



WORKING HANDS WORKING MINDS



A Vocational Education Curriculum Developed by YouthBuild USA

UNIT 5

Housing and Community



**by Anne Meisenzahl and David Greene
Edited by Keisha Edwards**



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Acknowledgements

Working Hands, Working Minds is a work in progress. The authors have experimented over the years with a variety of strategies for bringing education, community building, and societal issues into an occupational framework. We are eager to work with other teachers and learn from them as they experiment with new ways to engage, involve, and challenge young people who are working to create a better future for themselves and others. This curriculum is based upon our belief that meaningful learning is contextual, intuitive, and connected to community issues.

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Finally, we want to give a special appreciation to the hundreds of young people we worked with over the years. They gave us guidance, made us laugh, and challenged our assumptions. Their contributions are immeasurable.

Anne Meisenzahl, David Greene, and Keisha Edwards

Special Thanks

YouthBuild USA is proud to present this fine curriculum for use by YouthBuild programs. Anne Meisenzahl and David Greene, the primary authors of this curriculum, deserve enormous respect and gratitude for their creative and persistent work. They were both teachers in the first two YouthBuild programs in New York City during the mid-1980s. Anne taught at Banana Kelly Community Improvement Association in the South Bronx, and David Green taught at Youth Action Program in East Harlem. As teachers they discovered there was no appropriate vocational education curriculum in existence and they embarked on what turned out to be a 16-year trek to produce something truly useful for future YouthBuild teachers. Their incredible determination to find the time, the funds, and the expert consultation to give this gift to their fellow teachers, and to their students, is the highest form of dedication to a vision and to service. We thank them.



Dorothy Stoneman
President, YouthBuild USA

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Guide for Facilitators

What is YouthBuild and Who Participates?

YouthBuild is a highly successful and well-respected program for out-of-school young adults that places equal emphasis on community development, job training, career development, and education. The program is nationally recognized for its ability to enable young adults to create success for themselves while making a significant contribution to society. As of June 2000, there are approximately 145 YouthBuild programs operating in 43 states.

Started in 1978 as the Youth Action Program with support from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), YouthBuild provides young adults an immediately productive role in their community. As they engage in the development and renovation of low-income housing, they contribute to their communities, they learn about the responsibilities of work, they learn academic skills required for a high school diploma or a GED, they acquire job skills in the construction trades, and they learn skills of leadership and social action.

Is YouthBuild an alternative school? A charter school? An employability program for out-of-school youth? A social movement? A chance for “at-risk” young adults to learn the skills required for success? A state-of-the-art example of contextual learning? The essence of school-to-work? It’s all of the above, and more — everyone who has experienced YouthBuild will add to the above description. Every YouthBuild program creates its own flavor and personality. With support and technical assistance from the national YouthBuild USA staff, young adults across the country are using the construction of low-income housing as the context through which they learn the skills to be productive, independent, contributing, and satisfied members of their communities.

The HUD legislation defines YouthBuild students as follows:

- Participants must be between 16 and 24 years old.
- At least 75 percent must have dropped out of high school.
- At least 75 percent must be low income or from a low-income family.
- One hundred percent (100 percent) must have “educational needs.”

The Working Hands, Working Minds Curriculum: What It Is and Isn't

Working Hands, Working Minds is an integrated construction curriculum. It was designed for academic instructors and construction trainers to use collaboratively.

In all YouthBuild programs, learning is an active process that involves interpreting new information, connecting it in some way to one's prior knowledge, and applying it appropriately. Traditional instruction focuses on discrete skills and isolated facts; it makes minimal connection to anything beyond the classroom or text. It does not advance authentic learning. Integrated and interdisciplinary curriculum, on the other hand, reflects real learning in the real world.

The YouthBuild Integrated Construction Curriculum, *Working Hands, Working Minds*, motivates students by engaging them in real-world problems and projects. Using the teacher as their guide, students investigate authentic community problems. They decide how they are going to proceed and what strategies to use. They develop the skills they need to take responsibility for their own learning. Students also share their individual talents and expertise as they work on projects as collaborative team members. They learn by talking over ideas with others, explaining their answers, and listening to other viewpoints.

In *Working Hands, Working Minds*, students explore topics and themes that are relevant and rich in possibilities. They are involved in activities that are practical and have clear value in a particular field. Instead of students showing what they know by taking a test that targets their weaknesses, they demonstrate their understanding in the context of meaningful activities that support their strengths and abilities.

Working Hands, Working Minds consists of the following five units:

1. Health and Safety
2. Housing and Community
3. Construction-Related Math and Measurement
4. Tools, Trades, and Technology in Construction
5. Teamwork and Leadership in Construction

It would be reasonable to ask why these five units were chosen to be the first phase of *Working Hands, Working Minds*. In many training programs, the two components — academics and construction — are separate and distinct from one another. *Working Hands, Working Minds* closes that gap. This curriculum is designed to help YouthBuild instructors and trainers integrate academics, construction, and leadership development. It fosters reading, writing, and mathematics learning through the context of construction; skill training is directly

"Because our students come to us with little or no experience with regular work, citizenship, or stable family life, we start with the experience of work, from which we draw out the academic lessons."

JOHN BRISCOE
VISIONS YOUTHWORKS, PA

linked to community responsibility and social analysis.

Each of the five units is an introduction, and only an introduction, to the topic. Each unit presents what we believe to be the essential ingredients of the topics, those ingredients that are essential to a YouthBuild student's learning. In the future, we plan to produce an intermediate and an advanced version of every one of these units for those young adults who have an extended YouthBuild experience, at this time, however, it is important for the users of the curriculum to realize that these lessons represent a critical foundation and, we hope, a springboard for other related learning experiences.

We encourage program staff to use the curriculum as a recipe. Although *Working Hands, Working Minds* was developed by many people, it does not represent rigid operating instructions. Usually the first time you cook a recipe, you follow the directions. But the next time you cook the recipe, you might add one thing and take out another. Just as a good recipe is a guide for you to create the dish you want to serve your diners, this is a flexible curriculum with many opportunities to give it your own flavor and personality.

It is critical to remember that learning happens everywhere at YouthBuild — at the construction sites in the community, in the academic and vocational classrooms, during community meetings, and while doing community service. All of YouthBuild is education. Therefore, this curriculum is a vehicle for program staff to integrate what they teach, why they teach it, and how they teach it.

These five units of *Working Hands, Working Minds* do not teach the technical vocational skills of the construction trades, such as framing, masonry, finish carpentry, plumbing, etc. Rather, these units teach a set of transferable skills that are critical for and applicable in any of the construction trades. In fact, many of the skills taught in these units, such as teamwork, basic writing and communication, critical thinking, and problem solving, are transferable to careers in nearly any occupational area.

Working Hands, Working Minds: Blueprint for Success

Working Hands, Working Minds is a curriculum that reflects current research and practice related to contextual teaching and learning. What is contextual learning? In a contextual learning environment, textbooks, lectures, and traditional tests are no longer the primary teaching tools. Rather, they are supplemental to a learning process in which students apply and experience what is being taught by addressing real problems and needs associated with their roles and responsibilities as family members, citizens, students, and workers. In a YouthBuild program, students are at the center of their learning, and construction of low-income housing is the context.

According to current research there are six key elements of contextual learning (Owens, Tom; Dunham, Dan and Wang, Changhua, "Toward a Theory of Contextual Teaching and Learning," *Washington State Preservice Teacher Education Consortium for Contextual Teaching and Learning*, 1999)¹:

1. Meaningful learning
2. Application of knowledge
3. Higher order thinking
4. Standards-based
5. Cultures-focused
6. Authentic assessment

Related to those elements of contextual learning, the *Working Hands, Working Minds* blueprint has been drawn to:

- Engage youth in real conversation about issues relevant to their lives.
- Help youth articulate their dreams, goals, experiences, skills, and talents.
- Encourage youth to plan and participate in change in their own lives and their communities.
- Challenge youth to step out of their comfort zone and put themselves in the driver's seat of their own learning.
- Push youth to think critically about program standards and employability standards as they assess their own strengths and weaknesses.
- Engage youth in hands-on activities with a meaningful balance of theory and practice in a safe environment.
- Engage youth in meaningful reflection about each lesson, thus teaching that reflection is a valuable process in our lives.

¹ Reprinted with permission from the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory.

- Instruct youth in the development of portfolios so they can document and articulate their knowledge and skills.
- Help youth make connections between the classroom, the worksite, and life beyond YouthBuild.
- Immerse youth in culturally relevant perspectives.

Just as the occupants of a building do not need to think about the architectural blueprints every day, YouthBuild staff do not need to recite these principles of contextual learning; however, in a program that operates without them, learning will not be meaningful.

Described below are some examples of how these principles play out in *Working Hands, Working Minds*.

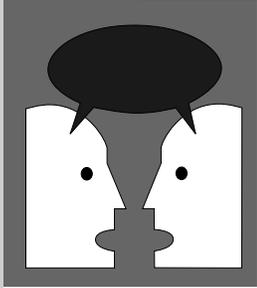
Teaching from Real Life Experiences

Skills introduced in *Working Hands, Working Minds* are taught in the context of low-income housing construction. The skills are introduced in reference to real community and social problems that need to be solved, in conjunction with real tasks that need to be accomplished. For example, when students build a porch on a low-income apartment unit, the curriculum addresses the reading, writing, and math skills needed to accomplish that task. In a lesson that teaches about first aid and how to respond to emergencies, related reading, writing, and communication skills are emphasized. Specific academic skills are identified in the GED description later in this section.

As young people work in and contribute to their communities, they assume ownership and they invest into the community. Their work is real, their work is urgent, and their work is valued. It is through these real life experiences that YouthBuild young adults flourish and create their own success.

Fostering Teamwork

Teamwork skills are among the most critical for success in any job in any career; construction sites are a perfect context for teaching these skills. Teamwork and cooperation are embedded throughout the curriculum. Students working together in teams learn a fundamental lesson: we are stronger when we help each other and share our skills than if we ignore or compete against one another. As students learn group skills necessary for work, their communication skills are enhanced and they develop confidence in solving problems. They learn to trust each other and respect differences. They participate actively and learn to work both cooperatively and independently.



We are stronger when we help each other and share our skills than if we ignore or compete against one another.

In this curriculum, many activities involve the use of small groups and teamwork. The following questions should be taken into consideration regarding the use of small groups:

- What are the reading and verbal abilities of students in the groups?
- How are students' maturity levels similar and/or different regarding teamwork skills? How will you structure the activities to increase the skill levels of all the students?
- Will anyone feel left out or left behind? How will students be able to assist one another?
- How many students are in the class and how will small groups be structured?
- What are the group management issues?
- What skills do the instructors have?
- Will staff training be available, if needed?

Encouraging Problem Solving and Critical Thinking

Problem posing and problem solving are key components of *Working Hands*, *Working Minds*. All lessons incorporate opportunities for generating questions, solving problems, and reflecting on the process. Students are given opportunities to use their own experiences as a source of information on how to complete tasks and reach goals. The lessons in the curriculum are designed to facilitate critical analysis and reflection by creating opportunities for students to act on and experiment with the problems and solutions they have posed. The curriculum makes explicit the connection between these problems, community development, and the literacy skills needed to support reflection and action.

Developing Skills of Social Analysis

In *Working Hands*, *Working Minds*, the social realities of housing, community, and urban development are addressed through the construction and renovation of low-income housing. Students have opportunities to research and appraise related social issues and to develop strategies for creating change. By participating in the process of renovating buildings or constructing new homes, students are making important social contributions. In this curriculum, through research, reading, writing, and math activities, students become more conscious of their socially useful role.

The Importance of the General Equivalency Diploma (GED)

Obtaining either a high school diploma or a General Equivalency Diploma (GED) is an important goal for YouthBuild students. The GED examination certifies that a learner performs academically at a level that is equivalent to a high school education.

Although for many years the GED has been nationally recognized as an equivalent to the high school diploma, some people believe it does not represent equal rigor and preparation for postsecondary courses. Most of the studies comparing the outcomes of GED and high school graduates indicate that, although getting a GED does not offer the same set of comprehensive experiences that a high school education/diploma would provide, it does allow individuals to enter the job market and postsecondary education at similar rates. In other words, the GED definitely provides an avenue for young people to pursue job opportunities and postsecondary education.

YouthBuild students who are close to graduating from high school and lack only a few high school credits are encouraged to obtain their diploma either through partnership with the local school system or through the YouthBuild program itself. However, for many YouthBuild students, the GED provides the most efficient and reasonable pathway to high school competition. The GED is recognized by employers and postsecondary institutions as proof that the individual has achieved a level of competency that will benefit them on the job and in future educational endeavors.

The major academic and GED skills emphasized in the first five units of *Working Hands, Working Minds* include:

Reading and Writing

- Recognize and infer cause and effect
- Predict outcomes
- Apply information to new situations
- Recognize, recall, summarize, and express main ideas
- Recall detail
- Recognize sequence
- Organize ideas
- Write an essay
- Use the library, encyclopedia, table of contents, and index of a book
- Read and write poetry

Math

- Define standard units of measurement
- Convert length and time measurements

- Solve measurement problems
- Add, subtract, multiply, and divide numbers using inches, feet, and yards
- Use fractions and percentages to solve problems
- Use standard measurement tools, such as ruler, tape measure or yardstick
- Estimate and draft a budget
- Solve area problems using square foot and perimeter
- Explore angles and triangles as used in construction

The New GED Test to be used in 2002, will provide students with calculators during part of the Math Section of the Test. Students will be expected to be able to use these calculators effectively to answer questions. We recommend that staff access training and learning materials to facilitate the development of this new skill requirement for the General Equivalency Diploma.

These skills are interspersed throughout many of the lessons in all of the units. Students have multiple opportunities to practice using the skills both in the classroom and on the construction sites. As the students learn these skills in the context of doing construction, they understand that the skills are transferable to many other areas of their lives.

Employability and Career Development

YouthBuild helps young adults acquire the skills required to succeed in any job, in any industry, in any community. In 1991 the U.S. Department of Labor's Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) gathered information from business owners, public employees, union officials, and workers in all types of jobs from entry level to top management. The conclusions were unanimous:

“New workers must be creative and responsible problem solvers and have the skills and attitudes on which employers can build. Traditional jobs are changing and new jobs are created every day. High paying but unskilled jobs are disappearing. Employers and employees share the belief that all workplaces must ‘work smarter.’”

(From *What Work Requires of Schools, A SCANS Report for AMERICA 2000*, 1991)

Most youth employment programs, as well as nearly every state education agency, have adopted the SCANS competencies as those skills that all people need to become productive, independent, contributing, and satisfied members of society. *Working Hands, Working Minds* consciously and directly addresses the following SCANS competencies and foundation skills:



photo: YouthBuild Houston

- **Identify, organize, plan, and allocate resources:** time, money, material and facilities, and human resources
- **Work with others:** teamwork, teach others, serve clients and customers, leadership, and work with diversity
- **Acquire and use information:** find and assess information, organize and communicate information, and use computers to process information
- **Understand complex inter-relationships:** understand, improve and design systems, correct performance
- **Work with a variety of technologies:** apply technology to a task, maintain and troubleshoot equipment
- **Basic skills:** reading, writing, math, listening, speaking
- **Thinking skills:** creative thinking, decision making, problem solving, knowing how to learn, reasoning
- **Personal qualities:** responsibility, self-esteem, sociability, self-management, integrity/honesty

As YouthBuild students successfully complete the *Working Hands, Working Minds* lessons, they demonstrate increasingly high levels of achievement of the SCANS competencies that are critical to construction or any other industry they may choose to pursue. Through the learning activities and portfolio entries, YouthBuild students have many opportunities to document their skills for use on a resume, letter of application, or job interview.

In order to help students prepare for the realities of the world of work, many lessons involve visiting local workplaces, gathering information about career opportunities, and interviewing workers. Not only do these activities acquaint students with the literacy skills needed to do particular jobs, but they also learn about the physical environment, teamwork, and communication skills required by different jobs.

Working Hands, Working Minds is about career exploration. By researching the types of jobs available in the construction trades, students gain a broader understanding of the options available to them, and develop a realistic sense of what skills and training they will need for jobs that interest them.

Assessment

YouthBuild thrives in the new era of educational assessment. The traditional paper-and-pencil testing mode of assessment is losing prominence. A few notes about the “old methods” will add to our understanding of the new. It used to be that achievement tests were used to sort and separate learners into those who went on to college and those who didn’t. Traditionally, teachers

taught and students were tested to determine if they learned what they were supposed to; this created a wall between teachers and students. The '70s brought statewide testing, the '80s and '90s brought national standards and centralized assessments.

The more realistic theory of assessment is that testing alone is insufficient. Assessment must be used to inform the instructional process and the learning process, and the teacher and the student should use assessment information equally. Here are a few assumptions about authentic assessment:

- Meaningful learning and meaningful assessment go hand-in-hand; one won't happen without the other.
- Good assessment comes from a clear vision of expected outcomes; the standards and criteria for excellence are clear and understood by both the learner and the instructor.
- Good assessment actively involves the learner; there is a conscious emphasis on reflection and ownership of learning.
- Assessment has many purposes, strategies, and products; it is multidimensional, much more than a test-at-the-end strategy.
- Assessment should not be a time-eater; it should save time. It should make the job of teaching easier and more effective.
- There is ongoing positive interaction between all learners, including the instructor.

The assessment process in *Working Hands, Working Minds* is as authentic as possible. It is based on the “use it or lose it” theory of knowledge. Every lesson in all five units ends with Creative Extensions and Project-Based Learning Activities so that students can demonstrate their understanding of what they have learned. Both of these components of the lessons are structured opportunities for students to apply what they have learned. Embedded in the lessons are numerous opportunities for both individual and group reflection.

The final lesson in each unit is a formal assessment of learning that measures young peoples' ability to apply and personalize the information they have acquired. Assessment activities in each unit might include writing a response to a question such as, “How have your attitudes, beliefs, and ideas changed as a result of this unit?” Or students might complete a safety self-assessment and compare it to one completed by their construction trainer.

Throughout each unit, students collect work products/samples to put in a portfolio. As the culmination of the student's work in the unit, the portfolio serves the following purposes:

- It is a student-centered assessment tool. Students make judgments about the quality of their work and learning and what needs to be improved.

- It enables teachers to review collected work and make judgments about students' growth over time.
- It has the potential to boost students' self-confidence about their skills because it offers a concrete illustration of these skills.
- It is a potential tool to help students “show what they know” to a prospective employer, internship host, or educational institution.

Although different YouthBuild programs make different uses of portfolios, in its simplest form a portfolio serves as an assessment tool for instructors, a self-assessment tool for students, and the raw material to use for a career presentation portfolio.

Working Hands, Working Minds: The Foundation

First, a note about learning readiness. Learning readiness is defined as the ability of a learner to engage in the instructional program with effective learning and study skill habits. YouthBuild students must be able to take notes, do homework, take examinations, read and digest material, write effective prose, problem solve, and think critically — all habits that are conducive to life-long learning. In addition, YouthBuild students need to learn how to ask questions, think about their learning, and assess how they are doing with the material that is presented to them. Study groups are often used to support effective learning and study habits.

Working Hands, Working Minds was conceived as a way to introduce individuals to the world of construction and its relationships to academic achievement, e.g., reading, writing, and mathematics. It provides classroom teachers, counselors, and construction managers with a set of lessons to integrate academics with construction skills. Because *Working Hands, Working Minds* requires YouthBuild students to learn and practice effective study skills, learning readiness is an important consideration when delivering the curriculum.

Learning readiness is a key to successfully completing the GED program, learning construction skills, and being prepared to enter the job market or post secondary education. *Working Hands, Working Minds* was designed to take this into consideration in both content and process.

Working Hands, Working Minds was designed to be easy to use, easy to adapt, and easy to integrate with other program curricula. Therefore, each unit has a similar format and each lesson has the same design. Described below is the structure of the units and the lessons in each unit.

"We try to make our students feel okay about who they are. There was a time when it wasn't okay to be Indian. There is a whole movement now to preserve our cultural identity, and our young people are becoming a part of that."

DENNIS FOX,
YOUTHBUILD FORT BERTHOLD, ND

Each unit has an overview, which includes:

- A brief *summary* of each lesson.
- A *competency checklist* that outlines the skills (both academic and construction) students should be able to perform upon successful completion of the lessons in the unit.
- A *portfolio assessment checklist* that outlines the materials students could include in their portfolios.

Each lesson in each unit uses the following format:

- **Aim:** The purpose of the lesson and what students will do/learn.
- **Key Terms and Concepts:** A list of vocabulary words that can be introduced in relation to specific lessons.
- **Time:** Approximately how long the lesson should take.
- **Things to Consider:** What an instructor might need to do or think about before starting to teach the lesson, such as how to present a sensitive topic, finding a guest speaker, arranging for access to computers for Internet research, or preparing for career interviews.
- **Materials, Tools and Resources:** A list of all the handouts and any materials that are needed to teach the lesson, such as flipchart paper, student journals, or newspapers.
- **Steps for Activities:** A lightly scripted step-by-step guide for the instructor.
- **Wrap-Up:** Reflection on the lesson, thinking about how to apply what was learned both to the YouthBuild program and to one's personal life.
- **Creative Extensions:** Suggestions about ways to adapt certain activities in the lesson; ideas for embellishing the lesson; simple applications or ways to practice what was learned in the classroom.
- **Project-Based Learning Activities:** Ideas for extending the lesson with a group or individual project that requires students to take leadership to plan, carry out their activities, and reflect on what they did and learned. Projects should all have a community component in which students connect with other people or organizations; some have career connections. These activities are ideas for program staff to start from, not fully scripted guides for each project idea.
- **Handouts:** All handouts required to complete the lesson are at the end of the lesson; others are in the supplemental Tools and Resources section at the end of the unit.

Following the lessons in each unit are two final sections:

- **Tools and Resources** section lists print, Internet, and video resources that might be helpful for enrichment activities or for the facilitator.

- **Supplemental Handouts** suggest optional activities, creative extensions, and project-based learning activities.

“We do vocational education on the site two mornings a week. We are in a room in a garage that is set up like a classroom. It has a desk, tables and a blackboard...I also teach vocational education in the classroom two sessions a week. We have a good blackboard, textbooks, and a VCR. We combine reading and writing, vocabulary development, demonstration, and hands-on practice...I’m also planning to deal with the history of construction careers, barriers to employment for women, real estate, financing and community development, because these topics make construction come alive, students can see the relevance of it.”

Rebecca Etchison, YouthBuild Dayton

Making the Curriculum Work for Your Program

Working Hands, Working Minds is appropriate for any program that strives to teach construction skills in the context of community development and social action.

The curriculum is applicable to any performance-based and competency-based education programs. It can be integrated into programs that use Individual Education Plans (IEPs) or Academic Development Plans (ADPs) in which students have individual plans geared to their particular learning needs. It can be used in conjunction with other curricula; it can supplement high school equivalency (GED) or high school diploma curricula. Programs can adapt the curriculum to meet their needs by selecting lessons relevant to their program’s competencies.

Working Hands, Working Minds is designed to be used by a team of staff (teachers, counselors, construction managers, and other instructional staff) working together to coordinate the learning process. Programs should make their own decisions about which lessons will be taught, who will teach which lessons of each unit, and which lessons will be taught as a team. Instructors should meet regularly to plan and debrief.

Groups might consider the following questions as they plan the use of the curriculum:

- Where will instruction take place?
- Who will teach which lessons?
- How will the program maximize the integration of worksite and classroom instruction?
- When will instructional staff meet to plan, coordinate instruction, and debrief?

"I'm also planning to deal with the history of construction careers, barriers to employment for women, real estate, financing, and community development because these topics make construction come alive; students can see the relevance of it."

REBECCA ETCHISON
YOUTHBUILD DAYTON

- How much of the time will be spent team-teaching and how much will be separate?

Depending on the staffing structure and the skills and background of the staff, programs can use *Working Hands, Working Minds* in numerous ways, ranging from a traditional approach (in which components remain distinct) to a fully integrated approach. Three of these approaches are described below.

1. Separate but Equal Approach

In this traditional model, academic teachers, worksite instructors, and vocational instructors work and teach separately, but reinforce each other's separate domains and support each other's work. Instructors and teachers choose separate lessons from the curriculum to teach in their distinct components, but do not actually teach together. Because of the shared theme of the lessons, students may, on their own, make the intellectual connection between them, but the connection is not overtly emphasized by the instructors.

2. Content Exchange Approach

In this approach, academic teachers and vocational instructors meet initially to discuss how to divide the lessons and when lessons might best be taught in order to support each other's content area. They meet regularly to discuss how the curriculum can be expanded to demonstrate the interrelatedness of the content. For example, when students learn vocabulary, they use words related to construction; after learning how to frame a wall on the construction site, students might describe the process in a writing exercise in the classroom.

Vocational instructors might recommend creative extensions or project-based learning activities to be coordinated by the teacher; academic teachers might suggest materials and methods for teaching measurement skills on the worksite.

3. Team Teaching Approach

When "teaming," worksite instructors, academic teachers, and vocational instructors work together to choose lessons, develop additional instructional materials, present material, and assess student progress. In this highly cooperative approach, instructors demonstrate to students the way in which their respective fields are related. The academic teacher might go to the worksite to teach the math skills needed to measure the perimeter of a lot to determine board feet of fencing needed, or to teach the reading skills needed to understand the directions for operating a power tool. Likewise, worksite and vocational instructors might go into the classroom to teach proper names and operating instructions of tools to be used on the construction site. Academic and vocational teachers decide which lessons can be taught together and with which activities they can assist each other.

On a frequent basis, all of the instructional partners meet to assess the collaboration process and to discuss continuous improvement of the process.

Using the Key Terms and Concepts

At the beginning of each lesson you will find a list of vocabulary words from the lesson that may require clarification and dialogue. Listed here are a few ideas for teaching the key words and concepts.

- **Before each lesson, write the words on the board and ask students what they think the words mean.** Have a short group discussion to come to a consensus on definition; if a consensus is not reached, wait until the term or concept appears in the lesson and then revisit the discussion.
- **Before beginning the lesson, you could have students individually write down what they think the terms mean.** Then, at the end of the lesson, ask students to revisit their definitions and revise, as necessary. Give students a chance to compare their definitions and come to a common definition.
- **Students can compile glossaries of key terms** and continue to add words to it from each lesson. In addition to writing definitions, they could divide words into syllables to aid spelling, identify parts of speech, and use words in sentences.
- **Short quizzes** can be given at the end of a lesson so students can assess their own comprehension of the key terms and concepts.
- **A homework assignment** could be for students to teach one or more of the key terms or concepts to a family member or friend.
- **Using computers**, students can create YouthBuild dictionaries with definitions of the key terms and concepts.

The last lesson in each unit is a good time to briefly review the vocabulary from the unit and assess comprehension.

- **You could be traditional** and give a test.
- **You could be dramatic** and ask for a skit using some of the key terms.
- **You could be playful** and engage students in a charades or game activity.
- **You could be humorous** and let students draw cartoons with captions or write jokes using the vocabulary words.

Creative Extensions

Everyone teaches differently and all learners have their own unique interests and needs. We know that there is no “one right way” to teach, and the more teachers modify these lessons to make them their own, the more effective they will be. Therefore we have included two or three ideas for modifying or

enriching the lesson. These ideas are optional of course, and are meant to be short, creative, typically classroom-based extensions and modifications of the lesson. The overall purpose, however, is to offer students alternative strategies to learn and opportunities to apply what they learned in a wide variety of ways.

One simple example of a creative extension in the math unit is to have students write their own construction-related word problems using the skills they learned in the lesson. A more complex creative extension in the math unit has students explore how the architect Frank Lloyd Wright used angles and geometrical shapes to enhance the aesthetic beauty and functionality of his buildings. Many creative extensions are, in fact, applications of learning that can be used as an assessment of how well the students learned the subject matter.

While the overall purpose is application of knowledge gained, these creative extensions should also be motivating and personalized. For example, the one about Frank Lloyd Wright could be changed so that a student or group of students select their own architect to study. If you wanted to personalize or localize the project even further, you could focus on local architects.

The creative extensions are meant to be just that — creative activities that extend, embellish, or enrich the lesson.

Project-Based Learning

Every day more research appears on the rationale for, and the value of, project-based learning. It is a teaching and learning strategy that puts students “in the driver’s seat of their own learning.” YouthBuild is intrinsically conducive to project-based learning because of the very nature of the construction projects.

What is a project? Coupling the current research and practice on project-based learning with the YouthBuild philosophy, a good YouthBuild project is a cohesive set of learning activities with the following characteristics:

- A project is derived from an issue or idea that has authentic meaning for the student(s), the community, and the program.
- Rather than focusing on one subject area, projects are interdisciplinary and integrate a variety of content areas.
- A project takes more than a week to complete; it is a series of activities that hang together with a beginning, a middle, and an end.
- Students, teachers, and in many cases, community members, collaborate in the planning, execution, and assessment of the project.
- A project requires the use of both community and classroom resources.
- Projects require students to use critical thinking and problem-solving skills, and many of the GED skills and employability (SCANS) skills described earlier in this Guide for Facilitators.

- Projects encourage teamwork and leadership as students take on different roles and assist each other in the learning process.
- A project should ideally result in a product, presentation, portfolio, or demonstration of knowledge.
- Project-based learning demands that both students and teachers assume new roles.
- The teacher is the facilitator, not the leader.
- The teacher learns along with the students rather than being an expert.
- The teacher gives up some authority as the students demonstrate leadership.
- The teacher is a coach, cheerleader, and a model.
- The teacher must be patient, willing to let students make mistakes in a safe environment, and ready to support students through the bumps in the road.

One of the nicest pieces written recently on project-based learning is from a toolkit titled *Connected Learning Communities Toolkit for Reinventing High School* (Jobs for the Future) by Adria Steinberg of Jobs for the Future. Divided into six categories, the author identifies these criteria for designing projects:

Authenticity

- Project emanates from a problem or question that has meaning to the student.
- Problem or question is one that might actually be tackled by an adult at work or in the community.
- Students create or produce something that has personal and/or social value, beyond the school setting.

Academic Rigor

- Students acquire and apply knowledge central to one or more discipline or content area.
- Students use methods of inquiry central to one or more disciplines (e.g., to think like a scientist).
- Students develop higher-order thinking skills and habits of mind (e.g., searching for evidence, taking different perspectives).

Applied Learning

- Students solve a semi-structured problem (e.g. designing a product, improving a system, or organizing an event) that is grounded in a context of life and work beyond the school walls.
- Students acquire and use competencies expected in high-performance work organizations (e.g., teamwork, problem solving).
- Work requires students to develop organizational and self-management skills.

“All students don’t learn the same. Learning should be tailored around students so that it doesn’t force them to learn in one way. Learning should not be limited to the classroom. The whole world is a classroom. Take them out in the world and teach them.”

ROBERT BELL,
YOUTHBUILD PHILADELPHIA

Active Exploration

- Students spend significant amounts of time doing field-based work.
- Students engage in real investigations using a variety of methods, media, and sources.
- Students communicate what they learn through presentations.

Adult Connections

- Students meet and observe adults with relevant expertise and experience.
- Students work closely with at least one adult.
- Adults collaborate on the design and assessment of student work.

Assessment

- Students reflect regularly on their learning, using clear project criteria that they have helped to set.
- Adults from outside the classroom help students develop a sense of the real-world standards for this type of work.
- There are opportunities for regular assessment of student work through a range of methods, including exhibitions and portfolios.

The project-based learning activities at the end of each lesson are merely ideas; doing a project in its ideal form is no simple matter. As you begin to build on some of the project ideas in the lessons, it is good to start small, make it doable, and build in success for the participants.

Time

The time indication for each lesson is an estimation, not a statement of fact. The time it takes to complete each lesson is dependent on the following factors: the intent of the facilitator, past experiences of the students, interest of the students, how verbal and conversational the students are, and how your program is structured.

“All students don’t learn the same. Learning should be tailored around students so that it doesn’t force them to learn in one way. Learning should not be limited to the classroom. The whole world is a classroom. Take them out in the world and teach them. Strategies? I use everything around me to make it work. Newspapers, videos, guest speakers, ‘regular people,’ families, the elderly, the young, the entire community.”

Robert Bell, YouthBuild Philadelphia

Tips for Instructors

“Facilitate” means “to make easier.” Think about yourself as a facilitator — someone who helps people learn rather than someone who imposes learning upon them. Facilitating suggests the idea of a collaborative relationship between the instructor and students. A facilitator is a:

- Coach
- Listener
- Trainer
- Learner
- Manager of a group process

What follows are some good practices for facilitating, adapted from *Strengthening Mentoring Programs: The National Mentoring Center Training Curriculum* (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention; Northwest Regional Education Laboratory, Public/Private Ventures, 2000)².

Before Each Lesson

Know the curriculum thoroughly

- As necessary, customize activities, handouts, and overheads so they best address characteristics of your program and your specific group of students.
- Think about how you will facilitate the session, and be prepared to make on-the-spot adjustments. If, for example, you find you need to spend more time on one activity, you might need to shorten another.

Make your learning environment conducive to group interaction.

- Avoid a traditional classroom set-up. Depending on the size of your group, have tables large enough for all the students to sit around, write and converse.
- If small groups are going to be meeting as part of the lesson, make sure the area is large enough so that small groups can meet without distracting each other.

Have everything ready.

- Copy handouts and prepare overheads.
- Gather any required materials and equipment: newsprint, markers, masking tape, an overhead projector (and extension cord, if necessary), and anything else you might need for the lesson.

² Reprinted with permission from the Northwest Regional Education Laboratory.

Keep this point in mind: people remember about 10 percent of what they hear, 40 percent of what they hear and see, and 80 percent of what they discover for themselves.

During Each Lesson

Create a comfortable learning environment.

- Create an atmosphere where participants are taken seriously and where they can also laugh. People are usually most open to new ideas when they are enjoying themselves and feel comfortable enough to risk making mistakes.

Pace the lesson appropriately.

- Encourage the exchange of ideas and information, while also keeping activities on track. Move things quickly enough to keep students from being bored, but slowly enough to make sure they absorb what is being discussed.
- Allow time throughout the session for students to ask questions and assist one another with seeking answers.

Model good listening, feedback, and problem-solving skills.

- Listen carefully and respectfully. Acknowledge what the young people say even if you don't agree. People need to feel they are being listened to and their ideas and concerns are recognized as worthy contributions.
- Respond by guiding, not judging. Repeat and address key points.
- Help students develop collaborative problem-solving skills. Involve them in answering other participants' question, and have them work together to arrive at solutions.

Think about how people learn best.

- Keep this point in mind: people remember about 20 percent of what they hear, 40 percent of what they hear and see, and 80 percent of what they discover for themselves.
- Use overheads and newsprint to help students see and remember. Newsprint is also a useful tool for group thinking and problem solving. Summarize major discussion points on newsprint. Post it on the walls around the room so you and your group can keep referring back to, and expanding upon, earlier ideas and contributions.
- Use the three effective strategies for facilitators — brainstorming, group work, and role plays — that are described below.
- Build in success. People learn best when they experience success frequently. Structure activities so students have a sense of accomplishment by the end.

Be yourself

- Know your limitations. If you don't know the answer to a question, that's okay. You don't need to know all the answers. Learning is a collaborative process and you are a partner with your students in that endeavor.
- Maintain your sense of humor.

After Each Lesson

Get feedback from students.

- Prepare an evaluation form that asks for feedback on both the process and the content of the lesson. Distribute it at the end of the session, and ask students to complete it before they leave.
- Use their comments and opinions to plan and tailor your next lessons.

Reflect on what worked well and what did not.

- Don't use the feedback forms to judge yourself. Instead, use the information to help you think through what went well from the students' point of view, what you need to modify about the content, and what facilitation skills you should work on.
- Along with students' feedback, give yourself feedback on the lesson. Think about the situations when students seemed involved, bored, stimulated, confused, angry, or amused. Based on your self-observations, make necessary adjustments in lesson content and your facilitation strategies.

Three Strategies for Effective Facilitation

While facilitating these lessons, you will want to take advantage of three important strategies: brainstorming, group work, and role plays.

1. Brainstorming

Brainstorming is an excellent way to generate ideas, and it is an effective technique for getting all students involved and contributing. This is especially true at the beginning of a lesson when you are trying to get everyone focused on the same subject.

When facilitating brainstorming activities, keep these points in mind:

- The purpose of brainstorming is to encourage all students to offer their thoughts and opinions in a nonjudgmental atmosphere.
- As students offer ideas, record them — all of them — on newsprint.
- Brainstorming is a free exchange of ideas on a topic; it is important to accept everyone's contribution.

2. Group Work

During many activities, organizing the whole group into small groups of four to six students will encourage participation, involvement, and collaborative problem solving.



photo: Martin Dixon

In some cases, assign, or have group members assign to themselves, these specific roles:

- **The leader** (like a facilitator) takes responsibility for helping the group complete its task. He or she helps group members work together and encourages everyone to participate in positive ways.
- **The recorder** writes down ideas from a brainstorming and anything else that needs to be recorded.
- **The reporter** presents the small group's ideas and conclusions back to the whole group. Sometimes you might want to combine the recorder and reporter roles.

Make sure that over the course of several sessions student roles vary and that everyone has an opportunity to be the “leader.” Make sure participants understand that, whatever other roles they may have, everyone in the group works together to complete the group task. Everyone suggests ideas, gives opinions, agrees or disagrees with others, asks questions, and offers solutions.

3. Role plays

When preparing to facilitate role plays, keep these points in mind:

- Role plays are informal dramatizations through which students can try out ways they might handle a potential situation and increase their insight into someone else's feelings, values, or attitudes.
- If the lesson includes suggested scenarios and characterizations for the role plays, you should modify these, where possible, to reflect actual situations that have arisen or are likely to arise in your particular program.
- Always allow time after the role plays for students to discuss their own and others' “performances” and to talk about what they learned from the activity.
- Many people initially feel uncomfortable doing role plays. However, once they have some practice with them, they usually enjoy the experience and see that role plays can increase confidence, comfort, and self-esteem.

What If Life Happens?

Nothing in life goes perfectly all the time, and facilitating an integrated curriculum is no exception. Despite all your planning and skillful facilitation, things can (and sometimes will) become unexpectedly challenging. Below are suggestions for handling some of those awkward situations.

What if you notice that students' eyes are glazing over?

- Ask yourself if you're talking too much without giving the students a chance to contribute. Get the participants engaged by structuring it so they have to do the thinking.

- Do a reality check. Are you addressing the needs students have presented?
- Do another reality check. Do you all need a break? Perhaps you could pass out Hershey's Kisses!
- Inject some humor fast.

What if you don't have enough students for the small group work you have planned?

- Use pairs instead.
- Change the activity to a whole group activity, and seat the the group in a circle.

What if there's a heated discussion that is moving the group off track and taking up too much time?

- First let students know that you value their interest and enthusiasm.
- You can say, "Let's stay with this discussion for two more minutes." Then, after two minutes, sum up what's been said and move on.
- Refer back to the aim of the lesson and say "We need to move on so let's have two or three final comments on the topic."
- Let the students suggest an alternate time and process to pursue the discussion so you can move ahead with the lesson.

What if you realize you're going to run out of time before you've accomplished your goals?

- One option is to move quickly through the rest of the lesson. Cover everything, even though the coverage will not be as deep.
- Another option is to stop the activities a little earlier than planned and have a longer wrap-up session where you talk about the topics you didn't get to. Relate those topics to the lesson's goals.

Finally, be flexible, be creative, be honest, be a learner, be ready for anything, and, most important of all, have fun with *Working Hands, Working Minds*.

Overview of Housing and Community

Building and renovating housing is a critical part of the YouthBuild experience. Through their involvement in these projects, students make a significant social contribution while improving the quality of housing in their communities.

This unit is designed to extend students' understanding of the main housing issues that influence their communities and to show them their potential power to impact policies that affect their communities. After reading statistics and personal histories, surveying the local community, researching key housing issues, and interviewing experts, students plan a project that addresses an important community housing concern.

“Housing and Community” consists of 20 lessons which address key housing-related issues:

- Lesson 1 — Describing Home
Students are introduced to literature about home as a physical place and an emotional center.
- Lesson 2 — Building a House into a Home
Students reflect on the physical and emotional characteristics of a home and take a walk around the neighborhood to examine these characteristics in the homes they observe.
- Lesson 3 — Housing and YouthBuild
Students interview a representative of the agency that coordinates housing development for the YouthBuild program in order to learn about its role in housing development.
- Lesson 4 — Take a Stand: Key Issues Related to Housing
YouthBuild participants explore their values and assumptions around issues of housing and poverty and brainstorm tactics for self-advocacy with social issues, particularly housing issues.
- Lesson 5 — Housing in Literature I
Students read classic poems about landlord and tenant issues and then write poems about the topic.
- Lesson 6 — Housing in Literature II
Students read an excerpt from Lorraine Hansberry's famous play about housing discrimination and then write a short play about the topic.

- Lesson 7 — What Is Community?
Students design a community that meets human needs they have identified.
- Lesson 8 — Describing Community
Students read essays by YouthBuild students about their communities and write essays describing their own communities.
- Lesson 9 — Exploring Community History
Students explore the importance of community history and research/record the history of their community through oral history interviews.
- Lesson 10 — Compiling and Presenting Community History
Students compile historical data and share oral histories through group presentations.
- Lesson 11 — Young People Write about Housing
Students read essays about housing problems by young people in YouthBuild programs and write essays discussing key housing issues in their communities.
- Lesson 12 — The State of the Nation's Housing
Students are introduced to statistics on the state of the nation's housing in order to identify significant housing problems and the causes of these problems.
- Lesson 13 — Homelessness
Students read articles by and about homeless people in order to identify the key causes of homelessness and solutions to the problem.
- Lesson 14 — Creating Change...One Person at a Time
Students reflect on central aspects of community and their own civic participation by reading what other YouthBuild students have written about their communities and civic participation.
- Lesson 15 — Community Survey of Housing Needs
Students survey the local community about local housing needs to determine key areas of concern that they will use as subjects of research.
- Lesson 16 — Research on Housing Needs
Students research housing problems in order to better understand how these problems evolved and to find innovative solutions at the local and national level.

- Lesson 17 — Creating Change II
Students explore the motives and strategies of a person who has worked to change housing patterns.
- Lesson 18 — Do Something! Culminating Project and Portfolio Assessment
Students collect work they completed during the unit to demonstrate their learning and include in their portfolios. They reflect on their progress over the course of the unit, and plan a project intended to influence a particular housing issue.

Competency Checklist

Upon satisfactory completion of this unit, students will be able to:

- Describe a “home”
- Use poetic language to create a home
- Identify key factors in the creation of a community
- Describe the student’s own community
- Use poetic language to illustrate landlord/tenant issues
- Compile and present a community history
- Use dialogue to illustrate housing issues
- Describe key housing issues in the community
- Identify key housing problems
- Identify and write about key causes of housing problems
- Understand statistics and read a pie chart
- Identify key causes of homelessness
- Survey the local community
- Graph survey results
- Identify causes and solutions for a particular housing problem
- Describe the role of YouthBuild program in housing development
- Write a letter of action to an elected official or newspaper
- Plan and organize a social change project related to a housing issue
- Evaluate effectiveness of social change project
- Assess knowledge and understanding of key housing concepts

Portfolio Assessment Checklist

Upon completion of the unit, students should have the following items in their portfolios:

- Essay describing home (Lesson 1)
- Poem about the creation of a home (Lesson 2)
- Collaborative community design (Lesson 3)
- Essay describing the role that YouthBuild plays in housing development (Lesson 3)
- List of strategies for self-advocacy around housing (Lesson 4)
- Poem about landlord/tenant relationships, or their housing issues (Lesson 5)
- Short play or monologue on the theme of housing (Lesson 6)
- Journal essay describing memories of a neighborhood or community (Lesson 7)
- Description of student's community that includes culture, population, employment, and resources (Lesson 8)
- Written oral history taken from a community member (Lesson 9)
- Creative writing on an issue or historical event from the community oral histories (Lesson 10)
- Letter written to public official or local newspaper raising awareness of a housing issue (Lesson 11)
- Journal entry on key national housing issues, taken from statistical charts (Lesson 12)
- Essay on local YouthBuild housing development (Lesson 12)
- Essay or creative writing on key causes of homelessness (Lesson 13)
- Journal entry on the theme of community activism (Lesson 14)
- Graph of the results of a community survey (Lesson 15)
- Journal entry on addressing a particular housing issue with innovative solutions (Lesson 16)
- List of strategies using the decision-making model for creating community change (Lesson 17)
- Written self-assessment and plan for carrying out community action (Lesson 18)

LESSON

1



Describing Home

Aim

Students will explore the notion of “home” as both a physical place and an emotional center. In this lesson they will:

- Discuss “home”
- Read an essay about home
- Brainstorm a list of words that can be used to describe “home”
- Write about “home”

Things to Consider

The topic of “home” may be sensitive for students who have experienced painful home lives or homelessness. Allow students to be honest and open about their experiences and feelings. Consider how you will address potential issues before the lesson.



Materials, Tools, and Resources

- Handout: “Grandmama’s Kitchen Table”

Time

1 hour

Key Terms

- Refuge
- Fiction vs. Non-fiction
- Theme
- Narrative

Steps for Activity

- 1.** Write the statements: “A HOUSE IS...” and “A HOME IS...” on a chalkboard or flipchart. Ask students to complete these statements and discuss the difference between what these two words mean. Help students expand their discussion by asking questions like:

- Is a house always a home? Is a home always a house?
- Describe the physical characteristics of a house. Describe the physical characteristics of a home.
- Do all people deserve both?
- What is lost when a person does not have a house?
- What is lost when a person does not have a home?

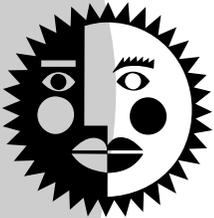
Record responses on the chalkboard or flipchart.

- 2.** Tell students that they will now read an essay on the theme of home. Pass out copies of “Grandmama’s Kitchen Table.” Ask students what they think these essays might be about.

Let the students read either individually or together in small groups. When they have finished, lead a discussion using the following questions as prompts:

“Grandmama’s Kitchen Table”

- Where does Grandma live?
- Can you find where she lives on a map?
- What is her community like?
- What is her land like?
- What is her home like?
- What happens in Grandma’s kitchen?
- Why doesn’t the writer ever sit in Grandma’s chair?
- What specific examples does the writer give of the food and drink that are eaten in Grandma’s kitchen?
- How do these help you to picture the situation better?
- Why doesn’t anyone want to go in the living room?
- Does this story make you think of situations you have been in? If so, describe.
- Would you like to visit the author’s Grandma? Why?



*Home—a place
that is both a
physical location
and an emotional
center*

3. Tell students that the stories they just read used descriptive language to describe home—a place that is both a physical location and an emotional center. Introduce the concepts of nouns, verbs, and adjectives, and ask students to brainstorm examples of each that might be used to describe a home. Record responses on the chalkboard or flipchart.

- Nouns: What are the people, places and things that make up this space we call home?
- Verbs: what happens here? What action takes place? What do people and objects do there?
- Adjectives: what “picture words” can be used to describe the sights, smells, sounds, textures, tastes of the place?

Ask students to write descriptive essays about “home.” The home described can be their own home, someone else’s, or an imaginary place. Ask them to use vivid descriptive language like they just generated in the previous brainstorm.

Wrap Up

- 1.** When everyone has completed the writing assignment, ask for volunteers to share their essays with the larger group.
- 2.** Ask students to think about a goal they can set for themselves in terms of making the place where they live (or will live in the future) into a “home” or safe place. Ask for students to share their goal and the steps that they need to take to achieve that goal.

Creative Extensions

- Have a guest speaker come in and talk to the group about home ownership.
- Students can find a creative way to display their writings on home. Ideas might include a community bulletin board or student publication.
- Have students use markers, paint, or carving tools to transfer their ideas about home onto building materials such as wood, plaster, drywall, or glass. Display these around the YouthBuild center.
- Give students materials to draw, sculpt, or build a model of their dream home.
- Have students write a creative piece (fiction or non-fiction) based on the theme, “If only these walls could talk...” using the “house’s voice” to tell the story. Their narrative might focus on a funny or startling

incident that recently happened or a young person who lived in their house before them (25, 50, or 100 years ago).

- Have the students take a walk around the YouthBuild neighborhood and observe and record (via sketching, writing, or symbols) the various physical characteristics of the homes in the neighborhood. This can be done before the writing exercise to spark creativity.

Project-Based Learning Activities

- Have students create a photographic or pictorial essay of their home: what people, animals, or objects make their home what it is? What things on the outside of their home are defining characteristics? How can they creatively display photos, drawn objects, pictures, words, and narratives to communicate their home with the larger group?
- Have students design their dream home and present it to the larger group. They might: Research various home designs (through books, magazines, Internet); create a scale floor plan or model of the home selected; create a sketch of the home; interview an architect, interior designer, or landscape artist; or write an essay about the home that includes: a description of the home, how much will it cost to create or buy the home, and what type of income they will need to buy their home.
- Have students create a prototype of what housing will look like in their community 50 or 100 years in the future. They might: identify local housing needs/trends through interviews, local government reports, newspaper articles; examine housing trends over the last 50–100 years and hypothesize future housing trends; interview a city planner to see what the housing needs are and how the city/town plans to address those needs; investigate local zoning /growth boundary guidelines or laws; or interview community residents about housing issues/solutions.

Handout 1**GRANDMAMA'S KITCHEN TABLE**

by Cynthia Rylant

Since I was four years old I have been talking about my life to the people who sit at my grandmama's kitchen table in Cool Ridge, West Virginia.

The kitchen is small and skinny. There is a little window next to Grandmama's table, and this is where she sits when she is alone in the house. Out it she can see the birds at the apple tree, eating the seed she left them, and she can see who's driving up the hollow, or whose child is walking on the dirt road to the school bus. There are woods all around, and her eyes will follow them down past the creek, down past Bill Mills' house, and on.

When I am visiting, I make sure I never sit in Grandmama's chair. I want her to have her little window.

Relatives will come by—Uncle Dean and Aunt Linda, Sue and the girls, Bev and the baby—and all sit around Grandmama's sturdy old table, even though someone will have to sit on a bench in the doorway or on an extra chair that will block anybody who's trying to get through the room. But no one wants to go into the living room, where there's plenty of seats for us all. We want to be in Grandmama's kitchen, near this heavy old table, and we want to drink coffee and tea and Coke and eat angel food cake or leftover biscuits and talk and talk and talk and talk until we are all talked out, and there is nothing left to do but go on home and rest up and come back tomorrow to talk some more.



Home, edited by Michael J. Rosen, 1992, HarperCollins Publishers

LESSON

2



Building a House into a Home

Aim

Students will explore the physical and emotional characteristics of home through observation and their own creative writing. In this lesson they will:

- Identify physical and “emotional” characteristics of homes in their YouthBuild community
- Write about the making of a home

Time

1 hour

Things to Consider

This lesson supports the themes and activities completed in *Lesson 1 — Describing Home*. Students are asked to think about the physical and emotional characteristics of home and use descriptive language about building a home (like that brainstormed in Lesson 1) to guide them. If you did *Lesson 1 — Describing Home*, use your notes to remind students what nouns, verbs, and adjectives are all about.

In this lesson you will be asking students to take a walk around the block to identify physical and “emotional” characteristics of homes in the YouthBuild neighborhood. If you have a large group, you may wish to break the group into smaller teams and assign each group a different block to observe.



Materials, Tools, and Resources

- Handout: Walk around the Block Reflection
- Clipboards and pencils for each student or team of students

Key Terms

- Reflection
- Characteristics

Steps for Activity



*“Mid pleasures
and palaces,
though we may
roam/Be it ever
so humble,
there’s no place
like home.”*

1. Tell students that in this session they will be walking around the block to observe the physical and emotional characteristics of “home” in the YouthBuild neighborhood and then writing their own poem about the making of a home.
2. Write the following three quotations on the chalkboard or flipchart paper:
 - “Home is where the heart is.”
 - “Mid pleasures and palaces, though we may roam/Be it ever so humble, there’s no place like home.”
 - “A house does not always make a home.”

Lead a discussion with the group about the quotations. To promote dialogue ask questions like:

 - Do you agree with the quotations? Why or why not?
 - What are the physical and emotional characteristics that make up a warm and welcoming home?
 - If you were to create your own quotation about home, what would it be? Why?
 - Do the physical details about a house convey a message about the person or people that live there? If so, how?
3. Tell the group that they are now going to take a walk around the block to identify the physical and emotional characteristics of homes in the YouthBuild neighborhood. Give each participant a copy of the “Walk around the Block Reflection.” (Make sure everyone has a clipboard and pencil.)

Go over the directions of the handouts to make sure everyone is clear on the assignment. Give students 10 minutes or so to walk around the block and complete their reflection sheets.
4. When everyone has completed the walk around the block and reflection, ask for several volunteers to share the physical or emotional characteristics that they noted. Tell students that they will use the same descriptive writing techniques when writing poems about the building of a house.
5. Ask students to write poems in which they describe the process of building a home, either real or imaginary. Ask them to use some of the nouns, verbs, and adjectives used in the “Walk around the Block” activity.

Wrap Up

When everyone has completed their poem, ask for volunteers to read their poems aloud for the class. After volunteers have shared, select several of the follow questions/probes to help students reflect on the activity:

- How does it feel when you build YouthBuild houses? Why? Do those same feelings translate into your current housing situation (or other areas of your life)? Why or why not?
- Do you feel you will have an opportunity to build your own home or have one built for you? Why or why not?
- What do you think it takes to be able to build or buy a home?

Creative Extensions

- Tour a historical building that is being renovated. Have students pay close attention to the physical details of the home. On-site activities might include sketching the home, creating a floor plan of the home, and taking notes about the home while the tour guide is speaking. Classroom activities might include creative writing activities, researching the history of the house, or creating a scale model of the home.
- Have students brainstorm a list of movies or books that focus on the theme of “home” (*Boyz ’n the Hood*, *Our Town*, etc.) or “going home” (*The Wizard of Oz*, *E.T.*, etc.). Select one of the movies or stories to watch or read as a group. Follow up the reading or viewing with discussion and creative activities. Explore issues like: What is home like for the characters? How do the physical and emotional characteristics of their home differ from your own? Why do the characters want to go home? What is the world like for the characters away from home? What lessons can be learned from the main character’s experiences or quest?
- Have students think about the expression, “You can’t go home again.” The expression originally comes from the title of a novel by Thomas Wolfe in which the main character returns later in life to the small town where he grew up and discovers that it’s changed. Ask students:
 - What does that expression mean to you?
 - Do you believe the expression is true? Why or why not?

Project-Based Learning Activities

- What children's and young adult books center on home or housing issues? (There are a lot of great ones!) Have students go to the library, do research, find the ones they like best, and create a bibliography. Have students select one or two books and write "lesson plans" for them. Ask students: How would you use the books in a classroom? How do you think young people would connect best with the book? What creative art, writing, or social science activities can you think of? Have students volunteer to share the books and their lesson in a nearby school, or train a teacher to deliver the lesson.
- Have students look through a poetry anthology for poems that revolve around home. Ask students: What impressions about home do the poets share with the reader? Have them compare two different authors' (with different backgrounds) view on home. Does race, class, cultural background, gender, or time period have any bearing on the way they feel about or describe home? How can you creatively share your research with the larger group?
- How do people say "home" in other languages? Look up the word for home in as many languages as you can. Are the words similar in some languages? Do the other words for home tell us anything about other cultures? Create a poster that illustrates all the different ways to say home.

Handout 1

Walk around the Block Reflection

Directions: Take a walk around the block of your YouthBuild center. List both the physical and “emotional” characteristics of the houses you see in your YouthBuild neighborhood. Use colorful, descriptive language. You will use this completed worksheet to help you write a poem about the making of a home.

Physical Characteristics

Describe:

- windows (22, clean, “watchful eyes”)
- doors (yellow, bright, the color of lemons)
- porch (white, large, and inviting)
- roof (steep slope, in need of repair)

Your Descriptions

Emotional Characteristics

Describe:

- special touches (cheery flowers, “lawn a thick green carpet under your feet”)
- care or neglect of home or block (vacant lot, litter and debris, no one cares)
- people (grandfather, wipes hot brow after mowing lawn)

Your Descriptions

Nouns: What are the people, places, and things that make the home?

Verbs: What happens here? What action takes place? What do people and objects do there?

Adjectives: What “picture words” can be used to describe the sights, smells, sounds, textures, and tastes of the place?

LESSON

3



photo: Martin Dixon

Housing and YouthBuild

Aim

Students will learn about YouthBuild's role in the development of housing. In this lesson they will:

- Interview a YouthBuild staff member or a representative of an outside organization associated with the building they are working on
- Read an essay by a student from a YouthBuild program
- Write an essay about their YouthBuild program based on the interview

Things to Consider

Before beginning this lesson, arrange for the class to interview either a person in your organization who is responsible for some aspect of housing development or a representative from a community development organization closely associated with your local YouthBuild. Consider your construction manager, executive director, program director, or a representative from a partner organization.

At the beginning of this lesson, brief students on the “code of conduct” for hosting a guest speaker. This includes things like being attentive (good eye contact and no side conversations), asking meaningful questions, and thanking the speaker when he or she has finished. You may wish to take a few minutes for the group to set a few guest speaker “ground rules” that everyone can abide by.

If you don’t have a one-and-a-half hour block of time to complete this lesson, it can be broken into two 45-minute lessons. The first lesson might include reading, developing interview questions, interviewing the guest speaker, and debriefing after the interview. The second lesson can then consist of “recapping” the interview, allowing students to write their essays, and then wrapping up/reflection.

You will be asking the group to use a map of the United States during this lesson. Place the map in a central, visible location before you begin the lesson.

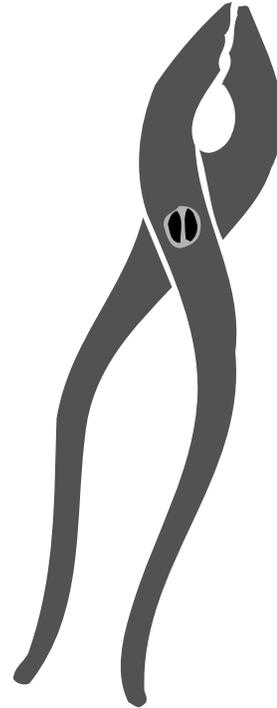
Don’t forget to have students “formally” thank the guest speaker for sharing her or his time and expertise with the class with a thank you letter, a certificate of appreciation, or a hand-made card. You might reserve time at the end of this lesson to brainstorm with the group how they would like to show their appreciation.

Materials, Tools, and Resources

- Handout: Housing Development: Interview Questions
- Handout: The Neighborhood, the People Who Live Here, and the Economics Involved
- Map of the United States
- Guest speaker

Time

1.5 hours



Key Terms

- Advocacy/self-advocacy
- Inequity
- Housing development
- Discrimination
- Interest rates
- Gut-rehab
- Self-sufficient

Steps for Activity

1. Distribute the handout “The Neighborhood, the People Who Live Here, and the Economics Involved.” Read the piece as a class by asking volunteers to read various sections out loud. When you have finished the reading, lead a discussion by using the following prompts:
 - Where is Philadelphia? Ask for a volunteer or a pair of volunteers to find it on a map.
 - Can you describe YouthBuild Philadelphia’s role in housing development?
 - What does the author say are the main contributions his program has made to the community in the area of housing development?
 - What do you think are some of the key housing issues in this writer’s community?

2. Tell students that the guest speaker will be arriving shortly. Distribute the handout “Housing Development: Interview Questions.” Ask students to review the interview questions and add others that they feel are relevant. Ask for volunteers to choose questions from the list to ask the guest speaker.

Remind students to write careful notes during the interview and to ask clarifying questions if they do not understand something, because they will be writing up the interview as an essay after the speaker is done.

3. Introduce, or ask a student to introduce, the guest speaker to the group.

4. As a large group, discuss and review the comments made by the speaker. You may wish to record main thoughts or points on the chalkboard or flipchart paper.

Ask students to write a five-paragraph essay in which they explain the role that your local YouthBuild has played in housing development and the effect it has had on the local community.



Don't forget to have students “formally” thank the guest speaker for sharing her or his time.

Wrap Up

1. Ask students to share any new information they have learned about the role that YouthBuild plays in the community.
2. Have students brainstorm a list of “players” involved in housing or community development. Ask them how they play a role in the development of their community (as a YouthBuild participant, a community member, a citizen, a parent, a worker, etc.). Could they play a more active role? If so, how?

Creative Extensions

When the guest speaker has finished discussing YouthBuild’s role in housing development, invite her or him to share a little about the job he or she does, the skills used in the job, and the educational background or technical training needed to be prepared for the work. This is a wonderful way to take advantage of a “teachable” career-development moment.

Project-Based Learning Activities

- Where in the community can YouthBuild students present the role that YouthBuild plays in housing development? Students can brainstorm and research appropriate forums, select one, and prepare and deliver a presentation complete with informational materials.
- Have students create an “exchange” with another (or several other) YouthBuild site(s). Questions to get students started on this project might include:
 - What purpose will their exchange serve? (Strengthen the “national” YouthBuild community, promote networking opportunities, information exchange, friendship.)
 - How will they find another program that wants to participate in an exchange?
 - How will they communicate with their exchange members?
- Have students create a marketing or promotional tool for their local YouthBuild. Create a video, a poster, a flyer, or a storyboard. Do they need more information about YouthBuild’s philosophy or programming? How would they sell YouthBuild to the larger community?

Handout 1**Housing Development: Interview Questions****Name and title of person interviewed**

1. What is your name and job title?
2. What are your housing development responsibilities?

Role of our YouthBuild in Housing Development

1. How is the history of YouthBuild related to housing development in our community?
2. What is the current role of YouthBuild in housing development?
3. Does YouthBuild work in partnership with other agencies?
4. Why does YouthBuild do the particular type of housing development work that it does?
5. What contributions has YouthBuild made to the community so far?
6. What are some of YouthBuild's goals for the future?
7. Think of a question on your own:



Handout 2

The Neighborhood, the People Who Live Here, and the Economics Involved

YouthBuild Philadelphia serves as a general contractor for low-income housing. Since the program has opened, it has successfully gut-rehabbed 16 houses for ownership. The bulk of the expenses for these projects are for costs, materials, and labor. YouthBuild Philadelphia works in partnership with a nonprofit community developer that invests \$100,000 into each property but only sells them for \$35,000–\$40,000.

The neighborhood our YouthBuild program is in consists primarily of low-income African American families. I haven't met everyone on the block yet, but the people that I have talked to say, "We don't really have a lot of problems in the area, except for the abandoned houses that crack addicts use to smoke drugs in. But it's nice to see young people doing something about it."

One community member that I conversed with was the lady who sells us water ices. When I asked her how long she has been in the neighborhood, she said that she'd been here approximately 12 years. She told me that the neighborhood used to be infested by thugs and gang members. After they moved out, they left the houses in such a way that no one would move into them — and that is where the crack addicts and drug pushers moved in. She also stated that now that the youth were fixing up the houses there was no telling what the future holds. She thought that it was about time that the youth of this city build things rather than destroy them.

Matthew Allen Browne
YouthBuild Philadelphia Charter School
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania



YouthBuild Philadelphia students

photo: Lisa Kessler

LESSON

4



Photo: Earl Dotter

Take a Stand: Key Issues Related to Housing

Aim

YouthBuild students will discuss the critical issues related to housing. In this lesson they will:

- Explore their values and assumptions around issues of housing and poverty
- Brainstorm tactics for self-advocacy with social issues, particularly housing issues

Things to Consider

In this lesson, students explore their values and assumptions around issues of housing and poverty. Read over the “Housing Conversation Starters” before doing the activity to make sure you feel comfortable facilitating dialogue. Keep in mind that you can add or make substitutions to the list; the possibilities are endless.

Before you begin the activity, write up place cards reading “Agree,” “Unsure” and “Disagree” and place them around the room.

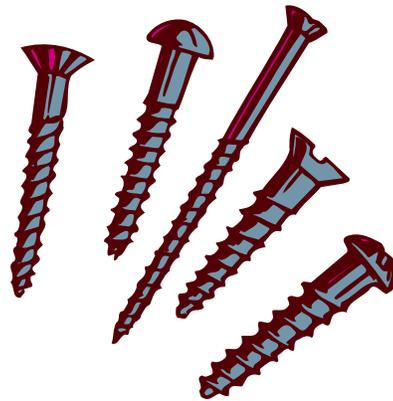
You will need to do this activity in a room big enough for students to move freely between the Agree, Disagree, and Unsure place cards.

Materials, Tools, and Resources

- Conversation starters
- Student journals
- A room big enough for students to move freely from place card to place card

Time

1 hour (depending on number of conversation starters selected)



Key Terms

- HUD
- “Housing issues”
- Values
- “Discrimination with a smile”

Steps for Activity

1. Tell the students that this activity is a great way for the group to talk about housing issues in a non-threatening way. Students will literally “take a stand” when a particular statement about a housing issue is read.

Begin by asking students what “housing issues” means to them. Allow a few minutes for students to share their thoughts and definitions. Remind students that talking about housing issues is not always easy. The group should be aware and sensitive to the fact that some of the students in the room may have had to deal with housing issues at one time or another.

Explain to students that, often, how we (and others in this society) respond to poverty, homelessness, or being poor has a lot to do with our values. Values are ideas that we were taught to believe — by our parents, school, church, and even the media. These ideas deal with subjects such as right and wrong, good and bad, etc.

2. Explain that you are going to read a series of conversation starters. After each is read, the students should stand under the place card that best describes how they feel about the statement. Point out each of the place cards. Tell the students to be true to what they believe and not worry about where others go because there will be plenty of opportunity for conversation about the statements.

3. Begin the activity by reading a statement from the “Take a Stand: Housing Conversation Starters” handout. After the statement is read, give students time to think about where they want to go. After everyone has “taken a stand,” ask volunteers to share why they have taken that position. Try to get several different opinions whenever possible. Tell students they can express themselves freely, but cannot put down other students who hold a different point of view. After everyone has had an opportunity to share, you may choose to add facts or information from the facilitator’s guide. Repeat the process with as many statements as you have time for, keeping in mind that what is most important is the opportunity for open dialogue. Students can change their vote if they hear something that causes them to change the way they feel about the statement.



Values are ideas
that we were
taught to believe —
by our parents,
school, church, and
even the media.

Wrap Up

- 1.** Select several of the follow questions to help students reflect on the activity:
 - How did it feel to discuss such personal or controversial issues?
 - Are housing issues important? Why or why not?
 - Was there any statement that was particularly difficult for anyone and, if so, why?
 - Did you learn anything new from the conversation, either about yourself or about another person's perspective?
 - How do we come to believe the things we do? Do we ever change our minds? If so, how does that usually happen?

Share with students how it feels for you to facilitate this type of dialogue.

- 2.** Ask students if they have had previous opportunities to talk openly about such these issues. If so, how did it feel and why did it feel that way? (Examples: It felt bad because people just yelled and screamed at one another, or it was good, we were able to talk about the issues calmly and with respect.) Ask students if they feel that this type of dialogue is important to have. Why or why not? Who do they feel needs to participate in the dialogue (the community, schools, policymakers, youth, etc.)?

Tell students that talking about issues like housing (especially when inequities are involved) can be challenging, but that it gets much easier with practice. Emphasize the importance of finding ways to share one's beliefs and experiences around a particular issue so that opponents will hear one's perspective and experience without being threatened. Communicating effectively about one's beliefs and experiences is known as self-advocacy.

- 3.** Brainstorm various strategies for self-advocacy around housing (and other social) issues with the group. Ask students to think back to the dialogue that occurred during the "Take a Stand" activity, and share what conditions made it a productive and meaningful conversation. Record the list on the chalkboard or flipchart paper.

- 4.** Ask students to take notes on their brainstorm in their journals. The list might include:
 - Maintain your cool
 - Don't use offensive language
 - Don't use physical threats
 - Know the issue well (do some background reading. Be able to share what the sympathetic experts say, and have statistical information to back up what you're saying)

- Share personal experiences to support your issue or concern
- Have confidence in your beliefs and experiences (find ways to practice talking about the issue(s) to build confidence)
- Listen to the other side. Respect that others have experiences and beliefs different from your own. Understanding the opposition's perspective will allow you to formulate a stronger argument
- Have an open mind — be willing to explore other strategies/ways of being

To help students reflect on the lesson, ask questions like:

- In what situations (housing-related and other) might you use the list of strategies you just brainstormed?
- How can you get further information on housing issues that are important to you?
- What other social issues are important to your survival? How might you begin to educate yourselves on those issues?
- What is a time in the near future when you can practice self-advocacy using the strategies we just brainstormed? (i.e., community forum, public speaking assignment in class, talking with a friend)

Creative Extensions

- After you have debriefed the activity with the students, select four or five of the housing statements and write them on the chalkboard or flipchart paper. Allow students to respond in their journals to one of the statements. You might use questions like:
 - Which statement pushes the most buttons for you and why?
 - Share an experience that validates or refutes one of the statements.
- Select a statement you agree with. How might an opponent respond to the statement you selected?
- Have a local housing activist or a representative from a community development corporation or government agency come talk to the group about a local housing issue. Let the group prepare interview questions around information or issues important to them.

Project-Based Learning Activities

- Divide the class into teams and have each team research (via the internet, library, interviews, etc.) a different housing issue. Have each group find a creative way to share their findings with the larger community (collage, storyboard, video interviews, play, PowerPoint presentation, etc.).
- Have students create a resource directory addressing local housing issues. Questions to get students started on this project might include:
 - Who is the audience? (YouthBuild students, the larger community, a specific target group within the community, e.g., homeless teens.)
 - What information does the target group need?
 - Do we want to include anything besides resource information? (Uplifting quotes, artwork, etc.)
 - What will the final product look like? (8 1/2 x 11" single sheet of paper wallet-size card, or a stapled booklet.)
 - How will students get the resource directory to the intended audience? (Distribute copies through local community-based organizations, post on community bulletin boards, or have students hand out individual copies.)
- Have students create new conversation starters for an upcoming lesson or unit. (Note: the “Take a Stand” activity can be used with any topic area that has “values” or beliefs attached to it. Examples: homelessness, poverty, education, economic/class status, gender, or race issues.) You might even have a pair of students facilitate the next “Take a Stand” activity. Steps for the project:
 1. Determine the topic area. (It helps to have a narrower topic. Examples: Women in the Workplace, Institutional Racism, Poverty and Health).
 2. Research pertinent facts or statistics around the issue.
 3. Create 10–12 “values” statements for the issue, such as: Women’s work is in the home; If women just worked a little harder they could make as much as men; It’s ok for women to make less than men.
 4. Create a facilitator’s fact sheet for the statements created.

Handout 1

Take a Stand: Housing Conversation Starters

1. Housing discrimination no longer exists.
2. People who are homeless enjoy living on the street.
3. Poor people would rather buy expensive cars and jewelry than a home.
4. If individuals just worked a little harder, no one would have to be homeless or live in poverty.
5. Most homeless people are old men.
3. A high school diploma or college diploma is assurance against homelessness.
4. Poor people who are not homeless are not in need of assistance.

Handout 2

Take a Stand: Housing Conversation Starters

Facilitator Notes

1. Housing discrimination no longer exists.

While laws exist to prevent housing discrimination, there are many cases of “discrimination with a smile.” Such is the case with the property management company in southern California that was under investigation by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). “Instead of telling people to their faces that minorities were unwelcome in an apartment complex, rental agents told some of them politely — and falsely — that no apartments were available or none would be available for several weeks,” said HUD Secretary Andrew Cuomo in 1998. In some cases, when a white person would go to the complex on the same day they would be told that there were apartments available. “When this type of discrimination occurs, people don’t even realize they’ve been victimized.” While “discrimination with a smile” is illegal, it appears to be widespread in communities across the country, according to HUD.

- What are your thoughts on “discrimination with a smile?”
- How can people know when they are being discriminated against?
- What are some solutions to the problem?

2. People who are homeless enjoy living on the street.

Less than six percent of people living on the street are homeless by choice, according to the book, *54 Ways You Can Help the Homeless*.^{*} The 94 percent of the homeless who are on the street not by choice include the working poor who cannot afford housing, the unemployed, and victims of child abuse and domestic violence.

Primary causes of homelessness include a lack of affordable housing, incomes that are too low to cover basic living expenses, and a lack of services to help people overcome personal challenges.

- What are your thoughts on the reasons why people become homeless?
- What are some solutions to the problem?

3. Poor people would rather buy expensive cars and jewelry than a home.

While cars and jewelry are expensive, they still cost a fraction of what a home costs. Because there is a lack of housing that low-income persons can afford to buy and banking practices and high interest rates that discourage the

^{*}by Rabbi Charles A. Kroloff, Behrman House Inc., West Orange, NJ.

working poor from applying for home loans, poor people frequently do not believe they have the opportunity to buy a home.

- What are your thoughts on home ownership?
- Can you think of ways to make home ownership more accessible to low-income people?

4. If individuals just worked a little harder, no one would have to be homeless or live in poverty.

Wages and housing costs are increasingly out of line with each other. Increases in the minimum wage do not keep up with the skyrocketing costs of rental housing. As a result, people in low-paying jobs must work longer hours or take on additional jobs to keep up with the rent each month. Those who are unable to pay increasing housing costs may become homeless.

Here are some statistics from the National Low-Income Housing Coalition:

- As renters, more than half of extremely low-income households spend more than 50 percent of their monthly income on housing. In other words, people without much money for their basic needs spend a high proportion of it to pay for a roof over their heads.
- In 168 metro areas and 473 counties across the country in 1998, renters need to earn at least double the minimum wage to afford a two-bedroom apartment and other basic needs.
- In some American communities, a minimum wage worker would need to work 160 hours a week to afford a two-bedroom apartment and meet other basic needs.
- What are your thoughts on housing costs?
- What needs to be done to make housing more affordable?

5. Most homeless people are old men.

While this is the stereotype, the face of homelessness is changing. Here are some statistics from the National Center on Homelessness and Poverty about the 2 million men, women and children who are currently homeless in the United States:

25–40 percent of the homeless work
 37 percent are families with children
 25 percent are children
 25–30 percent are mentally disabled
 30 percent are veterans
 40 percent are drug or alcohol dependent

- What are your thoughts on groups who are at risk of becoming homeless?

- What can be done to have less groups “at risk” of becoming homeless?

6. A high school diploma or college diploma is assurance against homelessness.

According to *54 Ways You Can Help the Homeless*, many homeless have completed high school and some have attended college and graduate school. Wages earned by high school graduates are not always enough to pay for housing.

7. Poor people who are not homeless are not in need of assistance.

A recent report by HUD found that in addition to the two million Americans who are already homeless, an additional three million people are living in worst-case housing conditions. These scenarios include:

Paying more than 50 percent of the household income for rent, while HUD estimates that households should be paying no more than 30 percent.

Overcrowding into small houses and apartments.

Living in run-down housing without basic amenities such as heat and working bathrooms.

Facing the prospect that a missed paycheck, a health crisis, or an unpaid bill can send the family into the streets.

- What are your thoughts about poverty?
- Those who live in poverty?
- Can you think of ways to help eliminate poverty?
- How can you help those in poverty become more self-sufficient?

LESSON

6



Housing in Literature II

Aim

Students will discuss their hopes and dreams related to housing and become acquainted with the issues of segregation and discrimination raised by the well-known play, *A Raisin in the Sun*, by Lorraine Hansberry. In this lesson they will:

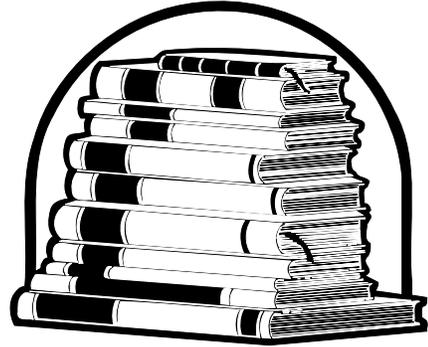
- Read two short pieces about dreams/ housing discrimination "Harlem (#2)" by Langston Hughes and a short excerpt from *A Raisin in the Sun*
- Write a short play about an experience of disappointment (real or imagined) related to housing

Time

1.5 hours

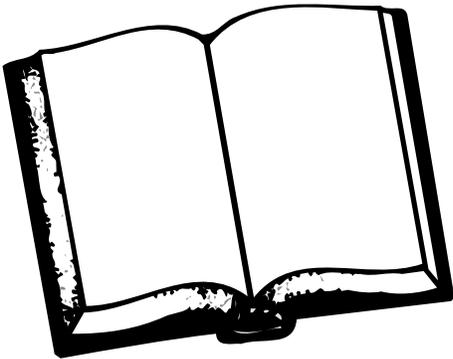
Things to Consider

If possible, show the video of the full-length film, *A Raisin in the Sun*, either before or after reading the excerpt. Discuss housing discrimination in its subtle and not so subtle forms as it is represented in the film, and discuss the way it affects the characters. You may also choose to read the entire play as a class, alternating parts.



Materials, Tools, and Resources

- Handout: "Harlem (#2)" (Excerpt from "Montage of a Dream Deferred")
- Handout: *A Raisin in the Sun* excerpt



Key Terms

- Segregation
- Deferred
- Simile

Steps for Activity



Have you, or
anyone you know,
ever had to face
disappointment related
to housing?

1. Distribute the handout: “Harlem (#2).” Read it aloud with the class. Tell the students that this poem is rich with similes. Remind them that similes are comparisons. Frequently, the words “like” or “such as” introduce similes. Discuss with the group:

- What is meant by the phrase “a dream deferred?”
- What examples can you give of deferred dreams?
- What similes does the writer use to ask what might happen to a dream deferred?
- Can you give examples of what each of these similes might represent in real experiences?
- Have you, or anyone you know, ever had to face disappointment related to housing?
- How did you (or they) respond?

2. Distribute the handout *A Raisin in the Sun*, excerpt. Ask the students what they think might be the relationship between the play and the poem, “Harlem (#2).” Ask what they think the play is about.

Have students volunteer to read the parts of the characters. You may want to read the excerpt twice to give additional students the opportunity to participate in the reading.

After students have completed the reading, ask:

- Can you summarize what happens in your own words?
- What is the mother planning to do?
- Who is Lindner?
- Why does he come to visit the family?
- In the beginning, Walter and Ruth seem to trust him. Why do they think he has come to visit?
- After Lindner begins to explain himself, the family becomes angry. Why?
- Why does Walter tell Lindner to “get out?”
- What does Lindner mean when he says “you can’t force people to change their hearts, son?”
- This story takes place in the 1950s, before much of the civil rights legislation and anti-discrimination legislation was passed. How does the historical time period affect what happens in the story?
- Is there any relationship between the events in this story and anything that occurs today?

3. Divide students into groups of three. In their groups, ask them to create a short play with three characters. Ask them to think of a disappointment or a conflict that might arise about housing and access to housing and to write a short play in which the characters deal (or do not deal) with the disappointment or conflict. Ask them to perform their plays for the class.

Wrap Up

To help students reflect on the lesson, ask questions such as:

- Did the characters in *A Raisin in the Sun* deal with the conflict the way you would have? Explain.
- What would have been some alternative ways to deal with the conflict they were faced with? What might the consequences have been given the time period?
- Are there areas in your life where you've had to deal with discrimination?
- How did the situation make you feel?
- Do you feel you handled the situation well?
- Who were/are your allies in situations such as you experienced?
- Would you handle it differently today?
- How might others in the group have handled the situation?

Creative Extensions

- Have students discuss other examples that show “welcome wagon” discrimination — in other words, acts of discrimination delivered in a friendly manner. Have students problem solve the various situations they came up with through role plays.
- Have students research more about the life of Lorraine Hansberry (possible resources include encyclopaedias and the Internet). Was she ahead of her time?
- Create a piece of literature or performance art that communicates YouthBuild's role in housing in the local community.
- Have students critically analyze plays, movies, books, songs, etc. that have themes similar to *A Raisin in the Sun*.
- Have the students research the years that the plays, movies, etc. came out. Have them place the works on a timeline.
- Using the timeline, ask students to discuss how the plays, movies, etc. show how the issues have changed over the years. Ask them to identify the ways in which the issues have stayed the same. How do plays, movies, etc. reflect current events? Can we read the attitudes of people from what we see in works of entertainment and art?

Project-Based Learning Activities

- Have students discuss and research the following questions and then creatively share their findings: Does segregation exist today? What are the causes of discrimination? Is segregation changing or is it staying the same? Is segregation different in other places?
- Have students write a monologue, or short play, that centers on the theme of housing. Students can edit each other's work. Students can then plan a performance of their work.

Handout 1**Harlem (#1)**

(Excerpt from “Montage of a Dream Deferred”)

What happens to a dream deferred?
Does it dry up
like a raisin in the sun?
Or fester like a sore —
and then run?
Does it stink like rotten meat?
Or crust and sugar over —
like a syrupy sweet?
Maybe it just sags
like a heavy load.
Or does it explode?

Langston Hughes

Handout 2**A Raisin in the Sun**

EXCERPT

MAN: Uh — how do you do, miss. I am looking for a Mrs. — *(He looks at the slip of paper)* Mrs. Lena Younger? *(He stops short, struck dumb at the sight of the oblivious WALTER and RUTH)*

BENEATHA: *(Smoothing her hair with slight embarrassment)* Oh — yes, that's my mother. Excuse me *(She closes the door and turns to quiet the other two)* Ruth! Brother! *(Enunciating precisely but soundlessly: "There's a white man at the door!") They stop dancing, RUTH cuts off the phonograph, BENEATHA opens the door. The man casts a curious quick glance at all of them)* Uh — come in please.

MAN: *(Coming in)* Thank you.

BENEATHA: My mother isn't here just now. Is it business?

MAN: Yes...well, of a sort.

WALTER: *(Freely, the Man of the House)* Have a seat. I'm Mrs. Younger's son. I look after most of her business matters.

(RUTH and BENEATHA exchange amused glances)

MAN: *(Regarding WALTER, and sitting)* Well — My name is Karl Lindner —

WALTER: *(Stretching out his hand)* Walter Younger. This is my wife — *(RUTH nods politely)* — and my sister.

LINDNER: How do you do?

WALTER: *(Amiably, as he sits himself easily on a chair, leaning forward on his knees with interest and looking expectantly into the newcomer's face)* What can we do for you, Mr. Lindner!

LINDNER: *(Some minor shuffling of the hat and briefcase on his knees)* Well — I am a representative of the Clybourne Park Improvement Association.

WALTER: *(Pointing)* Why don't you sit your things on the floor?

LINDNER: Oh — yes. Thank you. *(He slides the briefcase and hat under the chair)* And as I was saying — I am from the Clybourne Park Improvement Association and we have had it brought to our attention at the last meeting that you people — or at least your mother — has bought a piece of residential property at — *(He digs for the slip of paper again)*—four o six Clybourne Street...

WALTER: That's right. Care for something to drink? Ruth, get Mr. Lindner a beer.

LINDNER: *(Upset for some reason)* Oh — no, really. I mean thank you very much, but no thank you.

Handout 2, cont'd.

RUTH: (*Innocently*) Some coffee?

LINDNER: Thank you, nothing at all.

(*BENEATHA is watching the man carefully*)

LINDNER: Well, I don't know how much you folks know about our organization. (*He is a gentle man; thoughtful and somewhat labored in his manner*) It is one of these community organizations set up to look after — oh, you know, things like block upkeep and special projects and we also have what we call our New Neighbors Orientation Committee...

BENEATHA: (*Dryly*) Yes — and what do they do?

LINDNER: (*Turning a little to her and then returning the main force to WALTER*) Well — it's what you might call a sort of welcoming committee, I guess. I mean they, we — I'm the chairman of the committee — go around and see the new people who move into the neighborhood and sort of give them the lowdown on the way we do things out in Clybourne Park.

BENEATHA: (*With appreciation of the two meanings, which escape RUTH and WALTER*) Un-huh.

LINDNER: And we also have the category of what the association calls — (*He looks elsewhere*) — uh — special community problems —

BENEATHA: Yes — and what are some of those?

WALTER: Girl, let the man talk.

LINDNER: (*With understated relief*) Thank you. I would sort of like to explain this thing in my own way. I mean I want to explain to you in a certain way.

WALTER: Go ahead.

LINDNER: Yes. Well. I'm going to try to get right to the point. I'm sure we'll all appreciate that in the long run.

BENEATHA: Yes.

WALTER: Be still now!

LINDNER: Well —

RUTH: (*Still innocently*) Would you like another chair — you don't look comfortable.

LINDNER: (*More frustrated than annoyed*) No, thank you very much. Please. Well — to get right to the point I — (*A great breath, and he is off at last*) I am sure you people must be aware of some of the incidents which have happened in various parts of the city when colored people have moved into certain areas — (*BENEATHA exhales heavily and starts tossing a piece of fruit up and down in the air*) Well — because we have what I think is going to be a unique type of organization in American community life — not only do we deplore that

Handout 2, cont'd.

kind of thing — but we are trying to do something about it. (*BENEATHA stops tossing and turns with a new and quizzical interest to the man*) We feel — (*gaining confidence in his mission because of the interest in the faces of the people he is talking to*) — we feel that most of the trouble in this world, when you come right down to it — (*He hits his knee for emphasis*) — most of the trouble exists because people just don't sit down and talk to each other.

RUTH: (*Nodding as she might in church, pleased with the remark*) You can say that again, mister.

LINDNER: (*More encouraged by such affirmation*) That we don't try hard enough in this world to understand the other fellow's problem. The other guy's point of view.

RUTH: Now that's right.

(*BENEATHA and WALTER merely watch and listen with genuine interest*)

LINDNER: Yes — that's the way we feel out in Clybourne Park. And that's why I was elected to come here this afternoon and talk to you people. Friendly like, you know, the way people should talk to each other and see if we couldn't find some way to work this thing out. As I say, the whole business is a matter of *caring* about the other fellow. Anybody can see that you are a nice family of folks, hard working and honest I'm sure. (*BENEATHA frowns slightly, quizzically, her head tilted regarding him*) Today everybody knows what it means to be on the outside of *something*. And of course, there is always somebody who is out to take advantage of people who don't always understand.

WALTER: What do you mean?

LINDNER: Well — you see our community is made up of people who've worked hard as the dickens for years to build up that little community. They're not rich and fancy people; just hard-working, honest people who don't really have much but those little homes and a dream of the kind of community they want to raise their children in. Now, I don't say we are perfect and there is a lot wrong in some of the things they want. But you've got to admit that a man, right or wrong, has the right to want to have the neighborhood he lives in a certain kind of way. And at the moment the overwhelming majority of our people out there feel that people get along better, take more of a common interest in the life of the community, when they share a common background. I want you to believe me when I tell you that race prejudice simply doesn't enter into it. It is a matter of the people of Clybourne Park believing, rightly or wrongly, as I say, that for the happiness of all concerned that our Negro families are happier when they live in their own communities.

BENEATHA: (*With a grand and bitter gesture*) This, friends, is the Welcoming Committee!

WALTER: (*Dumbfounded, looking at LINDNER*) Is this what you came marching all the way over here to tell us?

Handout 2, cont'd.

LINDNER: Well, now we've been having a fine conversation. I hope you'll hear me all the way through.

WALTER: (*Tightly*) Go ahead, man.

LINDNER: You see — in the face of all the things I have said, we are prepared to make your family a very generous offer...

BENEATHA: Thirty pieces and not a coin less!

WALTER: Yeah?

LINDNER: (*Putting on his glasses and drawing a form out of the briefcase*) Our association is prepared, through the collective effort of our people, to buy the house from you at a financial gain to your family.

RUTH: Lord have mercy, ain't this the living gall!

WALTER: All right, you through?

LINDNER: Well, I want to give you the exact terms of the financial arrangement.

WALTER: We don't want to hear no exact terms of no arrangements. I want to know if you got any more to tell us 'bout getting together?

LINDNER: (*Taking off his glasses*) Well — I don't suppose that you feel...

WALTER: Never mind how I feel — you got any more to say 'bout how people ought to sit down and talk to each other?...Get out of my house, man.

(*He turns his back and walks to the door*)

LINDNER: (*Looking around at the hostile faces and reaching and assembling his hat and briefcase*) Well — I don't understand why you people are reacting this way. What do you think you are going to gain by moving into a neighborhood where you just aren't wanted and where some elements — well — people can get awful worked up when they feel that their whole way of life and everything they've ever worked for is threatened.

WALTER: Get out.

LINDNER: (*At the door, holding a small card*) Well — I'm sorry it went like this.

WALTER: Get out.

LINDNER: (*Almost sadly regarding WALTER*) You just can't force people to change their hearts, son.

(*He turns and put his card on a table and exits.*)

WALTER pushes the door with stinging hatred, and stands looking at it. RUTH just sits and BENEATHA just stands. They say nothing. MAMA and TRAVIS enter.)

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LESSON

8



Describing Community

Aim

Students will reflect upon key aspects of community by reading what other YouthBuild students have written about their communities, interviewing an important member of their community, and writing descriptively and reflectively about their own communities. In this lesson, they will:

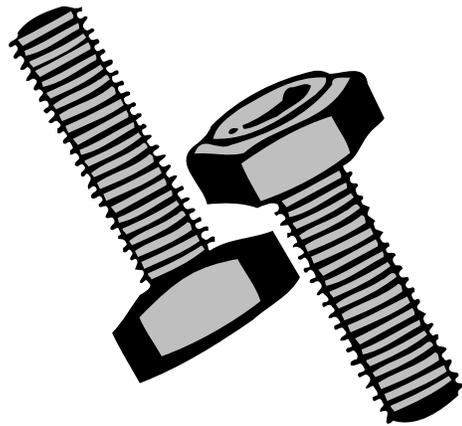
- Read how other YouthBuild students describe community
- Interview a key member of their community
- Write an essay that describes their community

Time

1 hour

Things to Consider

You will need a guest speaker for this lesson. This should be someone who is either a central figure in the community (a pastor, an artist, a writer, an educator, a city council member) or an individual who has resided in the community for a long time. This person should be able to speak about the “culture” of the community, who the people are, what type of work they do, and the resources available in the community. It would also be helpful if the person could talk about how the community has changed over a period of 20–30 years.



Materials, Tools, and Resources

- Handouts 1–3: YouthBuild Student Writings on Community
- Guest speaker

Key Terms

- Population density
- Slums
- Ghetto
- Harlem

Steps for Activity

1. Distribute the handout “YouthBuild Student Writings on Community.” Read the passages together and discuss:

- How did these writers feel about their communities?
- What do they like and dislike?
- What do they feel needs to be changed?
- How are these young people’s experiences similar to or different from your own?

2. Write the following topics on the board or flipchart:

- Description of the community
- Culture
- Population
- Employment
- Resources

Lead a discussion with the students about what these things mean to them in terms of their own communities. Use the following conversation starters if needed:

- **Description of the community.** What kind of buildings are in your neighborhood or community? What do they look like? What is the land like, etc.
- **Culture.** What is culture to you? Describe it. Is it the foods, buildings, religions, languages, and neighborhood centers that make a community unique in the city? If so, describe those things.
- **Population.** Who are the different people that live in the neighborhood? Describe the age groups, ethnic, religious, and racial makeup of the community. What is the population density?
- **Employment.** What kind of work do people do who live in the community? Are there jobs available in the community? What types? Does everyone work? What do people do who do not work?
- **Resources.** What are some of the resources available to the people in the community? Are there schools, playgrounds, libraries, stores, restaurants, public transportation, and other services? Are they easy for people to get to and use?



Do you take
pride in your
communities? Why
or why not?

3. Have students write descriptions of their communities in which they address each of the above issues.
4. Before the guest speaker arrives, give the students time to formulate questions. Ask a student to introduce the guest speaker. Share the speaker's background information. Allow 20 minutes for the guest speaker to share his or her insights on the local community and for students to ask questions.

Wrap Up

Ask several students to volunteer to read what they wrote about their own communities. Ask the following questions to encourage reflection:

- What are the similarities and differences between the community reflections shared today?
- Do you take pride in your communities? Why or why not?
- How did the guest speaker reinforce some of your thoughts or raise new questions for you?

Creative Extensions

- Have students write about the places in the neighborhood that they feel are “community centers.” Where do people go to gather, play, and have fun? Is YouthBuild a community center? If so, how?
- Have students “artistically” illustrate the descriptions of community that they wrote. This could include visual arts (collage, sketch, or sculpture) or spoken-work expression (rap, song, or dramatic interpretation). Have students present their work to one another.

Project-Based Learning Activities

- Have students create a photo essay of the buildings in the neighborhood. After the photos are developed, students can write descriptions of the types of building shown, where they are located, and how the buildings contribute to the quality of life in the community (or don't). Put all of these photos and descriptions on a bulletin board, perhaps in a map format.
- Students can create or enhance a community gathering place. Do you have a place in the community where people gather? Do the young people want a space of their own? Where and how can you make this happen? Does your existing gathering place need a little “brightening up?” What about a fresh coat of paint or a mural? How about soliciting donations of new furniture, games, or equipment?

Handout 1

Summer Festivals in My Neighborhood

by Luis Santiago



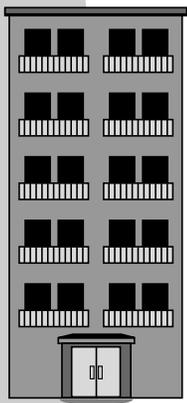
The summer festivals in my neighborhood are exciting. Across the street from the public school is a park. Every summer the park attendants hold festivals. The summer in my neighborhood begins with a festival and it ends with a festival. Sometimes WBLS comes. Other times 98.7 KISS comes, and they hold a festival on their own. It is fun. They give out records, talk about drugs — especially about that new drug, crack. They also have Spanish festivals. WJUT 1060 and a lot of celebrities come to the Spanish festivals. Tito Puente and other famous music stars come to sing and talk to the Spanish people about drugs and government. It's a wonderful feeling to know that they know what's up in the world.

There are a lot of activities going on during the festivals. People come to sell toys. The toys they sell are small cars and dolls. They also sell hats to cover the sun, sunglasses when it's sunny and umbrellas when it's cloudy. Others sell food: french fries, morcilla (blood pudding), pork meat, ribs, pig ears with green bananas. They mostly sell Spanish American food. They also sell beer and soda in cans only. Also there's a piragua man selling his cup of ice and the flavor of liquid you like on it. There's also a coco or cherry man selling his cups of coco or cherry. It's your choice what you want to eat.

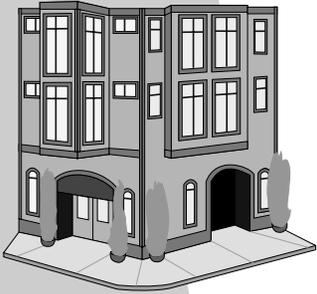
At the festivals they play a variety of music. Some for the old, some for the young. They play salsa and people dance where they stand. They ask others to dance with them. You turn your face for a minute and when you look again everyone is going from left to right, dancing. Even kids two, three years old — you know that salsa gets into their blood. Another kind of music played in the festival is rap. The raps mostly go like this: "We're the demolition crew, we knock down walls, floors and doors." They use rhyming words.

At the festivals, they also put on plays for the children. Not only kids enjoy the plays — adults also enjoy them. They are fun and educational. They teach kids what drugs do to the human and what to say when you are offered drugs.

Some of the festivals last for a week, others just for a day. Most of the ones that last a day are on Sunday. They last up to 10:00 or 10:30 at night. A lot of people come to these festivals. Most of the neighborhood comes and lot of outside neighborhood's people come. People come from Manhattan, New Jersey, upper Bronx and other areas. Some come to show their interest in the festival against drugs. And others come just to hear the music and dance.



Handout 2



Changes

by Pablo Morales

Back in 1977 the owners of stores were different. The parks were more decent. The streets were calmer and cleaner. It was just a whole different scene.

Then it all changed. There were different owners in stores. The parks are not so great to play in, without getting cut with a piece of glass or something. Then a lot of drug selling really made things bad. As far as friends and neighbors are concerned there were no problems with that even back in 1977.

Now it has changed much. The police have gotten strict with drug dealers. There are no more drugs being sold on the corner. Parks have gotten cleaned up. Now graffiti has been cleaned off walls on the streets. Parks are more cleaner and kids, adults and the elderly can live in a good neighborhood.

My Neighborhood

by Mark Jarrett

My neighborhood is a middle-class place. My neighborhood is not the slums or the ghetto.

There are a few drugs, but it is still a nice place to live. The reason I say it is nice is because the streets are clean. The buildings are all occupied. There are no abandoned buildings in my area. There are a lot of parks. The parks are decent enough for kids to play in and have fun. The stores around my place are close by. They are neat and decent.

Some of the people in my neighborhood are nice and some are bad apples. Some of the people are jealous when you are just being yourself. Either they want you to get lost or pick a fight with you.

Handout 3**Living in Harlem**

by Trevor Walsh

The area I live in is pretty rough. It has its problems with drugs and a little crime. The worst problem is drugs. Two weeks ago there was a shoot-out involving two young men over a girl and drugs. Both of the guys shot each other and an innocent person was also shot. It makes me feel mad to think someone was shot just walking past. I think to myself, just think if that was me or someone I know.

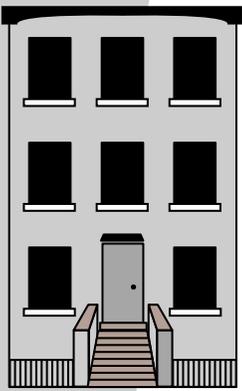
The neighborhood is a pretty okay place. People look out for each other. Well, some of the people at least do. I like some of the people around there and I hate some of the people. The local store is okay, and the people who work in there are nice people.

All kinds of people live in Harlem but the majority is Black. There are also Americans, West Indians and Spanish people who live there. The majority of the Spanish people live in East Harlem and lower Harlem. (That's from 125th St. to about 96th St.)

People think that if you come from Harlem, you're poor. But it's not really like that. You could come from East Central Park and 66th St. or live on Park Ave. and still be poor. If a person comes from Harlem, don't judge the book by the cover.

When I first came over here, I got a job downtown in a store. People I met at work asked, "Where do you live?" And I said, "Harlem." They looked at me and said, "Damn, I'm scared." They used to tell me they were scared to go there.

A large percentage of the buildings in Harlem are renovated and fixed up. The building I live in is also renovated, but also a large percentage of the buildings are messed up and need renovation. But it all depends which part of Harlem you're in or what block you're on.



LESSON

9



photo: Martin Dixon

Exploring Community History

Aim

Students will explore the history of their community by conducting oral histories. In this lesson they will:

- Discuss the importance of community history
- Learn how to conduct an oral history
- Conduct and write up an oral history
- Produce at least one creative piece to “illustrate” their interview

Things to Consider

Knowing one's own history and the history of one's community are very powerful tools. Be prepared to discuss the power of this knowledge with students. Also, be prepared to facilitate discussion around the silencing or devaluing of the history of select groups/communities/individuals and the feelings that this may raise for students.

In this lesson, students are asked to conduct oral history interviews with people who have resided in the community for an extended period of time (20 years or more). Think about how students will connect with long-term residents of your community. Here are several suggestions:

You might arrange for the interviewees to come to your classroom where students could interview them in small groups. You might arrange for students to do the interviews at a local senior center. You might contact a local community organization that works with senior citizens for names of potential interviewees. You might invite elders from a local church group to be interviewed. A student might interview a grandparent or senior neighbor.

You may want to follow up the oral history interview with a trip to the library. Here the students can find books, newspaper articles, maps, and photos or other narratives that relate to the oral history interviews they conducted.

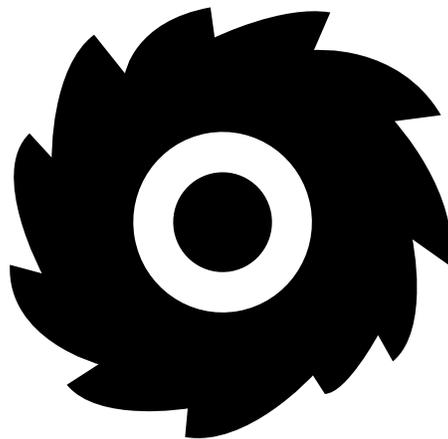
Use tape recorders, cameras, or video cameras if they are available. These tools would greatly enrich this lesson. If you allow students to use this equipment, take a few minutes to go over use and care, and give students time to practice.

Materials, Tools, and Resources

- Handout: Community History Research
- Handout: Oral History Interviews
- Handout: Guiding Interview Questions
- Handout: Tips for Successful Oral History Interviews
- Handout: Your Presentation

Time

2 hours (1 hour for the lesson and 1 hour for the interviews)



Key Terms

- Oral history
- Ethnicity
- Class status
- Gender
- Sexual orientation
- Artifact
- Inclusive
- Perspective

Steps for Activity



Knowing one's own history and the history of one's community are very powerful tools.

- 1.** Lead a discussion with the students about the concept of history. Help students to expand their discussion by asking questions like:

 - What does the word history mean to you?
 - Did you take history in school? If so, did you enjoy it? Why or why not?
 - From your experience, who writes “history?”
 - Do perspectives on history differ? How can this be? Is there ONE history of an event, or many?
 - Whose “history” is usually told? Do factors like race, ethnicity, class status, gender, sexual orientation, nationality, or religion play a part?
 - Do you feel that your “history” has been recorded and valued? In what ways? Why or why not?
 - Where have you learned about your history?
 - How could you record and share your history?
- 2.** Ask students to discuss what community history means. Expand the discussion by asking questions like:

 - Why is it important to know the history of a community? What is the importance for community members? For others?
 - Why is it important to know about a community's history?
 - How does understanding the history of a community affect the community's future?
 - What do you know about the history of your community?
 - How can you find out more about the history of your community?
- 3.** Divide the group into teams of four or five. Ask each team to brainstorm topics that they think would be important to explore in order to understand their community history. Suggestions might include:

 - Physical description of the community
 - Culture, race, ethnicity or class
 - Types of housing and housing costs
 - Population
 - Employment
 - Resources
 - Environmental issues
 - Political issues/activities
 - Changes in the entertainment activities

- 4.** When everyone has completed the activity, have each team share its list. Write all responses on the flipchart or chalkboard. Distribute the “Community History Research” handout to each person. As a group, narrow it down to four or five topics to research. Ask each person to record the topics selected on his or her “Community History Research” sheet. Explain that in this activity students will learn more about the history of their community through oral history interviews. Pass out and discuss the “Oral History Interview” handout.
- 5.** Pass out “Guiding Interview Questions” and read the directions aloud. Have students write the focus topics on the sheet. As a group brainstorm possible interview questions (keeping in mind the focus or purpose of the interview). Possible questions might include:
 - When did you first come to this community?
 - How different did the community look back then?
 - Describe the people who lived here then.
 - What things have changed the most?
 - What events stick out in your mind the most?
 - How much did rent cost when you first moved here? How much did it cost to buy a house then?
 - What has this community lost that you would like it to regain?
- 6.** Have students record the guiding questions to be used in the interviews.
- 7.** Pass out and discuss “Tips for Successful Oral History Interviews.”
- 8.** Share decisions for how students will conduct interviews. If students are setting up their own interviews, make sure they are clear on the date by which they need to have the interview completed.
- 9.** If time permits, allow students to form teams and role play the oral interview process. If you have audio or video equipment for the students to use, go over use, care, and allow them to practice.
- 10.** Pass out “Your Presentation.” Give students time to read over the handout and ask questions. This handout will explain the steps for gathering the information for their presentations.

Wrap Up

1. Discuss the oral history activity with the group. Ask students to produce at least one creative piece (a drawing, a photo, a timeline, etc.) to illustrate their interview and to gather other artifacts relevant to the community history/interview. You might brainstorm with the students about what creative project they will do and where to get artifacts.
2. Ask for feedback about the process and assignments. Is everyone clear on the activity and expectations? Encourage reflection with questions like what are you excited about learning from your research and (if applicable) how will you arrange your oral history interviews? How can you help each other connect with community members?

Creative Extensions

If students are responsible for setting up their own interviews, allow them to work in teams of two, especially if they are using a video camera. (One person can conduct the interview while the other videotapes.) Just make sure that each team member about what their role is and what is required of them (and that there is an equal distribution of work).

Project-Based Learning Activities

- Have students visit your local historical museum. Are the museum's focus and holdings inclusive of all the people who live in the community or who participated in building the community? How can the YouthBuild students work with the historical society to bring varying perspectives/experiences to the museum?
- Have students use the knowledge that they have gained to design a "How to Record Your Community's History" guide for doing community research. Then have students share their research and guide at schools, churches, community centers, or other community "hubs."

Handout 1**Community History Research**

Oral history interviews can be a great way to find out more about your community and the housing issues that your community has experienced. First you must decide what information you want to know. As a group, define several topics that you will focus on for your research. In the space below, write down the areas that you decided upon.

Focus Topics

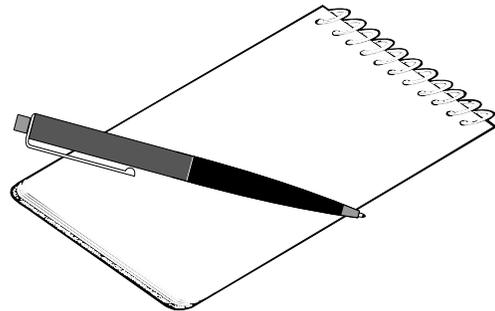
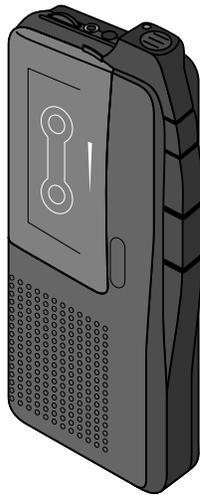
Handout 2

Oral History Interviews

Directions: There are many ways to gain knowledge about a community. Doing research at your local library is one effective way. But there are many important aspects of your community that have not been recorded in books or newspapers. Older people living in your community have a **unique perspective** on the history, culture, and happenings of your community. This history is important because a community must know and understand its roots in order to plan a meaningful future.

To access this information about your community you will conduct an **oral history interview**. This is a wonderful way to learn more about your community and to document and recognize the priceless knowledge and traditions held by community members. The person you interview should have lived in the community for at least 20 years and be old enough to remember and discuss the events that have taken place during that time. To find an appropriate person for this activity you could speak with a relative, a friend of the family, a neighbor, or a member of a community organization or church.

Before your interview, you will work as a group to design interview questions. After the interview you will compile the information from your library research and oral history interview and present your findings to the group.



Handout 3**Guiding Interview Questions**

Work as a group to develop two or three questions for each of the topics to be focused on during the interview (the ones you brainstormed earlier with your group).

These questions should be used as “guides” only. It is ideal for the interview to be a natural discussion around these topics, not a series of questions and answers.

FOCUS TOPIC #1: _____

Question: _____

Question: _____

Question: _____

FOCUS TOPIC #2: _____

Question: _____

Question: _____

Question: _____

FOCUS TOPIC #3: _____

Question: _____

Question: _____

Question: _____

FOCUS TOPIC #4: _____

Question: _____

Question: _____

Question: _____

FOCUS TOPIC #5: _____

Question: _____

Question: _____

Question: _____

Handout 4

Tips for Successful Oral History Interviews

- Put the person at ease by introducing yourself (if necessary) and explaining the project and how their “story” will be used.
- If you are using a tape recorder or video equipment, be sure to get permission before you start. Otherwise take good notes.
- Begin with simple background questions. How old are you? How long have you lived here? What was it like then?
- Use follow-up questions to draw out more details and stories from interesting topics/points.
- Be patient and give plenty of time to respond.
- Some silence is ok; it gives the person time to think.
- Maintain eye contact if it is culturally appropriate.
- Show that you are listening and interested by nodding your head or saying “yes” while the person is speaking.
- Be respectful of the person’s boundaries. Do not insist on pursuing issues that they do not wish to discuss.
- Say thank you and ask if he or she would be interested in seeing your final product. Make arrangements to share the product with them.

Handout 5

Your Presentation

After you have completed your oral history interview, think about how you might present your findings. In an upcoming lesson, you will work on a team to create a presentation of your historical research. Here are some suggestions of ways to make your presentation interesting and effective:

- Review your notes, tape, or video images and find responses, quotes, or references that were the most interesting/surprising/inspiring to you.
- Collect or create a variety of “tools” that you can use to share your findings. This might include:
 - Photographs
 - Music
 - Timelines
 - A collage
 - Maps
 - Quotes
 - Art or artifacts
 - Drawings
 - Poems or other literature
- Be prepared to answer questions and to discuss your findings as well as the process of doing community research.

Tools and Resources

Selected Readings and Films

A Street Is Not a Home: Solving America's Homeless Dilemma, Robert C. Coates, Prometheus Books, Buffalo, NY 1990.

Film, "Metropolitan Avenue" by Christine Noschese, 60 minutes, color, available from New Day Films, 121 West 27th, Suite 902, New York, NY 10001, (212) 477-4604.

"Metropolitan Avenue" is an inspiring film about community, about the changing role of women, and about how powerful ordinary people can be when they join together to fight for something they believe in. We are introduced to a lively Brooklyn neighborhood, which, like many urban areas, faces problems caused by racial tensions and cutbacks in municipal services. But in this case "traditional" homemakers from varied ethnic backgrounds rise to the challenge and become leaders in the effort to save their community.

House Sense, by Jim Story, Housing, Preservation and Development, New York, New York.

Report of the National Low-Income Housing Coalition, Washington, DC.