

Living in Poverty Lesson

Intro Activity: What do you think of when you think of the word POVERTY? Write down as many things as you can that you associate with it.

Whip around the room asking students to share their ideas and write them on the board.

Discussion/Notes: Ask students the following questions to get a feel for their knowledge on poverty and tie to their intro responses:

- What does poverty look like in America? Poverty looks like anyone who lacks sufficient money or goods to meet basic human needs such as food, shelter, clothing
- Who lives in poverty? Adults, teens, children...48 million living below the poverty level
- Where do we see poverty? Everywhere....It's a worldwide epidemic...let's look at our state. Complete the "What do you think # activity" first. Then go over actual PA stats. You can find all states information at this website. http://www.spotlightonpoverty.org/about_spotlight.aspx
- How do people end up living in poverty? A number of ways/reasons... View and write down as many reasons as you can based on this clip <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=81iZZF5lx4k>

Answers may include:

- Education Level such as secondary and post-secondary degrees often determines type of job you have qualifications for as does experience in the field, lack specific skills
- Family Structure can play a role too especially if you are a single parent, or a one income family, number of children
- Geographical Location often determines cost of living, taxes, affordable housing, or number of industry or jobs in area. Ex. Rural vs. urban vs. city.

- Unemployment due to loss of job from down-sizing, closures, furloughs, etc. Many have stopped looking/applying because they can't find anything.
- Never Ending Cycle for some means they were born into poverty and do not have the means to escape
- Can you be employed and still be living at the poverty level? Absolutely! View any one of the following YouTube clips as an example:
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qjsrdcbbPBU>
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bv48A9BSews>
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=45Ouqrnku2g>
 - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MdbHEZp0WPA&feature=em-sub_digest-vrecs
- Discuss reactions.

Discuss: Is it easy to budget a paycheck and meet all of your weekly/monthly expenses?

First, let's generate a list of all possible expenses and write them on the board (this will vary based on the specifics of each family): food, toiletries, housing, utilities, health care, medical/prescriptions, transportation, child care, clothing, laundry, taxes, insurance, household items, education, miscellaneous things like internet, cable, phones/cell plans, subscriptions, pets, emergencies.

Activity: Turn to your neighbor and decide which of the above expenses are truly essential and necessary and which are non-essential extras. Have each group share and try to come to a class consensus. Was it easy to decide? What criteria did you use to determine each?

Simulation: All of you will participate in the online simulation/game about surviving poverty and homelessness. It is called SPENT: <http://playspent.org/>

Overview of Game: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d7T5x6nOIWQ>

Assignment: Your goal is to play this game and then write a summary of your results. The summary should include...

- Progress throughout the simulation...did you make it through the month? If not, how far did you get?
- What sacrifices or cuts did you have to make? How did you feel about making these cuts?
- What was the most difficult decision you had to make in this simulation? Why?
- Did you have power over your decisions? Explain.
- What budget expenses from the class list actually showed up in the simulation?
- What did you learn from this simulation?
- What can you do now, for your future to reduce your chances of living paycheck to paycheck, in poverty or becoming the working poor? Explain in a one page paper the personal and professional goals you wish to set for yourself including a realistic timeline.

Project: Create a Non-Fiction Wikipedia Article to inform others about the Poverty Crisis affecting many families today.

This article should address the: Who, What, Where, Why and How of the issue. See some ideas below. Use the Wikipedia Template found free at TPT

<https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Wikipedia-Templates-for-Non-Fiction-Writing-Projects-485878>

***Note**: You will need to add more sections to your digital article template. Be sure to save your progress along the way.

- Who lives in poverty?
- What does mean to live in poverty? What does poverty look like? What are some statistics associated with the issue?
- Where does poverty exist? Where can people go for help/assistance?
- Why do we need to be aware of this problem?
- How does poverty occur? How do we solve this problem?

****Be sure to cite your sources.**

Rubric

Criteria	Present	Not Present
All of the Questions Addressed with accurate information (30)		
Images included (10)		
Template completed & Titled (5)		
Mechanics: Free of Spelling & Grammatical Errors (5)		
Sources Cited (10)		
Total Points 60		

SPENT

Assignment: Your goal is to play the game SPENT and then write a summary of your results on composition paper. The summary should include...

- Progress throughout the simulation...did you make it through the month? If not, how far did you get?
- What sacrifices or cuts did you have to make? How did you feel about making these cuts?
- What was the most difficult decision you had to make in this simulation? Why?
- Did you have power over your decisions? Explain.
- What budget expenses from the class list actually showed up in the simulation?
- What did you learn from this simulation?
- What can you do now, for your future to reduce your chances of living paycheck to paycheck, in poverty or becoming the working poor? Explain in the personal and professional goals you wish to set for yourself including a realistic timeline.