

Lesson Overview

How many days are needed to teach this lesson?	5 days, including inter-school connections and a journalist visit (3 days without cross-school connections)
Grade Level(s)	9-12
Subject(s)	Social Studies - Human Geography, US History, Civics / Government, Current Events, Economics, Sociology, or related courses
Lesson Summary	In 2020, the Illinois legislature promised to end poverty in the state by 2036. In this lesson, students analyze progress on that goal by comparing news stories on Cook and Alexander Counties.
Standards	Illinois State Standards for Social Studies IL.SS.IS.1.9-12: Address essential questions that reflect an enduring issue IL.SS.IS.3.9-12: develop new supporting questions IL.SS.IS.4.9-12: Gather and evaluate information from multiple sources IL.SS.IS.5.9-12: Identify evidence from multiple sources IL.SS.IS.6.9-12: Construct and evaluate explanations and arguments using multiple sources. Common Core State Standards: Reading in History CCSS.RH.11-12.1: Determining central ideas CCSS.RH.11-12.2: Citing specific evidence CCSS.RH.11-12.7: Integrating maps and charts into understanding CCSS.RH.11-12.6: Comparing and contrasting authors in multiple sources. CCSS.RH.11-12.9: Gather information from more than 1 document Speaking and Listening CCSS.SL.11-12.1: Initiate and participate in a range of collaborative discussions Writing in History CCSS.WHST.11-12.1: Write arguments focused on content. CCSS.WHST.11-12.4: Write arguments in a clear and concise fashion CCSS.WHST.11-12.8: Gather relevant information from multiple sources, integrate information, and avoid plagiarism
Focus Pulitzer Center news story and news outlet	"Illinois Made a Bold Promise To End Poverty. In Alexander County, It's Hard To Tell." by Lylee Gibbs, Jamilah Lewis, Molly Parker and Julia Rendleman for <i>Capitol News Illinois</i> "Illinois Banned Life Sentences for Young Offenders—but Not for Those Already Behind Bars." by Ethan Holder, Molly Parker and Julia Rendleman for <i>Capitol News Illinois</i>

	“All Our Future Money Is Gone’: The Impossible Task of Providing Child Care in Rural Illinois.” by Molly Parker and Julia Rendleman for <i>ProPublica</i> “The Government Spends Millions To Open Grocery Stores in Food Deserts. The Real Test is Their Survival.” by Molly Parker and Julia Rendleman for <i>Capitol News Illinois</i> “Rice and River: A Family’s Approach to the Changing Agricultural Landscape.” by Lylee Gibbs for <i>The Daily Egyptian</i> “Shaped by Faith: A Young Cairo Councilman’s Coming of Age” by Lylee Gibbs and Ryan Grieser for <i>Urban Voices</i>
Identify the theme/idea/issue connecting the Pulitzer Center article to your community	Issue: poverty Idea: Because Illinois has one of the largest cities in the country, but is also home to a vast geographical area of farms and small towns, Illinois residents don’t identify with one another. However, poverty is an issue that impacts us all, from the smallest rural towns to the heart of the city. Young people across the state need to see the spaces in which they share experiences. This series of Pulitzer articles allows students to investigate those shared spaces.
What additional news outlet(s) in your city/state/region will students learn about in the learning experience?	Block Club Chicago - a parallel series of articles will be utilized from this newspaper Local broadcast and other news sources will also be investigated
Content Advisory	This lesson may contain some information that may be emotionally challenging for those who have been incarcerated, or who have friends/family members who have been incarcerated. There is also mention of gun violence in the article about incarceration.
Notes on Context	My students attend school on the South Side of Chicago and live on the South and West sides of the city. While they do not all live in poverty, their neighborhoods and our school are categorized by census tract and other demographic indicators as “poor.” Because suburbs surround Chicago, many of which are vastly wealthier than the South and West sides of Chicago, there is often an assumption that outside of Chicago, Illinois is wealthy. This unit is an exploration of the ways poverty traverses Illinois geographically, and an opportunity for students to see how people at the opposite end of the state struggle with many of the same issues that my students’ families and communities face.

Lesson Plan

Essential Questions

1. How does connecting with others impact and change our understanding of ourselves and the world?
2. How are different aspects of society handling the impacts of poverty in Illinois (eg, housing, jobs, food deserts, childcare, impact of incarceration, and local politicians)?
3. What role does the media play in our understanding of others and ourselves?

Focus Pulitzer Center News Story/Stories

["Illinois Made a Bold Promise To End Poverty. In Alexander County, It's Hard To Tell."](#) by Lylee Gibbs, Jamilah Lewis, Molly Parker and Julia Rendleman for *Capitol News Illinois* (housing)

["Illinois Banned Life Sentences for Young Offenders—but Not for Those Already Behind Bars."](#) by Ethan Holder, Molly Parker and Julia Rendleman for *Capitol News Illinois* (incarceration impacts)

["All Our Future Money Is Gone': The Impossible Task of Providing Child Care in Rural Illinois."](#) by Molly Parker and Julia Rendleman for *ProPublica* (childcare)

["The Government Spends Millions To Open Grocery Stores in Food Deserts. The Real Test is Their Survival."](#) by Molly Parker and Julia Rendleman for *Capitol News Illinois* (food deserts)

["Rice and River: A Family's Approach to the Changing Agricultural Landscape."](#) by Lylee Gibbs for *The Daily Egyptian* (jobs)

["Shaped by Faith: A Young Cairo Councilman's Coming of Age,"](#) by Lylee Gibbs and Ryan Grieser for *Urban Voices* (local politicians)

Introducing the Lesson

This unit is designed to connect students with one another through shared experiences, regardless of geographic distance or area. In facilitating this connection, students will have the opportunity to see how their struggles exist in other regions, including regions that are different from their hometowns. Students will also have the opportunity to hear from and interact with journalists, to discuss how reporting on these issues impacts the ability of residents to get relief, and the ability of the wider world to gain understanding of communities that are often seen only in stereotypes.

In 2020, the Illinois legislature made a bold promise to end poverty by 2036 in the state of Illinois. In this mini-unit, students will explore the impacts of poverty in Illinois following that promise. Students will examine a set of topics from two case studies, one from Chicago and the other from Alexander County, in the southern tip of the state. Each pair of students will be assigned one of the following topics, and will compare information from each location: housing, jobs, childcare, impact of incarceration, local politicians, and food deserts. Following their investigations on the topics, students will then connect online with students from another school — ideally, students in Chicago will connect with students from Southern Illinois, and vice versa, but any differences in geographically different regions (rural vs. urban, wealth vs. poor, etc.) will work. Then, all students will meet with journalists online to discuss the role of journalists and the media in telling accurate stories and sharing underreported news.

Day 1: Warm-up/Opening

1. Introduce students to the [Illinois Intergenerational Poverty Act using the December 2020 press release](#) (Day 1 - Press Release and Maps) and the charts located on pages 4-7 of the [Strategic Plan Brief](#).
 - a. Provide students with copies of each text to annotate. Instruct students to use the 5 Ws annotation method.
 - b. As a whole class, read the press release aloud, holding space for annotation and/or discussion.

Day 1: Preparing to Engage with the Focus Resource(s)

1. Direct students to examine a set of maps from the Day 1 - Press Release and Maps, highlighting topics related to poverty in both Illinois as a whole and in Chicago. Topics include: child poverty rates, income levels, food deserts, highway systems, access to hospitals, and educational attainment rates.
2. Students will close the day by creating at least two inquiry questions related to the essential question, which will guide their exploration over the next 2-4 days.
 - a. Encourage students not to get stuck on the details of the topics they just examined, but to think broadly about the Essential Question. For example, they might want to examine the role of legislation in ending things like poverty, the power of media to create change by covering / not covering events, or how people can create change in their communities using legislation or the media.

Day 2: Exploring the Resource(s)

1. On Day 2, instruct students to choose a topic from a list of [six topics](#) (childcare, food deserts, housing,

incarceration impacts, jobs, or local politicians). They will each have two articles to read on their topic: one article about Chicago and one article about Alexander County in Southern Illinois.

- i. Students can pair up for this activity. Each student reads one of the articles for the pair and shares the information with their partner.
 - ii. For larger classes, small groups can be created based on each topic, ensuring that all students who read the same topic can deepen their understanding of the material through conversation about the articles.
2. Have students compare and contrast the impact of the topic on the 2 locations.
 - a. Option A [Days 2-4 Reading Guide and Journalist Visit](#)
 - b. Option B [Day 2 Reading Guide](#)
3. Homework to prepare for Option A Days 3-4: On a shared slide deck, students should create a slide to introduce themselves to the partner school. This slide should include a photo of the student, and 3-5 fun details about themselves (ie, hobbies, extracurriculars, number of siblings, favorite song, etc.).

Option A Days 3-4: Processing the Resource(s) with a Partner School

Day 3: Meeting the Partner School

Using Google Meet or Zoom, bring students from both schools together to meet each other and discuss the articles.

1. For the first 5-15 minutes, depending on the size of the classes, have students present their introduction slides. This can be done in a whole-class setting for small groups, or in break-out rooms for larger groups.
 - i. Breakout rooms should be no more than 4-6 students, depending on how many classes are involved in the project.
2. Have students spend the last 1-2 minutes of this intro time highlighting similarities they discovered about each other.
 - i. If breakout rooms are used, have each group share 1 similarity with the class when all students return to the main room.
3. Once introductions are over, students should discuss the articles they read. Again, this can be done either as a whole group or in break-out rooms, depending on the number of students. During this 20-30 minute discussion, students should share the following from the [Days 2-4 Reading Guide and Journalist Visit](#):
 - Big takeaways about their pair of readings
 - Similarities and differences between Chicago and Alexander County
 - Steps being taken to end poverty in either or both locations

- Is local media covering the issues? If so, what kind of coverage is it - positive, negative, broad, narrow, etc?

4. For the last 10 minutes of class, students will be introduced to the journalists who will be visiting on Day 4.

- Encourage students to brainstorm at least two to four questions for the journalists. These should be questions related to the overarching inquiry goals set on Day 1, questions about reporting on these topics, and/or questions about media coverage, generally.

Day 4: Journalist Visit

Try to bring in at least two journalists. One journalist from Chicago and one from Southern Illinois would be ideal, but journalists could also cover other ranges, such as: small publication / large publication, non-profit news organization / for-profit news organization, print media/broadcast media, etc.

1. Each journalist should give a prepared intro of about 5 minutes to share who they are, where they have worked, what kind of reporting they do, etc. If the journalists worked on the articles for this unit, specifically, they should talk a little about why they chose to do these articles.
2. After introductions, students will have time to ask their questions to the journalists. As much as possible, get responses from both journalists.
3. Close the journalist visit in the last 7-10 minutes of class. Provide this time for students to discuss what they learned from the journalists. Make sure to hear from students from both schools. Remind students to go back to their Day 2 questions for the journalists, as well as their inquiry questions. What did they learn that helps them answer their inquiry questions and the overarching Essential Question?

Option A Day 5: Performance Task(s)

On Day 5, students will return to the Essential Question and the Inquiry Questions they created on Day 1. In a 2-3 paragraph [reflection](#), students will respond to the Essential Question and at least 1 Inquiry Question.

- They should cite evidence from at least two documents to support their position
- They should bring in information from the whole-class discussions with their classmates and the partner school

Option A: Assessment

Create a rubric with the following criteria:

IL.SS.IS.1/3.9-12: Address essential questions that reflect an enduring issue; develop new supporting questions

- Day 1, activity 3

- Day 3, activity 3
- Day 5 activity

CCSS.RH.9-12.1-2: Determining central ideas and citing specific evidence

- Day 1, activities 1-2
- Day 2, activity 1

CCSS.RH.9-12.7: Integrating maps and charts into understanding

- Day 1, activity 2

CCSS.RH.9-12.6/9: Comparing and contrasting authors and information in more than 1 document

IL.SS.IS.4-5.9-12: Gather and evaluate information; identify evidence from multiple sources

- Day 1, activities 1-2
- Day 2, activity 2
- Day 3, activity 2
- Day 4, activity 2

CCSS.SL.9-12.1: Initiate and participate in a range of collaborative discussions

- Day 1, activity 3
- Day 3, activity 1-2
- Day 4, activity 3

CCSS.WHST.9-12.1/4: Write arguments focused on content, in a clear and concise fashion

- Day 5 activity

CCSS.WHST.9-12.8: Gather relevant information from multiple sources, integrate information, and avoid plagiarism

IL.SS.IS.6.9-12: Construct and evaluate explanations and arguments using multiple sources.

- Day 5 activity

Option B Day 3: Processing the Resource(s)

Open the class with a student discussion of the articles they read. During this 15-20 minute discussion, students should share:

- Big takeaways about their pair of readings
- Similarities and differences between Chicago and Alexander County
- Steps being taken to end poverty in either or both locations
- Is local media covering the issues? If so, what kind of coverage is it - positive, negative, broad,

narrow, etc?
Option B Day 3: Performance Task(s)
1. Once students have shared from each pair of articles, direct them back to their Inquiry Questions and the Essential Question. 2. Spend 5-10 minutes supporting students as they bring their new information to bear on the questions. This can be done as a whole class on a screen or whiteboard, or it can be done in small groups, where each student shares information from their readings to respond to the questions. 3. Finally, have students answer the essential question and at least one Inquiry Question. In a 2-3 paragraph reflection, students will respond to the questions they chose. a. They should cite evidence from at least 2 documents to support their position b. They should include information from the whole-class discussions with their classmates.
Assessment
Create a rubric with the following criteria: IL.SS.IS.1/3.9-12: Address essential questions that reflect an enduring issue; develop new supporting questions - Day 1, activity 3 - Day 3 activities CCSS. RH.9-12.1-2: Determining central ideas and citing specific evidence - Day 1, activities 1-2 - Day 2, activity 1 CCSS.RH.9-12.7: Integrating maps and charts into understanding - Day 1, activity 2 CCSS. RH.9-12.6/9: Comparing and contrasting authors and information in more than one document IL.SS.IS.4-5.9-12: Gather and evaluate information; identify evidence from multiple sources - Day 1, activities 1-2 - Day 2, activity 2 - Day 3, activity 1 CCSS.SL.9-12.1: Initiate and participate in a range of collaborative discussions - Day 1, activity 3

- Day 3, activity 1-2

CCSS.WHST.9-12.1/4: Write arguments focused on content, in a clear and concise fashion

- Day 3, activity 3

CCSS.WHST.9-12.8: Gather relevant information from multiple sources, integrate information, and avoid plagiarism

IL.SS.IS.6.9-12: Construct and evaluate explanations and arguments using multiple sources.

- Day 3, activity 3