

Who Owns Poverty Lesson Plan

Lesson Title:

Chapter 1: Gala Dinner

Chapter Summary:

In this chapter we are introduced to a class of students who have been given an educational opportunity to help raise them out of their extreme poverty status. The author outlines several themes and outcomes of education and begins to address some of the implications that education has had on the students and their families as the students choose not to go back to their family farms.

Lesson Topic: This lesson introduces the topic of poverty and demonstrates the changes in mindset that students can undergo when exposed to education and new ideas.

At the end of this lesson, students will be able to describe the extent and level of poverty in different regions of the world, including poverty in their own country and community.

Advanced students will be able to describe how behavior and aspirations are linked to poverty.

Resources/Materials: Links needed for activities and assignments are in each section.

Lesson Vocabulary:

1. Guaraní tribes – Indigenous people of Paraguay. The Guaraní make up two percent of the county's population.
2. Campesino – a Tenant farmer or farm worker in Latin America
3. Fiesta - an event marked by festivities or celebration
4. Pygmalion - a play by George Bernard Shaw. In ancient Greek mythology, Pygmalion fell in love with one of his sculptures, which then came to life
5. Materialism – the idea that well-being and happiness depend on the possession of material goods
6. Austerity – simplicity, absence of excess, indulgences, or luxuries

Outcome(s)/Expectation(s):

1. Explain the markers of poverty outlined in the chapter.
2. Compare the two themes of poverty and misery and how they contrast with the teachings of austerity.
3. Summarize the challenges of rural farmers and communities in Paraguay.
4. Discuss how poverty, opportunity, and aspirations are interconnected.

Critical Thinking Discussion Questions

1. The author outlines that the purpose of educating the students was so they could take that knowledge back to their families. What are some of the consequences of the students not returning to the farms?
2. Why do you feel the author calls the graduation party “a pointless waste of money”?
3. The author discusses the role of the Church in the debate on poverty. Do you feel that the Church plays an important role in poverty?
4. [Advanced/College Students] What does the author mean when he describes the school as a “middle-class factory”? What determines if someone belongs to the “middle class”? How does education in general, and attending the school described by the author in particular, help in becoming a member of the “middle class”?
5. [Advanced/College Students] Do you think the school described by the author contributes to “development”? In what ways, or why not? Which development theories might help us understand the experience of students in the school described by the author?
6. [Advanced/College Students] Do you think that there is a “culture of poverty”? If so, how does it differ from the “culture of the middle class”?

Instructional Delivery

Activities/Motivation:

Understanding Poverty at Home

Determine the rate of poverty in your city or community, using appropriate Census Bureau statistics for your community. For example, if you live in the US, you can view “Table 708. Household, Family, and Per Capita Income and Individuals, and Families Below Poverty Level by City: 2009”, located at <https://www.census.gov/library/publications/2011/compendia/statab/131ed/income-expenditures-poverty-wealth.html>

If you do not live in the US, determine the poverty in your city by reviewing the latest census bureau poverty statistics in the country/city where you live.

Understanding US Poverty

Review established US Poverty Threshold for last year at: <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/income-poverty/historical-poverty-thresholds.html>

Review the four publications on the official poverty measure found: <https://www.census.gov/topics/income-poverty/poverty/about.html>

1. Infographic – Poverty: The History of a Measure
2. Working Paper – The Development of the Orshanky Poverty Theadsholds
3. Publication - Characteristics of the Population Below the Poverty Level: 1980
4. PDF – Family Food Plans and Food Costs (1962)

Understanding Global Poverty

Go to the World Bank Poverty & Equity Data site at <http://povertydata.worldbank.org/poverty/home/> and complete the following:

1. Review the Global Poverty Indicators
2. Explore the “Data Dashboards” of poverty by region
3. Visualize the distribution of poverty around the world with the World Interactive Map
4. See how poverty has evolved over time on the 8 World Interactive Map (press play button below map).

[Advanced students] Poverty, behavior, and aspirations

For an introduction to the topic, read:

World Bank. 2015. “World Development Report 2015: Mind, Society, and Behavior.” Washington, D.C.: World Bank. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/publication/wdr2015>

Writing Prompts

1. Research written and digital sources, and interview at least two local professionals who work with low-income families in your community that suffer from the type of poverty being studied, to gather data (nature, extent, degree) on the type of poverty you will be developing a solution for. You should focus on finding answers to the following questions in your research:
 - a. What does it mean to be "poor" in our community in this indicator? (What is the nature of the poverty?)
 - b. Who in our community is suffering from this type of poverty?
 - c. What percentage/number of families in our community are suffering from this type of poverty? (Extent of the poverty)
 - d. To what degree are these families suffering from this type of poverty?
 - e. What are the causes of this type of poverty?
 - f. What are the consequences of this type of poverty on the target population?
 - g. What are some possible permanent solutions to this type of poverty?
2. Making Poverty Personal – After reviewing the materials for this lesson and reading the chapter, how would you describe (in one single-spaced page) the state of poverty in the world, in your country, and in your community? (Be sure to cite your sources for the information you provide in your paper.)
3. [Advanced/College Students] The chapter describes how during their time at school, students change what they aspire to in life. What is the link between aspirations and poverty? Prepare a literature review that summarizes the available evidence on the importance of aspirations for overcoming poverty. This literature review should contain at least five articles from peer-reviewed journals, but may also be complemented with other materials.

4. [Advanced/College Students] The author notes the importance of Marxist-leaning liberation theology for the discussion of poverty in Latin America in the 1950s and 1960s. After doing some research, explain in a short paper (two to four pages) what are the roots and key tenets of this movement are.

Information for High School Teachers: Relation to Common Core Standards

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.6

Evaluate authors' differing points of view on the same historical event or issue by assessing the authors' claims, reasoning, and evidence.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.4

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including analyzing how an author uses and refines the meaning of a key term over the course of a text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.11-12.4

Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.