

Unit 2 Teacher's Guide

Grades 3-5

Unit 2: The Many Faces of Need

Unit Overview

Building on the foundational knowledge students have gained through Unit 1 (that shelter is a basic human need), Unit 2 helps students develop an understanding of why some people need housing assistance and of the wide variety of people who can benefit from housing assistance — i.e., the “many faces.” The unit presents short descriptions of people who have experienced housing crises, including some written by students describing their own situations. Putting both a human face and a context around some of the current crises makes it more likely that students see situations in realistic and human terms. The unit builds off the personal stories and introduces homelessness and housing statistics, reinforcing students’ mathematical and analytical skills through the analysis of the statistics.

Standards Addressed

Curriculum Standards for Social Studies (National Council for the Social Studies)

- Strand 3: People, Places, and Environments – Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of people, places, and environments.
- Strand 4: Individual Development and Identity – Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of individual development and identity.
- Strand 5: Individuals, Groups, and Institutions – Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of interactions among individuals, groups, and institutions.

Geography for Life: National Geography Standards

- Standard 4: The Physical and Human Characteristics of Places – The student knows and understands the human characteristics of places.
- Standard 13: How the Forces of Cooperation and Conflict Among People Influence the Division and Control of the Earth’s Surface – The student knows and understands how cooperation and conflict affect places in the local community.

2002 NAEP Writing Assessment Framework Objectives

- Students should write for a variety of purposes: narrative, informative, and persuasive.
- Students should write from a variety of stimulus materials, and within various time constraints.

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Standards Addressed

National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) Standards

- Data Analysis and Probability: Students should Formulate questions that can be addressed with data and collect, organize, and display relevant data to answer them.
- Data Analysis and Probability: Students should Select and use appropriate statistical methods to analyze data.

Standards for the English Language Arts (The National Council of Teachers of English and the International Reading Association)

- Students conduct research on issues and interests by generating ideas and questions, and by posing problems. They gather, evaluate, and synthesize data from a variety of sources (e.g., print and non-print texts, artifacts, people) to communicate their discoveries in ways that suit their purpose and audience.

Learning Objectives

After reading biographies of families in need of housing assistance and analyzing statistics, students should:

- Be able to put a human face on housing crises, including homelessness.
- Write in response to visual and written stimuli.
- Understand and analyze statistics in order to make connections to real world situations.

Teacher Preparation Time

30 minutes

Class Time

2 hours

Materials Needed

- Paper
- Pens, pencils

Activity Sheet(s)

- KWL reading sheet
- Real stories
- Housing, Homelessness, and Habitat fact sheet
- Multiple choice assessment

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Lesson Steps

1. Before beginning this activity, use the KWL chart to help actively engage your students in the upcoming reading. Have students brainstorm everything they know about homelessness and poverty housing, and list these under the “What I Know” column of the KWL worksheet. Then, have them list questions (what they want to know) about the topic in the “What I Want to Know” column.
2. As a class, read the four short descriptions of families experiencing housing crises. Some of them refer to Habitat for Humanity, including the term “sweat equity,” to describe the time and the effort required of people interested in being a Habitat family. (“Sweat equity” is the principle that homeowners actually help to build their home. See the Curriculum Overview for more information.) As the class learns about the different stories, encourage students to add to their KWL chart. They can place these statements and/or answers in the “What I’ve Learned” column of the chart. In addition, students might identify new areas of exploration that have arisen as a result of the reading, so they should add to the “What I Want to Know” column.
3. Have students read one of the personal accounts written by homeless children. As students read the real stories, have them think about the question “What does it feel like to be homeless?” They should also use their KWL chart as they read.
4. Give students the following scenario: Imagine you have just spent a day “hanging out” with your new friend — Andrew or Leah— at his or her home. Write a diary entry about what your day was like, emphasizing the things you have in common. Use the following questions to help you write your diary entry, keeping in mind that what Andrew or Leah wrote may not answer a question, so you will need to try and answer it based on what you know about Andrew or Leah.
 - How would you describe your new friend?
 - What does he/she like to do for fun?
 - Does he/she like school? Why or why not?
 - What is his/her family like?
 - What does he/she want to be when he/she grows up?
 - How did the two of you spend your day together?
 - Do you think you and your new friend could learn things from each other? If so, what?
 - What things do you and your new friend have in common?

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Lesson Steps

5. Have students share their diary entries with the rest of the class.
6. Now that students have connected with personal experiences of the homeless, they can begin to look at some of the statistics behind the faces. Before handing out the Housing, Homelessness, and Habitat Fact Sheet, have students try to answer the following questions (these questions are the categories in which statistics on the fact sheet are presented):
 - Why is there a lack of affordable housing?
 - What is poverty housing?
 - Why are people homeless?
 - How many people are homeless?
 - What kinds of people are homeless?
 - What does it “look like” to be homeless?
 - What is Habitat for Humanity International?
 - What does a Habitat house cost?
 - Where does Habitat for Humanity build houses?
 - Do people need to do anything in order to qualify for a Habitat for Humanity house?
7. As a class, read through and discuss the fact sheet. Then, divide the students into cooperative groups made up of students who wrote a diary entry about the same friend (Andrew or Leah). Each group should then come up with one or two connections between the life of their new friend and the statistics about homelessness and poverty housing. Each group should then share their findings with the rest of the class.
8. Revisit the KWL sheet, and have students fill in the “What I’ve Learned” column.

Assessment

Students will complete a multiple choice assessment based on the Housing, Homelessness, and Habitat Fact Sheet. Answers for the assessment are below.

Answers:

1. c
2. b
3. a
4. b
5. a
6. d

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Assessment

7. a
8. b
9. a
10. a

***Extension
Activities***

- To provide a wider breadth of housing crises, perhaps with a local emphasis, read and discuss current events articles from the Habitat for Humanity Web site or other resources or from your local newspaper.
- Reinforce students' understanding of the information in the fact sheet by having them create a series of charts and graphs to visually represent some of the statistics.
- Have students practice their research skills by using the fact sheet to create an inquiry and conducting research to investigate the inquiry. For example, students might explore the realities of poverty housing and its effects on people through photographs and readings.

***Abridged Unit
Activity***

To abridge the unit, use only one of the real stories of homeless children and/or fewer of the selected statistics.

KWL Reading Sheet

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What do you know about the housing crises that people face in the community, in the country, and in the world? What would you like to know? Use this chart to highlight what you know and what you'd like to know.

Name:

What I Know	What I Want to Know	What I've Learned

Say “No More” to a Tent

A beachfront Hawaiian address typically means a dream home in paradise. But for Vernon and Harrine Ceno, living in a tent on the beach for three years with their six children was no dreamland. Instead, it was a nightmare that meant they had to haul water from a nearby public park, where they also bathed. The Ceno family simply could not afford the high cost of housing. In time, they moved from their tent to transitional housing — a temporary place to live to help in finding a home more permanent than a tent. In July 1999, they became the owners of a Habitat home in Waianae. “Now my kids have a home,” says Vernon. “They will always have a roof over their heads.” No longer will they have to travel to a park to get water to drink! [<http://www.habitat.org/hw/feb-march01/feature/u.s.-canadaframe.html>]

No Longer Stranded in a Dangerous Place

Luis and Juana Castaneda and their four children lived in Dana Strand, a public housing project in Los Angeles. Bullet holes marked the family’s front door. Gang activity and drug use in the area were common. (One daughter saw a man stabbed to death.) Rats were a constant problem. “It was time to be able to live peacefully as a family and not have to worry about whether or not my children would make it through the night,” says Luis. Recently, the Castaneda family moved into a brand new house in a safer neighborhood! [<http://www.habitat.org/hw/feb-march01/feature/u.s.-canadaframe.html>]

Philadelphia Freedom

Major leaks have caused the ceiling and walls of two of the three bedrooms to crumble in Tracie Bryant’s home in Philadelphia. Holes in the kitchen ceiling allow water to run directly over electrical sockets — a major safety hazard. Bryant and her daughter, Elender, sleep in the only bedroom that is habitable, and the niece who lives with them sleeps on a couch. North Central Philadelphia Habitat for Humanity selected Bryant as a partner family in July 2000, and soon she was earning her “sweat equity.” (Habitat for Humanity requires that families put in time and hard work before they move into their own homes.) “The [sweat equity] I do is worth it because I am learning to take care of my own home,” she says. “When I am in the other [Habitat] houses here that are almost finished, I imagine what it will be like to have my own home. I can hardly wait.” [<http://www.habitat.org/hw/feb-march01/feature/u.s.-canadaframe.html>]

All in Good Time

Donna wasn't always able to have her children live with her. She was divorced, and her children went to live with their father because Donna had personal problems. Donna hit a low point in February 1991, when she sat on her mother's driveway, looked out at the freeway, and contemplated suicide. But on February 21, 1991, she found counseling and treatment and started over. She got an apartment and started working. Her kids came back, and her daughter urged her to apply for a Habitat house three years ago. Donna didn't feel confident enough to own a home right away, but in the winter of 1999, she applied and was approved as a Habitat homeowner! [<http://www.habitat.org/jcwp/2000/tuefla.html>]

Drawn to the Magnet Program

My name is Andrew Cuentes. I am from Las Cruces, New Mexico. I am a seventh grader at Sierra Middle School, and I am involved in the Science Magnet Program. I have two sisters and one brother.

I want to tell you about being homeless and how it affected me. We came to Las Cruces, New Mexico, from Utah with \$100. We lived in and out of motels. My mom could not find a job. We knew we needed help. We then moved into a homeless shelter.

Living in a homeless shelter was hard because of the rules we had to abide by. For example, we had an 8:00 p.m. curfew. At times we would be late, and the security guard would give us a hard time. I think he knew we had no other place to go. Plus, we weren't even allowed into the shelter during the day. After school my bus would drop me off at the shelter. I would have to wait for my mom to get there after work. This was hard because not only was it embarrassing in front of the students who were on the bus, but also hard not being able to enter the shelter to rest and eat an after school snack. The shelter had only one refrigerator which at times caused problems. When my mom bought groceries, we would put them into the refrigerator. Later, when we would go get a snack, we would find them gone.

I have been able to block out the fact that I was homeless. After awhile it really didn't bother me. My teachers, administration, and being involved in the Science Magnet Program has really helped me to realize my potential to become an excellent student. By taking advantage of these opportunities and making it to school on a regular basis, I know that I can become educated, which is the most important thing to me and to my mom, who I dearly love. [<http://www.nationalhomeless.org/experiences/andrew.html>]

In Transition

My name is Leah. I'm almost 12, and I live in Wheaton, Illinois, in a house with my mother and my dog Breezy, a Yorkshire terrier. We are in a transitional housing program called Bridge Communities. They help us with lots of things.

In Transition (cont.)

Even though we are homeless, we are pretty lucky. My mom and dad had some problems that caused them to separate. My mom was pretty scared about making things work out for both of us. When we became homeless, we freaked out. We had no place to live. We couldn't find something we could afford. It takes about \$1,000 a month to rent a two bedroom apartment. Even though my mom was working, we didn't have enough money to get our own place. Mom doesn't want me to worry, but I know she worries lots about not having enough money.

We moved in with a friend of my mom's and lived with their family for about three months in Warrenville, near Wheaton. It was pretty crowded, and I didn't have my own things there, so it was not great. I knew my mom felt bad that she couldn't get stuff for me that I needed for school. We had no money for extras or sometimes even food.

The worst part of being homeless was that my dog, Breezy, couldn't stay with us because the other family had a big rottweiler. Breezy and I had always been together through all our tough times. That made me sad. At least living with them meant that I got to stay in my same school. And our new family was good to us and helped us lots. When we had to move out, we moved in with my grandmother for a little while. I still got to stay in my school in Warrenville. Then we moved to where we live now. We were real happy to get into Bridge Community and get this house in Wheaton, where my mom grew up and near where lots of our friends and relatives live.

Now I go to 6th grade at Franklin Middle School in Wheaton. I know most of the 6th graders there. I have lots of hobbies — I sing, dance, and I'm a cheerleader with the Junior Luvabulls, which means that we get to work with the Chicago Bulls' cheerleaders. I got a scooter for Easter. I love sports. I ride my bike a lot. I want to be lots of things when I grow up — a lawyer, a singer, or maybe an interior decorator. Some of the kids in my school know I'm homeless and in the Bridge program. One teacher knows. We have a good program at school, Pride, which helps us with our homework. That is real important because it helps me do better in school.

I know there are lots of homeless people out there who don't have it as good as I do. I feel sad for them. I just want to tell them to hang in there. We need more shelters in our country to take care of people who don't have a place to stay or family to help them. We need to take care of people in our country, not just at the holidays, either. People need a place of their own to live.

I never thought I'd be homeless. I know people don't think about what they would do if they were homeless. You never know. Maybe your house will burn down. Be thankful for what you have.

[<http://www.nationalhomeless.org/experiences/leah.html>]

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Why aren't there enough affordable homes?

- There are 14.4 million families who need better, safer housing. That's a lot of homes!
- Today, there are more people living in the United States, but fewer low-rent apartments are available to them.
- The cost of a two-bedroom home is rising. For example, a home that cost \$75,000 in 2000 went up to \$88,500 in 2002.

What is poverty housing?

- Poverty housing describes a home that may not have hot water, electricity, a toilet, bathtub, or shower.
- There are 10.9 million people living in homes like this. One out of every three of those people is a child. (Worst Case Housing Needs 2001 Summary)

Why are people homeless?

- In 2000, 31.1 million people lived in poverty. (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2001)
- In the United States, half of all homeless women and children left their homes because of violence. (Zorza, 1991; National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, 2001)
- Many homeless adults have some serious form of mental illness. Simple tasks for us can sometimes be harder for people with mental illnesses. (U.S. Conference of Mayors, 2001)

How many people are homeless?

- Every year, there are about 3.5 million homeless people. One out of three homeless people is a child. (Urban Institute 2000)

What kinds of people are homeless?

- In 2002, families made up 41 percent of the homeless population in cities. (U.S. Conference of Mayors, 2002)
- In areas outside of cities — such as small towns — families, single mothers, and children make up the largest group of people who are homeless. (Vissing, 1996)

What is it like to be a homeless kid?

Homeless children often:

- Don't have a place to sleep at night.
- Share other people's homes.
- Live in motels, trailer parks, or campgrounds.
- Live in emergency shelters.
- Are waiting for foster parents.
- Live in cars, parks, abandoned buildings, bus or train stations, or other strange places.
- Have families that move around a lot.

What is Habitat for Humanity International?

- Habitat for Humanity International is a nonprofit, Christian organization that helps eliminate poverty housing by building homes with people in need of decent shelter.
- Millard and Linda Fuller founded Habitat for Humanity International in 1976.
- As of 2004, Habitat for Humanity International has built more than 175,000 homes for families around the world.

How much does a Habitat house cost?

Habitat houses can cost as little as \$800 in some countries. In the United States, Habitat homes usually cost around \$46,600.

Where does Habitat for Humanity build houses?

Habitat builds houses in 100 countries. There are Habitat offices in all 50 states of the United States, as well as in the District of Columbia, Guam, and Puerto Rico. In total, there are more than 2,100 active offices around the world. In other words, there are a lot of people working to build a lot of houses all around the world!

1. Since 1975, what happened to the number of low-rent apartments?

- a. The number of apartments decreased.
- b. The number of people increased.
- c. Both of the above
- d. Neither of the above

2. From 2000 to 2002, the average cost of a two-bedroom home:

- a. Increased by \$1,350
- b. Increased by \$13,500
- c. Decreased by \$1,350
- d. Decreased by \$13,500

3. Of the following characteristics, which is most likely a characteristic of poverty housing?

- a. There is no toilet in the home.
- b. There is only one bathroom.
- c. There are no children in the neighborhood.
- d. There is no grocery store nearby.

4. The fact sheet says that one out of three people living in poverty housing is a child. Based on that average, if a small town has 30 people living in poverty housing, how many of those are likely to be children?

- a. 3
- b. 10
- c. 17
- d. 25

5. Which of the following is least likely to be true about a child who is homeless?

- a. He goes to the same school from kindergarten to fifth grade.
- b. She lives in motels, trailer parks, or campgrounds.
- c. He and his family share a home with a friend of the family.
- d. She and her family go through some nights without a place to sleep.

6. Which of the following is true of a Habitat home?

- a. It costs less to build in some countries than it does in the United States.
- b. Its average cost in the United States is less than fifty thousand dollars.
- c. A Habitat home can be found in every state of the United States.
- d. All of the above

For questions 7–10, check “a” if you think the child described is living in a homeless situation or “b” if you think he or she is not.

7. Rosa sleeps some nights at friends’ houses, other nights she sleeps at an aunt’s or cousin’s house. Do you think Rosa is homeless?

- a. yes
- b. no

8. Juan and his family are spending their vacation camping by the lake. Do you think Juan is homeless?

- a. yes
- b. no

9. Sam and his mother are living in a motel. Do you think Sam is homeless?

- a. yes
- b. no

10. Rebecca is living at a shelter waiting to be placed in a foster home. Do you think Rebecca is homeless?

- a. yes
- b. no