

Unit Title	One Paycheck Away: Budgets, Evictions, Homelessness and Who Can Help
Unit Length	Nine classes (90-minutes each)
Grade Level(s)/Subject(s)	9-12 Grade, English Language Arts
Unit Overview	<p>Throughout this unit, students will examine underreported news stories about evictions and the housing crisis in the United States throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Students will read, summarize and analyze these news stories with a focus on how they exemplify inequality and injustice. The stories will provide a springboard to discussions about living wages and budgets, evictions/homelessness, the stereotypes associated with people who are without housing, and other social issues facing people experiencing poverty in America. Students will also learn about the basic costs of living expenses in today’s world via an online simulation. Students will engage in several projects throughout the unit. These include the creation of a class photo collage/slideshow of images that represent housing insecurity in West Virginia and/or the United States. Students will also be asked to complete creative writing activities about the photo collage. For example, they can create a poem, song or short story inspired by the images they curated to capture their research on housing insecurity in West Virginia and/or the U.S..</p>
Objectives & Outcomes	<p>Students will be able to...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Analyze news articles to determine if they represent an underreported news story. 2. Read, summarize and analyze news stories to determine the main idea and key details. 3. Analyze basic budgeting principles. 4. Evaluate the context of a variety of media images, both local and national, that capture stories of people and communities experiencing housing insecurity. 5. Write creatively about the topic of homelessness in America based upon what they learned from the news stories covered in the unit.
Standards	<p>WV College & Career Readiness Standards for English Language Arts:</p> <p>9-12.4: Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the informational text says explicitly as well as inferences drawing from the informational text; recognizing, determining where, why, and when the text leaves matters uncertain.</p> <p>9-12.5: Determine two or more central ideas of an informational text and analyze their development over the course of the informational text, including how they emerge and are shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the informational text.</p>

	<p>9-12.20: Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or text, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.</p> <p>9-12.21: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.</p> <p>9-12.23: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, pursue, and audience.</p> <p>9-12.23: Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or typing a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.</p> <p>9-12.25: Use technology, including the internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products, taking advantage of technology’s capacity to link to other information and to display information flexibly and dynamically, in response to ongoing feedback, including new arguments or information.</p> <p>9-12.27: Gather and synthesize relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the strengths and limitations of each source in terms of task, purpose, and audience; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and overreliance on any one source and following a standard format for citation.</p> <p>9-12.30: Initiate and effectively participate in a range of collaborative discussions with diverse partners on grade level topics, text, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing ideas clearly and persuasively.</p>
<p>Unit Resources</p>	<p>Text Resources: Pulitzer Center-supported News Stories webpage “Tulsa Landlords Were Offered Rent If They Didn’t Evict. Few Took the Deal” by Brenda Wintrode for the Howard Center for Investigative Journalism at the University of Maryland (Print)</p> <p>Videos: “What are Under-Reported Stories?” - YouTube video from the Pulitzer Center “Why rents are dramatically increasing across the United States” clip from 60 Minutes on YouTube “Don’t Blame Developers For The Housing Crisis, Blame The Homeowners” Think Opinion Clio from NBC News - YouTube Documentary: 'Facing Eviction' by Bonnie Bertram, Anne Checler, and Erik German for <i>Frontline</i> “In Richmond, VA, Eviction Burden Weighs Heavier on Black and Brown Residents” by Brian Palmer for PBS <i>Newshour</i> (YouTube Clip) “How Decades of Housing Discrimination Hurts Fresno in the Pandemic” by Bonnie Bertram for <i>Retro Report</i> (YouTube Clip)</p>

	<p>"Homelessness: A Short Film" from Invisible People</p> <p>Teaching Materials: Underreported Stories Analysis Worksheet: underreported_stories_worksheet.pdf (pulitzercenter.org) Student Handout: Characteristics of Underreported Stories [.pdf] [.docx] Online Budgeting Game Spent "I Used to be Your Neighbor" photo from www.halfguarded.com</p>
Performance Task(s)	<p>Students will complete a culminating project capturing their analyses throughout the unit about the root causes and lasting impacts of housing insecurity on communities in West Virginia and/or other regions in the United States. Students will view a short film about homelessness. They will then be given a creative writing assignment that requires them to synthesize their research into the stories of people experiencing housing insecurity in the U.S. into a creative work. Creative writing activities will include poems, songs, graphic novels or short stories inspired by the film, as well as the context and themes of the news stories explored in the unit.</p>
Assessment/Evaluation	<p>Formative assessment will be provided via direct teacher feedback. Summative assessment will be evaluated using the One Paycheck Away: Final Assessment Rubric [.pdf] [.docx]</p>

UNIT PACING / DAILY LESSONS AND RESOURCES

Pacing	Focus text(s) / resource(s) for today's lesson	Lesson Objective(s) or Essential Question(s)	Lesson / Activities	Lesson Materials
<i>Weeks 1 and 2</i>				
Day 1	"What are Under-Reported Stories?" - YouTube video from the Pulitzer Center	<p>Students will develop a working definition of "news."</p> <p>Students will discuss the positive and negative role of the press, news stories and journalism.</p> <p>Students will examine the characteristics of an underreported news story.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lesson Introduction: As students begin the lesson, ask them to journal a response to the following question: <i>What is the news?</i> Allow students a few minutes to compose a response and open the topic to discussion. Lead the discussion toward defining the word "news." Students will work together to create a class definition of "news." Post the definition in the class. 2. After establishing a working definition of "news," ask the class to create a T-Chart contrasting the negatives/criticisms and positives of the news today. Ask students to share their own experiences with both the positive and negative aspects of news stories/journalism. 3. Finally, ask students to discuss the following topic: <i>What makes something newsworthy?</i> Post student responses and lead the discussion toward the 	<p>Student Handout: Characteristics of Underreported Stories [.pdf] [.docx]</p> <p>Large Post-it notes</p> <p>Markers</p>

			issue of underreported stories. Utilize the Pulitzer Center clip <i>What are underreported stories?</i> After students have viewed the clip, review the student handout: Characteristics of Underreported Stories.	
Day 2	Pulitzer Center Stories webpage	Students will evaluate news stories to determine what makes them underreported stories.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review the Student Handout: Characteristics of Underreported Stories from the previous lesson. 2. Provide each student with copies of the Underreported Stories Analysis Worksheet. Inform students that they will be utilizing the Pulitzer Center webpage to view news stories. Instruct students to select a headline that sounds interesting to them. They must read the story and complete the analysis worksheet. 3. When students have completed their analysis, ask each student to summarize the story they read and provide a synopsis of their analysis. 	<p>Underreported Stories Analysis Worksheet: underreported_stories_worksheet.pdf (www.pulitzercenter.org)</p> <p>Student Handout: Characteristics of Underreported Stories [.pdf] [.docx]</p> <p>Computer with internet access</p>
Day 3-4	<p>“Why rents are dramatically increasing across the United States” clip from 60 Minutes on YouTube</p> <p>“Don’t Blame Developers For The Housing Crisis, Blame</p>	<p>Students will examine the causes of current rent/housing crises in America.</p> <p>Students will complete a budgeting/financial literacy</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Begin class by asking students if any of the stories they looked at the day before focused on people who have been in some way disadvantaged/marginalized/abused? Lead this discussion to an introduction of today’s lesson and how it will focus 	<p>Online Budgeting Game Spent</p> <p>Class Discussion guidelines and “mic”</p>

	<p>The Homeowners” Think Opinion Clio from NBC News - YouTube</p> <p>Documentary: 'Facing Eviction' by Bonnie Bertram, Anne Checler, and Erik German for <i>Frontline</i></p> <p>Online Budgeting Game Spent</p>	<p>simulation and evaluate what they learned from the simulation about factors contributing to housing insecurity.</p> <p>Students will explore how the Covid-19 Pandemic affected evictions.</p>	<p>on stories about people experiencing homelessness. Then conduct this simple poll: <i>What is the average cost of monthly rent in WV? (Answer is \$600-\$800.)</i> Ask students if they know whether their families and/or caregivers pay rent or a mortgage. Discuss with students what they think would happen if their family’s rent increased by 100-200 dollars a month. Use this discussion to introduce the video clips “<i>Why rents are dramatically increasing across the U.S.</i>” and “<i>Don’t Blame Developers for the Housing Crisis, Blame the Homeowners.</i>”</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. After viewing the video clips, review with students the key reasons for rent increases in the last year. (Housing shortage caused by high building costs; decreased construction workforce, and zoning regulations requiring single family housing construction) 3. Explain to students that they will be engaging in an online simulation called “Spent.” This simulation will help them understand how unplanned expenses, such as repair bills or increased rent, can cause financial hardship on wage earners. 4. Provide students with 5-10 minutes to complete the online simulation. Then have students write 2-3 paragraphs explaining their 	
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<p>Day 5-6</p>	<p>“In Richmond, VA, Eviction Burden Weighs Heavier on Black and Brown Residents” by Brian Palmer for PBS <i>Newshour</i> (YouTube Clip)</p> <p>“Tulsa Landlords Were Offered Rent If They Didn’t Evict. Few Took the Deal” by Brenda Wintrode for the Howard Center for Investigative Journalism at the University of Maryland (Print)</p> <p>“How Decades of Housing Discrimination Hurts Fresno in the Pandemic” by Bonnie Bertram for <i>Retro Report</i> (YouTube Clip)</p>	<p>Students will evaluate news reports about the roles of racial injustice and economic profiteering in Pandemic eviction rates.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide students with copies of the Underreported Stories Analysis Worksheets. Assign each student in class one of the three news stories listed under the focused texts. (Utilize Schoology accounts to upload article links.) Students will use the Analysis Worksheets to summarize and analyze their assigned story. 2. After their initial analysis, students will meet in groups of three to connect with students who analyzed the other two stories. They will share their summaries and analyses of each story. 3. Lead a whole group discussion of the following topics: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Why were Black and brown people more likely to be evicted during the COVID-19 Pandemic? What other groups of people were most vulnerable to eviction during the Pandemic? b. Why did some landlords refuse to take federal loan assistance? Was this right or wrong, and why? c. Do you think where a person lives can determine their success in life? 	<p>Computers with internet access.</p> <p>Underreported Stories Analysis Worksheet: underreported_stories_worksheet.pdf (pulitzercenter.org)</p>

<p>Day 7-9</p>	<p>“I Used to be Your Neighbor” photo from www.halfguarded.com</p> <p>“Homelessness: A Short Film” from Invisible People</p> <p>Homelessness and Affordable Housing Through the Lens of Evictions Pulitzer Center project with publications in Retro Report, PBS Newshour, and Frontline</p> <p>“Covid’s Invisible Victims” project from the Pulitzer Center with https://pulitzercenter.org/projects/covids-invisible-victim reporting in Cronkite News and with The Howard Center for Investigative Journalism</p>	<p>Students will evaluate a variety of national and local images of homelessness based upon the context of the previous lesson.</p> <p>Students will work collaboratively to create a photo collage that represents what real homelessness means to them.</p> <p>Students will write creatively about the feelings/ideas inspired by the photos.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Begin class by asking students to define the word, “stereotype.” Then ask students to work with a partner to create a list of stereotypes about homeless individuals, and where they think those stereotypes come from. Partners will then share their lists with the class. Create a class list of stereotypes of homelessness. 2. Display the photo “I Used to be Your Neighbor” for students to view. Ask them how the photo breaks the stereotypical mold about people experiencing homelessness and/or shows empathy toward people experiencing housing insecurity (Student responses will vary.) 3. Show “Homelessness: A Short Film” and discuss thoughts and ideas after viewing. Ask students how the film breaks some stereotypes of individuals experiencing homelessness, as well as, builds empathy for individuals in that situation. 4. After viewing the film, direct students to complete a creative writing piece inspired by the film and news stories viewed throughout the unit. Their piece may be a poem, song, graphic novel or short story, but needs to be reflective of the Pulitzer Center pieces explored in class, as well as the 	<p>Large Post-it Note</p> <p>Computers with internet access</p>
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			short film. Their work must also reflect empathy toward individuals experiencing homelessness, communicate underreported stories, and/or break the stereotypes about homelessness.	
Day 10		<p>Students will present their creative writing.</p> <p>Students will peer evaluate the work of another student.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Inform students that they will be working with a partner to present, share and evaluate each others' creative writing. 2. Provide students with copies of the Final Assessment Rubric. Review the criteria and inform students that they will utilize the rubric to provide feedback to their partners. 3. Allow time for students to meet, share and evaluate work. Circulate and provide support and feedback as students work together. 4. After peer-evaluations, allow students additional time to make additions/corrections on their pieces. 5. Finally, students will submit their work for a facility wide-competition, in which faculty, staff and students will select and share their favorite piece. 	<p>One Paycheck Away: Final Assessment Rubric[.pdf][.docx]</p>

Teacher Reflections:

1. This unit was implemented April 11-20, 2023.

2. Overall, the unit was very successful and positively received by my students. They explored the materials with mostly open minds and hearts. Their discussions were thoughtful and mature. What surprised me most was the magnitude of personal experiences my students had with homelessness and financial security. Almost all of my students had experienced some kind of homelessness or economic hardship. Many had lived with relatives or friends due to financial hardship. Several had been run-aways and homeless during that time. I expected to have to work hard to build empathy for the homeless, but found that most of them possessed it in abundance. Some of the comments from my students included:
 - a. “Man, it’s just hard sometimes.”
 - b. “I admit. I have taken food from stores before. That or starve.”
 - c. “I don’t have anyone to help me if I get down on my luck.”
 - d. “When you get addicted, nothing else matters.”
3. There were some issues I encountered while implementing the unit. Firstly, I delayed my original start date of February due to the large number of residents we were turning over at that time. Our facility was receiving approximately 2-3 new residents per week from November through March and I didn’t want to begin the unit and have new students arrive in the middle. This also resulted in me cutting a few parts of the original unit. Once the intake of new residents stabilized, I was reluctant to extend the unit too much and encounter the problem of new students enrolling in the middle of the unit. Another issue I encountered was technology problems. In February, all of our classroom computers were updated and caused several glitches that needed to be worked through. Also, due to the number of students in my class, I didn’t always have enough internet access for each student. This required me to implement materials as a whole class instead of individually. Also, I originally planned for students to locate individual images of homelessness in America, but opted for a short film instead. This was primarily due to time and technology constraints. Even with these problems I believe the unit was successful.
4. I am amazed by the creative writing of my students! Their culminating projects blew me away. Several of my students wrote about their own personal experiences and they were heartbreaking and compelling stories. In many ways, I was humbled by the fact that they wanted to share their experiences with me and were very eager to see my response. Because several students shared very personal stories, I opted against the peer editing as I didn’t want to hinder students from honest writing.