High Rise Stories Curriculum

Introduction

The Voice of Witness Education Program staff hopes that you find this curriculum useful in exploring the contemporary issues embedded in the stories from Chicago public housing residents.

This curriculum reflects the goals of our program: literacy, communication, community-building, and critical thinking. The first four lessons challenge students to explore contemporary social justice and equity issues through written analysis and reflection, a Socratic seminar, a Town Hall Circle, creative exploration, and small-group activities. We've incorporated literature, film, art, and writing, with the goal of creating multiple points of entry that connects with students' various interests and skill sets.

For this unit, we've created the lessons to be explored sequentially, with a culminating mural project. It is our hope that arts and humanities teachers will have an opportunity to collaborate. This version utilizes drawing and painting, and could easily encompass photography and other visual or literary arts. Imagine the resource as a dialogue between educators, with plenty of space created for new ideas and approaches. We encourage classrooms and communities to document the process and final mural project and share them with the Voice of Witness Education Program.

We're excited for teachers and students to turn their critical thinking and written reflections into art. Not only is the mural project an authentic assessment tool, but is also a powerful reminder about the role of art as a means for civic engagement. Voice of Witness welcomes suggestions and feedback as part of our commitment to providing useful and relevant oral history-based curriculum to U.S. schools.

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VOICE OF WITNESS

Curriculum Map

Themes	Concepts of Home	Exploring Rights and Obligations	Policing and the Criminal Justice System
Language	English	English	English
Standards	Speaking and Listening SL.9-10.1, SL.9-10.5. Language L.9-10.5. Writing W.9-10.3. Reading History RH.9-10.2, RH.9-10.4 Language L9-10.1	Speaking and Listening SL.9-10.1, SL.9-10.5. Language L.9-10.5. Writing W.9-10.3. Reading History RH.9-10.2, RH.9-10.4 Language L9-10.1	Speaking and Listening SL.9-10.1, SL.9-10.5. Language L.9-10.5. Writing W.9-10.3. Reading History RH.9-10.2, RH.9-10.4 Language L9-10.1
Recommended Narrator(s)	Dolores Wilson Denise Jenkins	Lloyd "Pete" Haywood Dawn Knight	Donnell Furlow Chandra Bell
Student Objectives	Students will explore the ideas of home and community through oral history narrative, participate in a Socratic Seminar, and evaluate their opinions and findings through a short critical reflection.	Students will be able to identify the differences between legal rights and societal obligations, exploring these topics through the lens of oral history and other primary source documents.	Students will explore the goals and efficacy of the police and the criminal justice system through analyzing first-person accounts of public housing residents who've been most directly impacted by them.
Ethnic Studies-Aligned Topics	• Power, Privilege, and Oppression • Human Rights • Environmental Racism • Civil Rights and Government Responsibilities • Empathy and Understanding Others	• Environmental Racism and Health Inequities • Civil Rights and Government Responsibilities • Human Rights	• Power, Privilege, and Oppression • Institutional Violence • Origins, identity, Culture • Environmental Racism • Empathy and Understanding Others • Justice and Injustice

Theme	Creating a Housing Bill of Rights	Mural/Collaborative Painting Project: Advocating for Social Justice Through Public Art	
Language	English	English	
Standards	Reading History RH.9—10.1, RH.9—10.5, RH.9—10.7, Speaking and Listening SL.9—10.1, SL.9—10.2, Language L.9-10.1	Speaking and Listening SL.9-10.1, SL.9-10.5. Language L.9-10.5. Writing W.9-10.3. Reading History RH.9-10.2, RH.9-10.4 Language L9-10.1	
Recommended Narrator(s)	Any narratives from *High Rise Stories* will be applicable.	Dolores Wilson Denise Jenkins Lloyd "Pete" Haywood Dawn Knight Donnell Furlow Chandra Bell	
Student Objectives	Students will utilize the direct human experiences in *High Rise Stories*, along with other primary source documents, to create a democratically-adopted Housing Bill of Rights.	Students will advocate for social justice in their community through the creation of public art. Students will create a symbolic representation/response to the rich readings and discussions from the *High Rise Stories* unit in the form of a public mural/collaborative art project.	
Ethnic Studies-Aligned Topics	• Civil Rights and Government Responsibilities • Empathy and Understanding Others • Systems and Power	• Community Engagement • Identity and Personal Narrative	

Lesson One: Concepts of Home

"Here were places marked by at times utterly inhuman conditions, and yet residents considered these buildings home."
—Alex Kotlowitz

Time Needed: Two class periods

Materials: Dolores's and Denise's narratives from *High Rise Stories,* copies of the Chicago Public Housing Fact Sheet, large butcher paper, colored markers, plain white paper, cell phone cameras (optional), computer, projector, Facing History and Ourselves Socratic Seminar resource: http://www.facinghistory.org/resources/strategies/socratic-seminar

Objective: Students will explore the ideas of home and community through oral history narrative, participate in a Socratic Seminar, and evaluate their opinions and findings through a short critical reflection.

Related Core Curriculum Standards: Speaking and Listening SL.9-10.1, SL.9-10.5. Language L.9-10.5. Writing W.9-10.3. Reading History RH.9-10.2, RH.9-10.4 Language L9-10.1

Connections: This lesson can be used with any of the narratives from *High Rise Stories.*

Narrative Excerpt: "When they told us that we had to leave, I'm thinking, fifty-three years in Cabrini. They gave us letters letting us know how many days. . . And it was hard for me. I was eighty-two years old when I moved. I didn't want to give up my apartment, and it was only two bedrooms . . . I had so many mementos and they made me move too fast to hold on to them. Now I cannot find my wedding pictures. I don't have one picture of me and my husband and my parents and his parents and our wedding cake that my aunt made. . . my husband's trophies are gone now. I didn't have the help to get those out of the closet, you know, and no boxes! I just had to leave them."
—Dolores Wilson, p. 37-38, *High Rise Stories* (Ed. Audrey Petty)

Essential Questions:

- Do you believe the government should provide housing to those who can't afford it? Why or why not?
- In your opinion, is public housing offered fairly in our country?
- How does an outsider's opinion about a neighborhood or community differ from an insider's?

Day One

Overview
In this lesson, students will reflect on what "home" means to them, and what elements come together to create one. Students will brainstorm pros and cons of public housing, and discuss

how Dolores' story reveals potential risks or benefits of public housing, connecting the ideas of housing and home.

Step One: Students respond to the following written prompt: (5 minutes)

- What does "home" mean to you? Is it defined by a place, a family, a feeling, a community? Something else? Explain.

Step Two: Read Dolores's narrative from *High Rise Stories*. This can be done as a class, using popcorn reading, in small groups, or as individual silent reading. Alternatively, the students could have read the narrative the night before for homework if class time is limited (20 minutes).

Step Three: Journaling activity. Write the following prompt on the board, and ask students to spend 10 minutes free-writing (10 minutes):

- Think about Dolores's emotional journey throughout her narrative. Can you identify with her feelings of loss, grief, or displacement? What would it feel like to be forced out of the home where you've lived for over 50 years?

Step Four: Pair share. Ask students to find a partner and discuss their answers to the journal prompt (5 minutes).

Step Five: To prepare students for the Pro/Con chart, hand out the Chicago Public Housing Fact Sheet and read it together as a class. Check for understanding and answer any questions students may have about public housing (10 minutes).

Step Six: Pro/Con chart. On the board, create a T-chart with PROS on one side and CONS on the other. As a class, brainstorm the pros and cons, or benefits and potential risks of public housing. Encourage the class to cite specific examples from Dolores's story. Examples may include: sense of community, shelter for people who otherwise might not be able to afford it, violence in the Chicago high rises, dilapidated buildings, low motivation for the city to make changes (15 minutes).

Step Six: Closing discussion/conclusions (10 minutes).

Homework: Ask each student to bring either a photograph (cell phone camera is fine) or, if they don't have access to a camera, a sketch of something that reminds them of home. This could be a person, an object, a neighborhood, a building, or a vignette. Along with the image, write a one-paragraph description of its significance.

Day Two

Overview
In this lesson, students will consider their own opinions on the right to public housing, and then engage in a classwide Socratic Seminar to further discuss nuances in the policies and ethics

surrounding public housing communities. Students will use a narrative from *High Rise Stories* as a jumping-off point for the discussion, using active reading strategies to formulate questions about the narrative's themes.

Step One: Students respond to the following written prompt (5 minutes):

- Do you believe that people should be totally responsible for themselves, despite their circumstances, or does government/society have an obligation to assist them if they can't afford housing or other basic needs? Explain.

Step Two: Using popsicle sticks with students' names on them, draw five names and ask those students to share their answers with the class (5 minutes).

Step Three: Homework check-in: Ask students to email their pictures and/or turn in their sketches and descriptions (2 minutes).

Step Four: Write the following short excerpt from Denise Jenkins's narrative on the board and read it as a class (5 minutes):

> "All your kids play together. That's when you become a big family. One of us might get a job and be like, "Hey neighbor, can you watch my kid?" That's how it went, and it was real nice. Friends and family living there. Me, my mother, my aunties, some of the uncles, and some of my friends. Cabrini's really my home. When I was a little girl, we used to have ramps to run up and down off the balconies, we used to play jump rope and hide-and-go-seek, but we also used to be safe from the bullets. There was lots of the neighbors outside and we was on the ramps, so we were safe." –p. 150

Step Five: Socratic Seminar (45 minutes). Now that the students have read a narrative from *High Rise Stories*, learned some basic facts about public housing, and explored the topic via yesterday's class brainstorm, they'll engage in a Socratic Seminar. As a first step, ask students to write an open-ended question they have about Dolores's narrative or about the right to housing. After everyone has written down a question, arrange the desks/chairs in a circle. With the teacher serving as facilitator, begin the Socratic Seminar. The teacher may use the following prompts throughout the discussion if needed:

- How long should a person or a family be able to stay in public housing?
- Where should the money used to support public housing come from?
- How should the rules around public housing be regulated? What are the potential challenges of those rules and regulations being applied across the board?
- Does a family having children impact your opinion about whether or not they are entitled to public housing?
- How should the disproportionate occurrence of violence and drugs in public housing be addressed? Who is responsible for working to fix it—the city government? The residents? The entire community?
- Does the debate around public housing apply to anything specific in your life? How so?

After the discussion has wrapped up, return the desks/chairs to their original places. Draw five popsicle sticks with students' names on them, and ask those students to share out their reflections about the Socratic Seminar. How was it different than less structured class discussions? Do they feel that everyone got a chance to be heard? Did the Socratic Seminar format help to deepen or enrich the conversation about public housing and *High Rise Stories*? Did new perspectives inform or change their opinions at all?

Step Six: As homework, ask students to have a discussion with someone at home (a parent, guardian, sibling, neighbor, etc.) about public housing. Encourage the students to share the information they've learned about public housing in class, incorporating the questions and prompts from the Socratic Seminar. Students will then write a two-paragraph critical reflection about how their discussions about public housing have either strengthened their opinions about public housing or changed them.

Possible Oral History Project:
Students choose two to three family members, neighbors, or community members, ideally of different generations, and conduct 30-minute interviews about home/community. After the interviews have been completed and portions have been transcribed, students can either create a series of mini-narratives about their family's concept of home, or write a critical essay comparing and contrasting the varying feelings about home/community among a family's different generations.

Media Options:
Voices of Cabrini: Remaking Chicago Public Housing (dirs Ronit Bezalel, Antonio Ferrara 1999. Ronitfilms Co.). Shot over a four-year period, this gripping documentary chronicles the demolition of Cabrini Green from the perspectives of residents, community activists and local business owners.
https://vimeo.com/8207992

A Raisin in the Sun (Lorraine Hansberry, 1959). Taking place in the aftermath of World War II, Hansberry's iconic American play follows the Younger family, living in the south side of Chicago, as they battle racism and wrestle with identity in pursuit of their individual American dreams.

Clybourne Park (Bruce Norris, 2010). Written in response to *A Raisin in the Sun,* this Tony award-winning play takes place in two acts, 50 years apart: the first act picking up where *A Raisin in the Sun* leaves off, with community leaders try to halt a home sale to the Younger family. In the second act, set in the present day, the same neighborhood (now predominantly African-American) tries to hold its ground while facing gentrification.

Lesson Two: Exploring Rights and Obligations

Time Needed: 2 class periods

Materials Needed: *High Rise Stories*, excerpts from the U.S Bill of Rights, The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (included), The Swedish Model (courtesy of the Constitutional Rights Foundation), *Amazing Grace* by Jonathan Kozol, *The Case Against Affordable Housing* from the Trenton Downtowner, and index cards.

Objective: To examine the differences between legal rights and societal obligations through the lens of oral history and other primary source documents.

Related Core Curriculum Standards: Speaking and Listening SL.9-10.1, SL.9-10.5. Language L.9-10.5. Writing W.9-10.3. Reading History RH.9-10.2, RH.9-10.4 Language L9-10.1

Connections: This lesson can be adapted for any book in the Voice of Witness series, exploring different contemporary issues (immigration, security, displacement, women's rights, etc).

Essential Questions:

- What are the differences between civil rights, economic rights and societal obligations? How do they intersect? How do the differences impact the narrators in *High Rise Stories?*
- How open to interpretation are the words "rights" and "obligations?"
- How does the U.S. Bill of Rights differ from the Swedish Model and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights?
- How do people's political perspectives, and/or personal experiences, shape their opinions about public housing and other societal issues?

Narrative Excerpts:

"You had tenants with video cameras outside on their balconies recording the places where they figure people who was public housing, and it was apparent to me from the first day. One day I was right outside changing my flat tire, and I'm looking at the people peeping out their windows. I'm thinking, all these people looking out the window about to call 911, but didn't nobody see nobody break into my car. I went to the building management about my car and they tell me they can't really see anything on the footage from their cameras, but let something happen to the homeowner, then they gonna see everything. Someone going to jail. I'm coming to the conclusion now with CHA and even with this country today: the laws they make is not the laws for us, the laws they make are to be exercised on us. Expediently. Laws are not for us. They're not to protect us." —Lloyd "Pete" Haywood

"Around 1988, someone shot and killed a policeman in the neighborhood. The shooting happened in the evening and the gunfire came from one of the buildings. Maybe hours later, early morning after the shooting, there were forty-five policemen lined up on the fire lane right outside. It was four or five in the morning and it was hot—even if you have a fan, the apartment gets so hot you just can't sleep—so lots of people were out on their balconies, trying to cool off. We saw the police in formation. It took a while to figure out that they were about to go door to door to search each apartment. Now, it's sixteen floors and there are ten apartments on each floor. And it's probably eight to ten buildings. They went to each building, each apartment with CHA management and they

searched our apartments.

They did all of this without a warrant. At the time we didn't know they needed one. I found out later they should have that. But to degrade someone like that, invading people's homes—we were already the lowest of the low. It's sad that the cop got shot, but where were these raids when children were getting shot? They never went door to door when a little kid got shot. They never went door to door when a woman was abused, or shot or whatever. What was so different? Why was his life valued more than our lives?" —Dawn Knight

Day One

Overview
In this lesson, students will consider definitions and perimeters of the concepts of rights and societal obligations, then using a VOW narrative to explore the topic on the level of the individual. Students will employ active reading strategies to engage with the narrative, and share their thoughts with peers in group discussion.

Step One: As a warm up activity, students respond to the following written prompt (5 minutes):

What comes to mind when you think of the word "rights?" Explore all aspects of the word and then create a one-sentence definition.

Step Two: Students work in pairs to share their ideas and definitions. Each group then creates their own one to two sentence definition of the word "rights" (5 minutes).

Step Three: Have a class discussion about the various definitions and create a working definition of "rights" incorporating ideas from the previous activity (7-10 minutes).

Step Four: Share the following definition of "rights" from Webster's Dictionary:

"Moral or legal entitlement to have or obtain something or to act in a certain way."

How similar/different is this to the definition the class created? Share the definition of the word "obligation" as well:

"An act or course of action to which a person is morally or legally bound; a duty or commitment."

Have a brief class discussion comparing/contrasting all three definitions (5-7 minutes).

Step Five: In groups of four, read Dawn Knight's narrative from *High Rise Stories* (20 minutes). Reading can be done as Sustained Silent Reading or aloud. If reading is done aloud, employ Popcorn reading format. Encourage students to use active reading strategies. Each student in the group will be assigned one of the four following roles:

Summarizer: Provides a brief, written or oral summary of the story for the group. The student in this role is the first to present after the reading is completed.

Vocabulary Helper: Defines new words for the group.

Connector: Finds connections between the story and the world outside. The Connector can incorporate personal observations, connections to other current events, or other literature being read in class.

Discussion Director: Facilitates a group discussion using provided prompts and questions of their own, such as "Did anything surprise you about this story?"

Step Six: After completing Dawn's narrative, groups fulfill their roles and present their findings to the other members of the group. The Discussion Director incorporates the following questions (and more) into the discussion (10 minutes):

- Who is directly or indirectly responsible for the challenges that Dawn faced as a resident of public housing? How far can you trace this responsibility?
- How do your personal opinions or perspectives influence your response to the previous question?
- Dawn's story contains events in which she felt her rights were violated. Which rights was she referring to?
- Are our rights as citizens upheld equally? Dawn's story is one example; can you think of others?
- What social, cultural, or historical forces impact how our legal rights are upheld?

Step Seven: Before leaving class, each student fills out an exit card addressing the following prompt (3-5 minutes):

List two things that "complicated" your thinking about rights and societal obligations in the United States.

Day Two

Overview
In this lesson, students will participate in a Town Hall Circle Activity to facilitate discussion around a set of texts which explore different perspectives on public housing. Students will consider how perspective and experience shape the narratives provided, and reflect on how their own ideas were impacted during the discussion.

Step One: As a warm up activity, students do a written reflection on the following quotes. Reflections should include student's opinions about which quote they agree with more and why (5 minutes).

"What we don't have a right to is healthcare, housing, or handouts. We don't have those rights."
—Glenn Beck

"A decent standard of housing for all is one of the irreducible obligations of modern civilization."
—President Harry Truman

Step Two: Students do a pair share, discussing their written reflections (5 minutes).

Step Three: Town Hall Circle Activity (adapted from Facing History and Ourselves):

Split students into the same groups of four as the reading groups from the previous class. Each group will receive one of the following excerpts to read. Before reading, students should receive brief introductions to the texts being used. If needed, students can create a short Critical Vocabulary List that includes space for a word's meaning and an opportunity to use it in a sentence. (15 minutes):

1. Lloyd "Pete" Haywood excerpt from *High Rise Stories* (pp.203-204)

2. Excerpts from the U.S, Bill of Rights, *The Swedish Model: Welfare for Everyone* (Constitutional Rights Foundation): http://www.crf-usa.org/bill-of-rights-in-action/bria-14-3-c-the-swedish-model-welfare-for-everyone, Articles 7, 12, and 25 from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

3. *The Case Against Affordable Housing*: Article from Trenton Downtowner http://livingonthenet.com/Trenton/The%20case%20against%20affordable%20housing.htm

4. Excerpt from *Amazing Grace* by Jonathan Kozol (pp. 61-64)

Groups can read the excerpts aloud (if desired) after each student has had the opportunity to read the excerpt silently.

Step Four: Group discussion of the reading that address the following suggested questions (5-7 minutes):

- From whose perspective is the text written?
- How might that influence the ideas expressed in the text?
- What are the main ideas and facts presented?
- Why are these ideas relevant or important to the issues being discussed?

Students will assign one person in the group to summarize the text for the class.

Step Five: Arrange chairs in a circle, providing one chair per group. The student assigned to summarize for each group sits in the chair. The other students then form a larger standing circle around the chairs. This format will allow for each student in the class to be heard. Students can only speak when they have entered the circle and are seated. Each representative then summarizes the reading assigned to the group. Summaries should focus on facts rather than analysis or interpretation (5 minutes).

Step Six: After all readings have been summarized, invite students seated in the circle to comment on what they have heard or to ask one of their peers a question. Students in the outer circle are then allowed to enter the conversation by "tapping" the shoulder of someone in their own group and taking their seat. The only way to enter or leave the discussion is by this process (15 minutes).

Step Seven: After the discussion, give students the opportunity to reflect on the following questions in writing and/or through a class discussion (10 minutes):

- How did your ideas about the topic change during this activity, if at all?
- Explain what caused your ideas to change or why you think your ideas did not change at all.
- What does "perspective" mean? Where does our perspective come from? How does our perspective shape how we see the world?

Students should draw from particular examples from this activity when answering these questions.

Media Option: *The Pruitt-Igoe Myth: an Urban History (*dir. Chad Freidrichs, Firstrun Features, 2011). *The Pruitt-Igoe Myth* tells the story of the transformation of the American city in the decades after World War II, through the lens of the infamous Pruitt-Igoe housing development and the St. Louis residents who called it home. http://www.pruitt-igoe.com/

Possible Oral History Project: Students create an oral history project about a school or community issue that explores the intersections and discrepancies between civil and economic rights. Project could incorporate the themes, essential questions, and written reflections from the unit, but need not focus specifically on public housing. Examples could range from access to education to exploring how the community defines and acts on its perceived societal obligations.

Lesson Three: Policing and the Criminal Justice System

Time Needed: Two class periods

Materials: Chandra's and Donnell's narratives from *High Rise Stories*, Police Presence handouts, computer, projector, several computers/computer lab for research, clips from *Juvies*, pens & paper

Objective: Students will explore the goals and efficacy of the police and the criminal justice system through analyzing first-person accounts of public housing residents who've been most directly impacted by them.

Related Core Curriculum Standards: Speaking and Listening SL.9-10.1, SL.9-10.5. Language L.9-10.5. Writing W.9-10.3. Reading History RH.9-10.2, RH.9-10.4 Language L9-10.1

Connections: This lesson can be adapted for use with narratives from *Surviving Justice, Inside this Place, Not Of It*, and *Voices from the Storm.*

Narrative Excerpt: "Police are always going to look at us as gang members or terrorists. They're always going to see us like that. I ain't gonna sit up here and say that being up in a gang is the right thing to do. I'd be lying. But I didn't have a choice like that. That's all I knew. My parents were there, but they weren't there. I learned more structure from the gang than I did from my parents. I wish I had stand-up parents, I wish I had someone to stand on me to go to school and stuff like that, but I didn't, so the streets had to raise me." —Donnell Furlow

"I have three kids. One child messed up. He's my youngest son. He's eighteen. He was arrested a year ago for selling, and now he's barred from my place. And I understand the rules they have, but kids make mistakes. You don't give them a second chance? One strike, you out. Everybody deserve a second chance. But my son won't ever be able to come and visit me because of a mistake he made." —Chandra Bell

Essential Questions:

- Which factors increase the likelihood of being arrested at some point in one's lifetime?
- How important is family structure and support in preventing youth from being caught up in the criminal justice system?
- When a child experiences excessive suffering and/or witnesses violence, how does this impact the decisions he or she makes later in life?
- How can the stigma of incarceration affect a person for the rest of their life?
- How can the act of telling one's story help people who have been marginalized to feel heard and in control of their own lives?

Day One

Overview
In this lesson, students will examine the relationship between police presence and criminal activity in four different communities. Students will use statistics and anecdotes in considering the area's demographics, correlations between crime type and location, and other variables to analyze any patterns in the police force's practices.

Step One: Students respond to the following written prompts: (5 minutes)

- *What is the primary responsibility of police? In your opinion, how do they fulfill that responsibility?*
- *What is your experience of police presence in your neighborhood?*

Step Two: Read Chandra's narrative from *High Rise Stories* (15 minutes). This can be done as a group using popcorn reading, as individual, silent reading, in small groups, or assigned as homework the previous night.

Step Three: Police Presence and Crime: What's the Relationship? In groups of four, students will take a close look at four very different communities, covering a span of rural to urban. Alternatively, the class could focus on one city, with each group taking a prominent neighborhood. Using statistics and anecdotes, the groups will examine the relationship between police presence and criminal activity in their designated neighborhood or community. If possible, allowing students access to a computer lab or a library for research is ideal. Below are three examples of crime maps. Students can use resources such as these, analyzing where police stations are located within a city, which neighborhoods are assigned the most beat cops, etc. Each group should complete a Police Presence handout to go with their neighborhood or community. (25 minutes)

Crime Map of San Francisco: http://www.crimemapping.com/map/ca/sanfrancisco
Crime Map of Chicago: http://spotcrime.com/il/chicago
Crime Map of New Orleans: http://www.crimemapping.com/map/la/neworleans

Step Four: Collect each group's Police Presence handout and tape them around the room. Students should walk silently around the room looking at the different Police Presence handouts. Ask students to take note of the similarities and differences between the different groups' findings about the correlation between police presence and crime (10 minutes).

Step Five: Reconvene as a class and collect group work. Go around the room and ask each student to say aloud one or two words that strikes them as thematic or symbolic of today's lesson *(ex: justice, injustice, poverty, social problems, etc.)* (5 minutes).

Day Two

Overview
In this lesson, students will write reflections on their findings from the day prior. Students will then read Donnell's VOW narrative and watch narrative clips from juveniles being tried as adults; they will write reflections on these individuals' experiences, employing sensory detail to explore their perspective deeply. Students will connect Donnell's narrative to the others, noting where they intersect and diverge.

Step One: Write the following guidelines on the board and ask students to respond to the written prompts (10 minutes).

Thinking back to your group's Police Presence handout, write a two-paragraph critical reflection about police presence and crime based on your findings.

Paragraph One: Is the correlation between police presence (in a given neighborhood or city) and criminal activity positive, negative, or neutral? Describe the research and findings that support your position.

Paragraph Two: What are the short-term and long-term effects of police presence in your neighborhood or city? How is police presence (or lack thereof) impacting residents? How does this connect to *High Rise Stories?*

Step Two: As a class, read an excerpt from Donnell's narrative (bottom of pg. 70 – middle of pg. 72) (5 minutes).

Step Three: Writing assignment (15 minutes): Ask students to write a one-page journal entry from the perspective of Chandra or Donnell. The imagined journal entry could occur before or during his incarceration. Encourage students to use the five senses in order to deeply explore how Chandra or Donnell must have felt. Use the following prompts for students who may get stuck:

- What events led up to Chandra and Donnell's incarceration?
- What do you think was going on in their mind at the moment where your journal entry starts?
- Is there anything that could have prevented Chandra or Donnell's arrests?
- What options did Chandra or Donnell have, given their life circumstances prior to arrest?

Step Four: After collecting the journal entries, divide students into groups of four (15 minutes). Each group should have a large piece of white paper and some markers. Ask students to create a visual representation of the connections between Chandra and Donnell's narratives in *High Rise Stories.* This could take the form of a flow chart, a Venn Diagram, a collage, or any other artistic expression. Some connections to consider:

- Early childhood/family background
- Influential people in their lives
- Neighborhood (urban/rural? high or low crime rate?)

- Position of privilege/power (socioeconomics, race/ethnicity, etc.)

Step Five: Reconvene as a class. Ask students to turn to the person next to them and share and explain their work from Step Five. Collect student work to assess student learning (5 minutes).

Possible Oral History Project: Class engages in a comprehensive oral history project that explores multiple facets of the criminal justice system. Working in groups, students interview a police officer, a formerly incarcerated person, a parent or child of someone who is incarcerated, a resident of a neighborhood that is highly policed, a resident of public housing, a person who works for the city's Housing Authority, etc. This can be done in class as a group interview or outside of school. After interviews have been completed and transcribed, groups will collaborate on critical analyses of the issues at hand.

Media Options:

Off the Cuffs: Poetry by and about the police (Sheeler, Jackie, 2003). This dynamic collection of poems features writing from police officers, civilians, and observers of the police.

The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness (Alexander, Michelle, 2010). Alexander's groundbreaking book explores the "rebirth of a caste-like system" in America as it incarcerates more and more African American men.

Race to Incarcerate: A Graphic Retelling (Jones, Sabrina & Marc Mauer, 2013). A graphic novel about the unprecedented expansion of the U.S. prison system and its connection to the War on Drugs.

The House I Live In (dir. Eugene Jarecki, 2012). Documentary film about the devastating effects of the War on Drugs: $1 trillion in debt and 45 million arrests.

Organizational Website: www.homeboyindustries.org. Based in Los Angeles, Homeboy Industries serves high-risk, formerly gang-involved men and women with a continuum of free services and programs.

Lesson Four: Creating a Housing Bill of Rights

Time Needed: One class period, one homework session

Materials: *High Rise Stories*, excerpts from the U.S. Bill of Rights, the South African Bill of Rights, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, copy of school's Student Bill of Rights (if applicable), and Housing Bill of Rights template.

Objective: Students will utilize the direct human experiences in *High Rise Stories,* along with other primary source documents, to create a democratically-adopted Housing Bill of Rights.

Related Core Curriculum Standards: Reading History RH.9—10.1, RH.9—10.5, RH.9—10.7, Speaking and Listening SL.9—10.1, SL.9—10.2, Language L.9-10.1

Connections: This activity can be adapted for use with narratives from *Underground America* (Immigration Bill of Rights), *Surviving Justice,* and *Inside This Place, Not of It* (Inmate Bill of Rights).

Narrative Excerpt: "When I was a small child, we used to live in an apartment on Sixty-Eighth and Wood in Englewood, and over there, white people would march through the blocks picketing for us to move. The march I most clearly remember was in 1976. They didn't want black people in their neighborhood."

—Dawn Knight

Essential Questions:

- How do the injustices experienced by narrators from *High Rise Stories* impact the creation of a Housing Bill of Rights?
- How do the narratives in *High Rise Stories* enhance personal understanding and interpretation of primary source documents?
- What are the benefits and challenges of creating a Housing Bill of Rights?
- Is there a difference between legal rights and societal responsibilities? If so, what are they?

Step One: To provide context for a Housing Bill of Rights, introduce excerpts from the U.S. Bill of Rights (14th Amendment, Section One), the South African Bill of Rights, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Articles 7 & 25), and any school or class agreements, or existing Student Bill of Rights.

Note:
Chosen excerpts should reflect grade level, learning style, language proficiency, and other factors. It may be desirable for students to create a Critical Vocabulary List that includes space for a word's meaning and an opportunity to use it in a sentence. In any case, save time for clarifying questions related to definitions and vocabulary (15 minutes).

Step Two: Split class into as many groups as there are primary source document excerpts. Each group should read through and discuss their documents using the format suggested in Lesson Two (Summarizer, Connector, etc). Groups can read silently or aloud. After the discussions, each student in the group gets one minute of uninterrupted time to comment on the merits and

limitations of their document. Encourage groups to incorporate prior discussions/activities regarding civil and economic rights and class definition of *rights*. (12-15 minutes).

Step Three: Using the phrase "We the students of (school name) hereby create this Housing Bill of Rights," each group creates their own Housing Bill of Rights. Each document should include 7-10 articles, or list of rights. A majority in each group must approve each article. Each group member should generate at least one article. Before articles are ratified, time should be given for each article to be debated. All class agreements must be adhered to during the process (20 minutes).

Step Four: Each group presents their Housing Bill of Rights to the class. Presentations should include details about the decision process—-which articles generated the most debate, etc. After groups have presented, class can discuss the similarities and differences of each (10 minutes).

Step Five: As homework, students do a one-page written reflection using the following prompts (15+ minutes):

- Why is a Bill of Rights important for the individual and for society?
- In our current society, do you feel most people are treated fairly and able to exercise their rights? What are some of the societal factors that impact this?
- What responsibilities do we have as citizens to ensure our rights are upheld?

Encourage students to incorporate direct quotes from the previously read narratives in *High Rise Stories* and at least one primary source document to illustrate their points of view.

Lesson Five: A Mural/Collaborative Painting Project

Time Needed: 4 class periods

Materials Include:
Mural Preparation
Plain white 8.5" x 11" paper, large mural paper ~ 5' x 8' (recommended: Tyvek paper is water resistant, durable, and can be used for interior or exterior murals) OR decide on a pre-approved mural location, large sheets of paper ~ 20" x 25" (10-15 pieces for whole class lists and larger sketches), charcoal, pencils, erasers, color pencils, thumbtacks, tape, tarp

Paint Station:
One large bucket (for washing hands), 3 small buckets (for scraping paint off brushes and rinsing brushes), wire brush (for scraping paint off brushes), pallets or pieces of cardboard (for paint & mixing paints), rags, smocks, paintbrushes

Computers to access imagery for inspiration (optional in-class time or homework assignment)

Overview: This art project is in response to four sequential lessons exploring themes from *High Rise Stories*: Home and community, individual and societal responsibilities, shelter, crime and policing, discrimination, justice/ injustice, privilege/power, and so on. The project creates an opportunity for students to advocate for social justice in their community through the creation of public art. The first four lessons will support the final class mural concept by capturing thoughts, ideas, quotes, themes, and feelings based on the content of the *High Rise Stories* curriculum.

Objective: To create a symbolic representation/response to the rich readings and discussions from the *High Rise Stories* unit in the form of a public mural/collaborative art project.

Day One

Overview
Students will choose themes from previous reflections on *High Rise Stories* they most want to work with, and then create mural concepts to effectively represent these themes visually. Students will pitch their mural ideas to the class, which will discuss the design and then vote on the one they like most.

Step One: Option #1 - In small groups, students will look over their reflections (from *High Rise Stories* lessons) and create a list of themes that have come out of the conversations and readings that they would be interested in translating into an art piece. Provided with a few examples of themes, students will brainstorm for ten minutes and then share their ideas with the class. A list of themes will be created on the board (5 minutes).

Options #2 – A Desired List of themes are on the board as students arrive for class (e.g. Home, Shelter, Individual /Societal Responsibilities, Justice/ Injustice, Privilege/Power, etc). Students will have an opportunity to add to the list if they think of themes that aren't represented (5 minutes).

Step Two: Individually, students will choose a theme that they feel strongly about. Students will create a list of at least twenty words that come to mind when thinking of this theme. Students can pull words from the text and/or from reflections and quotes from conversations if they would like. This list will become the jumping off point for translating themes and concepts into symbols (10 minutes).

Step Three: Once the list is compiled, students are given ten minutes to brainstorm at least five words. The student should choose their five strongest words to begin exploring how each word (set of words) can translate into a symbol/drawing (10 minutes).

Example #1: If one of the listed words is "warm," ask yourself, "How do I represent the concept of warm in a drawing?" Since colors have the ability to represent warmth, the student may write: warm = yellows, oranges.

Example #2: freedom = open hand holding a dove (dove = free)

Step Four: The class then gets into groups of five to seven students. Each student will get an opportunity to present their concepts to the group. As a group, they will decide what their concept strengths are and which symbols are the most powerful and resonant. They will prepare a presentation of their concepts to the rest of the class (10-15 minutes).

Step Five: Class Presentation: Each group will present their idea for their mural based on the strongest concepts presented in their group. Part of each presentation is to entice the rest of the class to go with that group's mural concept. During the presentations, the teacher will write down student responses and comments about the strengths and weaknesses of each presentation/concept. Following this activity, the entire class will create a one-paragraph Artists Statement. For both activities, the class can explore the following suggested questions (25 minutes):

- What is the message?
- Why is it important?
- How the mural will convey the message in form and in content?
- What is our purpose in creating the mural?
- Who is the audience? Who will see this mural?
- What do we hope to accomplish by creating it?

Step Six: Class Decision: The class will choose a concept using the democratic process called Fist to Five* based on which theme/concept is the most compelling and would be the most successful moving forward with. The list of responses and reasons from the chosen concept will be referred to throughout the project (5-10 minutes).

* Description of Fist to Five process courtesy of The National Center for Family Philanthropy: https://www.ncfp.org/knowledge/fist-to-five-voting-and-consensus/

Day Two

Overview
In this lesson, students will continue to hone in on the concept for their mural, and write an Artist's Statement. Students will create designs in small groups, and then share with the class, which will choose imagery/words which will appear in the final project together.

Step One: Artist's Statement: Ask the class to create a one-paragraph Artist's Statement. This statement should reflect the content, purpose, and goals of the project. If needed, students can respond to the suggested questions from Day One, Step Five (7-10 Minutes).

Step Two: Review written notes from Day One with the class. Then move the written brainstorm notes out of view. Have students break up into pairs to create drawings and sketches of mural ideas based on the chosen concept from Day One. Give each group a pencil and a sheet of paper, representing the approximate shape/proportions of the final mural (15 minutes).

Step Three: Have the students pass their sketches around the room to showcase the various ideas. This will allow students to see the details and concepts on an individual level before the whole class discussion (5 minutes).

Note: Reassure the students that this is an inclusive process, and that the drawings are not being judged for their merit, but appreciated for their expressive ideas. Remind the class that each student will have input into the mural. It is very important to value everyone's voice during this process and to not reject anyone's idea, whether small or large.

Step Four: As a whole class, invite each group to explain their design to the class. As the students share, write down words and imagery that could be added to the final mural. If the list gets to be too long, the class can cluster ideas together to narrow the list down (12 minutes).

Note: It is important to include something from everyone. You can show this by writing their name or initials down with the imagery. This way it is visible that ideas are being valued.

Step Five: Mural Composition. As a class, students need to decide how they want their mural to look. The composition is an important factor in how the audience will read the message. There are four different compositions to choose from: center out, left to right, bottom to top, or top to bottom (3 minutes).

Step Six: As a class, decide on how the final composition will look using all the items on the list from Step 3. Using charcoal, create a quick sketch (no details necessary) on a large piece of poster paper (15 minutes).

Days Three & Four

Overview
In these lessons, students will paint their final mural, transferring the agreed upon design from paper to wall or mural paper.

Prep: If the class is using mural paper, hang mural paper securely on a flat wall using tacks or nails. If your class is painting on a wall, make sure it is pre-approved by school administration and/or community members. It needs to be cleaned, primed, and dry beforehand. Create a washing station and a separate paint station. Keep the washing station farther away from the mural so students don't just dump their brushes after each color usage. (Otherwise there will be lots of paintbrushes to clean at the end). Make multiple copies of the final sketch so students can add ideas and color.

Final Mural Drawing: With the final composition in hand (from Day Two, Step Five), have students draw their images onto the paper or wall using charcoal—- five to eight students at one time. While students are rotating through, others can be considering color combination and adding color to the sketch.

Note: Encourage students to draw big!

Painting the Mural: Rotate students in groups throughout the process. Make sure that all students contribute to the process to the best of their ability. Less confident artists can paint the larger spaces while the more confident ones can add the smaller details. Encourage everyone to give a solid effort—they might be very surprised with what they are capable of. While some students are painting, others are coloring their drawings or doing other assigned mural work.

Tips for painting:

- Always paint the background first – everyone should have a turn.
- Individuals can paint their individual contributions.
- Paint from top to bottom because paint drips on a vertical surface.
- Paint over the black charcoal lines (not around them).
- Don't leave background white.
- If there are undesirable results, wait for the paint to dry before trying to "correct" it.
- Use large paintbrushes for large surfaces.
- Have an adult/assistant in charge of paint station.
- Use spoons or knives to provide paint for student's palettes
- Never keep water buckets close by for students to leave their paintbrushes in buckets.
- Encourage students to reuse their brush when changing color.

Clean Up: This is an important part of the daily activity. The students need to help and should be encouraged to do most of the work. While some students are painting, others can be washing brushes, etc. Use the wire brush to clean the paintbrushes in the buckets. Do *not* use soap on brushes or pallets because it will leave a film. Depending on the amount of production that day, give about 10-20 minutes for cleaning up.

Mural/Public Art Resources:
Chicago Public Art Group: https://chicagopublicartgroup.org/
Precita Eyes Muralists: http://www.precitaeyes.org/

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From the U.S. Bill of Rights:

Amendment IV
The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no Warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by Oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized.

Amendment XIV
Section 1.
All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside. No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.

From the Universal Declaration of Human Rights:

Article 7.

- All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law. All are entitled to equal protection against any discrimination in violation of this Declaration and against any incitement to such discrimination.

Article 12.

- No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honour and reputation. Everyone has the right to protection of the law against such interference or attacks.

Article 25.

- Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.

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Police Presence & Crime: What's the Correlation?

Neighborhood or Community: _____

Map of Neighborhood or Community *(draw an outline of the area you are focusing on, noting police stations and highly patrolled areas in blue, and areas with highest arrest rates in red)*:

Describe the areas that have the highest concentration of police presence. Are they ethnically homogenous or heterogeneous? Do they contain public housing units?

In the neighborhood or community you are focusing on overall, what types of crimes are people most arrested for? Violent crimes, property crimes, drug possession/distribution, or other?

In the areas with highest police presence, what types of crimes are people most arrested for?

Based on your research, describe the relationship between police presence and crime.

In the areas with high police presence, do you think that police are targeting certain neighborhoods due to stereotypes or social factors, or do you think that police are responding to high crime by increasing their presence? Explain your thoughts. Continue writing on the back of this page if necessary.

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Chicago Public Housing Fact Sheet



Julien Lallemand, *High Rise Stories*

What is public housing? When was it established?

Public housing projects are funded and overseen by federal, state, and local governments. The aim is to provide subsidized housing to low-income families, the elderly, and people with disabilities. The Housing Act of 1937 provided loans for the construction of reduced-rent accommodations for low-income families. The loans went to local public housing agencies, such as the Chicago Housing Authority (CHA), which was also established in 1937.

How does a person or a family qualify for public housing in Chicago?

The head of household must be at least 18 years old and meet citizenship or immigration status requirements. Annual household income cannot exceed 80 percent of the median income in the surrounding area. The CHA also screens applicants for suitability by conducting criminal background, credit, and residential history checks. Qualified applicants are placed on a wait list. Based on the number of individuals in the household, applicants are assigned to a housing unit with the appropriate number of bedrooms. Generally, two people are expected to share a bedroom.

How much does the government subsidize in rent and bills for public housing residents?

Usually, the tenant pays 30% of their monthly adjusted income (annual adjusted income divided by 12) or 10% of their monthly gross (total) income, whichever is higher. In Chicago, the CHA has determined that tenants can pay no less than $75 per month.

What are some of the rules and regulations around public housing in Chicago?

Unless they are exempt, adult residents must work for at least 20 hours per week, or participate in some combination of work, community service, and economic self-sufficiency programs. Households must also prove that students or children attend school and/or daycare. Residents must continue to qualify as low-income, pass criminal background checks, and demonstrate that they are good tenants.

What is the Plan for Transformation?

In the 1990s, the CHA began to demolish its public housing high rises, including most of those featured in *High Rise Stories*. The Plan for Transformation is the CHA's plan to renew public housing by demolishing the high rises and constructing 25,000 new or renovated units. As of 2013, construction has not kept up with demolition of old units, leaving many former residents without replacement housing.

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