

UNVARNISHED

HOUSING DISCRIMINATION IN THE NORTHERN AND WESTERN UNITED STATES



EDUCATOR RESOURCES NOTEBOOK

unvarnishedhistory.org

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Unvarnished: Housing Discrimination in the Northern and Western United States© and *Teaching Unvarnished*© were developed and hosted by the Naperville Heritage Society and Naper Settlement.

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DEAR EDUCATORS,

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



Courtesy of the
Naperville Heritage Society

We know that teaching this history can pose unique challenges. Some of your students may have experienced discrimination or trauma in their lives, including in school settings. Topics such as discriminatory housing practices and exclusion can impact students of color and/or people who have struggled with housing insecurity, eviction, or other housing issues. Here are ideas to help prepare you and your students to discuss this history.

Some students will be able to approach this curriculum by intellectualizing the intersecting structures that influence the way our country has addressed housing—including racism, religious discrimination, and issues of economic status—while others grapple with the ongoing effects of the lived experience of those structures. Yet others might struggle to identify with the issues of housing insecurity and the structures that have made homeownership and housing difficult, if not impossible, for many. This can make discussions about housing difficult as students are coming to this material through different “ways of knowing.”

Avoid declaring your classroom a “safe space” for these discussions as safety looks different for every student based on their own lived experience. Rather, set clear guidelines with your students before beginning this curriculum. Guidelines establish the group’s expectations for how all participants will engage with each other and can be helpful in preparing a group to engage with integrity.

Guidelines are always more effective and more likely to be upheld by your students if they develop them themselves. To help them generate guidelines unique to your learning community, you might ask:

- What do you need in order to speak more openly and listen with curiosity?
- What are your concerns about talking about these topics?
- What would productive conversations around these topics look like?
- How can I help you to do your best work on these topics?

Remember that guidelines should be responsive to challenges that arise in your classroom—and larger community—and should be specific to the unique culture(s) and content within your immediate environment. You may find inspiration in some of these ideas:

Lean into the hard.

Learning new information is often complicated, especially when it challenges previously held beliefs. We commit to leaning in and sticking with it, even when things get uncomfortable.

Assume good intent.

We will make missteps in talking about these issues. We commit to giving each other the benefit of the doubt and the chance to further explain.

Stay engaged.

Defensiveness can cause us to become dismissive. We're committed to staying engaged with this content and with each other.

You do not need a clear position to speak.

It's okay to be confused and to change your mind.

Use "I" statements.

Avoid speaking on behalf of others or making broad generalizations about groups of people.

Throughout these lessons, regularly remind students of the guidelines, and ask your students if any of them need to be amended or if new guidelines need to be added.

In addition to guidelines, consider the non-negotiables surrounding this content. Racial, religious, and ethnic discrimination in housing happened. You can and should be unapologetic in your critique of the systems that enable discrimination to occur. Being clear about naming non-negotiables can help you more effectively respond when students articulate ideas that are factually incorrect. In those cases, you might try:

- **GATHERING MORE INFORMATION AND INVITING SELF-REFLECTION.**

Keep these questions/statements short and clearly worded. Try: "Tell me more about that."
"How did you come to that?" or "What experiences have you had with that?"

- **ENCOURAGING YOUR STUDENTS TO REFRAME THEIR BELIEFS AS QUESTIONS.**

For example: if a student were to say, "I don't think there's discrimination; people just like to live with other people who are like them," you might ask them: "People like the

Shelley family, W. Ashbie Hawkins, and William Warley were interested in moving to homes in a mostly White neighborhood where they would be living with people of another race. Can you help me understand that?"

- **USING THE HISTORICAL SOURCES PROVIDED IN UNVARNISHED.**

Try: "It's not enough just to say we believe in something; we have to be able to articulate and support our positions. Given all of the sources we've examined, why does that idea persist?"

AND SOME FINAL THINGS TO REMEMBER:

- Avoid asking students to share from their personal experiences with housing, racism, religious discrimination, or economic instability.
- Work with your students to stay in the "could," i.e., what could local governments put in place to address these issues? "Could" can generate possibilities. By contrast, "should" and "would" statements often invoke judgment or shame, which can inhibit or limit personal learning.
- Be aware of your own positions on the issues raised in this curriculum. Teachers of all backgrounds can be equally effective in leading this content, yet students may respond differently to you on the basis of what they perceive about your identity and/or lived experience.
- Stay focused during these conversations and activities, and move through groups when they are engaged in classroom work. Asking students to examine these topics can cause discomfort, and discomfort can lead to microaggressions—subtle, often unintentional, interactions or behaviors that convey bias and perpetuate stereotypes. When possible, address these in the moment they happen, and then continue the conversation and activities.

WE HOPE YOU AND YOUR STUDENTS WILL FIND THAT LEARNING WITH UNVARNISHED LEADS TO RICH DISCUSSIONS AND NEW KNOWLEDGE THAT PREPARES THEM WELL FOR THEIR LIVES AS ACTIVE CITIZENS. WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING THE RESULTS OF YOUR LEARNING.

EDUCATOR OVERVIEW

HOW TO USE THE *UNVARNISHED* EDUCATOR RESOURCES



Courtesy of the
Naperville Heritage Society

Housing history affects every community. With the *Unvarnished Educator Resources*, we invite you and your students to discover and share the local dimensions of national housing patterns and policy and see them through the wide lens of American history.

During the five years of research, development, and design of *Unvarnished: Housing Discrimination in the Northern and Western United States* we have had many teachers, administrators, principals, and superintendents from across the country ask us to create materials designed just for educators. The online exhibit contains essential background information to understand the history of residential segregation through its 16 national context and 6 local spotlight articles, primary materials, oral histories, and expert interviews. Together, they provide an important overview of the tools and systems that were put in place to segregate the nation through sundown towns and discriminatory real estate practices. We encourage you to thoroughly read the articles and watch the explainer and oral history videos throughout the exhibit. *Some of the materials, resources, and links in the exhibit may not be suitable for use in your classroom.*

The **EDUCATOR RESOURCES** section of the *Unvarnished* web site is designed especially for the middle and high school classroom. We've taken the articles, activities, and resources from the main sections of the *Unvarnished* online exhibit and tailored and scaffolded them to meet the needs of today's students. Due to the material being curated and created for a wide age range, we ask that you use your expertise and your students' funds of knowledge and background to differentiate the material provided when necessary.

The 16 national context articles and 6 local spotlight articles are rewritten into student-focused PDFs containing primary materials, simplified language, and age-appropriate content. These are clearly labeled **STUDENT ARTICLES**.

We hope you will use the *Unvarnished* website and its **EDUCATOR RESOURCES** section as a teaching companion and a source of background knowledge for your students.

BEFORE USING UNVARNISHED IN YOUR CLASSROOM AND WITH YOUR STUDENTS:

You will need to preview ALL materials, including articles and their links, in *Unvarnished* for suitability in your classroom and before assigning them to your students. This is especially important if you choose not to use the clearly marked **STUDENT ARTICLES** in the **EDUCATOR RESOURCES** section of the exhibit.

Primary sources, articles, and the linked resource materials, especially in the main sections of the exhibit, may contain racial epithets, academic terms associated with the study of race and ethnicity, and other elements that may require scaffolding by the educator. We encourage you to preview ALL content before determining whether to share it with students.

The *Unvarnished* Educator Resources are organized into four Inquiries, or modules, that can be used singly 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 State Standards. Each Inquiry is driven by a compelling question that students explore through supporting questions and classroom activities. Inquiry Four closes with a set of large-scale summative tasks that allow students to take action on what they have learned.

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 U.S. 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.

INQUIRY ONE

WHY DO WE LIVE WHERE WE LIVE?

Students consider the meaning of “home” through vision boards and ranked-choice organizers, and discover what people value in a place to live. Then, working with oral histories, they discover how constraints play a role in housing decisions and analyze forces that combine to generate housing patterns.

SUPPORTING QUESTION 1 | WHAT MAKES A HOME?

Lesson 1: My Future Home

SUPPORTING QUESTION 2 | HOW DO PEOPLE CHOOSE A HOME?

Lesson 2: Housing Choices

Lesson 3: What Matters Most?

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

Lesson 4: Learning from Lived Experience

Lesson 5: Push and Pull

Lesson 6: Forces at Work

INQUIRY TWO

HOW DID THE U.S. BECOME SO SEGREGATED?

Students interrogate the concept of “segregation” from the 1890s to today, building a timeline to organize key events. They practice reading historic images to develop a one-page research project on a specific fair housing story and explore legal and policy tools that separated American communities.

SUPPORTING QUESTION 1 | WHAT IS SEGREGATION?

Lesson 1: Concept Mapping

SUPPORTING QUESTION 2 | HOW DID SEGREGATION HAPPEN?

Lesson 2: Using Historical Evidence

Lesson 3: Building a Timeline

SUPPORTING QUESTION 3 | HOW HAVE PEOPLE EXPERIENCED HOUSING SEGREGATION?

Lesson 4: Reading a Historic Image

Lesson 5: One-Pager Research Report

INQUIRY THREE

HOW HAS HOUSING DISCRIMINATION IMPACTED US?

Using maps and primary documents, students discover how redlining, deed restrictions, and zoning policies have had long-lasting effects on American residential patterns. Then they role-play zoning and planning decisions that guide community development.

SUPPORTING QUESTION 1 | WHAT WAS REDLINING, AND WHAT WERE ITS EFFECTS?

Lesson 1: The Building Boom

Lesson 2: How the Lines Were Drawn

SUPPORTING QUESTION 2 | HOW WERE PROPERTY DEEDS USED TO DISCRIMINATE?

Lesson 3: Exclusive Deeds

Lesson 4: Covenant for the Future

SUPPORTING QUESTION 3 | WHAT IS LAND-USE ZONING, AND HOW HAS IT BEEN USED TO EXCLUDE?

Lesson 5: Zoning Basics

Lesson 6: Zoning Board

Lesson 7: Yesterday and Today

INQUIRY FOUR

WHAT CAN PEOPLE DO ABOUT RESIDENTIAL SEGREGATION?

Students delve into original research to discover local housing history. Using systems mapping, they identify potential barriers and find entry points to change. They profile fair housing leaders and design an infographic to represent a contemporary housing issue. Finally, they debate the question of housing as a human right.

SUPPORTING QUESTION 1 | WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO MAKE CHANGE IN THE HOUSING SYSTEM?

Lesson 1: Systems Mapping

Lesson 2: Meet a Changemaker

Lesson 3: Become an Issue Expert

SUPPORTING QUESTION 2 | IS THERE A RIGHT TO HOUSING?

Lesson 4: Points of View

Lesson 5: SPAR (SPontaneous ARgumentation) Debate

SUMMATIVE PROJECT | WHAT IS OUR COMMUNITY'S HOUSING HISTORY?

Lesson 6: Comparing Community Stories

Lesson 7: Exploring the Census

Lesson 8: Tracking Community Change

Lesson 9: Beginning Your Local History Research

Lesson 10: Get into the Archives



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