

MILWAUKEE'S CULTURAL CONNECT: HOMELESS AMERICANS

Teacher Guide

This program includes (1) your input (which can be modified any way you wish), (2) a video (divided into two parts) that describes the Milwaukee homeless experience presented by a formerly homeless anthropologist, (3) talking points with images you can print out from this site, (4) a game of jeopardy to help students retain information, and (5) a pre-/post-test survey to evaluate the program.

Small prizes may be offered. Or you might print out the cultural FACEBALL CARDS on this site as prizes.

PART ONE: INTRODUCTION

1. Explain that students will be learning about the practices and history of homeless Americans
2. Explain the concept of “culture” to the students (people who are chronically homeless develop their own subculture, which is a division of a larger culture)

Culture

Cultural traits are any kinds of behaviors or ideas or beliefs that are SHARED by a group—meaning that a high percentage of the people practice these behaviors or beliefs. The cultural traits develop because people are adapting or adjusting to something in their environment. For example, if the group lives in an area where people are at war all the time, they might become more of a warrior society themselves to protect their group, and they might then believe that the finest people are those who are good fighters. If a group is discriminated against, they might learn that their only way to survive is to really stick together as a group, as they can't rely on help from the outside.

A subculture is a smaller group within a larger group that has different practices. They are also adapting to something in their environment.

3. Pass out homeless American timeline (if desired)
4. Conduct the pre-test survey (if desired)
5. Have students count off to divide into four groups (numbered one, two, three, four) and pick group leaders, for later discussions and game

PART TWO: EXPLAIN HOW THE VIDEO WILL WORK

1. Tell students that the cultural anthropologist is a formerly homeless anthropologist
2. Tell them they will also see excerpts from a documentary where local homeless Americans discuss their culture in their own words
3. Tell them that parts of the video will be covered later in discussions and a game of Jeopardy—hence they might want to take notes
4. The video will be paused once so students can take part in discussions
5. Explain that you will write questions on the board for discussion after the video is paused

PART THREE: VIDEO (FIRST SECTION)

While the video is on, write these questions (and any others you deem important) on the board:

1. What are ways you believe people can become homeless? (This will be covered in the second half of the video.)
2. What are ways that individuals and society can prevent people from becoming homeless?

The video narrator will tell you when to pause the video

PART FOUR: STUDENTS RESPOND TO QUESTION

1. In their groups, students should come up with lists of ways they believe people can become homeless.
2. In their groups, students should come up with lists of things that might prevent people from becoming homeless—things individuals can do and things society can do.
3. Group leaders should report out, then hand in the lists with their group numbers on sheets of paper.

PART FIVE: VIDEO (LAST SECTION)

While this section is aired, you can tabulate the best responses on the lists, for later prizes, if applicable.

Here you might give out Faceball Cards (or some other prizes) to the students and select some topics in this section of the video to discuss later. Some might be the following:

PART SIX: TALKING POINTS

1. Do you remember the reference to the football player who had been homeless? There are many celebrities in America who came from homelessness.

You might first ask what the students already know about this.

Formerly homeless celebrities (see images on this site)

Names include football star James Jones, actress Hilary Swank, TV star Brett Butler, business entrepreneur Steve Jobs, American Idol winner Kelly Clarkson, and actress Halle Berry.

2. (Select another talking point if you wish.)

PART SEVEN: GAME/EVALUATION

1. Engage the four groups in the game of Jeopardy, which can be accessed on this site (prizes or Faceball cards may be handed out, if desired).
2. Conduct the post-test survey (if desired), which can be accessed on this site.