

SDG 1: No Poverty

This module focuses on SDG 1 which aims to “end poverty in all its forms everywhere.” The stories include experiences of poverty in Bolivia and Cambodia. Students will explore absolute and multidimensional poverty through stories, data, and a poverty simulation.

Link to Subjects	Civics, Economics, Geography, History, Social Studies		
Link to Indiana High School Core	E.4.5	Link to International Baccalaureate	
Story	Story #1: Treasure of the World Story #2: The Rent Collector		
Activities	Activity #1: What is Poverty?	Activity #2: Address Poverty: What can we do?	Activity # 3: Volunteer with a local organization
Type of Activity	Simulation	Discussion	Guest Lecturer_Local Outreach opportunity
Time of Activity	1 class	1 class	2 classes

Key Questions & Terms

Key Questions	Key Terms
What is poverty? What are the 3 dimensions of poverty?	Multidimensional Health Education Standard of Living Safety Net Equity Resiliency Human Capital

Story Summaries

Story #1: Treasure of the World

The full book can be found here: <https://bit.ly/45A8g01>.

For Ana and her sickly younger brother, Daniel, cherished and free-spirited school days come to a premature close when Papi, a man filled with meanness, forces Daniel to join him in the mines. Daniel, however, doesn't last long, returning sick on his second day. Ana volunteers to take her brother's place until he can recover, much to the disapproval of Mami, Abuelita, and, particularly, the other miners, who deem her appearance in the mines a bad omen. Despite harsh dreaded misfortune comes in the form of a cave-in: Papi dies and Daniel goes missing. Though everyone believes that Daniel is dead, Ana doesn't give up hope and secretly enters the mountain one quiet night to find him, ending up lost, disoriented, and on the verge of death. But when she returns to the land of the living, she finds her world forever altered.

Sullivan, T. (2021). *Treasure of the World*. Putnam.

Story #2: The Rent Collector

Full book for young readers can be found here: <https://bit.ly/45A2JGH>. The original novel can be found here: <https://bit.ly/3Rypk0w>.

Survival for Ki Lim and Sang Ly is a daily battle at Stung Meanchey, the largest municipal waste dump in all of Cambodia. They make their living scavenging recyclables from the trash. Their living hut is in the heap of trash and access to food and clean water is scarce and inconsistent. Life is hard. It becomes unbearable with added worry and care for their chronically ill child, Nisay, and the added expense of medicines that are not working. Just when things seem at their worst, Sang Ly learns a secret about the ill-tempered rent collector who comes demanding money—a secret that changes the landscape for Sang Ly forever—the gift of reading.

Wright, C.S. (2012). *The Rent Collector*. Shadow Mountain.

Opening Discussion

1. Use a KWL chart (<https://bit.ly/3RqzbWp>) to identify what students already know and/or think about poverty. Think about poverty as it pertains to their senses.
 - a. What do you see when you think about poverty?
 - b. What does poverty smell like?
 - c. What do you think poverty tastes like?
 - d. What does poverty sound like?
 - e. What does poverty feel like?
2. Go through these questions pretty quickly; do not leave too much time for students to mull over and/or overthink their responses.
3. Next, have a slideshow presentation of several different images highlighting impoverishment, excellent images can be found in *Fragile*, by Howard Buffet (You can find a copy at your nearest library using <https://bit.ly/4ceTgH4>). Ask students the same set of questions as above with a minor twist:
 - a. What do I wonder about image A?
 - b. What do I wonder about image B?
 - c. Etc. Have as many or as few images as you see fit
4. Record these statements in the W (what do I wonder) portion of the chart. The intent is to bring their senses to life through real-life photographs. These are the things we will discover and learn throughout this module.

Activity #1: What is Poverty?

What is poverty? Can you see it? Why does it exist? How do we eradicate it? Can we eradicate it? According to the United Nations, the first listed SDG focuses on the eradication of extreme poverty for all people everywhere. However, if you don't know what it is or why it exists, how will you know how to eradicate it? In this activity, you will be asked to role-play a certain 'member' of US society. You must then work collaboratively to make decisions on everyday living conditions ranging from housing to childcare. From your newly-informed position, you will work to establish a definition of poverty, identify the dimensions of poverty and assess US and global poverty trends.

Activity Learning Objectives

1. Students will actively participate in simulation to prompt discussion and reflection about poverty in the US.
2. Students will create a working definition of poverty.
3. Students will assess trends of poverty around the world.

Teacher preparation

1. Simulation Notes and Reflection Questions
2. Create a slide show presentation of images reflecting impoverishment around the world

Lesson Flow

3. Students will process through the poverty simulation.
 - a. [Student Resource Sheet](#) in Resources
4. Work with your small group to create a working definition of poverty. Be prepared to share these with the class and modify as needed.
5. Compare and contrast poverty in areas of the world for which you are familiar and/or interested.
 - a. For example, if you read a book about Tanzania, maybe you'd like to see how much poverty is in the country. If you have relatives from Venezuela, what is poverty like there? Once you get a feel for how the graph works, there are 2 things you need to do: 1) reflect on the simulation...what determines how many tokens you would spend on a standard of living and 2) do a bit of research on a country (not the US) of your choice. From your quick look-up and your reflection, what prevents those countries from breaking free from extreme poverty?
 - b. Find poverty rates using World Bank Data: <https://bit.ly/3VocCTg>

Possible enrichment

You might also lead class discussions about poverty globally by conceptualizing the total global population as 100 people and providing some statistics about those 100 people. See for example this TED talk (<https://bit.ly/3KBZQvD>) or the 100 People project (<https://bit.ly/3XofDph>).

Activity #2: Address Poverty: What can we do?

This activity requires students to be divided into 2 groups. One group will use “The Rent Collector” and the other will use the “Treasure of the World”. From these stories, students are challenged to imagine a safety net for eliminating and/or reducing poverty in these parts of the world.

Activity Learning Objectives

1. Understand the basics of government anti-poverty programs as social safety nets.
2. Explore social safety net programs in the United States that curb poverty
3. Expand global awareness and comparative skills by exploring poverty in two different contexts: Bolivia and Cambodia.

Teacher preparation

1. As an alternative to assigning the books to students, you can choose excerpts or write summaries for students to read.

Student preparation

1. Students will have to read the novels prior to this activity.

Lesson Flow: Fact Finding

1. Read the stories “Treasure of the World and “The Rent Collector.”
 - c. Think back to Activity 1 the standards of living [table](#) (see the Resources section).
 - d. What living standards are absent from these two scenarios?
 - e. What would these people need to get out of poverty?
 - f. Generate a list for these answers in your notebook.
2. The World Bank explains that “Social safety net programs protect families from the impact of economic shocks, natural disasters, and other crises.” (read more here: <https://bit.ly/3KPjGnd>). Ask students to provide examples from your context.
3. Next, asking students to look through the Strategy and Results tabs of the World Bank resource (<https://bit.ly/3KPjGnd>). Invite students to answer the following questions:
 - a. Explain the role of equity in social safety nets
 - b. Explain the role of resilience in social safety nets
 - c. Explain the role of human capital in social safety nets
4. What kind of social safety nets can you identify here in the US?
 - a. In a small group, generate a list of social safety net programs in the United States to address poverty.
 - b. If you or the students need a resource to look up these programs you can use this page: <https://bit.ly/3KOC0g6>
5. Share that list with the class to create a comprehensive list.

6. Using appropriate research skills, students will create a one-pager identifying the four most important social safety net programs in the United States (or another country)
 - a. What does the program do?
 - b. Who is eligible to apply for it?
 - c. What is the relationship to the program and poverty?
 - d. How would a program like this help in the story (Rent Collector and/or Treasure of the World).

Activity # 3: Volunteer with a local organization

In this activity students will explore the difference between relative and absolute poverty and then will identify local organizations that they can volunteer with to address aspects of poverty in their community. The activity includes a speaker from one of those organizations.

Activity Learning Objectives

1. Identify ways that local organizations are addressing poverty in their community
2. Understand the difference between relative and absolute poverty
3. Feel empowered to reduce local poverty by engaging with their community through local organizations

Teacher preparation

1. Prepare a handout or presentation on the difference between relative and absolute poverty using resources such as the explanation by Habitat for Humanity <https://bit.ly/4cqMpue>
2. Identify one to three local organizations that students could volunteer with, making sure to contact them before to ask how high school students can volunteer.
 - a. For an organization that provides housing for low income families, you can look for your local Habitat for Humanity in the United States here: <https://bit.ly/3z9FTtH>
 - b. For food banks, you can search for your local food bank using through Feeding America (<https://bit.ly/3RvxC9p>) and ask how students can volunteer
3. Invite one speaker from a local organization to come speak to the class in person or to call in and speak to the class over a video conference (e.g., Zoom, Google Meet, Teams etc.)

Student preparation

1. Ask students to find one to three local organizations that address poverty in their community.

Lesson Flow

1. Ask students to share examples of programs or organizations in the community that provide support for people experiencing poverty
 - a. For each, ask students the the program/organization does
 - b. Note: Be sensitive to avoid speaking of poverty as something for others, there is very likely students in your class who are experiencing poverty or have done so and might be benefiting from some of these programs
2. Ask students to work in pairs to come up with ideas for how they, as students, could support one of the programs/organizations listed in the class brainstorm

3. Introduce the speaker to the students and encourage students to take notes and prepare questions that they would like to ask the speaker at the end of their presentation.
4. The external speaker then makes their presentation while the students listen and take notes.
5. In groups, ask students to propose a way that they can volunteer at a program in their community that serves as a social safety net.
6. Have students vote on their favorite proposal(s) and make a plan for who the students can carry out the planned volunteer activity before the end of the semester and report back to class.

Advanced Approaches

Have students compare social protection systems (programs or overall statistics) between two different countries. They can explore global data on social protection using the International Labour Organization's (ILO) World Social Protection Data Dashboards <https://bit.ly/3VA9Kmm>. You and your students can also find more details about social protection systems in the ILO's World Social Protection Report: <https://bit.ly/45vOvqk> (archived here: <https://bit.ly/3VpkP9S>).

The advanced approaches might also include opportunities for students to volunteer with organizations in other countries or to invite speakers from programs/organizations in other countries.

References

- Center for Poverty and Inequality. (2018). What are the major federal safety net programs in the U.S.? A summary of efforts to reduce poverty in the U.S. University of California, Davis. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/3KOC0g6>
- Habitat for Humanity. (n.d.). Relative vs Absolute Poverty: Defining different types of poverty. Habitat for Humanity Great Britain. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/4cqMpue>
- ILO. (2021). World Social Protection Report. International Labour Organization. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/3VpkP9S>

Resources

Poverty Simulation: Student Resource Sheet

Directions: In this simulation, you will be **assigned** to one of the families seen below. Your job is to select the best standard of living given your annual income; this is represented by the number of tokens you have to spend. It is important that you record your discussion notes for how your 'family' came to the decision of how many tokens to spend for each standard of living. Once you have decided, take the physical tokens (colored discs) and place them on the sheet (as if it were a BINGO sheet). *For example, if Family C opted to live with another family member, what are the pros and cons of that choice? How many people have to share a bedroom? Who has to sleep on the floor? When do you get to wash your clothes?* **You are challenged to really think about all the nuances that could arise from each selection.** Stop at the end of 1 month and assess.

Family A: Two kids, two parents

Both partners work, earning 11.00/hour
Total annual income is \$45,760.00
You have 15 'tokens' per month

Family B: Two kids, one parent

You are the sole provider, full-time employee earning 15.00/hour
Total annual income is \$31,200.00
You have 12 tokens/month

Family C: Three kids, one guardian (an aunt or grandmother)

You are the sole provider
Because of some health complications, you work as a self-employed, domestic laborer.
Total annual income is 28,500.00
You have 10 tokens/month

Part A: Month One

Standard of Living	Option 1- 1 tokens	Option 2- 2 tokens	Option 3- 3 tokens	Discussion Notes
Housing/month	You must find a family/friend to stay with; or a housing shelter	Studio Apartment	3 bedroom apartment	
**Healthcare/month	No healthcare	Employer Healthcare for the employee only	Employer healthcare for you and your family	
Food/month	1 meal a day	2 meals a day	3 meals a day	
**Transportation/month	Walk or bike everywhere	Walk, bike or take public transportation OR Used junker-car that requires a lot of extra \$\$ for upkeep	Own your own car	
Technology Access/month	Have 1 cell phone - yours	Have two cell phones OR Have 1 cell phone and 1 TV	Have 2 cell phones and Wi-Fi OR Have 1 cell phone, 1 TV and Wi-Fi	
Utilities/month	Skip this months bill so next months bill	On a payment plan	Pay for all utilities	
Child Care/month	Unreliable family/friend	Reliable family/friend, no educational value	Full-time childcare, similar to Pre-K	
Spending Money/month	No extra money	\$20.00 left after bills are paid	\$50.00 left after bills are paid	

Assessment: Take a picture of your 'bingo sheet for reference then answer the questions: What worked? What didn't work? Was it easy to make those decisions? What can/can't you live with/without?

Part B: Month Two

Repeat the process for another month. This time, you need to roll the dice as life is always a game of **chance**.

- If you roll a 1, you remain in good health and all stays as it is.
- If you roll a 2, you get COVID and can't work for 2 weeks. You lose 1 token.
- If you roll a 3, your alternator breaks on the junker-car. You have to replace it so you lose 1 token.
- If you roll a 4, your kid drops the cell phone in the sink and you have to replace it. You lose 2 tokens
- If you roll a 5, the family member taking care of your children has to move; you must find different childcare. Lose 2 tokens
- If you roll a 6, you were promoted and/or picked up another house to clean, add 2 tokens.

Complete the challenge 1 more time for another month. Once you are finished complete the reflection and questions below.

Part 3: Reflection Activity

As you think about the simulation, reflect on the following prompts:

Think: Think about the 'family' you were in: do you think these are real life situations for them? How could you help them? Are there places they could go to get help?

Feel: How did this make you feel? What was something that was difficult to 'give up'? What was something you had to sacrifice in order to eat? H

Care: Explain the role of the family's values, priorities, or motivations with regard to decision making?

Question: Poverty is considered [multi-dimensional](#) meaning there are many things that contribute to a person in poverty. Thinking about the simulation you just completed, explain the relationship between the standards of living, health and education.

