

UNVARNISHED

HOUSING DISCRIMINATION IN THE NORTHERN AND WESTERN UNITED STATES

OVERVIEW OF UNVARNISHED EDUCATOR RESOURCES

THANK YOU FOR TEACHING *UNVARNISHED*. THIS AMERICAN STORY IS AN IMPORTANT PART OF HISTORY AND BUILDS ESSENTIAL UNDERSTANDINGS FOR SOLVING PROBLEMS WE FACE TODAY.

The *Unvarnished* Educator Resources are organized into four Inquiries, or modules, that can be used individually or combined into a full unit of study. The four Inquiries work in alignment with the C3 Inquiry Learning process and connect with Common Core standards. Each Inquiry is driven by a compelling question that students explore through supporting questions and classroom activities. Inquiry 4 closes with a set of large-scale summative tasks that allow students to take action on what they have learned.

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Together, the components promote these key understandings:

1. Housing matters.

Where we live impacts our health, opportunities, social environment, education, safety, and more. Neighborhoods and the built environment are linked to many other systems that influence the course of our lives.

2. Both choice and constraint play roles in housing outcomes.

Though Americans have often been able to make housing choices, they have also been constrained by external factors including housing discrimination.

3. The United States has high levels of residential segregation.

Neighborhoods and cities in the US are divided by race, ethnicity, and income. Most Americans still live in racially segregated neighborhoods.

4. Segregation results from policy.

Residential segregation was and is not just a result of personal choices or individual prejudice. It developed through intentional policies at many levels of government, business, and community. The effects of those policies are still influencing life today, contributing to wealth inequality, access to opportunity, and disproportionate health outcomes.

5. Housing is a system.

Available housing choices are defined by an interconnected system of economic, social, geographical, and political conditions, among others. This system can be changed through citizen engagement.

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The four Inquiry modules, with their supporting questions and classroom activities, are:

INQUIRY 1: WHY DO WE LIVE WHERE WE LIVE?

Supporting Question 1: What makes a home?

- Activity 1: My Future Home

Supporting Question 2: How do people choose a home?

- Activity 2: Housing Choices
- Activity 3: What Matters Most?

Supporting Question 3: Have people always had free choice about where to live?

- Activity 4: Learning from Lived Experience
- Activity 5: Push and Pull
- Activity 6: Forces at Work

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HOUSING DISCRIMINATION IN THE NORTHERN AND WESTERN UNITED STATES

INQUIRY 2: HOW DID THE US BECOME SO SEGREGATED?

Supporting Question 1: What is segregation?

- Activity 1: Concept Mapping

Supporting Question 2: How did segregation happen?

- Activity 2: Learning from Primary Sources
- Activity 3: Building a Timeline

Supporting Question 3: How have people experienced housing segregation?

- Activity 4: Reading a Historic Image
- Activity 5: One-Page Research Report

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HOUSING DISCRIMINATION IN THE NORTHERN AND WESTERN UNITED STATES

INQUIRY 3: HOW HAS HOUSING DISCRIMINATION IMPACTED US?

Supporting Question 1: What was redlining, and what are its effects?

- Activity 1: How the Lines Were Drawn
- Activity 2: Reading Residential Security Maps

Supporting Question 2: How were property deeds used to discriminate?

- Activity 1: Reading Property Deeds
- Activity 2: Covenant for the Future

Supporting Question 3: What is land use zoning, and how has it been used to exclude?

- Activity 1: Zoning Basics
- Activity 2: Zoning Board
- Activity 3: Planning Board
- Activity 4: Yesterday and Today

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INQUIRY FOUR: WHAT CAN PEOPLE DO ABOUT RESIDENTIAL SEGREGATION?

Supporting Question 1: What is our local community's housing history?

- Activity 1: Comparing Community Stories
- Activity 2: Beginning Your Local History Research
- Activity 3: Exploring the Census
- Activity 4: Tracking Community Change
- Activity 5: Getting into the Archives

Supporting Question 2: What does it take to make change in the housing system?

- Activity 6: Systems Mapping
- Activity 7: Meet a Changemaker
- Activity 8: Identifying Current Housing Issues

Supporting Question 4: Is housing a right?

- Activity 9: Points of View
- Activity 10: SPAR Debate

Concluding Conversation and Summative Tasks

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BACKGROUND FOR EDUCATORS

The *Unvarnished* website contains the project’s key background content. Articles and historic images relate the history of residential segregation and describe policy mechanisms that excluded or removed people from homes. The site also contains six Spotlight stories sharing local histories of residential racial segregation from towns and cities across the nation’s North, Midwest, and West. We hope you will use the *Unvarnished* website as a teaching companion and a source of background knowledge.

Student versions of the *Unvarnished* articles are provided for your use in the classroom. These PDFs contain visuals, simplified language, and age-appropriate content. If you elect to use the articles directly from the *Unvarnished* website, be aware that you will need to preview each article and its links before assigning 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.

For even more resources to support *Unvarnished*, visit the [Resources](#) page on the project website. Please note that 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.