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HOUSING DISCRIMINATION IN THE NORTHERN AND WESTERN UNITED STATES

INQUIRY ONE: WHY DO WE LIVE WHERE WE LIVE?

INTRODUCTION

In Inquiry One, students explore the compelling question through vision boards and ranked-choice organizers. They reflect on the hopes and needs people invest in the idea of home, explore their own housing preferences, and discover common considerations people use when finding a place to live. Finally, by hearing oral histories of real people who experienced housing discrimination, they discover how external constraints also play a role in decision-making. They identify some of those constraints and use an analysis tool to understand how forces combine to generate housing patterns.

CONTENTS OF INQUIRY ONE

SUPPORTING QUESTION 1: WHAT MAKES A HOME?

Activity 1: My Future Home

Students create a personal vision board to imagine a future home. The class compares boards to discover important factors in personal decision-making.

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SUPPORTING QUESTION 2: HOW DO PEOPLE CHOOSE A HOME?

Activity 2: Housing Choices

Students expand their thinking to consider the importance of community and neighborhood, using three types of factors in housing selection.

Activity 3: What Matters Most?

Students weigh competing values. Using a graphic organizer and rank order exercise, they discover what people value most highly in a place to live.

SUPPORTING QUESTION 3: HAVE PEOPLE ALWAYS HAD FREE CHOICE ABOUT WHERE TO LIVE?

Activity 4: Learning from Lived Experience

Students plan, script, and conduct a short oral history interview and write an interview abstract. Oral history content introduces and reveals the concepts of housing discrimination and inequality.

Activity 5: Push and Pull

Students use information from interviews to complete a Push and Pull Analysis.

Activity 6: Forces at Work

Students conduct a PESTLE Analysis to categorize the forces that produce housing outcomes.

SLIDES

See Inquiry One Slides for accompanying images and diagrams.

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EDUCATOR BACKGROUND FOR INQUIRY ONE

UNVARNISHED ARTICLES

- Article 1: Introduction
- Article 2: Segregation Mania
- Article 3: Making Moves: Immigration, Migration, Discrimination
- Article 4: Tools of Exclusion: The Ever-Present Threat of White Violence

Note to Educators: Student versions of the *Unvarnished* articles are provided for your use in the classroom. These PDFs have simplified language, age-appropriate material, and reproduced visuals. If you elect to use the articles direct from the *Unvarnished* website, you will need to preview each article and the links before assigning them to students as they may contain racial epithets, academic terms associated with the study of race and ethnicity, and other elements that may require scaffolding by the teacher.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

These resources are intended for educator background and may not be suitable for use in your classroom. Preview this content before determining whether to share it with students.

- Lesson plans from [Facing History & Ourselves: Understanding Jim Crow](#) and [The Road to Brown](#)
- American Historical Association: [Violence in Political History: The Challenges of Teaching About the Politics of Power and Resistance](#)
- Robert Wood Johnson Foundation: [Where We Live Matters for Our Health: Neighborhoods and Health](#)
- Equal Justice Institute: [Segregation in America](#)

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- Learning for Justice: [Segregation by Design](#)
- History.com: [Segregation in the United States](#)

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SUPPORTING QUESTION 1: WHAT MAKES A HOME?

"The ache for home lives in all of us, the safe place where we can go as we are and not be questioned." Maya Angelou

ACTIVITY 1: MY FUTURE HOME

Overview

In this creative collage project, students use imagination and found imagery to identify and express their own interests and priorities related to housing choice on a unique vision board.

Procedure

1. Introduce the subject of housing. Do a quick poll with students to ask what percentage of household income most Americans spend on their housing. Compare their thoughts with facts from research studies, showing that Americans, on average, spend between one-third to one-half of their take-home income on housingⁱ. Regardless of income or current housing status, most people bring hopes, dreams, needs, and goals to the process of finding and establishing a home. For most people, creating a safe, comfortable home is an aspiration and a lifelong effort.
2. Introduce students to the concept of a Vision Board. Show some examples of student-created vision boards (many can be found online). Describe the use of a vision board to identify and express your hopes and desires for the future.

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Creating a vision board can help you develop a clearer sense of your own preferences, ideas, and plans and can support you in pursuing your goals. Encourage students to approach the vision board, not as an exercise in pure fantasy, but by really thinking about what kind of personal environment helps them thrive.

3. Give students the assignment to create a vision board that answers the question: If you could design the perfect future home for yourself, what would it look like?
4. Before beginning to create, lead students in a short visualization exercise. Invite them to close their eyes and begin picturing ideas in their minds as you offer prompts aloud:

“Picture yourself in the future. You are an adult ...maybe in your 20s, maybe older. Imagine yourself living in the home of your dreams. It’s a home that makes you feel secure, safe, unique, and well cared for. It is a place you really thrive, and it makes you happy. Let’s imagine the details of your home...

Is your home in a city? In a suburb? Somewhere remote and surrounded by nature? Near the mountains or the sea?

Is your home an apartment in a high-rise building? A multi-family home shared with friends or family? A stand-alone home?

How big is this home? What rooms does it have? Does it have a yard? A balcony? A roof terrace? A garden? A pool?

Who lives with you? Are there children, partners, parents, extended family, roommates, or just you? Do you have pets?

What is special about this house that makes you feel relaxed and comfortable?

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What in this house reflects your unique personality? Are there spaces for your interests, hobbies, crafts, activities? If you like to cook, what do you find in the kitchen? If you like to exercise or play sports, where do you see those activities in your home?

Make sure you have a clear image in mind. Now, we'll translate that into a Vision Board to share with others."

5. Provide students with materials:

- Half-sheets of poster board or similar stiff paper substrate, about 14"x22"
- Drawing and writing implements
- Adhesives, such as glue sticks or decoupage adhesive
- Wide brushes for applying adhesives
- A brayer, roller, or ruler to flatten images down
- Sources of imagery that depict varied settings, diverse people, interiors, and exteriors. Use magazines, newspapers, and circulars; also consider using Internet access for printing imagery from sites like Zillow or AirBnB and providing a copier/scanner for reproducing images in books

This project can also be done remotely by using PowerPoint or Google Slides as a collage board.

6. Students select images, words, colors, and patterns that appeal to them. Encourage them to integrate text - either clipped or handwritten - to help viewers understand their vision. Ask students to cover the whole surface and to be sure edges are well glued down.
7. When their boards are complete, have students pair and share to present their boards to a partner. Ask each student to practice active listening while the other

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describes their board. After sharing, have each student write down three things that they've learned are important to their partner in their future home.

Debrief

Bring the class together. Ask a few students to draw on their partner interviews by naming three of the things that were important to their partner in their future home.

Compile a list of important features on the board or on chart paper, grouping similar items into categories. Note any priorities that appear more than once. Identify and discuss any patterns students see, and try to generalize about what people feel is important in a home.

The boards can be displayed in the classroom as a continuing reminder of the importance of a safe and supportive home.

Extensions

If students have chosen specific locations for their future homes, explore those communities online. Look at the demographics (available on Wikipedia), explore housing prices, and try using a cost-of-living calculator online to estimate the financial requirements of living in those places.

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SUPPORTING QUESTION 2: HOW DO PEOPLE CHOOSE A HOME?

ACTIVITY 2: HOUSING CHOICES

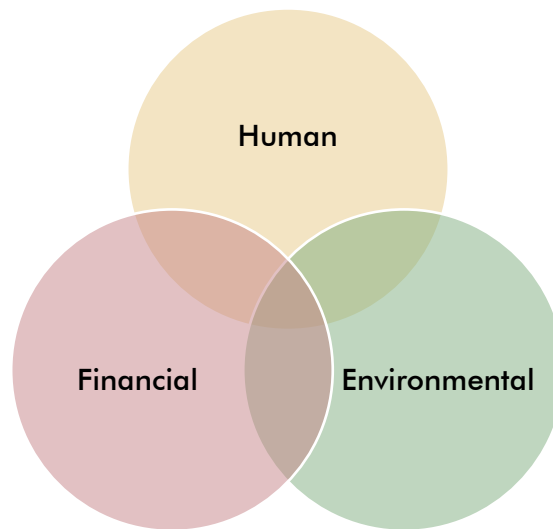
Overview

Students expand their thinking to consider the importance of community and neighborhood. Using brainstorming and graphic organizers, students explore three categories of factors in housing selection.

Procedure

1. Ask students: Beyond your own front door, what else is important in choosing a place to live?
2. Share the slide **Choice Factors**, included in the Inquiry One Slides.

CHOICE FACTORS



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Sociologists and others who study housing have asked the question: “What do people consider when they’re choosing a new place to live?” Based on the study of these choices, we can group the important factors into three major categories: human, financial, and environmental.

- **Human factors** include things humans need and want from others, such as proximity to family or good schools.
- **Environmental factors** include things outside a home’s walls, such as transit, nice weather, or clean air and water.
- **Financial factors** include things related to money, such as employment opportunities or the cost of rent.

Brainstorm a few examples within each category to get students started. A list of sample responses to use as prompts is included below.

3. Distribute the student reproducible Housing Choice Factors. Working alone or in groups, ask students to use the organizer to generate a long list of factors someone might consider when choosing a place to live. Challenge the students to think of at least 5 items in each category, scaffolding up or down as needed.

Debrief

Compile the student responses into a complete class list of all the possible factors that might influence housing choice. The Module 1 Slides contain a blank template for compiling responses. If possible, keep this on display for reference as you continue working on the topic.

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SAMPLE LIST OF HOUSING SELECTION FACTORS

Human	Environmental	Financial
Proximity to family and friends	Weather and climate	Cost of housing
Cultural diversity	Length of commute	Average wages in the area
A language you understand	Cleanliness of air, water, soil	Job opportunities
Good schools and child care	Quality of housing available	Cost of commuting
Safety, a low crime rate	Type and size of housing available	Tax rates
Age diversity	Proximity to events, attractions, things to do	Local cost of living
Income diversity	Good public transit and/or access to highways	Prices at stores and restaurants
Sense of community	Walkability and bikeability	Free things to do
Feeling like you belong	Distance to hospitals or medical clinics	Cost of repairs or maintenance to home

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Friendly neighbors	Opportunities for outdoor fun, parks, and open space	Cost of moving to this location
Places to meet people and socialize	Distance to stores and shopping centers	Cost of travel to see distant family and friends
People who share your interests	Access to fresh, healthy, familiar foods	Cost of food
Availability of good health care	History and landmarks	Utility costs for heat, electricity, water, etc.

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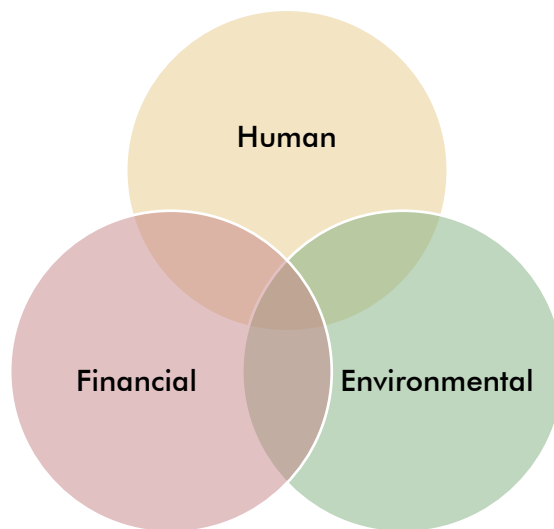
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Student Reproducible: Housing Choice Factors

People consider many factors when weighing the choice of a home.

Use this sheet to think of as many items to consider as you can.

Try to come up with at least 5-8 items in each category.



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Human Factors

Environmental Factors

Financial Factors

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ACTIVITY 3: WHAT MATTERS MOST?

Overview

This activity explores how people weigh competing values when seeking a place to live. Thinking about the relative weight of factors like safety and freedom from discrimination vs. the size of a house, quality of schools, or distance from work will help students recognize that some priorities are stronger drivers than others.

Procedure

1. Share this quotation with students:

“The place we choose to live affects every aspect of our being. It can determine the income we earn, the people we meet, the partners we choose, and the options available to our children and families.”

– Richard Florida

2. Using a quick thumbs up/thumbs down poll, ask students whether they think this statement is true, false, or a little of both. Spend a few minutes discussing the quotation and why students agree or disagree. Document any questions that arise.
3. Discuss the idea that where people live matters. There is a growing body of research showing that many life outcomes, like physical and mental health, educational achievement, lifetime employment and earnings, chance of incarceration, and much more, are correlated with residential location. Where people choose to live is one of the most consequential decisions they make. Most moves involve some trade-offs and compromises. The people we’ll be meeting through *Unvarnished* often had to make compromises in search of safe, welcoming homes.

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4. Introduce the academic term “residential mobility,” as sociologists, geographers, and others call aggregate movement from one residence to another. Often, improving one’s life chances means moving. Americans have a long history of moving to achieve better outcomes. According to a Harvard University study, 40 million Americans moved each year from 2015-20, meaning that about 13% of all Americans changed homes in each of those years. But relocation has also been declining among all age groups since the mid-1980s. Today, people move only about half as often as they did in the 1940s when one in five Americans, or 20%, moved each year. Most American moves are local - within the same county or state. Nearly 72% of Americans stay close to the place where they grew up. In 2019, only 14% of people who moved crossed state lines to their new home. 4% of people moved from outside the country.ⁱⁱ

What are all these people trying to achieve by moving? A 2019 Pew Research study showed that:

- 40% of movers aimed to upgrade their housing or to move from renting to owning
- 27% moved for a family-related reason
- 21% moved for a job-related reason
- Most long-distance moves were prompted by new jobs or work opportunities ⁱⁱⁱ

5. Remind students that one day, they’ll be choosing their own places to live. Ask: What will you look for in a neighborhood? In this activity, imagine that you are ready to set out into the world and are about to choose your own place to live for the first time. You’ll be given 10 factors to consider. Which ones will be the most important in your decision?

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6. Distribute the reproducible What Matters Most? Ask students to rank the 10 factors from most important (1) to least important (10).
7. After students complete the ranking, invite them to pair and share their top 3 priorities with a partner. Partners should ask each other for the rationales behind their choices, giving the other person a chance to justify their ranking.

Debrief

Reconvene for a class discussion. What patterns do students see among themselves? What differences do they have? Can we help one another understand why our priorities differ?

Call attention to the trade-offs students might have made in their ranking. What if you found the top 5 but couldn't afford it? What might it mean for you and your family if you traded affordability for safety and security?

What can we learn by comparing student preferences with things that other people value? Show students the list "Americans' Top Ten Reasons to Move," included in the Inquiry 1 Slides. The US Census Bureau conducts an annual study called the American Community Survey. One of the questions, "Residence 1 Year Ago/Migration," asks people whether they have moved in the last year, where from and where to, and why.^{iv} We can use this data to compare the students' reasons with the average of all Americans' reasons to move.

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AMERICANS' TOP TEN REASONS TO MOVE (2016 AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY DATA)

1. Home Type and Size
2. Family
3. Work
4. Affordability
5. Commute
6. Safety
7. Climate
8. Demographics
9. Culture and Amenities
10. Community Scale

Ask students: After you saw others' results and heard their reasons, did you think about changing your answers?

Emphasize that different people value different things, but that there are general trends. For example, priorities vary with life stage. Ask students if they can think of how their priorities might differ at different ages.

- Younger people, age 25-34, are starting their working lives and moving to be close to work. Cost is important to them. They may not yet be caregiving for children or older adults. They face limited housing choices since prices are rising relative to income levels. They are active with friends and may be seeking life partners and prefer to live near city amenities like restaurants, culture, and parks.

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- People aged 35-54 may be raising families. Safety and security, good schools, and housing that offers more indoor and outdoor space become higher priorities. Cost is still very important as raising a family is expensive.
- People over 55 may be retired from work or have the goal of retiring soon. Their moves tend to bring them toward less densely settled and quieter areas, closer to nature. They may choose smaller homes, called downsizing. Since retirement can mean a fixed income, many people move to areas with a lower cost of living.

People also have preferences about the diversity of the communities they want to live in. In a 2015 poll, 90% of Americans said that one of the most important attributes of a community was “providing equal chances to all people to get ahead, through educational and economic opportunities.” More than 75% of respondents thought that ethnic and racial diversity were positive community attributes. Only about half of respondents said they preferred living among people with the same religious or political affiliations.^v

The same poll also asked people whether they thought their communities were doing a good job delivering equal opportunity to get ahead. Conduct a quick spot poll with students: Thinking about our own community, would you say that equal opportunities are available for all? Invite students to respond with a thumbs up/thumbs down or other quick assessment. Compare their responses with the national figure: 74% of Americans said they believed their community offered all people the opportunity for advancement.

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Extensions

There is almost limitless data on residential migration and community comparison. You may want to explore:

[The Opportunity Atlas](#): This data-visualization project uses anonymous data following 20 million Americans from childhood to their mid-thirties to answer the question: *Which neighborhoods in America offer children the best chance at a better life than their parents?* Powerful but intuitive tools allow students to compare two communities, look at differences in life outcomes across community borders, and to see relationships between income, education, and identity.

[“The Power of Place: How the neighborhood you grow up in affects your future,”](#) by Mark Kramer, compares neighborhoods in Pittsburgh, PA, showing how children “just a few streets away” from one another can have vastly different experiences and outcomes. Kramer interviews the creators of the Opportunity Atlas and illustrates the article with graphics and photos.

[Housing Cost Burden Map](#): This interactive map shows how many Americans are “cost-burdened” by housing, meaning their housing costs are equal to or greater than 30% of their take-home income. Students may want to explore comparative data for their own community and neighboring ones. More maps and resources are available at the [Harvard Center for Joint Housing Studies](#) site.

[Mapping Migration in the United States](#): The New York Times compiled this map. It’s accompanied by [Where We Came From and Where We Went](#) in which students can explore rich data sets that track how states have changed since 1900, seeing where people moved from and moved to, state by state.

[Interstate Migration Interactive Map](#), US Census Bureau. Students can click on a county for data on the flow of migration into and out of any area.

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[Interstate Migration, 1890](#): This map was developed from the 11th Decennial Census. Students might enjoy the challenge of comparing this primary source map with the interstate migration maps above.

North American Moving Services offers some [simple infographics based on Pew Research](#) on their page.

“The Biggest Decision of All” is a short reading on the importance of where we live from Richard Florida’s 2009 book *Who’s Your City? How the Creative Economy Is Making Where to Live the Most Important Decision of Your Life*.

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Student Reproducible: What Matters Most?

There is a lot to think about when choosing where to move. Most moves involve a trade-off - giving up something you want less to have something you want more. What's most important to you? What are you willing to trade off?

Below is a list of things that people rank highly when seeking a place to live. Rank these in order from 1 (most important to you) to 10 (least important to you). When you're done, you'll have a chance to compare your priorities with others'.

- ___ Affordability: A home you can comfortably afford
- ___ Climate: Weather and seasons you love
- ___ Scale: The right size town or city - city center, suburbs, small town, rural
- ___ Commute: A home close to your job
- ___ Culture and Amenities: Fun things to do, places to go, a vibrant scene
- ___ Demographics: A sense of belonging, a rich cultural mix, languages you speak
- ___ Family and friends: Being close to the people you love
- ___ Home Type and Size: A space that suits you and your companions
- ___ Safety: A low crime rate, a feeling of comfort at home and in the neighborhood
- ___ Work: Good job opportunities doing work you love

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My top 3:

My reasons:

1.

2.

3.

Partner's Top 3:

Partner's reasons:

1.

2.

3.

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SUPPORTING QUESTION 3: HAVE PEOPLE ALWAYS HAD FREE CHOICE ABOUT WHERE TO LIVE?

ACTIVITY 4: LEARNING FROM LIVED EXPERIENCE

Overview

When we think about housing, we often emphasize choice - the things within our control. But people's decisions about where to live and when to move have often been influenced by external conditions beyond individual control. In this project, students hear the voices of people whose experiences reveal the interplay between choice and constraint. Students conduct (or listen to pre-recorded) oral history interviews with people who moved from one place to another and/or confronted housing discrimination and learn about constraints imposed by external forces. Next, they analyze those forces using two graphic organizers to reveal the structure of the housing system.

Procedure

1. Select Interviewees or Assign Recordings

There are several approaches to this project: 1:1 or small group in-person interviews, class in-person interviews, or recorded interviews. For all in-person interviews, we recommend following a template created by the group [Reimagining Migration](#), a research and resource group that focuses on students of immigrant origin and assists educators in providing supportive classroom environments. Their project, [Moving Stories](#), helps students focus on the human experience of moving from one place to another. You may wish to download the Educator Guide, [Moving Stories in the Classroom](#), and explore the resources on their website to support your oral history work.

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1:1 or Small Group Interviews: Assign students to identify and interview people who have a story about moving from one place to another. These may be structured as a 1:1 interview or in small groups of 2-3 students per adult. Work with students to identify potential interviewees among family members, trusted adults in the community, or school staff. For some students, family stories about migration can include traumatic histories and immediate legal risks. Someone outside the family may be more comfortable to speak with. For others, discovering a previously unknown family story or connection to this content could be very meaningful. Make choices about assignments with care and provide alternative options to everyone.

Class Interviews: Conduct the interview(s) as a class by inviting one or more community members to visit the class, in person or via video link, to complete the interview. Interviewing as a class can ensure shared knowledge and an increased sense of safety and focus for both students and educators. If you choose this strategy, conduct a pre-interview with the selected speaker to be sure they can speak to the content comfortably.

Recorded Interviews: Rely on the many collections of oral history recordings that shed light on housing issues. A selection of suggested videos and additional collections of oral histories is included in this resource.

2. Preparing for the Interview

Oral history interviewing is an important historical research skill. It's worth taking time to fully prepare. [Moving Stories: An Educator's Guide to Connecting and Engaging](#) includes material you may draw on for student preparation, including student contracts, classroom norms, active listening, guidelines for interviewing, and respecting boundaries.

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3. Planning the Interview

Have students complete the student reproducibles **Oral History Interview Planner** and **Interview Script**. Ask students to share their questions in advance with the interviewer. This will help them recall and prepare their thoughts ahead of time, and ensure their willingness to talk about those topics.

4. Documenting the Interview

If possible, record the interview(s) on audio or video. This creates a valuable reference you can return to or include in a summative project. If you are creating an audio or video recording, be sure to get the participant's agreement. The Library of Congress has [sample agreement forms here](#).

It is also important for students to take notes - even if you're recording. Notes help students recall and summarize the main points of the interview content.

You may wish to take photos of your interviewees. Be sure to get their permission for photo use as well.

After each interview, ask students to summarize on the spot some of the key takeaways, referring to their notes. Create a short list of topics, dates, places, and important events. It's important to summarize as soon as possible while the interviewee's words are fresh in mind.

Ask students to write an abstract for the oral history interviews they complete, using the student reproducible **Oral History Abstract**. Help students complete the documentation of their interview by packaging the abstract together with their notes, recordings, and other materials and saving them in a physical or electronic file.

5. Following Up

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Discuss possible uses for the oral history content you have developed. And don't forget to write your interviewees a thank you note letting them know what you learned and how you will be using their information.

6. Learning from Your Research

Oral history interviews are profound personal testimony. An oral history becomes a primary source that students can use to build understanding of historical events from a personal perspective.

Following the interviews, students can analyze what the content means for their exploration of housing discrimination. Begin processing the interview content with Activities Two and Three.

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Suggested Recorded Oral History Excerpts

Interviewee Name	Source	Topics Discussed	Format	Excerpt Time Signature
Bridgett Davis	Red Line Archive	Her mother's move from Nashville to Detroit; her effort to move to an integrated neighborhood; affordability, intimidation and violence by White neighbors; difficulty securing credit; contract selling	Audio	Full segment: 6:48
Gloria Patten	Red Line Archive	Exclusion from FHA and veterans loan programs; redlining; neighborhood segregation; disinvestment	Audio	Full segment: 6:02
Peggi Nashamura Bain	Densho	Seeking housing in Chicago after World War II; discrimination from landlords	Video	Full video 0:00 - 1:29

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<u>Deborah Borglund</u>	<u>Red Line Archive</u>	Redlining; blockbusting; ethnic and racial segregation; Great Migration; neighborhood diversity; difficulty accessing credit	Audio	0:00 - 4:20
<u>Bernadine Jones</u>	<u>Rochester Voices</u>	Community involvement in education; health and housing; lead poisoning; seeking a home; experiencing unfair practices	Audio	4:05 - 6:33
<u>Mildred Pitts Walker</u>	<u>Library of Congress Civil Rights Oral History Project</u>	Marching for fair housing in LA; unfair sales practices; racial epithets; nonviolent tactics; freedom to decide where to live	Video	57:30
<u>Harold K. Brown</u>	<u>Library of Congress Civil Rights History Project</u>	Moving from the South to Pittsburgh; experiences of discrimination in the neighborhood	Video	0:00-5:47

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LaVerne Summerlin	West Side Stories, Cincinnati Public Library	<p>Migration of parents from Mississippi to Cincinnati; living in cold water tenements; moving to Lincoln Courts public housing</p>	<p>Audio</p>	<p>0:00-10:30</p>
Marguerite Williams	Richmond Community History Project	<p>Buying property as a Black family in a mostly white neighborhood; blockbusting; post-war settlement; restrictive covenants; neighborhood associations</p>	<p>Text</p>	<p>Text</p>
Ricardo Sanchez	Seattle Civil Rights and Labor History Project	<p>Moving from a mixed neighborhood in Montana to a majority White neighborhood; losing Spanish language skills</p>	<p>Video</p>	<p>Full video 0:00 - 3:25</p>
Emelda and Manuel Brown	Washington State University Civil Rights Oral History Collection	<p>Moving to Spokane, WA as a military transfer; housing discrimination on the military base and in the community; finding housing through church community</p>	<p>Audio</p>	<p>0:00 - 10:44</p>

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Emily DeCory, Irwin Shiosee, Nellie Saracino, Bertha Hicks	Oral History Center of The Bancroft Library	Agreement between Laguna Pueblo and US government to spare Laguna houses in exchange for living and working on a railroad site; Santa Fe Indian Boxcar Village	Video	0:00 - 8:58
Elayne Hunt	Civil Rights in Black and Brown	Discriminatory real estate practices; returned bank check		
Mitsuru "Mits" Kataoka	Discover Nikkei	Moving from a WWII Japanese relocation camp to Rhode Island to attend RISD; housing discrimination; segregation	Video	
Annette Epstein Jolles	Yiddish Book Center Wexler Oral History Project	Neighborhood segregation in Washington, DC; restrictive covenants; anti-Semitism	Video	9:24- 14:10

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Additional Sources for Recorded Oral Histories:

- [Library of Congress Civil Rights Oral History Collection](#)
- [History Makers: The Digital Repository for the Black Experience](#)
- [Rochester Black Freedom Struggle Online Project](#)
- [Southern Oral History Program](#)

Additional Resources for Conducting Oral History Projects:

- [Oral History Association](#)
- [Smithsonian Institution Archives: How to Do Oral History](#)
- [Library of Congress American Folklife Center: Planning an Oral History Project](#)
- [National Council on Social Studies: Oral History in the Classroom \(PDF\)](#)

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Student Reproducible: Oral History Interview Planner

Name of interviewee: _____

Date and time of Interview: _____

Why is this person a good subject for an interview? _____

What topics and experiences will this interview document? _____

What do I/we hope to learn about through this interview? _____

Look at the questions below, adapted from [Moving Stories](#). Which are the 5 most important questions for your interview? Place a checkmark next to the most important questions.

What other questions would you like to add to your interview to explore the topic of housing? Think of at least three.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

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Questions from Moving Stories:

MOTIVATION FOR MIGRATING

- There is a story behind every decision to migrate. What do you know about your family's story?
- What did your family hope for in their new life here?
- Why did your family choose to come to this community instead of somewhere else?

THE JOURNEY

- What was most difficult for your family about leaving?
- What was the journey to this new community like?
- What was the most difficult thing for your family about arriving?
- What most surprised them when they first arrived?
- Who was most helpful with getting settled in?
- Migration can be hard. Where did your family gain strength in difficult times?
- How do you think your family was changed by migration?

HOPE AND REALITIES

- How do you think your family's experience compares to their expectations?
- What have been your family's biggest challenges?
- What have been your family's biggest sources of joy?
- Can you think of times when your family has felt unwelcome because they are newcomers?
- What about when they have felt welcomed?
- What do you think your family is most proud of having accomplished?

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- What do you think are your family's hopes and dreams for the future?
- What do you think may get in the way of your family's dreams?
- What do you think may help your family's dreams come true?
- In what ways do you think your family's migration has made YOU a stronger person?

ADVICE

- If someone you knew were planning on coming to this community, what would you tell them to expect?
- If they decided to come, what advice would you give them about how to make the best of their experience?

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Student Reproducible: Oral History Interview Script

Introduction:

- Introduce yourself
- Describe the purpose of your interview
- Thank your interviewee for participating

Warmup:

Ask the following questions to establish basic information and get your interviewee talking.

- What is your full name? What would you like us to call you?
- Where were you born?
- Where do you live now and how long have you lived there?
- What else?

Topic Questions:

Use the Top 5 questions you chose from the list above and the three questions you brainstormed to create your interview script. Adjust the wording of the questions in any way that makes sense for your interview. Place these eight questions in the order you want to ask them. This will serve as your script for the interview.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

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4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

Follow-Up Questions:

Prepare a few follow-up questions that you might use to explore topics further.

1.

2.

3.

Final question:

- Is there anything you would like to add that has not been asked?

Closing the Interview:

- Thank your interviewee again for participating
- Let your interviewee know what you will be doing with the information they have shared
- Write your interviewee a thank you note

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Student Reproducible: Oral History Abstract

Write a one-paragraph summary of your interview, covering the main points and details shared. This short summary is called an “abstract.” It lets other researchers know the content of your interview without reading all the notes or listening to the recording so they can decide whether it relates to their questions.

Abstract Example:

Title

Mildred Pitts Walter oral history interview conducted by David P. Cline in San Mateo, California, 2013 March 01

Summary

Mildred Pitts Walter discusses her early life in Louisiana, attending Southern University, and moving to Los Angeles in 1944. Pitts recalls meeting Earl Walter whom she married two years later, her work with Earl who headed the Los Angeles chapter of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) from 1951 to 1963, CORE pickets of housing developers in Los Angeles, and her work as a clerk in the LA school district while getting her teaching credentials. She also discusses her career writing over 20 books for children, her work with a national association of nurses to develop culturally sensitive training, marching in the Soviet Union for peace, her ideas about civil rights and human rights. ([Library of Congress Interview](#))

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ACTIVITY 5: PUSH AND PULL

Overview

Students use the “Push and Pull” framework to understand forces that contribute to the decision to move.

Procedure

1. Introduce Push and Pull Factors

The decision to move is a big one, and people usually don’t make it lightly. Geographers, sociologists, and others who study human migration identify two forces that cause people to move from one place to another, known by the shorthand “Push” and “Pull.”

Pull Factors: People usually hope to gain something positive from moving to a new place. Researchers call the hoped-for gains “pull factors” as they pull or draw people to desired locations.

Push Factors: People may also be trying to get away from something negative. The negatives that cause people to want to leave are called “push factors” since they give people strong reasons to move away.

Some factors are personal, such as wanting to be close to family (pull). Some factors are driven by external constraints, such as being evicted from a home (push).

2. Distribute the reproducible **Push and Pull**.

Ask students to draw on what they learned from the oral history interviews to identify some push and pull factors. The worksheet asks students to organize the factors according to whether their origin is in the person (internal) or in the environment (external).

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Debrief

Compare students' responses. Ask them to provide concrete examples from their oral history explorations that fit into each quadrant on the worksheet. To conclude, ask them to think about how much control people have in their housing decisions, today and in the past.

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Student Reproducible: Push and Pull

People usually hope to gain something positive from moving to a new place. They may also be trying to get away from something negative. Geographers, sociologists, and others who study human migration identify two forces that cause people to move from one place to another, called “push” and “pull” factors.

Push factors are conditions in the current home place that make it difficult or even impossible to live there. Push factors might include:

- High unemployment
- Racial intolerance and harassment
- Changes in the family

Pull factors are conditions in another location that suggest it may be a better place to live. Pull factors could include:

- Better work opportunities
- The presence of family or a welcoming community
- Better educational opportunities

Some factors are personal, such as wanting to be close to family (pull). Some factors are driven by external constraints, such as being evicted from a home (push).

Thinking about what you have learned from your research, identify three push factors and three pull factors that can cause people to seek a new place to live.

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Choices (Internal and personal factors)	Push factors	Pull factors
1		
2		
3		
Constraints (External Factors)		
1		
2		
3		

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ACTIVITY 6: FORCES AT WORK

Overview

The PESTLE Analysis is a sorting tool that allows people to break down the kinds of forces at work in a particular situation. For this project, it highlights the types of external forces that constrain housing choices. PESTLE introduces a new level of complexity by using more abstract concepts to characterize housing decisions as part of larger systems.

Review the six categories with your students and explore them together to ensure their understanding is clear. Students can complete the PESTLE analysis as a class together or as an individual worksheet. A slide version is included.

Procedure

1. Introduce the Diagram

Create a blank PESTLE diagram on a board (or use the slide included in the Inquiry One slides) to record student input. Distribute the student reproducible PESTLE Analysis.

2. Brainstorm

Have students work in pairs or small groups to brainstorm factors they have learned that limit housing choice and note them on their sheets.

3. Group

Have students report out and add their factors to the class list. Eliminate any duplicates and combine similar ideas. Continue until all factors are mapped.

4. Display

Consider keeping this list on display as you continue exploring housing discrimination. It's likely students will find information to add to it or will want to refer to it in later projects.

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Student Reproducible: Forces at Work

A PESTLE Analysis is a tool for identifying forces that have an impact on people. We can use it to better understand the forces that have influenced people’s choices about where to live. Each letter in the acronym PESTLE stands for a different type of force.

	Type of Force	Definition and Key Question	Examples from Data
P	Political	<p>Factors that come from political processes. These could include government policies, government corruption, tax policy, government lending, or urban renewal initiatives.</p> <p>Key question: Were politics and government involved in any of the conditions that influenced people’s decisions about where to live?</p>	
E	Economic	<p>Economic factors involve money. Examples include income levels, community and real estate investments, market competition, availability of credit and loans, taxation rates, or unemployment rates.</p>	

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		<p>Key Question: How did money and credit, or the lack of it, influence who lived where?</p>	
S	Social	<p>Social factors are behaviors, attributes, and attitudes of people. Examples include family size and structure, beliefs about racial hierarchies, relationships, religion, or social movements.</p> <p>Key Question: How does human behavior play a role in who lives where?</p>	
T	Technological	<p>Technological factors relate to communications or physical structures. Examples include technology for safety and security, home technology such as appliances and plumbing, access to information technology, media representation, banking systems, surveillance, recordkeeping, and data analysis.</p>	

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		<p>Key question: How have technologies influenced where people live?</p>	
L	Legal	<p>Legal factors have a basis in law. Examples include laws about segregation and housing access, health and safety law, labor law, regulations on advertising, product safety law, Constitutional guarantees, Supreme Court decisions, etc.</p> <p>Key question: How have laws and courts played a role in where people live?</p>	
E	Environmental	<p>Environmental factors relate to natural resources and climate. They might include weather, climate, natural disasters and threats, pollution, energy sources, waste management, and open space.</p> <p>Key question: How has the environment influenced where people live?</p>	

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INQUIRY ONE NOTES

ⁱ USAFACTS 2019, “Standard of Living,” 2019 Annual Report, USAFacts.org, 2 May 2019, <https://annualreport.usafacts.org/articles/36-standard-living-americans-health-housing-largest-spending-categories-families>

ⁱⁱ Riordan Frost, “Who is Moving and Why? Seven Questions about Residential Mobility,” Housing Perspectives, Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University, 4 May 2020, <https://www.jchs.harvard.edu/blog/who-is-moving-and-why-seven-questions-about-residential-mobility>

ⁱⁱⁱ Richard Fry and D’Vera Cohn, “In 2020, Fewer Americans Moved, Exodus from Cities Slowed,” Pew Research Center, PewResearch.Org, <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2021/12/16/in-2020-fewer-americans-moved-exodus-from-cities-slowed/>

^{iv} US Census Bureau, “Why We Ask Questions About Residence 1 Year Ago/Migration,” American Community Survey, Census.gov, accessed 30 November 2021, <https://www.census.gov/acs/www/about/why-we-ask-each-question/migration/>

^v Gillian B. White, “What Do Americans Prioritize When Picking a Place to Live?” *The Atlantic Monthly*, 12 March, 2015.