Unit One addressed the big picture of labor market realities—which industries are growing, which are shrinking, and technology’s impact on the market. Students interpreted graphs and charts depicting recent employment trends in Construction and learned about a wide range of careers in the sector. They also learned about how technology has impacted the sector, what a labor union is, and the various types of career families and employer types available in Construction.

Unit Two addressed the inner workings of the job-seeker. What are her interests and passions? What kind of work environment will she enjoy? What careers should she consider based on what she knows about herself and what factors might influence someone making a career change? Students also learned to navigate career database websites, assess their own interests and conduct a group research project about careers in the Construction sector.

In Unit Three, students heard from Construction workers themselves, through firsthand accounts and interviews from workers in text and video. They developed informational interview questions and conducted further research on Construction careers of interest.

In Unit Four students considered what it takes to prepare for a career in Construction. They learned about common career pathways in the industry and considered how career movement happens in Construction careers. Students also explored the kinds of training and education opportunities available for someone interested in this field.

In Unit Five, students learned how to leverage their existing and potential professional networks for job seeking, explored the job search process, including analyzing help wanted ads, assessing job offers, and engaging with a panel of Construction professionals. They learned how to become entrepreneurs by reading about Construction workers who have started their own businesses and using online resources from New York City’s Office of Small Business Services.
In Unit Six, students look at the Construction sector from a consumer’s perspective. They learn about the types of housing available in New York, how to find an apartment or house, and what to do if their housing is unsafe. They learn how changing demographics impact the amount and cost of housing available. They learn home maintenance literacy—the tools and tasks they can do on their own, especially in the case of an inattentive landlord or building manager.

1. TYPES OF HOUSING SERIES

Students learn about the various types of housing that are available to New Yorkers, how to find assistance to secure housing and prevent homelessness, and the cost of housing in New York. They analyze an informational video, practicing note-taking, read informational texts, cite evidence from the readings to support their ideas, and determine “rent burden” by performing calculations on income and rent.

1.1 • The Cost of Housing

Students read an article on the complex issues underlying the shortage of affordable housing and increase in homelessness. They work in pairs to respond to the text in writing, analyze a graph and perform calculations to determine what constitutes rent burden.

1.2 • Government-Supported Housing

Students learn about three types of government-supported housing: NYC Low-Income and Affordable Housing Lottery; the Section 8 Housing Voucher system; and NYCHA (New York City Housing Authority) public housing. Students take notes on and summarize videos, navigate a housing website and read an information sheet. They then identify similarities and differences between the three programs.

1.3 • Housing Assistance

Students conduct a jigsaw reading activity by reading in groups about one of four kinds of housing assistance—homelessness prevention programs, the shelter system, supportive housing and street outreach programs. Students from each group then come together and combine their knowledge to answer questions about all the readings and respond to scenarios that describe various housing needs. They match the need with the most appropriate resource, activating recall, critical thinking and problem-solving skills.
Unit 6 • Summary

2 • HOUSING DISCRIMINATION AND WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT

Students watch and summarize a video about housing discrimination. Then they read an article, practicing skimming and scanning to find information about the right to fair housing, and analyze scenarios about fair housing regulations.

2.1 • Tenants’ Rights and Resources

Students practice scanning to learn about tenants’ rights. They navigate a housing organization website and paraphrase what they have read. Students then examine scenarios involving tenants’ rights, identify the tenant right that best applies to the situation and summarize the appropriate next steps, activating critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

3 • A STORY OF NEIGHBORHOOD CHANGE: PEARL RIVER MART

Students analyze a video case study about an iconic family business that is faced with the choice to adapt or perish in response to economic changes in the neighborhood, and respond in writing to questions about the video.

3.1 • Analyzing Neighborhood Change

Students read about the systemic issue of neighborhood change and indicators of economic change in neighborhoods, analyze a graph of rent increases in three neighborhoods and learn how to calculate rent increases. They apply this information to determine which of four sample neighborhoods are showing signs of economic change.

4 • HOME SAFETY AND MAINTENANCE

Students read and analyze a flow chart showing how housing complaints are resolved. They generate phrases that will help them advocate for themselves in housing situations and role play parts of the housing complaint process. Students also respond to a writing prompt on housing safety.

4.1 • Do It Yourself Literacy: Basic Apartment Maintenance

Students read, annotate and discuss an article about basic apartment maintenance and repair. They activate critical thinking skills by applying the information in the reading to sample scenarios to determine how they should address various home maintenance needs.

5 • MEASUREMENT MATH: PROBLEM SOLVING WITH INCREMENTS ON A RULER

Students build a conceptual understanding of fractions, focusing on halves, quarters, eighths, and sixteenths. They then consider that understanding in the context of measurement, working with rulers.
Students learn about the availability of housing, the various ways renters find and pay for an apartment or house, and services available to individuals and families who may be at risk of homelessness. They practice note-taking by analyzing an informational video, read informational texts, cite evidence from the readings to support their ideas, and determine “rent burden” by performing calculations on income and rent.

**ACTIVITIES IN THIS SERIES**

- 1.1 • The Cost of Housing
- 1.2 • Government-Supported Housing
- 1.3 • Housing Assistance
The Cost of Housing

Students read an article on the complex issues underlying the shortage of affordable housing and increase in homelessness. They work in pairs to respond to the text in writing. They analyze a graph and perform calculations to determine what constitutes rent burden.

PREP

- Be prepared to explain vocabulary: housing unit, street homeless, rent-burdened.
- Prior knowledge of calculating with percents is helpful, but not necessary.

MATERIALS

- The Human Cost of Housing reading
- Using Benchmarks to Calculate Percents handout
- Calculating with Percents: Determining if a Household is Rent Burdened handout
- Respond to Text in Writing: The Human Costs of Housing handout

EXPLAIN

1 One statement at a time, students will be asked if they agree or disagree with the following statements.

Write the first statement on the board and read it aloud. If students agree with the statement, ask them to move to one side of the room. Students who disagree should move to the other side of the room. Students who disagree should move to the other side of the room.

- Shelter is a privilege, not a human right.
- All people deserve help when they have fallen on hard times.
- Spending half of your income on rent is a burden.

2 Ask students to elaborate on their opinions, alternating between the two sides of the room. Encourage students to back up their opinions with reasons, experiences, or beliefs that led them to their conclusion. Let students know they may switch sides if they change their minds at any point during the discussion. When students are finished discussing one statement (or the allotted time has expired), write the next statement on the board and repeat the process.
3 Write the last statement on the board and ask students what they think the word “burden” means in the sentence.

   A burden is a difficulty, a heavy load, something that is difficult to do or deal with.

4 Read the statement: “Spending half your income on rent is a burden.”
If students agree with the statement, ask them to move to one side of the room. If they disagree, they should move to the other side of the room.

5 Distribute The Human Cost of Housing reading. Ask students to read and annotate it, marking anything they find interesting, important, surprising or confusing. They should circle any unfamiliar words and write any questions they have in the margins.

6 While the class is reading, write the following sentences on the board.

   • “For every 100 households with extremely low incomes, there are only 32 affordable housing units.”
   • “Studies show that the large majority of street homeless New Yorkers are people living with mental illness or other severe health problems.”

7 Read the first sentence: “For every 100 households with extremely low incomes, there are only 32 affordable housing units.”

   What do you think housing “units” are?
   - Apartments or houses that people can rent.
   - Places people can rent to live.

8 Read the second sentence: “Studies show that the large majority of street homeless New Yorkers are people living with mental illness or other severe health problems.”

   What do you think the phrase “street homeless” means in the sentence?
   - Someone who is homeless and is living on the streets instead of in a shelter or other form of temporary housing.

7 Let’s review the graph titled, “Percentage of New York State Households that are Rent-Burdened.”

   Based on the title, what does the graph measure?
   - The percentage of households that pay more than 30% of their income on rent and utilities.
What different kinds of households are being measured?
- Households are divided by race and ethnicity.
- White households, Black households, Latino household, Asian households and Biracial/Multiracial are measured.

What group has the highest percentage of rent-burdened households?
- Latino households

What percentage of Asian households pay more than 30% of their income for rent and utilities?
- 54%

What conclusions can you draw based on this graph? Student answers will vary. Sample answers may include:
- Being rent-burdened is a problem in New York State.
- Latino and Black/African American households have the highest rate of being rent-burdened, while white households have the lowest rate of being rent-burdened.

Why do you think that households of color are more likely to be rent-burdened than white households? Student answers may vary. Sample answers may include:
- Racial and ethnic groups with a high percentage of low income households are more likely to be rent-burdened as they have to spend a higher proportion of their income on rent.
- Households of color are more likely to face barriers to both housing and employment that will lead to a greater risk of being rent-burdened.
- Immigrant households may face language, immigration status and other barriers to both housing and employment that will lead to a greater risk of being rent-burdened.

The first paragraph of the reading gives an example of how to figure out if a household's housing is affordable or if they are rent burdened. Families that spend more than 30% of their income on rent are considered rent-burdened.

What pieces of information do we need to know to find out if a family is rent-burdened?
- What is the household income?
- How much do they pay in rent?
Let students know they are going to be doing some work finding out what 30 percent of a family’s income is. First, they’ll do a quick review. Write $\frac{1}{10}$ on the board and have the class turn to a partner and discuss what it means. Walk around and listen to the different ways your students explain $\frac{1}{10}$.

Ask for a few volunteers to share what they talked about. Record student responses on the board. Students may say things like, “A pie divided into ten pieces with one piece colored in.” Eventually, you want to get to: $\frac{1}{10}$ means you have some whole and it is divided into 10 equal parts/pieces. And we are talking about one of those parts/pieces.

If students have not already raised equivalent ways of writing one-tenth, tell them there are other ways to say or write $\frac{1}{10}$. Ask them to come up with other ways:

- Student responses may include: One out of 10, .10, 10%, etc.

How does .10 relate to our definition of $\frac{1}{10}$? Consider where we often see .10 in our lives. $0.10$ is $1/10$ of $1$. If you divide the value of $1$ into ten equal pieces, each piece would be .10. $0.10$ is a dime and there are ten dimes in one dollar. Similarly, 100% is the whole. If you divide 100% into ten equal parts, each part is 10%. Let’s say a household earns $360$ a week. If we divide that $360$ into ten equal groups, how many would be in each group?

- Thirty-six. $360 \div 10 = 36$

You can draw the following on the board to help all students see:

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Once we determine 10% of a number, we can use that information to figure out other percents. For example, if 10% of 360 is 36. What would 20% be?

- $10\% = 36\$ dollars
  - $10\% \times 2 = 20\%$
  - $36\$ dollars \times 2 = 72\$ dollars
  - $20\% \text{ of } 360\text{ dollars} = 72\$ dollars$

How could we find 60% of 360?

- $10\% + 10\% + 10\% + 10\% + 10\% + 10\% = 60\%$
  - $36 + 36 + 36 + 36 + 36 + 36 = 216$. (Or $36 \times 6 = 216$)
Now we are going learn how to determine if a family is rent-burdened (that is, spending more than 30% of their family's income on rent). First, let’s practice using 10% to find 30%.

Distribute the Using Benchmarks to Calculate Percents worksheet and ask students to fill in the table.

There may be students who already know that when you divide any number by ten, you can move the decimal point one place to the left. At first, let students divide it any way they can, including using a calculator. After they have completed the table, you can ask the whole class to see what they notice when they look at the 100% (Whole) column and the 10% column. This will give all students a chance to practice using the calculator, more time to think about what they are actually doing when they move the decimal (dividing by ten) and then to identify a pattern that will let them make more efficient calculations in the future.

Once they are done, have students check their answers with a partner.

Let’s say that a family’s monthly income is $2,400 per month. What would 30% of that be?

10% of 2,400 = 240
240 x 3 = 720

If the rent on their apartment is $900 per month, is the family rent-burdened?

Yes, because $900 is more than $720, so the family spends more than 30% of their income on rent.

Distribute Calculating with Percents: Determining if a Household is Rent Burdened handout.

Divide the class into pairs. Have each pair work to solve the problems on the handout. Review the answers with the class.

When students are finished, distribute Respond to Text in Writing: The Human Costs of Housing handout and ask students to work with their partner to complete it.

When students are finished, discuss their answers as a class.

NOTE: Students should back up their thinking with evidence from the article. Ask follow-up questions that help students explain their thinking, delve more deeply into the questions, and cite evidence to support their responses. Some sample follow-up questions might include:
• How do you know that?
• Where in the article do you see that?
• Why do you think that?
• What else do you notice?
• Can you say more about that?
• What do you think that means?

After discussion, remind students of each of the three statements they debated in the beginning of class. Ask if anyone has changed their mind about any of the statements and why.
The Human Cost of Housing


There are human costs to the high cost of housing. According to the federal government, housing is considered affordable if a family spends 30 percent or less of their income on rent and utilities. Families that spend a higher percentage of their income on rent are considered “rent-burdened.” For example, a family with an income of $3,000 per month that spends more than $900 per month on rent and utilities is rent-burdened. By this measure, “over 46 percent of all families in New York State are rent-burdened. Families end up forced to choose between rent and other basic needs such as food, clothing, and medical care,” explains Brent Kramer, PhD, Senior Economist at the Fiscal Policy Institute (FPI).

According to the 2011-2015 American Community Survey, about half (51%) of New York State households that rent their homes spend more than 30% of their household income on rent and utilities. This burden often falls disproportionately on people of color and the elderly. The 2011-2015 American Community Survey revealed that while 49% white families in New York State were paying more than 30% of their household income on rent and utilities, that percentage rose for

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Data is from the 2011-2015 American Community Survey, Selected Housing Dataset, U.S. Census Bureau
families of color, with 57% of Black/African American households and 61% of Latino households being rent-burdened.

**Rent-burdened families face a greater risk of becoming homeless**

As Sydney Bennet, an Apartment List research associate, puts it, “Households that are spending most of their income on rent are often unable to save money for things like a medical emergency, or a car breakdown. This puts them at greater risk for being evicted or ending up homeless if something goes wrong.”

“The new working poor are homeless,” agrees Christine Quinn, the former City Council Speaker who now serves as chief executive for Win, a shelter provider for women and families. Seventy-one percent (71%) of the New York City shelter population is made up of families, a third of whom have a head of household who is working. These families are caught up in a familiar New York story: wages that don’t increase while rents soar. Between 2000 and 2014, the median New York City rent increased 19 percent while household income decreased by 6.3 percent. In that same period, the city’s homeless population more than doubled from 22,972 to 51,470. By 2017, there were around 60,000 people in the city’s shelter system, an all-time peak.

The National Low Income Housing Coalition found that for every 100 households in New York State with extremely low incomes, there are only 32 affordable housing units. In the Syracuse City School District, one in ten school children lack permanent housing. “This is a reflection of our community,” said Debra Montroy, a Syracuse School District administrator. In a city where more than 50 percent of the kids live in poverty and where some of the neighborhoods are among the poorest in the nation, families lacking stable or

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**VOCABULARY**

- **Soar:** To fly upward, like a bird, a plane or a kite.
- **Peak:** High point, like a mountaintop.

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Parvati Devi, 70
Retired hairdresser and manicurist

Rent Burden: 51 percent

Income: $1,014 ($820 in supplemental security income; $194 in food stamps).

Rent: $465.89 for a two-room, rent-stabilized apartment, and $55 to $120 in utilities.

“I have practically nothing left for the basics. I learned to clean with vinegar. I can buy that with food stamps. Today I’m staying in the house not to spend money. It’s difficult to have a quality of life. Sometimes I go to my senior center, but I’m pre-diabetic, and the centers serve a lot of food that’s not healthy. I eat whole grains at home or my friend brings me brown rice from a Chinese restaurant. I’ve gone to food pantries, but they don’t have brown rice. I’m always relying on friends, and I shouldn’t have this worry all the time.”

Credit: Chang W. Lee/The New York Times
permanent housing is simply a mirror of that intense poverty.

Coping with mental illness or addiction
For many New Yorkers, the difficulty in finding and keeping affordable housing is made worse by issues with drug addiction or mental illness. According to the Coalition for the Homeless, compared to families, homeless single adults have much higher rates of serious mental illness, addiction disorders, and other severe health problems. Each night thousands of unsheltered homeless people sleep on New York City streets, in the subway system, and in other public spaces. Studies show that the large majority of street homeless New Yorkers are people living with mental illness or other severe health problems.

Efforts to increase affordable housing
All these different families and individuals have a common need for safe, affordable housing. Cities and towns have programs in place to try to alleviate, or help solve, this problem. In 2017, New York City began a plan to build 90 new shelters, run in collaboration with non-profit social service organizations. These shelters would provide counseling and case management to help people move into permanent housing. At the same time, the city plans to convert about 800 apartments that are currently part of the temporary shelter system into permanent housing.

Other efforts to increase affordable housing while helping people who have become homeless include:

- Rent stabilization laws in New York City, Rockland, Nassau and Westchester counties to protect 2.5 million tenants who live in privately-owned apartment buildings from unexpected and steep rent increases.

- Housing developer set-asides that require companies that build higher rent apartments to have some apartments available at lower rents. These apartments are reserved for low and moderate income tenants who could not afford to rent apartments in that building otherwise. In New York City, applicants enter a lottery to determine which of the many people wanting these apartments will get one.

- **Section 8** is a federal program that helps people stay in housing by providing a voucher that will pay the landlord for part

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**Isara Linares, 34**  
*Former waitress with three young children*

Rent Burden: Her rent is more than her income.

Income: $640 in public assistance; $500 from her ex-husband, a driver for a car service; and other income from small jobs.

Rent: $1,275 for a two-bedroom apartment in Washington Heights in Manhattan, plus $158 to $280 in utilities.

“I’m not going to find anything cheaper than where I am for the size. I used to pay $1,375 for another apartment in the building. I talked to the landlord about lowering the rent, and he moved me to the 12th floor and charged me $1,275. We have bed bugs, and they don’t fix things. I’m now four months behind in rent.”

Credit: Juan Cristóbal Cobo for The New York Times
of the rent. The tenant will typically pay 30% of their income towards rent and the voucher will pay the rest.

- **Public Housing** provides affordable rental housing for eligible low-income families, the elderly, and tenants with disabilities. These developments are built and maintained with public (government) funds. There are about 80 local housing authorities in New York State that oversee public housing in their local areas.

- **Shelters** provide emergency housing for homeless individuals and families. New York City must, by law, provide temporary shelter to any eligible person.

- **Supportive housing** combines temporary or permanent affordable housing with vital support services for individuals living with special needs, including programs for homeless New Yorkers with mental health conditions, substance abuse issues (past or present), individuals living with HIV/AIDS, the elderly and young adults aging out of foster care and others.

- **Single Room Occupancy (SRO) housing** is a type of supportive housing that has smaller-than-average studio apartments sharing common kitchen or bathroom facilities.

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**Yoselyn Gómez, 54**
*Customer service associate at home improvement supply store and mother of three teenagers*

Rent Burden: 72%

Income: $2,200 (plus $263 in disability payments for husband).

Rent: $1,616 for a two-bedroom stabilized apartment in the Bronx, plus $175 in utilities.

“When we rented the apartment three years ago my husband paid half the rent, but then he became disabled. Now I’m the only one paying for everything. When you try to get some public assistance, they see that you have a job and they tell you that you don’t qualify. I’m behind $200 in the July rent and $1,616 in August. My biggest fear is to be thrown out on the street with three children.”

Credit: Hiroko Masuike/The New York Times

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**Alan Negron, 56**
*Homeless since: 2013*

I used to work for the post office, as a clerk. Fourteen years. And before that, I did Construction. I still do side jobs: fix a sink, a faucet, a light fixture.

To be honest, it was the drugs and the alcohol and fighting with my wife and carrying on and losing my job, losing my wife, father died, mother died, and at that time, I was just gone. I was living on the streets. I was sleeping in the park right here on Douglass and Third Avenue. Then I moved into a shelter called Camba. It’s here in Brooklyn on Atlantic Avenue, but it isn’t a shelter like people perceive it to be. There’s no fighting whatsoever. If you steal something, you’re out. They got showers there, they got a laundry room where you can wash your clothes. They got a bank where you can save your money. That’s part of the rules: They want you to save money.
Using Benchmarks to Calculate Percents

There are different ways to calculate percents. One way is to use common percents called benchmarks. 50%, 25% and 10% are all common benchmark percents. Let’s focus on 10%.

10% is equivalent to .10 or 1/10. Each of these mean we are talking about a whole divided into ten equal parts.

Let’s imagine a family has a household income of $360 a week. That $360 represents 100% of the income they have. If we divide that $360 into 10 equal groups, we would have 10 groups of 36. (360 ÷ 10 = 36)

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So we can see that 10% of 360 is 36. Once we determine 10% of a number, we can use that information to figure out other percents. For example, if 10% of 360 is 36 dollars, 20% would be 72 dollars. 30% would be 108 dollars, and so on.

(Use the chart on the following page to make various benchmark calculations.)
In this exercise, you will use the benchmark of 10% to determine 30% of a number. Complete the table.

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# ANSWER KEY: Using Benchmarks to Calculate Percents

In this exercise, you will use the benchmark of 10% to determine 30% of a number. Complete the table.

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Calculating with Percents:
Determining if a Household is Rent-Burdened

Work with your partner to review each situation and answer the questions. Remember to show your calculations.

Remember that to meet the federal standard for affordable housing, a household should only spend 30% or less of their income on rent.

HOUSEHOLD #1

Sonia and Daniel live with their son and daughter in a three bedroom apartment. Their income is $3,640 per month. Their rent is $1,985 per month.

Based on their income, according to the federal standard for affordable housing, what is the most that they should pay for rent each month?

Are they rent-burdened? Why or why not?

HOUSEHOLD #2

Tonya lives in a studio apartment. Her rent is $945 per month. Tonya’s income is $3,500 per month.

Based on her income, according to the federal standard for affordable housing, what is the most that she should pay for rent each month?

Is she rent-burdened? Why or why not?
**HOUSEHOLD #3**

Michael lives with his mother and son in a three bedroom apartment. He earns $2,250 per month. His mother gets $1,400 in social security and retirement benefits per month. Their rent is $2,255 per month.

What is their total household income?

Based on their income, according to the federal standard for affordable housing, what is the most that they should pay for rent each month?

Are they rent-burdened? Why or why not?

**HOUSEHOLD #4**

Yvonne and Yvette live with their daughter in a two bedroom apartment. Yvonne earns $3,940 per month. Yvette earns $2,980 per month. Their rent is $2,025 per month.

What is their total household income?

Based on their income, according to the federal standard for affordable housing, what is the most that they should pay for rent each month?

Are they rent-burdened? Why or why not?
ANSWER KEY: Calculating with Percents: Determining if a Household is Rent-Burdened

HOUSEHOLD #1

Sonia and Daniel live with their son and daughter in a three bedroom apartment. Their income is $3,640 per month. Their rent is $1,985 per month.

Based on their income, according to the federal standard for affordable housing, what is the most that they should pay for rent each month?

**ANSWER:**

\[
10\% \text{ of } 3,640 = 364 \\
364 \times 3 = 1,092
\]

*The most they should pay for rent is $1,092.*

Are they rent-burdened? Why or why not?

**ANSWER:** Yes, because 1,985 is more than 1,092, so they are paying more than 30% of their income in rent.

HOUSEHOLD #2

Tonya lives in a studio apartment. Her rent is $945 per month. Tonya’s income is $3,500 per month.

Based on her income, according to the federal standard for affordable housing, what is the most that she should pay for rent each month?

**ANSWER:**

\[
10\% \text{ of } 3,500 = 350 \\
350 \times 3 = 1,050
\]

*The most she should pay for rent is $1,050.*

Is she rent-burdened? Why or why not?

**ANSWER:** No, because 945 is less than 1,050, so she is paying less than 30% of her income in rent.

HOUSEHOLD #3

Michael lives with his mother and son in a three bedroom apartment. He earns $2,250 per month. His mother gets $1,400 in social security and retirement benefits per month. Their rent is $2,255 per month.

What is their total household income?

**ANSWER:**

\[2,250 + 1,440 = 3,650\]
Based on their income, according to the federal standard for affordable housing, what is the most that they should pay for rent each month?

**ANSWER:**

\[
10\% \text{ of } 3,650 = 365 \\
365 \times 3 = 1,095 \\
The \text{ most they should pay for rent is } $1,095.
\]

Are they rent-burdened? Why or why not?

**ANSWER:** Yes, because 2,255 is more than 1,095 so they are paying more than 30% of their income in rent.

**HOUSEHOLD #4**

Yvonne and Yvette live with their daughter in a two bedroom apartment. Yvonne earns $3,940 per month. Yvette earns $2,980 per month. Their rent is $2,025 per month.

What is their total household income?

**ANSWER:** 

\[
3,940 + 2,980 = 6,920
\]

Based on their income, according to the federal standard for affordable housing, what is the most that they should pay for rent each month?

**ANSWER:**

\[
10\% \text{ of } 6,920 = 692 \\
692 \times 3 = 2,076 \\
The \text{ most they should pay for rent is } $2,076.
\]

Are they rent-burdened? Why or why not?

**ANSWER:** No, because 2,025 is less than 2,076, so they are paying less than 30% of their income in rent.
Respond to Text in Writing: The Human Costs of Housing

Work in pairs to answer the following questions. Cite evidence from the reading to support your answer.

1. What is supportive housing? Who does it help?

2. When is housing considered “affordable?” When is a family considered “rent-burdened?”

3. Why are rent-burdened households at a greater risk of becoming homeless?
Section 1.1

4 What is the key point that the article is making about the lack of affordable housing and homelessness?

5 What do you think is the author’s purpose in writing this article?

6 The article includes text boxes with quotes from four different people. Why do you think the article includes them? How do they affect your experience of reading the article?
Government-Supported Housing

Students learn about three types of government-supported housing: NYC Low-Income and Affordable Housing Lottery; the Section 8 Housing Voucher system; and NYCHA (New York City Housing Authority) public housing. They do so by taking notes on and summarizing videos, navigating a housing website and reading an information sheet. Students determine commonalities and differences between the three programs.

NOTE: This activity uses New York City housing programs as a means for helping students practice summarizing, navigating websites and comparing information from different mediums. This activity can be adapted to local housing resources.

This activity is extensive and can be divided into two or three shorter activities.

PREP

1. Review the “Affordable Housing in New York City” video on the housing lottery at https://tinyurl.com/ybxa69of

2. Review “Section 8 Housing Vouchers” video at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N5aPE_2n6vl Note: Stop at minute 2:09.

3. Be prepared to explain the following vocabulary words:
   - **Amenities**: features of a building that help to provide comfort, convenience or safety.
   - **Municipal employees**: People employed by the city government
   - **Unit size**: An apartment is a unit. Unit size refers to the number of bedrooms.
   - **Market rate apartment**: an apartment that has no rent restrictions. A landlord who owns market-rate housing is free to rent the space at whatever price people in the area will pay.
MATERIALS

- This activity requires a computer with projector or student computers with headphones.
- Affordable Housing Headlines handout
- Housing Lottery Video Key Points handout
- Housing Connect Ad handout
- Housing Connect Ad Question handout
- Section 8 Voucher Video Key Points handout
- New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) Public Housing: Frequently Asked Questions reading
- Housing Programs: Compare and Contrast handout

EXPLAIN

1. Government officials and the news media talk about the “affordable housing crisis.” Here are some recent examples of headlines. Distribute Affordable Housing Headlines handout. When you look at these headlines, what are some things that come to mind? Find a partner and list all the things you can think of when you see these headlines.

After the pairs have had a few minutes to talk, ask the class to list some of the things that came to mind. Sample answers may include:

- People can’t find apartments they can afford.
- There are fewer low-rent apartments than there used to be.
- What does rent-burdened mean?

2. These headlines talk about “affordable housing.” What do you think that means? Student answers will vary. It is fine if some of the answers aren’t accurate. Sample answers might include:

- Apartments that are cheap/easy to afford.
- Apartments in public housing.
- Lower-rent apartments in new buildings.

3. The federal government has determined that housing is affordable if you are spending 30% or less of your income on housing. Look at the headlines. What words are used to describe families that spend more than 30% of their income on rent?

- Rent-burdened

4. There are government programs for people who are looking for an apartment, but have difficulty finding one that they can afford. Most of these programs have waiting lists and require patience. The three main resources are:
• New York City Housing Lottery for Low-income Renters
• Section 8 Housing Vouchers
• New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) Public Housing

**Affordable Housing Lottery**

5 When you hear the word, “lottery,” what comes to mind? Students may give examples or descriptions. Sample answers can include:

> Something you enter to win money.
> “You have to be in it to win it,” or other slogans from ads.
> Examples such as the New York State Lottery and Powerball.

6 A lottery is a system where many people enter to gain a prize of some kind, but only one or a few people win the prize. There are apartments available through lottery and some schools available through lottery. In a housing lottery, chance determines which of the applicants will get the apartment. Names are chosen at random.

7 Distribute *Housing Lottery Key Points* handout. We’re going to watch a video on how to apply for housing through the New York City Housing Lottery. We’re going to play the video twice. Read the questions first, but do not write anything down yet.

8 The first time we play the video, listen for the key steps in the process of applying for an apartment through the housing lottery without writing anything down. Turn your paper over and focus on listening. Then we’ll play the video again, stopping it at key points so that you can answer the questions on the handout.

9 Play “Affordable Housing in New York City” video at [https://tinyurl.com/ybxa69of](https://tinyurl.com/ybxa69of).

10 Briefly discuss with a partner the steps one must take to get an apartment through the affordable housing lottery.

11 Now we are going to listen to the video again, stopping at key points so that you can write notes on your *Housing Lottery Key Points* handout.

12 Play the video again. Stop at 0:28 minutes. Ask the class to note the answer to Question #1 on their handout:

> How do you find information about potential apartments? What do you need to do to get more information on an apartment that you are interested in?
Resume playing the video. Stop at 0:59 minutes. Ask the class to note the answers to Question #2 and #3 on their handout:

- What are the two things you need to keep in mind when deciding on whether to apply for a particular apartment?
- What are the three important pieces of information that the ad will include?

Resume playing the video. Stop at 1:58 minutes. Ask the class to note the answers to Question #4 and #5 on their handout:

- What is the first thing you need to do before applying?
- How can you apply with a paper application?

Resume playing the video. Stop at 2:41 minutes. Ask the class to note the answers to Question #6 and #7 on their handout:

- How are applicants selected for interview for an apartment? What criteria are used?
- How long do applicants usually wait to hear if they have been selected for an interview after the deadline for applications has passed?

Resume playing the video. Stop at 3:10 minutes. Ask the class to note the answer to Question #8 on their handout:

- If an interview has been scheduled, what does the applicant have to bring to the interview?

Play the video until the end. Ask students to take a moment to review their notes. Then in pairs, they should compare notes for accuracy.

What are some things you need to consider when looking for an apartment in the housing lottery? Sample answers can include:

- Am I eligible for this particular apartment?
- What does the apartment look like? How many bedrooms does it have? Can I afford it?
- What borough is it in?
- Is it in a neighborhood I want to live in?

According to the video, where can you get more information on each apartment?

- A link on the website will lead you to a description of each apartment.
Distribute *Housing Connect Ad* reading. This is a sample Housing Connect Ad, the kind that can be found on the housing lottery website. Let’s take a more in-depth look at it. What do you see at the top of the page in capital letters?

- *The name and address of the apartment building.*

Looking right below the name and address is a description of the building’s “Amenities.” Based on the description, what do you think “amenities” refer to? Student answers will vary. Sample answers might include:

- *Things that the apartment building offers, such as a laundry room.*
- *Extras that all tenants in the building can use.*

Look at the section labeled, “Who Should Apply?” Some apartments are set aside or reserved for applicants with disabilities or other groups, such as residents of a certain borough or neighborhood. These groups are called preferential groups. What percentage of vacant apartments have been set aside for these groups?

- 5% of apartments are set aside for people with mobility disabilities.
- 2% of apartments are set aside for people with vision/hearing disabilities.
- 50% of apartments are set aside for Bronx residents.
- 5% of apartments are set aside for municipal employees.

Who do you think municipal employees are?

- *People who work for the city government.*

There are eight 3-bedroom apartments in the building on the list. How many have been set aside for Bronx residents?

- *Four*

If 62% of the apartments are set aside for various groups, what percent of apartments are available for all other eligible applicants? How would you find this out?

- 100% – 62% = 38%. Thirty-eight percent (38%) of apartments are available for all other eligible applicants.

Let’s review the table. What information is provided in each column? The column heading will indicate this.

- *Unit Size*
- *Monthly Rent*
- *Units Available*
- *Household Size*
- *Annual Household Income*
27 What do you think the word “unit” in “Unit Size” refers to?
   ▶ A unit is an apartment. Unit size refers to the number of bedrooms.

28 What other information is on the Housing Connect Ad? What are the other section headings highlighted in light blue?
   ▶ How Do You Apply?
   ▶ When is the Deadline?
   ▶ What Happens After You Submit an Application?

29 Distribute Housing Connect Ad Questions. Ask students to work in pairs to answer the questions. Review the answers with the class, using the answer key for Housing Connect Ad Questions to guide the discussion.

Section 8 Vouchers

30 Next, we’re going to watch a video on the Section 8 Voucher system. We’re going to play the video twice. Distribute Section 8 Video Key Points handout. Read questions but do not write anything down yet.

31 Write the following questions on the board:

   - What are market rate apartments?
   - What is a Section 8 voucher?
   - What process does James follow?

We’re going to watch the video two times. The first time you watch the video, think about the questions on the board.

32 Play the video at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N5aPE_2n6vl
   Note: Stop at minute 2:09.

33 The video says that James can’t afford to pay market rate for an apartment without help. What do you think market rate is?
   ▶ The amount of money that people in that neighborhood are willing to pay for an apartment.

34 What is Section 8? What is a Section 8 Housing Voucher, and how does it work?
   ▶ Section 8 is a federal program that provides vouchers that tenants can use to pay the landlord for part of the rent. The tenant will typically pay 30% of their income towards rent and the voucher will pay the rest.
It says in the video that James will have to pay 30% of his income towards his rent. The Section 8 Voucher will pay for the rest. If James's income is $2,000 a month, how much will he pay in rent? What steps can we do to solve this problem?

Let's do a quick review of using benchmarks like 10% to find other percents.

NOTE: For a more detailed explanation of using benchmarks to calculate percents, please see the preceding lesson, “The Human Cost of Housing.”

What are some other ways to say 10%?

- One out of 10, 1/10, one in ten. 10% means you have a whole and it is divided into 10 equal parts/pieces; it refers to one of those parts/pieces.

Consider where we often see 10% in our lives. If you divide the value of $1 into ten equal pieces, each piece would be .10 or 10% of a dollar. $0.10 is a dime and there are ten dimes in one dollar.

Now let's try this with bigger numbers. If James earned $100, what would 10% be?

- $10

If James earned $1,000 per month what would 10% of his income be?

- $100

What if James earned $2,000 per month? What would 10% of his income be?

- $200

How would we find out what 20% of James's income would be if James earned $2,000 per month?

- 10% + 10% = 20%, therefore $200 + $200 = $400
  or
  10% × 2 = 20%, therefore $200 × 2 = $400

How would we find out what 30% of James's income would be if James earned $2,000?

- 10% + 10% + 10% = 30%, therefore $200 + $200 + 200 = $600
  or
  10% × 3 = 30%, therefore $200 × 3 = $600

If James’s income is $2,000 per month, James will pay $600 per month in rent.

If James's rent is $1,000 per month and his income is $2,000, how much of his rent will be paid for by Section 8? How would you find this out? What kind of word problem is this?
Section 1.2

Lesson Guide

This is a subtraction problem. We need to subtract the amount that James can pay from the rent. The remainder is the amount that Section 8 will pay.

$1,000 – $600 = $400

38 In New York City, it is illegal for a landlord to refuse to accept a Section 8 voucher. New York City Fair Housing law states that landlords cannot discriminate against applicants based on whether their source of income includes government assistance. What do you think this means?

Landlords can’t refuse to rent to people because they have Section 8 vouchers or because their rent will be paid for by a government program.

39 More people apply for Section 8 vouchers each year than the program has money to fund. In order to apply for a Section 8 Housing Voucher, your area must have vouchers that they can assign to families. If a region has already given out all the vouchers assigned for their area, they will close the application process.

40 We’re going to play the video again. At the end of it, work with a partner to answer the questions on the Section 8 Video Key Points handout.

41 Play the video again. After students have completed the handout, review the answers as a class, using the Answer Key as a guide.

NYCHA (New York City Housing Authority) Public Housing

42 In addition to lower cost housing available in private properties (Housing Lottery), and government vouchers used to cover part of the rent in private apartments (Section 8), cities also build and maintain low and moderate income housing with federal assistance. Distribute New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) Public Housing: Frequently Asked Questions reading. Ask students to read and annotate the article. First, they should mark anything they think is interesting, important, confusing, or surprising. They should circle unfamiliar words and write any questions they have in the margins.

43 Divide the class into groups of four. Ask students to discuss the reading in their group and answer the following questions:

• What did you notice in the article? (Write down as many things as you can.)

• What did you read that interests you?

• What do you want to know more about? Was anything confusing? What do you have questions about? (Be specific.)
Facilitate a discussion in which students share their responses to the NYCHA Public Housing reading. Broaden the discussion to include all three types of housing programs covered in this lesson:

- What is the aim of all three programs? What are they trying to do?
- What problem are they all trying to address?
- Can someone enroll in all three? What makes you think this?
- What would be the advantages of enrolling in all three? Why might someone not want to do that?

Have students stay in their groups. Distribute Housing Programs: Compare and Contrast handout. Have students use their previous handouts and notes to complete the handout. Discuss the answers as a class.
Affordable Housing Headlines

Behind New York City's affordable housing crisis

The New York Times

How Do Rent-Burdened New Yorkers Cope?

amNEWYORK

New York housing crisis: Low-rent apartment stock has plummeted since 2005, Stringer says
Housing Lottery Video Key Points

Answer the questions based on the information in the video. When you have finished answering the questions, compare your answers with a partner for accuracy.

1. How do you find information about potential apartments? What do you need to do?

2. What are the two things you need to keep in mind when deciding whether to apply?

3. What are the three important pieces of information that the ad will include?

4. What is the first thing you need to do before applying?
5. How can you apply with a paper application?

6. How are applicants selected for interview for an apartment? What criteria are used?

7. How long do applicants usually wait to hear whether or not they won the housing lottery after the deadline for applications has passed?

8. If an interview has been scheduled, what does the applicant have to bring to the interview?
ANSWER KEY: Housing Lottery Video Key Points

Answer the questions based on the information in the video. When you have finished answering the questions, compare your answers with a partner for accuracy.

1. **How do you find information about potential apartments? What do you need to do?**
   **ANSWER:** Go to the Housing Connect website to see the list of developments that are accepting applications. Click on any listing you are interested in to get more details.

2. **What are the two things you need to keep in mind when deciding whether to apply?**
   **ANSWER:** Do you qualify? What is the deadline date or the date you must apply by?

3. **What are the three important pieces of information that the ad will include?**
   **ANSWER:** Apartment sizes, the number of people allowed in a household and income limits, or the maximum amount of money you are allowed to have as income in order to qualify.

4. **What is the first thing you need to do before applying?**
   **ANSWER:** You must set up a profile on the Housing Connect website.

5. **How can you apply with a paper application?**
   **ANSWER:** When you open the advertisement to read the details, it will tell you how to apply with a paper application.

6. **How are applicants selected for interview for an apartment? What criteria are used?**
   **ANSWER:** All applications are entered into the computer and given a random number, called a Log Number. Applicants are called back for interviews based on their Log Numbers. Apartments for people with disabilities are leased first, then apartments set-aside for people who meet the preference criteria, then the rest of the applicants are leased.

7. **How long do applicants usually wait to hear whether or not they won the housing lottery after the deadline for applications has passed?**
   **ANSWER:** It can take from 2–10 months to hear back after the deadline has passed.

8. **If an interview has been scheduled, what does the applicant have to bring to the interview?**
   **ANSWER:** You must bring the documents on the checklist that will be given to you before the interview. This list includes identification documents, pay stubs, etc. for everyone in the household.
Section 1.2

Housing Connect Ad

Affordable Housing for Rent

THESSALONIA MANOR APARTMENTS
83 NEWLY CONSTRUCTED UNITS AT 960 PROSPECT AVENUE & 961 REV. JAMES A. POLITE AVENUE, MORRISANIA, BRONX

Amenities: On-site laundry, 24-hour security cameras, community room, courtyard, and roof top terrace.

Transit: 2/5, Bx17, Bx40, Bx42

No application fee • No broker’s fee • Smoke-free building • More information: www.cmcdvelopmentnyc.com

This building is being constructed through the Extremely Low & Low-Income Affordability Program (ELLA) of the New York City Housing Development Corporation and the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development.

Who Should Apply?
Individuals or households who meet the income and household size requirements listed in the table below may apply. Qualified applicants will be required to meet additional selection criteria. Applicants who live in New York City receive a general preference for apartments.

- A percentage of units is set aside for applicants with disabilities:
  - Mobility (5%)
  - Vision/Hearing (2%).
- Preference for a percentage of units goes to:
  - Residents of Bronx CD2 (50%)
  - Municipal employees (5%)

TABLE 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit Size</th>
<th>Monthly Rent</th>
<th>Units Available</th>
<th>Household Size</th>
<th>Annual Household Income</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 bedroom</td>
<td>$929</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>1 person</td>
<td>$33,806 - $43,860</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 people</td>
<td>$33,806 - $50,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 bedroom</td>
<td>$1,121</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>2 people</td>
<td>$40,423 - $50,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3 people</td>
<td>$40,423 - $66,340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4 people</td>
<td>$40,423 - $62,580</td>
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<tr>
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<td>$1,269</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3 people</td>
<td>$46,732 - $66,340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4 people</td>
<td>$46,732 - $62,580</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5 people</td>
<td>$46,732 - $67,620</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6 people</td>
<td>$46,732 - $72,800</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 Tenant pays electricity.
2 Household size includes everyone who will live with you, including parents and children. Subject to occupancy criteria.
3 Household income includes salary, hourly wages, tips, Social Security, child support, and other income. Income guidelines subject to change.
4 Minimum income listed may not apply to applicants with Section 8 or other qualifying rental subsidies. Asset limits also apply.

How Do You Apply?
Apply online or through mail. To apply online, please go to nyc.gov/housingconnect. To request an application by mail, send a self-addressed envelope to: Thessalonia Manor Apartments, 1465 Nelson Avenue, Suite A, Bronx, NY 10452. Only send one application per development. Do not submit duplicate applications. Do not apply online and also send in a paper application. Applicants who submit more than one application may be disqualified.

When is the Deadline?
Applications must be postmarked or submitted online no later than October 26, 2018. Late applications will not be considered.

What Happens After You Submit an Application?
After the deadline, applications are selected for review through a lottery process. If yours is selected and you appear to qualify, you will be invited to an interview to continue the process of determining your eligibility. Interviews are usually scheduled from 2 to 10 months after the application deadline. You will be asked to bring documents that verify your household size, identity of members of your household, and your household income.
Housing Connect Ad Questions

Work with a partner to answer the following questions.

1. Look at the "Available Units and Income Requirements" table. What unit sizes are available?

2. What is the monthly rent for a one bedroom apartment?

3. How many two bedroom apartments are available?

4. What is the minimum number of people that can occupy a three-bedroom apartment?

   What is the maximum number of people that can occupy a three-bedroom apartment?

5. What is the minimum income a household can have and be eligible for a one bedroom apartment?

   What is the maximum income a household can have and be eligible for a one bedroom apartment?

6. Lisa is looking for an apartment for herself and her 2 daughters. What are the two unit sizes she could be eligible for?
7. How much is the rent on a two bedroom apartment?

8. How much is the rent on a three bedroom apartment?

9. How much more would Lisa pay if she rented a three bedroom apartment instead of a two bedroom apartment?

10. What are the two ways that you can apply?

11. When is the last day you can apply? What is the deadline?
ANSWER KEY: Housing Connect Ad Questions

Work with a partner to answer the following questions.

1. Look at the “Available Units and Income Requirements” table. What unit sizes are available?
   **ANSWER:** One, two and three bedroom apartments are available.

2. What is the monthly rent for a one bedroom apartment?
   **ANSWER:** $929

3. How many two bedroom apartments are available?
   **ANSWER:** 37

4. What is the minimum number of people that can occupy a three-bedroom apartment?
   **ANSWER:** 3
   What is the maximum number of people that can occupy a three-bedroom apartment?
   **ANSWER:** 6

5. What is the minimum income a household can have and be eligible for a one bedroom apartment?
   **ANSWER:** $33,806
   What is the maximum income a household can have and be eligible for a one bedroom apartment?
   **ANSWER:** $50,100

6. Lisa is looking for an apartment for herself and her 2 daughters. What are the two unit sizes she could be eligible for?
   **ANSWER:** A two bedroom or a three bedroom apartment.

7. How much is the rent on a two bedroom apartment?
   **ANSWER:** $1,121

8. How much is the rent on a three bedroom apartment?
   **ANSWER:** $1,289

9. How much more would Lisa pay if she rented a three bedroom apartment instead of a two bedroom apartment?
   **ANSWER:** $1,289 – $1,121 = $168. She would pay $168 more a month for a three bedroom apartment than for a two bedroom apartment.

10. What are the two ways that you can apply?
    **ANSWER:** You can apply online or by mail.

11. When is the last day you can apply? What is the deadline?
    **ANSWER:** October 26, 2018.
Section 8 Voucher Video Key Points

Answer the questions based on the information in the video. When you have finished answering the questions, compare your answers with a partner for accuracy.

1 How can the Section 8 Housing Voucher program help James find an apartment for his family that he can afford?

2 If James pays 30% of his income in rent, how much will he pay in monthly rent if his income is $2,500 per month?

3 If he rents an apartment for $1,150 per month, how much of his rent will be paid by his Section 8 voucher?

4 How long after he applies will James have to wait in order to get a housing voucher, based on the video?

5 What happens if James wants to move? Will he lose his voucher? Explain why or why not.
ANSWER KEY: Section 8 Voucher Video Key Points

Answer the questions based on the information in the video. When you have finished answering the questions, compare your answers with a partner for accuracy.

1. How can the Section 8 Housing Voucher program help James find an apartment for his family that he can afford?
   **ANSWER:** Under the Section 8 Housing program, James will pay 30% of his income for rent. Section 8 will pay the difference.

2. If James pays 30% of his income in rent, how much will he pay in monthly rent if his income is $2,500 per month?
   **ANSWER:**
   \[
   10\% \text{ of } $2,500 = $250 \\
   $250 \times 3 = $750 \\
   \text{James will have to pay } $750 \text{ in rent each month.}
   \]

3. If he rents an apartment for $1,150 per month, how much of his rent will be paid by his Section 8 voucher?
   **ANSWER:** $1,150 – $750 = $400

4. How long after he applies will James have to wait in order to get a housing voucher, based on the video?
   **ANSWER:** About 2 years.

5. What happens if James wants to move? Will he lose his voucher? Explain why or why not.
   **ANSWER:** If James moves to a place with a Section 8 voucher system, he will keep his voucher and can use it in his new location. He needs to work this out with his local housing authority first.
New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA)
Public Housing: Frequently Asked Questions


1. What Is NYCHA?
The New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA), the largest public housing authority in North America, was created in 1935 to provide safe, affordable housing for low- and moderate-income New Yorkers. NYCHA is home for 1 in 14 New Yorkers and NYCHA public housing represents 8 percent of the city’s rental apartments. NYCHA operates 325 housing developments across all five boroughs of New York City.

2. How do you apply for NYCHA?
You can apply online at http://apply.nycha.info from your own phone, tablet or computer or you can file online at a NYCHA walk-in center. To be considered for an apartment in a public housing development, you must submit a completed application. Applicants select a first and second borough choice, and provide information about:

- Their total household income
- Family composition
- Current living situation

3. Who is eligible for NYCHA housing?
You may be eligible if you meet NYCHA’s definition of family, which includes:

- Two or more persons related by blood, marriage, domestic partnership, adoption, guardianship, or court awarded custody.
- A single person.
- Your admission to a public housing development will not endanger the welfare and safety of other residents.
You and your co-applicant (spouse or domestic partner, if any) must be at least 18 years of age or an emancipated minor. An emancipated minor is a child who has been granted the status of adulthood by a court order or other formal arrangement. In the United States, there are three main ways for a teenager to become emancipated: Court petition, Marriage, and Military Service.

Your family’s income does not exceed the established income limits:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Person(s) in Family</th>
<th>Income Limits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>$58,450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>$66,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>$75,150</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>$96,850</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>$103,500</td>
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<td>9</td>
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<td>13</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>$150,250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>$156,900</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. **Do I have to be citizen of the United States to be eligible to apply for public housing?**

No, you do not have to be a citizen of the United States but at least one member of your household must be a United States citizen or a non-citizen with eligible immigration status (e.g. Permanent Resident, Refugee/Asylum statuses).

5. **What is the difference between Public Housing and Section 8?**

Public housing apartments are owned and operated by NYCHA. More than 400,000 New Yorkers reside in one of the 178,895 apartments located around the five boroughs of New York City. The Section 8 Program enables eligible persons to rent privately owned apartments. Housing assistance payments are made to the private landlords.
6. **Can I be on the waiting list for both Public Housing and Section 8?**

Yes, you can apply for both programs, but once you rent an apartment with the assistance of one program, your housing priority in the program that you did not yet receive will be significantly reduced. This reduction in priority would likely mean that you will not be reached on the waiting list.

7. **What happens after I apply?**

Applications are assigned a priority code based on information provided in the application and placed on NYCHA’s preliminary waiting list for an eligibility interview. Within 2 weeks of receipt of your application, you will receive an acknowledgment letter. This application will be in force for two years from the date of receipt.

8. **What are priority codes?**

NYCHA gives priority to applications based on two categories: family need for housing and whether the household contains working family members. These two categories are named Working Family and Need Based priorities. Need Based priorities include families who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless and victims of domestic violence. The Working Family priority includes families whose income comes from employment.

Each applicant is ranked based on these priorities. An applicant may be assigned a priority in one or both categories. Applicants are placed on the waiting list and called for interviews based on their priority.

9. **How are applicants selected for public housing?**

A computerized system randomly selects applicants for an apartment based on the priorities assigned to each applicant family, matching them to vacant apartments as they become available. For example, a family that, based on family size, is eligible for a two-bedroom apartment might also have a Need Based or a Working Family priority as described above. An applicant in one of the priority groups would be called for an interview earlier than those who fit the criteria, but are not part of any of the priority groups, and placed on the waiting list based on their priority. However, even if they were placed in the highest priority, they would still have to wait for an appropriate two-bedroom apartment in the borough(s) they selected to become available. 209,180 families are on the waiting list for public housing as of May 2018.
### Housing Programs: Compare and Contrast

Discuss the questions below in your group. Use your handouts, notes and shared knowledge to complete the table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Housing Program</th>
<th>Describe the program.</th>
<th>Who is eligible for it?</th>
<th>How do you apply?</th>
<th>What are the drawbacks of the program?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New York City Housing Lottery</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Section 8 Housing Vouchers</td>
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<tr>
<td>NYCHA Public Housing</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Housing Assistance

In groups, students read about various kinds of housing assistance: homelessness prevention, the shelter system, supportive housing and street outreach programs. Students then conduct a jigsaw reading activity by coming together to combine their knowledge. In groups, they answer questions about the whole reading and rely on one another’s understanding to examine scenarios that describe different housing needs and match the scenario with the most appropriate resource, activating critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

PREP

- Write on the board:
  - “The new face of homelessness is working people who fall into the shelter system because their income can’t cover their rent.” —Business Insider article, March 2018
  - “Many families that spend a large share of their income on rent are one car-repair bill away from eviction.” —Marketwatch article, December 2017

MATERIALS

- Four Types of Housing Assistance reading
- Helping People Stay in Their Homes reading
- Homelessness, Step by Step reading
- A Real Life Look at NYC’s Homeless Outreach Efforts reading
- Supportive Housing and SROs reading
- Housing Assistance Summary handout
- Housing Assistance Scenarios handout
EXPLAIN

1. Ask for a student to read the quotes on the board:

   • “The new face of homelessness is working people who fall into the shelter system because their income can’t cover their rent.”
     —Business Insider article, March 2018
   • “Many families that spend a large share of their income on rent are one car-repair bill away from eviction.”
     —Marketwatch article, December 2017

2. Write (or project) the following questions on the board, and read them aloud:

   • What are these two quotes saying about the problem of affordable housing?
   • What conclusions can you draw about the causes of homelessness based on these two quotes?
   • Why does the second quote say that some families are a “car-repair bill away from eviction”? What does that mean?

3. Find a partner and discuss these questions. Take notes on your discussion so you can share your thoughts with the class a little later.

4. After the pairs have discussed these questions, facilitate a discussion with the entire class. Sample comments may include:

   - Lack of affordable housing is a big problem.
   - Some families have rents that are so high that they can’t pay them and end up getting evicted.
   - Some families pay all their income in rent and don’t have money left over for emergencies, having to choose between rent and food, rent and medicine, etc.
   - If rents were lower, more people could afford to stay in their apartments.

5. There are some programs that help families that are having problems paying the rent. **What are some things that could help?** Have the class brainstorm for a few minutes. Write suggestions on the board. Sample ideas can include.

   - Housing lottery, programs that help you find cheaper places to rent.
   - Housing assistance programs that help you pay the rent.
   - Programs like the Earned Income Tax Credit or Food Stamps that save money in other ways.
Distribute *Four Types of Housing Assistance* reading. Before we read the article, we’re going to practice a skill that is included on the TASC: skimming and scanning. You skim and scan material by reviewing it quickly to get the general idea of what it is about, looking for key words or ideas.

Based on the title, “*Four Types of Housing Assistance,*” what do you expect the reading to be about?

- *Four types of government help you can get to find an apartment or house.*
- *Four ways you can get part of your rent paid for.*
- *Four organizations that can help if your home needs repairs.*

When you look at the page, besides the headline, what other words stand out? These words are called “subheadings” or “section headings.”

- *Homelessness Prevention*
- *Shelters*
- *Street Outreach*
- *Supportive Housing*

What would you expect the text under each subheading to do?

- *Give more details on each type of assistance.*

Divide the class into pairs and ask them to read the article on their own. Then, with their partner, ask them to briefly discuss what each section was about.

We’re going to look at these four types of housing assistance—homelessness prevention, shelters, street outreach and supportive housing—in more detail.

Divide the class into four groups. Each group will read about one of these forms of housing assistance. For example, students in Group 1 will read about homelessness prevention programs, students in Group 2 will read about shelters, and so on.

After they read and discuss their text in their groups, they will present information on their readings to the entire class. Then new groups will be formed so that students can combine their knowledge to answer questions and address specific housing scenarios.

Distribute one of the four readings—*Helping People Stay in Their Homes, Homelessness, Step by Step, A Real Life Look at NYC’s Homeless Outreach Efforts or Supportive Housing and SROs*—to each group so that all members of that group have the same reading.

NOTE: If you need an additional article, use *Reaching Out to Homeless Youth,* following the four main articles.
While the class is reading, write (or project) the following on the board:

- Describe the program.
  - What does the program do?
  - What services does it provide?
  - How does it provide services?
- Who does it serve?
  - Who is eligible?
- How do you apply?
  - How is outreach done?

Distribute *Housing Assistance Summary* handout and review the questions with the class. Ask groups to complete the handout, citing evidence from their article to support their answers.

When students are finished, each group presents their information to the class. Guide the class in responding to the presentation by asking follow-up questions to each group. Sample questions can include:

- How do you know that?
- Where in the article did you see that?
- Why did you choose the quotes that you used? Why do you think that they are relevant?

Divide the class into new groups that include at least one member from each original group. It is fine if some groups have more than one member from each original group. Give each group member a few minutes to review the main points from their presentations. Groups should feel free to bring up and discuss new information not in their presentations and ask each other questions.

Distribute *Housing Assistance Scenarios* handout. Each group should work together to match the person or family’s housing need with possible housing assistance options. Then each group should answer the discussion questions, including making up their own scenario showing how the same person or family might be helped by at least two of the different types of housing assistance mentioned.

When students are finished, discuss each of the four scenarios with the class. Then have each group present their housing scenario and the housing assistance suggestions they came up with. Facilitate a discussion around each student-written scenario where the class addresses these questions:

- What housing problem or problems are being raised in this example?
- How does the proposed assistance address this problem?
- Are there any other resources that could help this person or this family?
Four Types of Housing Assistance

1. **Homelessness Prevention**

   Some nonprofit, community-based organizations provide services such as emergency rent assistance, legal assistance and financial counseling that help people stay in their apartments. These services are called homelessness prevention programs. Nonprofits or not-for-profits are organizations that generally prioritize providing services over making money. For example, they might provide shelter or counseling to homeless or low-income people, people with disabilities or other groups of people who need assistance. They are governed by a Board of Directors, a group of people interested in the success of the organization, which guides the decision making. Users or clients often do not pay for the services. Instead, the organizations apply for and receive grants from the government or private funders.

2. **Shelters**

   There were over 60,000 people in the New York City shelter system in 2017, from individuals and families seeking emergency shelter to people in long term shelters looking for permanent homes.

3. **Street Outreach**

   In addition to the shelter system, there are several thousand people in New York State who sleep on the streets, in subways or abandoned buildings. They are referred to as "street homeless." Both government agencies and community-based organizations have street outreach programs to provide services to this group and to encourage them to enter the shelter system.

4. **Supportive Housing**

   Some people have issues or needs that require special housing, such as people with mental or physical disabilities, past or present substance abuse issues, people who are living with HIV/AIDS, families escaping domestic violence, people with unstable housing due to discrimination based on their sexual orientation or gender identity, young adults aging out of the foster care system and others. Supportive housing provides temporary and permanent housing that is combined with counseling services, medical assistance and skill building and job training programs. In addition to supportive housing, some shelters also are designed to help these special populations.
Helping People Stay in their Homes
Adapted from interview with BronxWorks staff

Homelessness prevention programs believe that the best time to stop homelessness is before it starts—by helping people stay in their homes. Homelessness prevention programs help people understand their rights as tenants, provide legal services, emergency financial assistance for arrears in rent (back rent that is owed) or utilities, financial counseling and help mediate or negotiate housing issues with landlords and government agencies.

These services are often provided by community-based organizations, settlement houses or other non-profit organizations using a combination of public money provided through grants from city, state or federal agencies and donations or grants from foundations and individuals. Community-based organizations and settlement houses often provide, in addition to homelessness prevention programs, “wraparound” or supportive services such as programs that help people get benefits, enter job training and find employment. These programs can also help families to stay in their homes.

BronxWorks is a settlement house in the West Bronx. It’s mission is to “help individuals and families improve their economic and social well-being. From toddlers to seniors, we feed, shelter, teach, and support our neighbors to build a stronger community.” As part of this mission, BronxWorks operates several different homelessness prevention programs. In the following interview, Julie Spitzer, Department Director of Homelessness Prevention and Access to Benefits, and Amanda Brown, Program Coordinator, talk about BronxWork’s homelessness prevention programs.

QUESTION: You have several different homelessness prevention programs. How do they work together? How do you manage them?

JULIE SPITZER: They all have the same goal of helping people stay in their apartments, but housing is complicated. Different programs have different funding sources and they target specific populations. Some programs will be for families,
others will be for single adults or for seniors. Some will be for people who live in a specific geographic area or neighborhood. Some programs are only for people who are one step away from eviction and going to a shelter.

When people come in, they don’t know which program is the best fit for them. They just know that they can’t pay their rent or they got an eviction notice and they need help. It takes someone knowledgeable about all of the programs available and who is eligible for each one to find the best match. That’s what we do. If anyone comes into any of our walk-in offices, we talk to the person and assess what they need and then direct them to the program or combination of programs that can help them.

**QUESTION:** What do homelessness prevention programs do? What services do they provide?

**AMANDA BROWN:** We help tenants understand their rights. One of the first things we do is look at the arrears or the back rent that the landlord says that they owe to make sure it’s correct. Sometimes when people pay their rent late, the landlord puts that money towards late fees instead of applying it to the rent they owe. That makes it look like the tenant owes more rent that they actually do. Landlords aren’t supposed to apply the rent that a tenant pays to late fees or other fees, but sometimes that happens and we have to get it corrected. We also look at things like: Did the landlord charge the right rent? Are there repairs that need to be made?

We help people navigate the housing court process. Facing eviction, or being forced out of your apartment for not paying the rent, is a very scary thing. We see this with seniors. They’re afraid of losing the only home they’ve lived in for the last 30 years.

**JULIE SPITZER:** We see what programs people are eligible for that can help them pay their arrears. Maybe one program will pay $400 of their back rent and a different one will pay $1,000. Without duplicating services, we help people get emergency grants so they can pay their back rent and stay in their apartment.

We’re here to prevent evictions, but we also take a more holistic approach. We look at the whole family and their needs. If we stop an eviction today, what happens tomorrow? We’re always asking: what other options do they have? Is there a better way? What other services do they need?

We do a complete assessment, not just on their housing situation but on what wraparound or other services or benefits they’re eligible for. Do they have Food Stamps? Health Insurance? If they’re working, do they know about the Earned Income Tax Credit? We’re trying to raise the family’s total spendable income. If they can save on the cost of medication or food—through Food Stamps or using our food pantry, then that’s money they can spend on other things. We have a Single Stop
program where people can find all the benefits that they’re eligible for. BronxWorks also has programs in Workforce Development, for people who need help with employment or job training.

**QUESTION:** You mentioned seniors earlier. Can you talk about your Senior Homelessness Prevention Project (SHPP)? Why did you pilot this program?

**JULIE SPITZER:** One thing that really got to me when I started working in homelessness prevention was just how neglected seniors are. I see so many elderly people who are paying more than 50% of their income on rent. They’re not financially prepared for retirement or the drop in their income when they stop working. Even if they have social security, it’s not enough to pay their rent. The Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption—which freezes rent for seniors living in rent stabilized apartments—tries to help, but the problem is that the rent is frozen at a level that the seniors still can’t afford.

**AMANDA BROWN:** Our program (SHPP) is right in housing court. We see what assistance seniors are eligible for to help them pay any rent arrears. Our goal though isn’t just to help them pay the money they owe, but to prevent it from happening again. Like if someone has a problem affording both food and rent, we’ll see if we can help them get food stamps or use our food pantry. If they need help managing their money, we’ll provide financial counseling.

**JULIE SPITZER:** We’ll look at their entire situation. Do they need to relocate? Is there elder abuse going on? Is someone stealing from them? Sometimes when a senior can’t pay their rent it’s because that money is going to help their child or their grandchild. They’re not paying their rent because they’re providing assistance to their family. So, we’ll look at what services can we provide to the entire family.

**QUESTION:** What drew you to working in homelessness prevention?

**JULIE SPITZER:** I grew up here. This is my community. I went to middle school right in back of this building. I took college preparation classes here. I tried to learn to swim here. You could say I’ve never left this neighborhood. It’s satisfying to work here helping friends from my childhood and their children. People in the community trust us because we’ve been here for decades. We’re part of the community.
Inside the building at East 151st Street in the Bronx, children sense something is wrong. Their parents are weighted down by backpacks, suitcases, strollers and worries—the burdens carried by many people who cannot afford to live in New York.

New York City must, by court order, provide temporary shelter to any eligible person. The city spends about $1.8 billion a year on shelters, apartments, hotel rooms and programs. It is a vital, or necessary, service for people in need, and it is a costly one. The city does not make it easy to qualify for shelter, and the high cost and lack of affordable housing does not make it easy to move from shelters to a permanent apartment. The process can stretch out for more than a year.

Each family’s journey begins in the building on East 151st Street, the city intake center known as P.A.T.H., or Prevention Assistance and Temporary Housing, with the application and a bunch of interviews. Then, temporary placement in shelter for up to 10 days while the city determines whether an applicant has somewhere—anywhere—to go. Next, placement in a long-term shelter.

This article follows four families at different stages of this process.

**The first stop is P.A.T.H. and a temporary shelter**

On a Thursday in October, Brittany Jackson and her 6-year-old son Preston arrived at P.A.T.H. between 1 a.m. and 2 a.m. Ms. Jackson carried a duffel bag and backpack. Preston had his own backpack and a stuffed penguin.

Ms. Jackson was an on-again, off-again student at Kingsborough Community College majoring in criminal justice. She was working for Instacart, a grocery delivery company, until September when she had to quit because she depended on a friend with a car who could no longer take her from place to place for deliveries. At the same time, her two younger sisters returned to her mother's two-bedroom apartment in Bedford-Stuyvesant, where Ms. Jackson had been living with her mother and her son, leaving Ms. Jackson and her son with nowhere to go.

The city placed Ms. Jackson and her son in a shelter nearby to get some rest so that they could return by 9 a.m. to be the first family in line at the start of the work day. With their birth certificates in hand, Ms. Jackson went from one floor to the next and one cubicle and kiosk after another. In all, she met eight homeless services employees and two employees from the Department of Education.

Hours later, Ms. Jackson and her son stepped into a black van. They arrived at the Kingston Family Residence in Crown Heights where 46 families, including about 70 children, live. Ms. Jackson met three more people, including Monica Lozado, a case manager who asked many of the same questions she had answered at P.A.T.H.
The shelter was worn, but it was clean. The room smelled like Ajax, and they received a care package of toiletries, peanut butter, jelly and a box of instant macaroni and cheese. Preston leapt like Superman onto one of two twin beds. “I’ll take it!” he shouted. It had taken 15 hours to get through P.A.T.H., and Ms. Jackson had 10 days to prove that she had nowhere else to stay.

**Waiting to find out if you are eligible for shelter**

In October, Shantae Young, now 35, and her three children were found ineligible for shelter. Now, Ms. Young has to convince social workers that she and her children—Julian, 15; Shaira, 12; and Shayla, 10 could not return to Orlando, Fla., where they had lived before moving to New York early last year.

Ms. Young grew up in foster care in Florida but lived with her biological mother in New York as a teenager. After living in Florida for several years, she returned to the city to reunite with Julian's father, but their apartment fell through. Then she tried staying with the children with a family friend, but the small space led to tension and arguments with the friend, Ms. Young said.

Ms. Young explains that she just needs a few months to get on her feet. “I’m not trying to work the system. I just want the system to work for me.”

**Long Term Shelter: Looking for a Way Out**

Desiree Rivera, a 38-year-old mother of seven children, had been homeless for months. It is the second time she has been homeless in 11 years. She was waiting for Ms. Huggins. They had an appointment to look at a potential apartment which she might be able to rent.

Ms. Huggins’s job was to coordinate housing for dozens of homeless families living in Win shelters. Win, formerly known as Women in Need, is the largest nonprofit provider of shelters for families with children in the city, housing about 1,400 families on any given day or about 9,000 adults and children annually.

Housing coordinators are matchmakers. They have to persuade landlords to take a chance on tenants who have low or no incomes and have often been evicted before. The housing coordinators also have to find the right apartments for homeless families who, while desperate to get out of shelter, have been there so long that they will wait until they find the right apartment.
Moving Day

Five days before Christmas, Madelyn Brito giddily signed out of the Kingston Family Residence for the last time. All of her belongings, including a new crib the shelter gave her for her 1-year-old son, were packed and ready to go.

Ms. Brito was petite, smiley and 26. She worked full-time as an assistant to an optometrist and was moving into her first apartment with the help of a rental assistance voucher worth $1,268 a month. To sweeten the pot for the landlord, the city paid 11 ½ months of the rent in advance, a $1,000 bonus and a little extra for holding the one-bedroom basement apartment while the city conducted an inspection to ensure it was adequate.

Ms. Brito, who was rejected for shelter three times before convincing the city that she had nowhere to go, had been in shelter for 10 months.

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SPECIALIZED SHELTERS

Sometimes shelters provide housing with special populations such as teenage runaways, young adults who are at risk because they are LGBT+, or families escaping domestic violence.

A domestic violence advocate describes daily life working in a shelter for women and families that are survivors of domestic abuse:

No two days are ever the same. Sometimes I’ll work intake, which means I’m helping new residents get used to being in the shelter. The first few days in the shelter are the hardest for people. Usually a woman coming in has a very high level of anxiety and stress, which means that I’ll spend time with her, doing paperwork and talking out the situation that she’s coming from.

Sometimes there will be major conflict, or disagreement, between residents and I will have to help the residents learn to live together and talk through their problems with each other. Sometimes we will be celebrating one of the resident’s birthdays and the whole shelter will come together.

The clients come in and ask for things: they need to look up directions to appointments or brainstorm on how to find a place to live or how to find a job. Sometimes they just need little things like toothpaste or soap. I also do a walkthrough of the shelter floors regularly to ensure that everything is calm and safe. The vast majority of time though, is spent listening. Whether the ladies in the shelter are having a good day or a bad one, they want to talk about it, and part of my job is just to be available for them to cry and share their frustrations or their successes. It is both the most difficult and the most rewarding aspect of my job.

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VOCABULARY

Eligible: To be entitled to a particular benefit. Ineligible: Not allowed to participate
A Real Life Look at NYC’s Homeless Outreach Efforts

By Jackson Chen | January 5, 2018

Adapted from: https://citylimits.org/2018/01/05/the-real-life-give-and-take-of-nycs-homeless-outreach-efforts/

Their outreach shift starts at 6 a.m. Before the sun rises, two social workers from Goddard Riverside Community Center’s Homeless Outreach Team are patrolling the streets of New York City’s Upper West Side in the car whose bumper sticker reads, “Makes Frequent Stops.” Brian Rodriguez, who’s been with Goddard for six years, is at the wheel while Gavin Wilkinson, a three-year team member, is going down the checklist of client names. They pass by morning joggers and sanitation workers, but their focus is on the homeless living on the streets. Their heads dart left and right scanning the streets for sleeping bags or scaffolding.

The two men are part of New York City Mayor de Blasio’s effort to address the homelessness crisis. Beyond the spotlight of political announcements, nonprofit organizations like Goddard Riverside Community Center—an organization that also runs after-school programs for kids and delivers meals to the elderly—are trying to provide services to help people who live on the streets move into housing. Rodriguez and Wilkinson’s experience demonstrates that getting people housed is a slow and difficult process involving reluctant clients who are hesitant to accept their help and limited housing supply.

Rodriguez and Wilkinson cover the early morning shift. They are part of Goddard’s uptown outreach efforts. The team is responsible for engaging folks on the streets to ensure their immediate health and safety, but their ultimate goal is getting them into some form of housing.

The first step is persistent or repeated outreach

The first step begins with persistent and repeated outreach. They encounter many of the same clients on a daily basis. They begin with
a greeting and inform the person on the street that they’re part of the city’s Homeless Outreach team. They continue by asking how they’re doing, if they need anything at the moment, and if they’re interested in getting housing.

The clients are usually those who have chosen not to enter the city’s shelter system, whether because of bad past experiences or because of the shelters’ reputation or for other reasons. They tend to differ from the families with children—many of them working people—who make up the bulk of the shelter population. Goddard Riverside’s outreach team works mostly with individual adults who have had long stretches of life on the streets.

The responses to the team varies. Clients who haven’t eaten in a while may request a bagel and something to drink, and those familiar with the outreach team will come over to talk like friends catching up after a long absence. But some clients are resistant, either ignoring the outreach team altogether or cursing at them to leave so they can sleep. “We get cursed out often and we have clients that don’t want to be woken up,” Rodriguez said.

“Even if they reject us, we still outreach to them weekly to see if they change their minds, especially in colder weather and if they have medical needs,” Wilkinson said. “But rejection is something we’re used to.”

**Developing relationships**

Through countless interactions with the same folks, the outreach workers are able to develop a friendly, trusting relationship. Rodriguez often chats in Spanish with clients and others have asked for Wilkinson by name.

“I have no words. They are angels,” said Miriam Rivera, who’s been living on the streets of the Upper West Side for three years. “I know all the programs because they help me. I’m very, very grateful for them...they [taught] me that you have to look for help.”

Rivera said she’s visited daily by either Wilkinson or another Goddard outreach member and that she’s hoping to live in Section 8 housing eventually.

Once the hard part of getting a street-homeless person to accept help is over, the outreach team then creates a file that logs how long they’ve been on the streets, where they usually sleep, and if they have any forms of identification. A social worker continues to check in with them until they’re added to the caseload where they can be helped with social services, like SNAP or food stamp benefits and health insurance. And if all goes according to plan, the client will complete a housing packet and wait for an opportunity for a housing interview. The interview offers an opportunity for the client and housing providers to see if the placement and accompanying social services would be a good fit.

**The struggle to find affordable housing with supportive services**

The Goddard workers understand that getting their clients into housing is a struggle that
requires plenty of patience. According to Goddard Riverside's statistics, by December 2017, the uptown outreach efforts have tallied more than 24,105 contacts with clients for the year. But while the outreach teams have racked up high counts, getting their clients into housing is a different story. By December of 2017, they'd only gotten 151 people into some form of housing, according to the organization's statistics.

While any homeless person who agrees to go inside can be placed quickly into immediate housing in the form of a church bed or transitional housing, most of them prefer to wait for a permanent apartment to open up, according to the uptown outreach team's program director Keri Goldwyn. But the city's low amount of affordable housing stock proves to be another difficulty for her teams, Goldwyn added. Even when they get to the last step of having a housing interview, there's no guarantee that affordable housing will be available.

“We can outreach all day and night, but if we don't have housing for them, there's not much more we can do,” Rodriguez said.

The city is doing a lot of work on this front. The city's homeless agency, the Department of Homeless Services (DHS), says the de Blasio administration has doubled the city's funding for street homeless programs. Mayor Bill de Blasio also announced on December 12, 2017 that the city will work with nonprofit organizations in converting “cluster site” buildings, where many homeless families stay in run-down apartments, into permanent affordable housing units or apartments.

“We are hopeful that the historic commitments to affordable housing made by the city and the state will help as those units come online,” said Jacquelyn Simone, a policy analyst with the Coalition for the Homeless. “However, we need to move faster given the needs we see on the streets and in the shelters.”

Meanwhile, the Goddard Riverside team is still making their early morning rounds. For the outreach workers, it’s exhausting trying to change someone’s life for the better while facing multiple barriers along the way. But they say the end result of getting someone in a safe, secure home is worth the struggles they face trying to house the homeless.

“Ultimately, we’re trying to improve their lives,” Wilkinson said. “You hear all the sad stories, but at the end of the tunnel, we’re trying to create that light for them. You just focus on that light at the end.”

Section 1.3  

Supportive Housing and SROs  

Supportive housing combines affordable housing with on-site services, such as medical care, counseling and skill-building and job training programs. The goal of this type of housing is to provide the services needed to make sure people don’t return to homelessness.

Supportive housing is targeted toward groups that need help to maintain apartments and live independently, including people with mental and physical disabilities, alcohol and substance abuse issues (past or present), individuals and families escaping domestic violence, young adults aging out of foster care, LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer) people with unstable housing and the elderly.

There are about 50,000 units of supportive housing in the state of New York, 32,000 of which are in New York City, according to the Supportive Housing Network of New York.

**Types of supportive housing**
Some supportive housing is temporary, assisting tenants in developing the skills they need to live on their own. Other supportive housing is permanent. Tenants have leases and pay rent. The most common type of supportive housing is SRO
(single room occupancy) units. In SROs, tenants have their own bedroom but share the kitchen and bathrooms. Many SROs have communal kitchens and set hours when meals are served. People are generally referred to supportive housing by shelters, homeless outreach workers, social workers and case managers from hospitals, social service organizations and city agencies.

One organization that provides supportive housing is Brooklyn Community Housing and Services (BCHS). Each year, BCHS provides safe and clean short-term, transitional and permanent supportive housing for more than 1,000 residents, as well as supportive services including case management, mental health care, on-site nursing, job training, substance abuse counseling, recreational activities and other vital services.

**Larry’s story**

Larry grew up in a middle class neighborhood in Queens as part of a tight-knit family. As Larry approached his early teens, his father had to travel frequently for work and Larry started to feel very lonely. As a result, he began hanging out with a gang from a nearby area and was pressured to use drugs and alcohol. He became an addict at a very young age.

As an adult, Larry held a professional job for a number of years until he could no longer cope with his addiction. Unemployed, he could not pay his rent and bartered or traded his last belongings for drugs and alcohol. Surprised at how quickly things had gotten out of control and too ashamed to ask his family for help, he found himself homeless, living on the street and in shelters.

Larry was ultimately referred to Oak Hall, BCHS’s permanent, supportive housing residence. He was able to work on-site with the Oak Hall Substance Abuse Counselor, attend Alcoholics and Narcotics Anonymous meetings regularly, and enroll in computer skills training. Oak Hall quickly became Larry’s community—exactly what he had been craving since his teenage years. Larry has been sober for more than seven years now. He has a successful and mature long-term relationship; and he has been commuting to a full-time job in Manhattan, recently earning a promotion.
Reaching Out to Homeless Youth
Based on interview with The Door staff https://door.org/

The Door, located in Manhattan, provides a variety of services to young adults from arts and recreational programs to High School Equivalency Preparation to Health Services and counseling. They have specialized programs for immigrant and for LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer) youth.

Sarah Meckler, Assistant Director of Special Populations, at The Door, talks about their outreach and drop-in programs for homeless youth.

We have a street outreach unit that goes out on foot in lower Manhattan and the West Village on Friday and Saturday nights and tries to engage youth that are homeless or insufficiently housed—youth that are couch-surfing or going from friend to friend or sleeping on the streets or subways. We offer them food and hygiene products like toothbrushes and deodorant and soap. We try to give them information about places the can go for help and tell them about our services. Often, the outreach team will see the same youth week after week and they get to know each other.

We encourage homeless youth to come into our drop-in center. It’s a place where they can get food or take a shower or do laundry, or just hang out. They can meet with counselors and case managers to find long term housing solutions. Some people will come in once for a meal and we’ll never see them again. Other people come in and out during the day and others are here from the time we open until we close every day. We try to make the drop in center friendly and family like. The Door has arts and recreational and support groups. We try to make it a fun place to come, because homeless youth are still youth and need that sense of community.

This is especially important in our programs and outreach to LBGTQ youth. Over 40% of homeless youth are LGBTQ. They’ve often been rejected by both their family and their community. We try to have outreach and other workers who are either LGBTQ themselves or who have experience with the community. That’s so important if we want to engage them. We also have special programs, from support groups to sexual health workshops to the Kiki Coalition weekly voguing group.
The youth we see have had so much trauma in their lives. Some of them have had to deal with sexual assault or mental illness or substance abuse. The high level of trauma sometimes makes it difficult for them to react to emotions and situations appropriately. We provide health services, counseling and case management and work with them on meeting community expectations.

The overwhelming challenge is the lack of affordable housing. If someone needs emergency housing, we can help them get into a youth crisis shelter where they can stay for 30–80 days. If someone qualifies for supportive housing, for example if they are chronically homeless and have mental health issues, that can take 6 months to 2 years. We evaluate each participant, and look at the programs they might be eligible for. There are different programs based on their age, housing situation, sexual orientation, history of trauma, mental illness or substance abuse issues and income.

There’s so much need out there, though, that our staff can’t address it all. We serve 2,000 homeless and runaway youth a year, but the need is so much greater. •
**Housing Assistance Summary**

Work in your groups to discuss the following questions. Write down the answers. Select and include a quote from the reading that supports your answer.

1. Describe the program.
   - What does the program do?
   - What services does it provide?
   - How does it provide services?

   Quote that supports your answer: _____________________________________________

2. Who does it serve? Who is eligible?

   Quote that supports your answer: _____________________________________________
3. How do you apply? How is outreach done?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Quote that supports your answer: ____________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
## Housing Assistance Scenarios

Discuss each scenario in your group. Which housing assistance option or options are best for each of the people or families in need of affordable housing? Why do you think this is the best option? Include your reasons.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Housing assistance needs</th>
<th>What service or services would you recommend?</th>
<th>Why would you recommend these options?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ana and Michael live in a 2-bedroom apartment with their two sons. Ana works part-time at a hair salon and Javier works in Construction. They pay more than half their income in rent. They managed to pay the rent on time until they had car trouble. Javier had to miss two days of work because he could not get to the job site and they had a big repair bill. They could not pay the rent on time. The next month, Ana had to miss 3 days of work due to court dates. They are worried that they might get evicted.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jamie is nineteen. He graduated high school and is in a job training program. He is gay and has been hiding it from his parents. They saw text messages from his boyfriend and made him leave their house. Jamie spent the night on his friend’s couch, but in the morning, he was afraid to go home. He is unsure where to go next.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing assistance needs</td>
<td>What service or services would you recommend?</td>
<td>Why would you recommend these options?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sara lives with her three year old daughter, Danielle. Sara works at a fast food restaurant for minimum wage. Her apartment building had a fire and her apartment was destroyed. Sara and her daughter lost their belongings and furniture. They have been moving from friend to friend, but none of Sara's friends have room to house Sara and her daughter permanently.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When Sandra was in her 20s, the break-up of her relationship triggered a deep depression and psychotic break. Soon afterwards, her parents died. She began hearing voices and struggled with anxiety, and she thought about suicide. As things worsened, she pushed away her remaining family and friends. She was unable to keep a job or pay the rent. She was finally evicted from her apartment. She refused to go to a shelter and sleeps on the streets or in the subways.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How do these programs work together? How can people move from one program to another?

2. Make up a sample person or family. What are their housing needs? Describe how they may be helped by at least three of the services from the readings.
Housing Discrimination and What to Do About It

Students watch and summarize a video about housing discrimination. Then they read an article, practicing skimming and scanning to find information about the right to fair housing and analyze scenarios about fair housing regulations.

NOTE: This activity uses New York City fair housing regulations as a means for helping students practice summarizing, skimming, scanning and analyzing an informational text and citing evidence from text. This activity can be adapted to local resources.

PREP

- Make sure the link to the following video is functional.
- Be prepared to explain the terms:
  - **Protected status:** Groups of people who are protected from discrimination based on common characteristics including race, age, religion, national origin, immigration status, and others.
  - **Fair housing:** The right to choose housing free from unlawful discrimination.
  - **Property manager:** A property manager is an individual or company that is hired to oversee the day-to-day operations of apartments or houses and maintain them in good, working order. S/he usually works for a landlord or property owner.
  - **Section 8:** Federally funded program aimed at assisting low-income families in paying for rent.
  - **Government Assistance:** Any federal program, project, service, or activity provided by the federal government that directly assists individuals.
  - **Advocate:** To speak or write in order to secure rights for something or someone.
  - **Settlement:** An agreement between two groups or people who disagree in a legal case.
  - **Lease:** The contract under which you agree to rent an apartment or house for a specific amount of money each month.
Write the following words on the board:

*Housing Discrimination*

**MATERIALS**

- *Fair Housing Vocabulary* worksheet
- “*My Dignity Restored*: Written Response” handout
- *There’s No Room for Housing Discrimination in NYC* brochure
- *There’s No Room for Housing Discrimination in NYC Scenarios* handout

**EXPLAIN**

1. What do you think the term “housing discrimination” means? Student answers will vary and may include:
   - When a landlord or property manager refuses to rent to you because of your race, religion, age, gender, etc.
   - When landlords are prejudiced against you because you are using Section 8, SSI, or other government money to pay the rent.

2. What do you think the “right to fair housing” means? Student answers may include:
   - If you can pay the rent, you cannot be rejected on grounds of race, religion, age, whether you have children, or whether you’d be paying part of your rent with government assistance.

3. We’re going to watch a video about a woman who was denied housing. We’re going to play the video twice. The first time listen for the following vocabulary words:
   - Property manager
   - Section 8
   - Government assistance
   - Advocate
   - Settlement
   - Lease

4. Play the video at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OjklHZob2H8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OjklHZob2H8). After playing the video the first time, have the class work in pairs to complete the *Fair Housing Vocabulary* worksheet.

5. Review the definitions with the class. The definitions should be informal and in the students’ own words.
6 Distribute “My Dignity Restored”: Written Response handout. Ask students to read the questions, but not write anything yet. Clarify any questions students have about the handout. Explain that the class will see the video again.

Ask students to keep the questions on the handout in mind as they watch the video a second time.

7 Play the video for a second time, then have the students work in pairs to complete the worksheet. Discuss the answers with the class. Students should back up their thinking with evidence from the video. Ask follow-up questions that help students explain their thinking, delve more deeply into the questions, and cite evidence to support their responses. Some sample follow-up questions might include:

- How do you know that?
- Where in the video clip did you see that?
- Why do you think that?
- What else do you notice?
- Can you say more about that?
- What do you think that means?

8 Distribute There’s No Room for Housing Discrimination in NYC brochure. Before we read the brochure, we’re going to practice a skill that is included on the TASC: skimming and scanning. You skim and scan material by reviewing it quickly to get the general idea of what it is about, and looking for key words or ideas.

9 First let’s look at the headline: “There’s No Room for Housing Discrimination in NYC.” Based on the headline, what information would you expect to be in the brochure? Sample answers can include:

- A description of what housing discrimination is.
- An explanation of your housing rights.
- A way to complain if your rights to housing have been violated or if you have been discriminated against while looking for housing.
Next, let’s look at the organization of the brochure. If you turn to page 2 of the brochure, what do you see?

- Photos of different people
- A section labeled, “5 Things Every Tenant Should Know About Fair Housing in NYC”
- A section labeled, “5 Things Every Landlord/Property Manager/Broker Should Know About Fair Housing in NYC”

Why do you think the brochure includes photographs? Answers can vary and may include:

- So that the reader can see people who look like them or are in the same situation.
- It shows a variety of people who face housing discrimination.
- It makes the brochure more interesting than if it only had words.

Look at the right-hand side of page 3. How is this column organized? What do you see?

- It starts by defining what fair housing means.
- There are two sections below that explain 1) what is illegal for landlords to do, and 2) situations or conditions that have protected status.

Point #1 in the section labeled, “5 Things Every Tenant Should Know About Fair Housing in NYC,” says that landlords can’t discriminate based on “because of your protected status.” Where on the brochure would you look to find out what this means?

- The right-hand side of page 3, under the section titled, “Based on Actual or Perceived Protected Status.”

Based on the information in this section, what do you think “protected status” means?

- That people can’t be discriminated against for their race, age, number of children, etc.
15 What does the brochure say to do if you think you are a victim of housing?
   > Call 311 and ask for the NYC Commission on Human Rights.

16 Look at page 3 of the brochure. Why do you think the brochure included scenarios or situations that people might find themselves in? Student answers will vary. Sample answers may include:
   > People can recognize things that have happened to themselves or a friend by reading the scenario.
   > Having examples makes it easier to understand the rights that they are talking about.

17 Divide the class into groups of four. Distribute Housing Discrimination Scenarios handout. Look at each scenario. For each one, discuss, decide and write what housing right has been violated and whether the person in the scenario has a protected status.

18 Discuss the answers with the class.
### Housing Discrimination Vocabulary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vocabulary</th>
<th>How was it used?</th>
<th>What does it mean?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Property manager</strong></td>
<td>I contacted the <em>property manager</em> and asked if the apartment was still available.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Section 8</strong></td>
<td>When I said that I collect <em>Section 8</em>, they told me they would have to check with the landlord.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Government assistance</strong></td>
<td>Then the investigator told them that she collects <em>government assistance</em>.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Advocate</strong></td>
<td>The commission <em>advocated</em> on my behalf.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Settlement</strong></td>
<td>A <em>settlement</em> was negotiated. After the <em>settlement</em>, the landlord accepted my voucher.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lease</strong></td>
<td>I signed a two-year <em>lease</em> for the apartment.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“My Dignity Restored”: Written Response

Work with your partner to answer the following questions and be prepared to share your answers with the class.

1. When the woman in the video said, “Something wasn’t right,” after being turned down for an apartment, what do you think made her feel that way?

2. What does the City Commission on Human Rights do? How could they help the person in the video?

3. What is a housing investigator? What do they do?

4. Based on the video, what do you think the “right to fair housing” means?
THERE’S NO ROOM FOR HOUSING DISCRIMINATION IN NYC

FAIR HOUSING. It’s Your Right. It’s Your Responsibility. It’s the Law.

5 THINGS EVERY TENANT SHOULD KNOW ABOUT FAIR HOUSING IN NYC

1. A landlord cannot refuse to offer a lease, charge higher rent, ask for additional fees, offer different amenities or services, or refuse repairs because of your protected status (See table in “What’s Fair Housing?” section).

2. You have the right to request a reasonable accommodation for your disability. In most circumstances, the landlord must pay for the accommodation unless doing so would cause an undue hardship. A reasonable accommodation could be, for example, a physical change to the building or your apartment, or changes to a building’s policies in order to allow you to keep your emotional support animal.

3. You have the right to see all available housing. You cannot be limited or steered to a particular area, neighborhood, or apartment. For example, a landlord or broker cannot say that an apartment is “only for families” or that it “won’t work” because the prospective tenant has a disability.

4. Landlords have to accept your government-provided rental assistance. If you receive Section 8, LINC, HASA, SSI/SSDI, or other public assistance, a landlord who owns a building with six or more units must accept that rental assistance.

5. You have the right to be free from harassing or threatening behavior or comments based on your protected status, including from other tenants (See table in “What’s Fair Housing?” section).

If you believe you have been discriminated against, call 311 and ask for the NYC Commission on Human Rights.

5 THINGS EVERY LANDLORD/PROPERTY MANAGER/BROKER SHOULD KNOW ABOUT FAIR HOUSING IN NYC

1. You cannot refuse to rent, charge higher rent, impose additional fees, offer different services or access to facilities, or fail to make repairs based on any resident’s protected status under the law. (See table in “What’s Fair Housing?” section).

2. It is illegal to post advertisements or make other declarations stating or implying that tenants who have a protected status will not be accepted. For example, ads stating “no voucher” or “no children” are a violation of the law.

3. You must provide and, in most circumstances, pay for a reasonable accommodation for a tenant with a disability at their request if it does not, in most circumstances, pose an undue hardship.

4. In a building with 6 or more units, you must accept all government-provided rental assistance from a current or prospective tenant. You cannot refuse any forms of government-provided rental assistance.

5. Train your employees on the Law. You are legally responsible for what your employees and agents, including superintendents, maintenance workers, brokers, and salespeople, say and do on your behalf. Make sure your employees and agents know the fair housing laws and how to comply with them.

If you would like to attend a free workshop on the NYC Human Rights Law, call 311 and ask for the NYC Commission on Human Rights.
REAL LIFE SCENARIOS TO HELP YOU IDENTIFY DISCRIMINATION

Scenario #1
A new landlord tries to get a family of immigrants who live in the building to move by telling the family that potential police activity in the building could bring the threat of deportation. Exploiting tenants’ vulnerability due to immigration status is a violation of the NYC Human Rights Law.

Scenario #2
An advertisement on Craigslist lists a two-bedroom apartment for rent in a building that has six units. John contacts the broker to inquire about the apartment and says that he has a Section 8 voucher for a two-bedroom. The broker says, “Sorry, we don’t take Section 8.” It is a violation of the NYC Human Rights Law to refuse to lease to a tenant because they will be paying rent with government-provided rental assistance.

Scenario #3
Lucy has a disability that causes severe anxiety and panic attacks, but her episodes are greatly reduced when she cares for her brother’s dog. Lucy’s doctor recommends that she get an emotional support animal, but when she asks her landlord, who has a no-pet policy, the landlord refuses and threatens to fine her. The NYC Human Rights Law requires landlords to provide reasonable accommodations for tenants with disabilities who request them unless the accommodation causes an undue hardship.

What’s Fair Housing?
All New Yorkers deserve fair and equal access to housing. The NYC Human Rights Law prohibits discrimination in private and public housing, land, and commercial spaces in New York City. This means that any person selling, renting, or leasing—including landlords, superintendents, building managers, brokers, and realtors—cannot discriminate because of a person’s actual or perceived protected status under the law.

IT IS UNLAWFUL TO:
• Refuse to sell, rent, or lease housing
• Require additional payments, or charge a higher rent, security deposit, or additional fees
• Post advertisements limiting the type of tenant or stating a refusal to accept a certain type of tenant
• Fail to make adequate repairs for, or provide equal services to, certain tenants
• Refuse to accept government-provided rental assistance

BASED ON ACTUAL OR PERCEIVED PROTECTED STATUS:
• Age
• Race
• Color
• Creed/Religion
• National Origin
• Gender
• Source of Income (using government-provided rental assistance such as Section 8, LINC, or PEPS or any form of public assistance including Cash Assistance and Social Security Income towards rent)
• Occupation
• Immigration Status
• Presence of Children
• Status as a Victim of Domestic Violence, Sexual Violence or Stalking (as of 7/26/16)
Section 2

There’s No Room for Housing Discrimination Scenarios

Review the following scenarios from the There’s No Room for Housing Discrimination in NYC brochure.

- Did the person in the scenario face housing discrimination?
- Which of the “5 Things Every Tenant Should Know About Fair Housing in NYC” apply to this scenario?
- Does the person in the scenario have protected status? What is that status?

Cite information from the brochure in your answer.

SCENARIO #1: A new landlord tries to get a family of immigrants who live in the building to move by telling the family that potential police activity in the building could bring the threat of deportation.

SCENARIO #2: An advertisement on Craigslist lists a two-bedroom apartment for rent in a building that has six units. John contacts the broker to inquire about the apartment and says that he has a Section 8 voucher for a two-bedroom. The broker says, “Sorry. We don’t take Section 8.”

SCENARIO #3: Lucy has a disability that causes severe anxiety and panic attacks, but her episodes are greatly reduced when she cares for her brother’s dog. Lucy’s doctor recommends that she get an emotional support animal, but when she asks her landlord, who has a no-pet policy, the landlord refuses and threatens to fine her.
Tenants’ Rights and Resources

Students practice scanning to learn about tenant rights. They navigate a housing organization website, paraphrase what they have read, analyze scenarios involving tenants’ rights, identify the housing right that best applies to the situation and summarize the appropriate next steps, activating critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

NOTE: This activity uses New York City housing regulations and laws as a means of helping students practice computer literacy, paraphrasing and problem-solving skills. All communities have applicable regulations and resources for tenants. This activity can be adapted to local resources.

PREP

- Review the scenarios in the Tenants’ Rights and Resources Scenarios handout.
- Review the categories listed in the scenarios handout.
- Prepare to discuss the following vocabulary words and phrases:
  - Tenants (See EXPLAIN #1.)
  - Essential services (See EXPLAIN #8.)
  - Judgment/warrant of eviction (See EXPLAIN #9.)
  - Waived (See EXPLAIN #10.)
  - Rent-regulated tenants (See EXPLAIN #11.)
  - Succession (See EXPLAIN #11.)

MATERIALS

- A computer lab is necessary for this lesson.
- Your Rights as a New York City Tenant handout
- Tenants’ Rights Summary handout
- Tenants’ Rights and Resources Scenarios handout
EXPLAIN

1. People who live in apartments or houses that they rent are called tenants. Tenants pay money to their landlords, or the people who own the property they live in, in order for the right to live there. **What are some things that every apartment or house needs in order to be livable?** Answers may vary. Sample answers can include:
   - *Heat and hot water.*
   - *No rats, mice or bugs such as cockroaches or bedbugs.*
   - *The apartment should be repaired/maintained. You need to be able to lock the doors, no holes in the walls or windows, have toilets and sinks that work well.*

2. Divide the class into pairs. Ask students to brainstorm and write down the rights they think people have as tenants.

3. Ask students to share their responses, write them on the board and discuss them as a class.

4. We’re going to read about the rights tenants have in New York City. (NOTE: *This lesson uses New York City housing regulations and laws as a means to help students strengthen their literacy skills. All communities have applicable regulations and resources for tenants.*)

   We’re going to read through the material quickly to find specific information. This technique is called “scanning” and is useful for standardized tests such as TASC and others which require students to look through information quickly. We’re going to scan the reading to get familiar with some of the terms and how the material is organized on the page.

5. Distribute *Your Rights as a New York City Tenant* handout. **What is the first thing you notice on the handout?** Student answers should include:
   - *The title of the reading*
   - *The section headings*

6. Why do you think some of the words are in a larger font?
   - *To draw attention to the different sections*

7. Based on the section headlines, what do you think these sections will cover? Write student responses, which can include the following, on the board:
   - *Evicting tenants with proper notice.*
   - *Failing to make repairs in a timely manner.*
   - *Failing to provide sufficient heat and hot water.*
   - *The ability of tenants to choose roommates.*
Subletting: The right of tenants to offer their apartment to someone for short term use, such as when they go out of town on vacation.

The right to rent an apartment regardless of race, gender presentation, disability, family composition, etc.

Taking a landlord to court for violating tenant rights.

Tenant organizations that can help tenants who believe their rights have been violated.

The rights of seniors and tenants with disabilities.

Rights of rent-regulated tenants.

Divide the class into four groups. Assign the groups the following sections of the reading:

Group A: Repairs and Services, Heat and Hot Water, Eviction
Group B: Taking Your Landlord to Court, Tenant Organizations, Seniors and Tenants with Disabilities
Group C: Roommates, Subletting, Discrimination
Group D: Additional Rights of Rent-Regulated Tenants

Let’s review some of the vocabulary words used in this reading. In the 10th line of the section on Evictions, the reading states that landlords can’t discontinue “essential services.” What do you think the words “essential services” means in this context? What are some essential services?

Things you need to make your apartment livable.

Basic services like heat, hot water and electricity.

The next paragraph states that before a tenant can be evicted, their landlord must obtain a “judgment and a warrant of eviction from a court.” What does this mean? What needs to happen before a tenant can be evicted?

The tenant has a right to a hearing before a judge. They can only be evicted if the judge rules against them in court and sides in favor of the landlord. The judge will then issue a warrant of eviction.

The section on Repairs and Services says that a tenant’s rights to repairs and essential services can’t be “waived.” What does “waived” mean in this context?

It means that a tenant cannot refuse or give up their rights to these things.

There is a section on rent-regulated tenants at the end of the handout. These are tenants who have legal protections against rent increases that are above a specified amount. The two main types of rent regulation are rent control and rent stabilization.
People living in a rent-regulated apartment who are not on the lease may have a right of “succession” to the apartment if the leaseholder dies or moves away. What do you think “succession” means in this context?

› The right to stay in the apartment and take over the lease. This often takes place with the child, partner or relative of the original lease-holder.

Are there any other vocabulary words in the reading that you are unsure of?

13 Distribute Tenants’ Rights Summary handout. Ask groups to read their section, discuss it and summarize the section they read on the first part of their handout.

14 Ask students to read the remaining sections in the article, and discuss the main points with their group.

15 Each group presents on their assigned sections of the reading, summarizing the main points.

16 Once all the groups have presented, ask students to complete the remainder of the handout based on the information presented and the text itself.

17 Review the handout as a class.

18 Sometimes even when you know your rights, it’s hard to know what to do to protect them. What are some places tenants can go to for help with housing problems? Have students brainstorm for a few minutes. Sample answers could include:

› Call 311.
› Call your landlord.
› Take your landlord to court.
› Get help from a housing organization or tenants’ organization.

19 The Metropolitan Council on Housing helps people assert their rights as tenants. We’re going to visit their website to find out how to get information on a variety of housing issues. What kind of information do you think a website for a tenants’ rights organization might contain?

› Information on how to deal with housing problems, on where to get help, and guidance on specific issues.

20 Write the website address http://metcouncilonhousing.org/ on the board and ask students to navigate there. Circulate to make sure all students can see the page. Once students are all on the homepage, ask them what they see.
What is at the top of the webpage?
› Help & Answers, Get Involved, News & Issues

What else is on the webpage?
› Boxes that highlight different sections on the webpage including news, tenant hotline information, housing history, donations, help and answers.

What would you click if you have a specific housing problem?
› Help & Answers

21 Ask students to navigate to the Help & Answers page. They can either click on the Help & Answers icon at the top of the homepage or click on the Help & Answers box at the bottom of the homepage. Circulate to make sure all students are on the correct page. Once students are all on the Help & Answers page, ask them what they see. Sample answers can include:
› Boxes that identify different issues and resources for tenants.

22 What are some of the categories covered on this webpage?
› Repairs, Services and Conditions
› Evictions and Housing Court
› Roommates and Sharing
› Tenants’ Bill of Rights
› Paying the Rent
› Your Lease
› New York City’s Affordable Housing Programs
› Do Your Own Research

23 Distribute Tenants’ Rights and Resources Scenarios handout. Read the column headings on the handout. Do the first scenario with the class as a whole. Ask the class to imagine they are describing the rights and processes that exist to address tenant problems to someone who does not have Internet access.

24 Divide the class into pairs and have each pair research the remaining scenarios using the Help & Answers page to complete the handout. Review the answers with the class.
Your Rights as a New York City Tenant

From http://metcouncilonhousing.org/sites/default/files/tenantsbillofrights.pdf

Tenants living in privately owned buildings in New York City containing at least three apartments have the rights listed below:

**Repairs and Services**
Your landlord must maintain your building in good repair, keep the hallways and public areas clean, paint your apartment every three years, exterminate rats, mice, roaches, bedbugs, other vermin, and deal with any other matter dangerous to life or health, in a timely manner. Your landlord must also maintain electrical, plumbing, sanitary, heating, and ventilating systems, and appliances installed by your landlord, in good working order. These rights cannot be waived.

**Heat and Hot Water**
Every tenant has the right to hot water all year long at all times at a minimum temperature of 120° F, and to adequate heat, with an inside temperature of 68° F from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m., when the outside temperature is below 55° F, and an inside temperature of 55° F from 10 p.m. to 6 a.m. when the outside temperature is below 40° F, during the period of October 1 through May 31.

**Eviction**
Only a marshal or sheriff with a court order can legally perform an eviction in New York:

- if your landlord has ever accepted rent from you, or
- if you have a valid lease for the apartment, even if the lease has expired, or
- if you have lived in the apartment for 30 days or more, even if no rent was paid and there is no lease.

If any of the above criteria apply, it is illegal for anyone other than a city marshal or sheriff to remove you or your possessions, prevent you from entering your apartment, or discontinue essential services such as water, heat, or electricity as a means of forcing you out. You can report such actions to the police, or seek re-entry and a restoration of services by bringing an illegal lockout case at your borough’s housing or civil court.

Before hiring a marshal or sheriff, your landlord must obtain a judgment and a warrant of eviction from a court, and you have the right to defend yourself in the court case. The landlord, court, and marshal, are all separately required to notify you if you are subject to an eviction case. These rights apply to everyone, including roommates, family members, subtenants, and guests.
Section 2.1

Taking Your Landlord To Court
If your landlord does not maintain the building and/or your apartment, or fails to provide reliable services, you can go to your borough’s housing court by yourself or with other tenants in your building and start a court case called a Housing Part (HP) Action against your landlord, and request the court to order repairs or the restoration of services. Low-income tenants can ask for the court fees to be waived.

Tenant organizations
You have the right to form, join, and participate in a tenants’ organization for the purpose of protecting your rights. Tenants organizations have the right to use common areas of the building, including the lobby if a community room is not available, free of charge for meetings. Your landlord is forbidden by law to harass you for tenant-organizing activities.

Roommates
You have the right to have family members reside with you as long as the apartment does not become overcrowded. You have the right to share your apartment with one other adult not related to you, and that person’s dependent children, but overcharging roommates in rent stabilized apartments is prohibited. Exceptions and restrictions to the rights to share your apartment apply to tenants living in subsidized housing and those who receive rental assistance based on income-eligibility. Always check your program’s rules before taking in another household member.

Subletting
In privately owned buildings with at least four units, your landlord may not unreasonably deny your request to sublet your apartment. You must follow specific rules when making a request to sublet. Subletting without making a proper request and/or obtaining consent from your landlord may be grounds for eviction. Tenants in subsidized housing, or who receive rental assistance based on income-eligibility, may not have the right to sublet while participating in the programs. Always check your program’s rules.

Discrimination
It is illegal for landlords and their agents to deny housing or the provision of services, based on actual or perceived race, creed, color, national origin, gender (including gender identity), disability, age, marital or partnership status, the presence of children, lawful occupation, sexual orientation or citizenship status. If your building—or another building owned by your landlord—contains six or more dwelling units, you are also protected against discrimination based on a lawful source of

Photo: https://haasinstitute.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/fairhousing50.jpg
income. The landlord may not refuse to rent to a tenant based on his or her intention to use a rent subsidy, or to refuse such subsidy from an existing tenant. If you have been discriminated against, you may contact the New York City Human Rights Commission by calling 311.

**Seniors and Tenants With Disabilities**

For tenants living in rent stabilized, rent controlled, and Mitchell-Lama apartments: If you are sixty-two years of age or older or a disabled tenant, and you pay one-third or more of your income in rent, and your income falls below a certain income threshold, you can apply to have your rent frozen through the Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption (SCRIE) or Disability Rent Increase Exemption (DRIE) programs. You may apply for such programs through the Department of Finance by calling 311. If you are disabled, your landlord must provide reasonable accommodations so that you may enjoy equal access to your housing.

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**Additional Rights of Rent-Regulated Tenants**

Rent-stabilized and rent-controlled tenants (rent-regulated tenants) have additional rights relating to maximum legal rents, causes for eviction, and leases. Consult the New York State Homes and Community Renewal for more about your rights as a rent regulated tenant. Call 718-739-6400 or visit nysdhr.gov/rent

**Lease renewals and riders:** Landlords can only end the tenancy of rent-regulated tenants for specific reasons set forth in the laws governing rent-regulation. In most cases when tenants are in compliance with their leases, rent-controlled tenants have rights to continuous occupancy, and rent-stabilized tenants must be offered the option of either a one- or two-year renewal lease, but if a renewal is not offered, the old lease remains in effect. Rent-stabilized tenants are not obligated to sign any riders or amendments that change the terms of their original lease.

**Succession:** Certain family members (including non-traditional family members) who live with a regulated tenant for a period of time before the primary tenant moves or dies have the right to take over the lease for the apartment under the same terms, conditions, and rent levels as the departing tenant.

**Rent reductions:** Regulated tenants may apply for a reduction of rent with HCR for decreased services or for repairs that are not addressed in a timely manner.

**Illegal overcharges:** A rent-regulated apartment’s unique history determines its legal maximum rent. You can contact HCR to investigate, challenge, and seek a rent adjustment and refund of an overpayment, if you believe that you’re being overcharged.
Tenants’ Rights Summary

What interested you in the section you read?

List three things you learned about tenant rights from the section you read.
1. 
2. 
3. 

What else do you want to know about tenants’ rights?
What are two important points about tenant rights in each category?

**SECTION 1:**

1. 

2. 

**SECTION 2:**

1. 

2. 

**SECTION 3:**

1. 

2.
## Tenants’ Rights and Resources Scenarios

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scenario</th>
<th>Which link would you click on to find information? Why did you pick it?</th>
<th>What are the tenant(s)’ rights in each scenario?</th>
<th>Describe the process the tenant(s) should follow</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cynthia</strong> lives with her two children in an apartment. In December, the boiler in her apartment building broke, leaving all the tenants without heat or hot water. She reported the problem to the super and the landlord, but the landlord said that there was nothing he could do. A week later, the tenants are still without heat.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After the heat problem in Cynthia’s building was fixed, several problems still remained. The landlord does not make repairs to apartments, hallways or staircases. The lock on the front door has been broken for months. He has not responded to repeated individual tenant complaints. Cynthia and her neighbors are trying to figure out if there is a way for them to band together to force the landlord to make repairs.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Scenario

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What are the tenant(s’) rights in each scenario?</th>
<th>Describe the process the tenant(s) should follow</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Luis and Gabriela</strong> signed a lease and moved into a new apartment. Midway through the lease, the landlord said that he was increasing the rent above the amount in the lease since rents were rising in the neighborhood. Luis and Gabriela said that they would not pay the increased amount. The landlord threatened to change the locks and put their belongings on the street if they didn’t pay the extra money.</td>
<td>tion: The tenant(s) should consult with a lawyer or tenant protection agency to understand their rights and options. They should also gather evidence of rent increases, lease agreements, and any communications with the landlord. If necessary, they can file a complaint with the city or county housing office.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Daniel</strong> lives by himself in an apartment. He lost his job in March. Although he found another job quickly, he was unable to pay the rent that was due on April 1 until April 15. Although his lease does not say anything about late fees, his landlord told him that he had to pay a $200 late fee.</td>
<td>Action: The tenant should contact the landlord in writing to explain the situation and request a payment plan. If the landlord refuses, the tenant should consult with a lawyer or tenant protection agency to understand their rights and options. They should also gather evidence of income and expenses. If necessary, they can file a complaint with the city or county housing office.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scenario</td>
<td>Which link would you click on to find information? Why did you pick it?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandra raised her daughter, Tanya, in a rent-stabilized apartment. Tanya continued to live in the apartment with her mother after becoming an adult and contributed to the rent and other expenses but was never included on the lease. When Sandra passed away, the landlord tried to evict Tanya since she was not on the lease.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A Story of Neighborhood Change: Pearl River Mart

Students watch, summarize and annotate a video about an iconic family business faced with the choice to adapt or perish in response to economic changes in the neighborhood.

PREP

- Review the video clip, “A New Generation of Pearl River Mart” at https://tinyurl.com/pearl-river-mart
- On the right side of the board, write:
  
  - “More than any other city, New York disappears. It disappears and then it disappears again, so that every 75 years or so another city bursts out, as if against nature—new shapes, new pursuits, new immigrants…”
    —Adapted from “The Synthetic Sublime” by Cynthia Ozick
  - “There is always a new New York coming into being as the old one disappears.”
    —from “Through the Children’s Gate” by Adam Gopnik

- On the left side of the board, write the following questions:
  
  - Why did Pearl River Mart open in 1971? Why was it important to the community?
  - What changes in the neighborhood caused Pearl River Mart to close?
  - Why did Joanne Kwong think that it was important to re-open Pearl River Mart?

MATERIALS

- Pearl River Mart Key Points handout
EXPLAIN

1. Ask for a volunteer to read the two quotes on the right side of the board.

These quotes are an example of figurative language. Figurative language is a word or phrase that does not have a literal meaning. Writers use figurative language to make comparisons or for dramatic effect to make the text more interesting to the reader.

2. What are these two authors trying to say? What do they mean by saying that New York disappears and that a new New York is born or comes into being?
   - *That cities change over time.*
   - *As new groups move in and new buildings are built, the city changes in many ways.*
   - *That the New York of today is different than it was in the past.*

3. There are a lot of different ways that neighborhoods, towns and communities show change. Based on your experience or things that you have seen in media or heard from friends, what do you think are some ways that communities show change? List student responses on the board. Student responses might include:
   - *Economic changes: New businesses opening; other businesses closing and being boarded up.*
   - *Changes in housing costs: Rents going up.*
   - *Building changes: Commercial buildings being changed into housing, buildings becoming abandoned or empty, new construction projects.*
   - *Demographic changes: Changes in the racial or ethnic make up of a neighborhood, changes in the income or area residents, changes in the age with more families with children moving in or long-term residents getting older.*

4. Many neighborhoods experience economic change. Economic changes can result in a neighborhood losing resources. For example, as a result of the financial crisis of 2008-2009, many people lost their homes. Other signs of economic change included an increase in abandoned or boarded up property and in the number of store closures because of fewer people in the neighborhood to buy goods.

   Another type of economic change occurs when greater numbers of wealthy people move into a neighborhood that is low-income, displacing (or pushing out) the people who already live there. Rents rise, and in New York City,
taller buildings may replace one- or two-family homes, increasing the population and putting a strain on resources like schools, hospitals, buses and traffic. Businesses that served the original residents or people living in the neighborhood often struggle to pay the new, higher rents and close. Eventually the original businesses and residents can be priced out of their neighborhoods.

5 We are going to watch a video that shows how one business, Pearl River Mart in New York City’s Chinatown/Soho area faced and adapted to economic changes. When Pearl River Mart opened in New York City’s Chinatown in 1971, it was one of the first stores bringing Chinese goods to the community. The three-story department store quickly became a neighborhood center, drawing Asian-Americans from all over the metropolitan area. The video starts with the store’s closure in April 2016, then goes back in time to detail its history before focusing on the store’s re-opening in October 2016.

6 Explain that students are going to watch the video twice. The first time they watch it, they should think about the questions on the board. Ask for a volunteer to read them aloud:

- Why did Pearl River Mart open in 1971? Why was it important to the community?
- What changes in the neighborhood caused Pearl River Mart to close?
- Why did Joanne Kwong think that it was important to re-open Pearl River Mart?


8 After playing the video, discuss the questions on the board. Student responses will vary.

9 Let’s review some of the vocabulary used in the video.

- Joanne Kwong explains, “Whatever the increased rent, it would not be sustainable for a small family business like ours.” What does the word “sustainable” mean in that sentence?
  - Being able to keep the store open.
  - Not sustainable means that they could not keep the store open because the rent was too high.
What do you think Joanne Kwong means when she says, “The company was not yet in the digital era?”

- The company did not sell online or have much social media.
- The company did not use social media and online sales apps effectively.

10 Distribute Pearl River Mart Key Points handout. Ask volunteers to read the questions, noting that students should not write anything down yet. Explain that they’re going to watch the video again, stopping at key points in order to answer the questions on the handout.

11 Play the video again. Stop at 1:50. Students should respond to the first two questions on the handout:

- What are Joanne Kwong’s memories of going to Pearl River Mart in the 1970s and 1980s?
- Why do you think Pearl River Mart was important to the Chinese community in the 1970s and 1980s?

12 Resume the video. Stop at 2:52. Give students time to respond to questions #3 and #4:

- Why did Mr. and Ms. Chen open Pearl River Mart?
- Do you think that there were a lot of Chinese products for sale in the U.S. at the time? Why or why not?

13 Resume the video. Stop at 3:33. Give students time to respond to question #5:

- What problem did Pearl River Mart face in 2016?

14 Resume the video. Stop at 5:06. Give students time to respond to question #6:

- What two changes did Pearl River Mart make to adapt to changes in the neighborhood?

15 Resume the video. Stop at 5:56. Give students time to respond to question #7:

- Why does Joanne Kwong feel that Pearl River Mart is a resource that the community can’t afford to lose? (In other words, why does she feel that Pearl River Mart is important to the community?)

16 Divide the class into groups of four and have them compare notes for accuracy. Students then discuss the remaining Discussion Questions on the handout in preparation for a class discussion.
Review the discussion questions with the entire class. Ask follow-up questions that help students explain their thinking, delve more deeply into the questions, and cite evidence to support their responses. Some sample follow-up questions might include:

- How do you know that?
- Why do you think that?
- What else do you notice?
- Can you say more about that?
- What do you think that means?
Pearl River Mart Key Points

1. What are Joanne Kwong’s memories of going to Pearl River Mart in the 1970s and 1980s?

2. Why do you think Pearl River Mart was important to the Chinese community in the 1970s and 1980s?

3. Why did Mr. and Ms. Chen open Pearl River Mart?

4. Do you think that there were a lot of Chinese products for sale in the U.S. at the time? Why or why not?
5. What problem did Pearl River Mart face in 2016?

6. What two changes did Pearl River Mart make to adapt to changes in the neighborhood?

7. Why does Joanne Kwong feel that Pearl River Mart is a resource that the community can’t afford to lose?

DISCUSS WITH YOUR GROUP

1. Why do you think the video opens with the closure of the first store?

2. Why does Joanne Kwong open by saying that she is Chinese-American? How does this relate to some of the main ideas in the video?

3. What do you think Joanne means when she says, “The neighborhood had changed like many neighborhoods in New York?”
Analyzing Neighborhood Change

Students read about the systemic issue of economic change in neighborhoods and learn some key indicators of this process. They analyze a graph of rent increases in different neighborhoods and practice calculating rent increases. Finally, students analyze the data of four sample neighborhoods to determine whether they are showing signs of economic change.

PREP

- Review the video clip, “A New Generation of Pearl River Mart” at https://tinyurl.com/pearl-river-mart
- Review all the handouts used in this lesson.

MATERIALS

- Signs of Neighborhood Economic Change reading
- Increases in Median Rents in Three Brooklyn Neighborhoods from 2000–2011 graph
- What Do I Notice? What Do I Wonder? handout
- Comparison of Brooklyn Neighborhoods handout
- Is this Neighborhood Changing? handout

EXPLAIN

1. Earlier we looked at Pearl River Mart as an example of the risks that culturally important family businesses can face when neighborhoods change, and how this iconic business adapted to survive. Why was Pearl River Mart important to the community?

   › It was a place where Asian American families could go to get supplies and products. It was also a site for family outings and an important tie to their culture.

   What were some of the challenges faced by Pearl River Mart due to neighborhood change?

   › Rent increases made it difficult for them to afford to remain in their location.

   › The population of the neighborhood changed and they did not have enough people buying things to be able to pay the increased rent.
Pearl River Mart is an example of how economic change can impact the residents and businesses of a neighborhood. Today we are going to take a closer look at what this economic change involves.

Distribute *Signs of Neighborhood Economic Change* reading. Ask students to read and annotate the article. They should mark anything they think is interesting, important, confusing, or surprising. They should circle unfamiliar words and write any questions they have in the margins.

Ruth Glass, a sociologist, coined the term “gentrification.” According to the article, what do you think “gentrification means?"

- When wealthier people move into a low-income neighborhood.
- When rents go up because people who can afford to pay higher rates move in.
- When the character of a neighborhood changes because the original residents are forced to move to cheaper neighborhoods.

What are some of the specific signs that a neighborhood is being gentrified (or going through economic change)?

- Rents increase dramatically.
- The racial and other demographics of the neighborhood change.
- There are increased numbers of young, white professionals moving in.
- Long-time businesses close due to rent increases.
- New types of businesses open that cater to affluent residents, such as organic grocery stores.
- Low income buildings being renovated and rented as luxury housing.

We are going to focus on sharp rent increases as a sign or measure of economic change by looking at rent data from a ten-year period in three Brooklyn neighborhoods.

Write the following on the board:

**Increases in Median Rents in Three Brooklyn Neighborhoods from 2000–2011**
The title of the graph we are going to analyze is, *“Increases in Median Rents in Three Brooklyn Neighborhoods from 2000–2011.”*

Before we look at the actual graph, based on the title, what would you expect the graph to show?

- *How much rents have gone up in different neighborhoods in Brooklyn.*

Would it have data on all neighborhoods?

- *No. It will only have data on three neighborhoods.*

What time period will the graph will examine?


If we want to find out how much rent has increased in a neighborhood, we need to have a way to measure rents. But, *does everyone in a neighborhood pay the same rent?* What are some things that might cause differences in what people pay for rent?

- *No, people pay different rents. Apartments have different sizes, different numbers of bedrooms, some buildings are better maintained or newer than others, some buildings have features like a laundry or community room.*

Think about the people that live in your neighborhood or in neighborhoods where you’ve lived in the past. *Does everyone’s rent go up the same amount?*

- *No, some people get larger rent increases than others. Some people live in buildings where the rent is regulated or stabilized, some people have longer leases than others and their rents go up at different times.*

We need a way to get a basic idea of how much the rent is in a neighborhood so we can make comparisons and look for patterns.

The title of this graph includes the word “median.” *What do you think “median” means? What do you think “median rents” refers to?*

- *Median is one way to get a general idea about a set of data, in this case, about rent. (Mean, which you may have heard called “average,” is another way to get a general idea about a set of data.) The way we figure out the median is to take all the rents of a neighborhood and imagine them lined up in order of the rent amount, from lowest to highest. The rent amount in the middle is considered the “median rent.” It gives us a general idea about the rent tenants pay in that neighborhood.*
Write the following amounts on the board:

| $1,250 | $750 | $1,025 | $875 | $500 |

Let’s practice finding the median rent. Let’s say we have an apartment building with 5 units with the following rents: $1250, $750, $1025, $875, and $500.

To find the median, we want to put the numbers in order. (Note: it doesn’t matter whether you put the numbers in order from biggest to smallest or from smallest to biggest. The sample below puts the numbers in order from smallest to biggest.)

Which amount is the smallest? Write that amount on the board. Continue asking which amount is next until all five amounts are on the board in order.

| $500 | $750 | $825 | $1025 | $1250 |

What do we notice?

- The lowest rent is $500 and the highest rent is $1250.

Which number is in the middle?

- $825. So $825 is the median rent for this apartment building. It means two people pay more than the median and two people pay less. The median is the middle amount.

The graph talks about the median rent for a neighborhood. What do you think that means?

- They took all the rents in a neighborhood, put them in order and used the one in the middle.

Does the median rent tell us what everyone in the neighborhood pays in rent?

- No, it is a summary, half the renters will pay a higher rent and half will pay a lower rent than the median rent.

What does it tell us? Why would we study the median rent of a neighborhood? Why is this useful to know?

- It gives a basic idea of how much people pay in rent in that neighborhood.
What changes would you expect to see in rent prices over an eleven-year period in general, even in neighborhoods that are not experiencing rapid economic change?

- Rents go up over an eleven-year period. Every neighborhood should have a higher rent in 2011 than in 2000.

Do you think that rents in every neighborhood always go up the same amount? What might account for the differences? Student answers might include:

- Rent increases might be steeper in neighborhoods that have a lot of new buildings or buildings being renovated.
- Rents will go up higher in some neighborhoods than in others.

In a moment I am going to hand out the graph. With a partner, I want you to notice at least 10 things on the graph. After that, I want you to ask each other things you wonder about the graph. You will have about 3 or 4 minutes to notice and wonder about as many things on the graph as you can.

Once the class has been divided into pairs, distribute Increases in Median Rents in Three Brooklyn Neighborhoods from 2000–2011 graph. Circulate among the groups, checking in on the conversations.

Facilitate a discussion where students share what they noticed. Then have students discuss what they wondered about the graph.

Ask questions to clarify student understanding, for example:

Based on the words on the left side of the graph, or the vertical axis, what do these amounts ($400, $500, etc.) represent?

- The median rent in dollars.

What do the numbers on the bottom of the chart, or the horizontal axis, tell you?

- The time period being measured in the graph.

The “Legend” or “Key” is at the bottom of the graph. What does it tell you?

- It tells you which lines on the line graph represent each neighborhood.

Rents are being compared in which neighborhoods?

- Brownsville, Fort Greene and Williamsburg.

Which neighborhood had the lowest median rent in 2000?

- Brownsville and Fort Greene
Which neighborhood had the highest median rent in 2000?

- **Williamsburg**

What was the approximate median rent in Brownsville in 2000?

- **$500**

What was the approximate median rent in Fort Greene in 2011?

- **$1,000**

Facilitate a discussion around the following questions:

- What might it have been like to live in each of these neighborhoods when these rents were increasing?
- Which of these increases would have been hardest for tenants to deal with?

Ask follow-up questions that help students explain their thinking. Sample follow-up questions can include:

- Why do you think this?
- What evidence in the graph supports this?

Since rents increased in all neighborhoods, it’s important to know how to calculate the growth rate of rent, or the percentage that rent went up, in each neighborhood.

Draw the following chart on the board:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LOCATION</th>
<th>2000 RENT</th>
<th>2011 RENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Neighborhood A</td>
<td>$250</td>
<td>$500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighborhood B</td>
<td>$600</td>
<td>$900</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Here are two sample neighborhoods (not ones included on the graph). They start with different rents in 2000. They end with two different rents in 2011. The rent increased in both neighborhoods. We want to find out how steeply the rent went up in each neighborhood.

Which of these two neighborhoods experienced the largest increase in rent? Student answers will vary. NOTE: Some students will say Neighborhood B because it went up by $300, compared with $250 for Neighborhood A; other students may say Neighborhood A.
How much did the rent go up in each neighborhood? Write the answers in the third column.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LOCATION</th>
<th>2000 RENT</th>
<th>2011 RENT</th>
<th>NET INCREASE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Neighborhood A</td>
<td>$250</td>
<td>$500</td>
<td>$250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighborhood B</td>
<td>$600</td>
<td>$900</td>
<td>$300</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Does anyone know what this number is called? Prompt students or introduce the term “Net Increase” and add a label to the third column.

Another way to think about increases is to think about which rent went up more steeply. Let’s look at the relationship between each net increase and the 2000 rent for each neighborhood. In other words, what is the relationship between $300 (the net increase) and $600 (the 2000 rent) for Neighborhood B?

$300 is half of $600.
We can write that as a percent by saying that the rent increased by 50%.

How about Neighborhood A? What is the relationship between the $250 net increase and the $250 rent in 2000?

The rent went up by the same amount.
The rent doubled
The rent in 2011 is twice as much as in 2000.

We can also write this as a percent by saying that the rent increased by 100%.
Write these numbers in the fourth column.

Does anyone know what this number is called? Prompt students or introduce the term “Percent Increase” and add a label to the fourth column.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LOCATION</th>
<th>2000 RENT</th>
<th>2011 RENT</th>
<th>NET INCREASE</th>
<th>PERCENT INCREASE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Neighborhood A</td>
<td>$250</td>
<td>$500</td>
<td>$250</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighborhood B</td>
<td>$600</td>
<td>$900</td>
<td>$300</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sometimes the numbers aren’t as easy to identify as 50% or 100%. Let’s look at a second set of numbers.
Write the following table on the board:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LOCATION</th>
<th>2000 RENT</th>
<th>2011 RENT</th>
<th>NET INCREASE</th>
<th>PERCENT INCREASE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Neighborhood C</td>
<td>$400</td>
<td>$500</td>
<td>$100</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighborhood D</td>
<td>$600</td>
<td>$720</td>
<td>$120</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

28 Let’s look at Neighborhood C, first. **What was the rent in Neighborhood C in 2000?** (Note: Show the work on the board for each step.)

- **400 dollars.**

**What was the rent in Neighborhood C in 2011?**

- **500 dollars.**

**How would you find out how much more rent cost in 2011 than in 2000?**

- Subtract $400 from $500 = $100.

There was a $100 net increase in rent. The original rent was $400. Now we need to know what percent of the original rent of $400 the $100 increase is.

**How do we write this as a percentage problem?**

- 100 is what percent of 400?

**How do we write this as a fraction?**

- $100/400$

**How do we find out what the percentage is?** (Note: This can be simplified from $100/400$ to $1/4$.)

- Divide 400 by 100 $(100/400) = .25$

We then need to multiply that answer by 100 to get the percent increase.

- $.25 \times 100 = 25\%.$

29 Repeat these steps with Neighborhood D with the entire class. When they are finished, ask: **Which neighborhood had the larger net increase in rent?**

- The net increase was higher in Neighborhood D. Rent in Neighborhood C had a net increase of $100, while rent in Neighborhood D increased $120.

**Which neighborhood had the larger percent increase in rent?**

- The percent increase was higher in Neighborhood C. Rent in Neighborhood C increased 25%, while rent in Neighborhood D increased 20%. 
NOTE: the completed chart on the board should look like this:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LOCATION</th>
<th>2000 RENT</th>
<th>2011 RENT</th>
<th>NET INCREASE</th>
<th>PERCENT INCREASE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Neighborhood C</td>
<td>$400</td>
<td>$500</td>
<td>$100</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighborhood D</td>
<td>$600</td>
<td>$720</td>
<td>$120</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on the *Signs of Neighborhood Economic Change* reading, what other signs of change, in addition to steep rent increases, would you expect to see in neighborhoods experiencing economic change or gentrification?

- Differences in who lives in the neighborhood: more young, single college graduates may move in, replacing families, a neighborhood with primarily people of color may have more whites moving in, wealthier people might move in replacing residents with lower incomes.
- Stores and restaurants catering to wealthier residents open up, often replacing more affordable stores and restaurants.

We are going to look at four neighborhoods to see if there were major changes in the following areas:

- **Increase in the median rent.**
- **Increase in the median income of the neighborhood.** Remember that just like with rent increases, we would expect income to increase from 2000 to 2011. We will be looking for sharp increases in median income, indicating that more affluent, or wealthier people, are moving into the area.

- **Demographics:**
  - **Education Levels** (Sharp or noticeable increase in the proportion of college graduates.)
  - **Race of residents** (Sharp or noticeable increase in the proportion of white residents in the neighborhood.)

Distribute *What Do I Notice? What Do I Wonder?* handout. Explain that students are going to look at different types of data on neighborhood change in Brooklyn. For each piece of data, they should write at least one thing that they notice and one thing that they wonder.

Distribute *Comparison of Brooklyn Neighborhoods* handout. Give students a couple of minutes for individual reflections. While students are writing the things that they notice and wonder, write the following column headings on the board:

| What I Notice | What I Wonder |
34 Ask students to find a partner and share their reactions to the data. In pairs, students should brainstorm additional things they notice and wonder.

35 Bring the groups together. For each table or graph, ask the class what they noticed and what they wondered, recording their responses on the board. Facilitate a discussion around the comments on the board. Ask the class the following questions:

- Is there anything on the board that you are wondering about? Anything you need clarified?
- Do you have a question about something someone noticed or wondered?

36 Review the two tables on the first page of the *Comparison of Brooklyn Neighborhoods* handout with the class to clarify student understanding, if necessary. Sample questions can include:

There are two tables: “Increases in Median Rents in Brooklyn Neighborhoods from 2000–2011” and “Increases in Median Household Income in Brooklyn Neighborhoods from 2000–2011.” When you look at them, what do these two tables have in common?

- The information is laid out the same way/they look the same.
- They both show data from 2000 and 2011, and both show the percent increase that occurred between those years.

What are differences between the two tables?

- They measure different things: one measures median rents and one measures income.

37 Let's look at the table “Increases in Median Rents in Brooklyn Neighborhoods from 2000–2011” as an example. What neighborhood is listed on the middle row of this table? What do you think the words “Brooklyn (Kings County) Average” mean?

- The Brooklyn (Kings County) Average row is telling you the median rent for the entire borough of Brooklyn (Kings County) for 2000 and 2011.

Why do you think this is important?

- It tells you whether each neighborhood’s median rent increase is above or below average for the larger area.

Which neighborhoods had median rent increases above the borough average?

- Fort Greene and Williamsburg.

38 The second page has two graphs titled “Percent of Residents with College Degrees by Neighborhood” and “Percent of White Residents by Neighborhood.”
What do these two graphs have in common?

- The information is laid out the same way/they look the same.
- They both show what percentage of each neighborhood has a specific characteristic, and how the neighborhood has or has not changed between 2000 and 2011.

What are differences between the two tables?

- They measure different things: one measures the percentage of college graduates and one measures the percent of white residents in each neighborhood.

If necessary, ask questions to clarify student understanding using the graph “Percent of Residents with College Degrees by Neighborhood” as an example. Sample questions can include:

What do the gray colored bars represent?

- The percent of residents with college degrees in 2000.

What do the green colored bars represent?

- The percent of residents with college degrees in 2011.

What do the numbers at the top of each bar tell you?

- The percentage of residents with college degrees.

Which neighborhood had the highest percent of college graduates in 2000?

- Williamsburg.

Which neighborhood had the highest percent of college graduates in 2011?

- Fort Greene.

When you look at the bar graph, which neighborhoods seem to have the smallest change in the percent of college graduates?

- Brownsville and Midwood.

Why do you think this? Student answers will vary. Sample answers can include:

- Brownsville and Midwood both went up only 3%.

Which neighborhoods had the biggest change?

- Fort Greene and Williamsburg.

Why do you think this? Student answers will vary. Sample answers can include:

- The percent of college graduates in Fort Greene went from 25% to 40%.
  The percent of college graduates in Williamsburg went from 18% to 37%.

Divide students into four groups, and distribute Is this Neighborhood Changing? handout. Assign each group one of the four neighborhoods.
mentioned in *Comparison of Brooklyn Neighborhoods* handout. For example, Group 1 will look at Brownsville, Group 2 will look at Fort Greene, Group 3 will look at Williamsburg, and Group 4 will look at Midwood.

Review the four indicators (or signs) of neighborhood change on the handout. Explain that for each indicator, students need to decide if the neighborhood is showing signs of economic change. They will then review all four indicators for their assigned neighborhood and decide whether the neighborhood is showing economic change.

41 If a neighborhood shows signs of change in only one area, do you think this indicates that the neighborhood as a whole, is experiencing economic change? Student answers may vary. Some student answers might include:

- *An increase in one category probably isn’t enough to show economic change. It’s only when you see the same trend in several indicators that you can be more confident that a neighborhood is undergoing economic change.*

- *It depends on the category. For example, if income and rents are rising that is a sign of economic change even if race and college don’t show as much change.*

42 Discuss each indicator in your groups and answer all five questions for your neighborhood. Each group will present their neighborhood findings to the class. Each group member should get a turn to answer a question as part of the presentation. Use the data from the graphs and tables as evidence in your answers.

43 When students are finished, each group presents their information to the class. Guide the class in responding with questions for each group. Sample questions can include:

- What in the data supports this conclusion?
- What do you think is a reason for this?
- What else do you want to know?

44 Data can be arranged in different ways. First, we first looked at a line graph. Then we looked at tables and bar graphs.

When you reflect on the different kinds of tables and graphs, how did the different types of data presentations—line graphs, tables and bar graphs—add to your understanding?

- Which do you find easier to read?
- Which is easier to analyze?
- Which gave you the “big picture” faster?
- When would you use a table?
- When would you use a line graph? A bar graph?
Signs of Neighborhood Economic Change


One type of neighborhood change occurs when people with higher incomes move into lower-income neighborhoods. British sociologist Ruth Glass observed this change in London in the 1960s and invented the term “gentrification” to describe it. “One by one, many of the working class quarters have been invaded by the middle class. Once this process of ‘gentrification’ starts in a district it goes on rapidly until all or most of the working class occupiers are displaced and the whole social character of the district is changed.”

This shift typically pushes economic investment, or increased money, into the neighborhood, encouraging the opening of new businesses and services that cater to higher-earning residents, while also resulting in rapid increases in rents. While this boost in resources can result in improved safety and services, it can also change the character and culture of an established community. The demographics—including income, race or ethnicity, age, and educational level—of the neighborhood can change, often forcing long-time residents to move to neighborhoods with lower rents and less access to transportation and jobs. This shift can also heighten racial tensions in many neighborhoods, as the arrival of wealthier, largely white newcomers can result in displacing lower-income communities of color that have lived there for generations.
Urban designer Benjamin Grant notes that the process is generally characterized by these changes:

- **Demographics:** As young, often white, college-educated professionals move into an area, these neighborhoods often see an increase in median income, a decline in the proportion of racial minorities, and a reduction in household size, as low-income families are replaced by young singles and couples.

- **Rent Increases:** Large increases in rents and home prices are a key sign of neighborhood economic change. As rents increase, the number of evictions also rises.

- **Real Estate Changes:** Rental apartments are converted to “condos” where the people living in the apartment buy their apartments instead of paying rent to the building owner. New construction tends to be of **luxury housing** rather than low-income housing.

- **Land Use:** While industrial uses decrease, there is an increase in office space, live-work “lofts,” high-end housing, retail, and restaurants that target a more **affluent** population.

- **Culture and Character:** New ideas about what is desirable and attractive for architecture, landscaping, public behavior, noise, and nuisance. For example, a study of 311 calls on a Harlem block revealed that there were over 3,000 quality of life complaints, mostly for noise or loud music, from 2015–2017 as compared with about 133 complaints in the three previous years, before the neighborhood experienced economic change. These complaints resulted in police presence on the block on 632 days from 2015–2017, a major increase over the 103 visits made from 2012–2014. The effects of neighborhood change extends to its schools. Newcomers sometimes send their children to charter or private schools rather than the local public school, contributing their time and money to schools outside of the neighborhood. Other parents, particularly if the local school has an arts or a gifted and talented program, will send their children to that school, with the school population becoming wealthier and whiter as time passes.

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**VOCABULARY**

- **Displace:** to replace or take the place of someone or something
- **Demographics:** social and financial characteristics of a population
- **Luxury housing:** high-rent apartments with features such as doorman service, central air conditioning, in-building gyms or spas, rooftop access and community rooms.
- **Affluent:** Wealthy
Increases in Median Rents in Three Brooklyn Neighborhoods from 2000–2011

Neighborhoods organized by Zip Code based on U.S. Census data from 2000 and 2011

Data is from the 2000 Census and the 2011 American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau.
What Do I Notice? What Do I Wonder?

For each table or chart, write at least one thing that you notice and one thing that you wonder. Then work with a partner to exchange ideas and list at least one more thing that you notice and one more thing that you wonder.

1. Increases in Median Rents in Brooklyn Neighborhoods from 2000–2011
   I notice…
   I wonder…

2. Increases in Median Household Income in Brooklyn Neighborhoods from 2000–2011
   I notice…
   I wonder…

3. Percent of Residents with College Degrees by Neighborhood
   I notice…
   I wonder…
4 Percent of White Residents by Neighborhood

*I notice…*

*I wonder…*
### Comparison of Brooklyn Neighborhoods

#### Increases in Median Rents in Brooklyn Neighborhoods from 2000 – 2011

Neighborhoods organized by Zip Code based on U.S. Census data from 2000 and 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Neighborhood</th>
<th>Median Rent 2000</th>
<th>Median Rent 2011</th>
<th>Percent Increase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brownsville</td>
<td>$497</td>
<td>$747</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midwood</td>
<td>$667</td>
<td>$988</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brooklyn (Kings County) Average</td>
<td>$621</td>
<td>$963</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fort Greene</td>
<td>$508</td>
<td>$991</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Williamsburg</td>
<td>$528</td>
<td>$1,030</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Increases in Median Household Income in Brooklyn Neighborhoods from 2000 – 2011

Neighborhoods organized by Zip Code based on U.S. Census data from 2000 and 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Neighborhood</th>
<th>Median Income 2000</th>
<th>Median Income 2011</th>
<th>Percent Increase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brownsville</td>
<td>20,829</td>
<td>27,278</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midwood</td>
<td>42,487</td>
<td>52,895</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brooklyn (Kings County) Average</td>
<td>32,135</td>
<td>44,593</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fort Greene</td>
<td>27,240</td>
<td>42,760</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Williamsburg</td>
<td>23,447</td>
<td>42,610</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Percent of Residents with College Degrees by Neighborhood

(Bachelor’s Degree or Higher)

Neighborhoods organized by Zip Code based on U.S. Census data from 2000 and 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Neighborhood</th>
<th>Percent of Residents with College Degrees 2000</th>
<th>Percent of Residents with College Degrees 2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brownsville</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Williamsburg</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fort Greene</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midwood</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Percent of White Residents by Neighborhood

Neighborhoods organized by Zip Code based on U.S. Census data from 2000 and 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Neighborhood</th>
<th>Percent of White Residents 2000</th>
<th>Percent of White Residents 2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brownsville</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Williamsburg</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fort Greene</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midwood</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Is this Neighborhood Changing?

Write the name of the neighborhood that you will be analyzing. Then, discuss each indicator of economic change with your group. For each indicator, determine whether the neighborhood is showing signs of economic change. Then review all four indicators. Based on the results of all four indicators, do you think the neighborhood as a whole is showing signs of economic change?

Neighborhood: __________________________________________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Median Rent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Does this indicator show signs of neighborhood change?</td>
<td>□ YES □ NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why or why not? Explain your answer. Cite data from the appropriate table or graph to support your answer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Median Household Income</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Does this indicator show signs of neighborhood change?</td>
<td>□ YES □ NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why or why not? Explain your answer. Cite data from the appropriate table or graph to support your answer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Section 3.1

#### Indicator

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percent of Residents with College Degrees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Does this indicator show signs of neighborhood change?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why or why not? Explain your answer. Cite data from the appropriate table or graph to support your answer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percent of White Residents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Does this indicator show signs of neighborhood change?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why or why not? Explain your answer. Cite data from the appropriate table or graph to support your answer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Overall:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>When you look at all four indicators, is this neighborhood, overall, experiencing economic change?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>□ YES □ NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why or why not? Explain your answer. Cite data from the appropriate table or graph to support your answer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Safety at Home: Making a Housing Complaint

Students read and analyze a flow chart showing how housing complaints are resolved. They generate phrases that will help them advocate for themselves and present role plays that highlight different parts of the housing complaint process. Students also respond in writing.

PREP

- Be prepared to explain the following vocabulary words:
  - **Housing code violation**: Housing conditions that do not comply with housing regulations and which have not been corrected.
  - **Underlying condition**: A problem that is hidden by, and which causes, a more obvious problem. For example, water pipe damage is an underlying condition that can lead to mold.
  - **Infestation**: An unusually large number or swarm of insects or other pests invading or over-running an area.

MATERIALS

- *Flow Chart: What Happens When You Call 311* handout
- *Interpreting a Flow Chart* handout
- *Housing Problems: Heat and Hot Water* reading
- *Housing Problems: Lead-Based Paint* reading
- *Housing Problems: Mold* reading
- *Housing Problems: Pests* reading
- *Housing Problems: Window Guards* reading
- *Writing Prompt: Housing Complaint Letter* handout

EXPLAIN

1. Imagine that you are looking for an apartment to rent. You visit a unit you saw advertised online and look carefully at the space. What kinds of things would make you uncomfortable about renting the space? What kinds of problems would have to be fixed before you would consider moving in?
2 Divide the class into pairs. Ask students to come up with as many problems as they can in 60 seconds. When time is up, write the answers on the board. Answers may include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No heat/hot water</th>
<th>Vermin: bugs, mice, rats, etc.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Peeling paint</td>
<td>Noisy neighbors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broken locks</td>
<td>Dirty hallways</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3 According to the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD), the New York City agency that handles complaints of building safety issues, property owners or landlords must provide heat, hot and cold water, and good lighting. They must also provide smoke detectors, carbon monoxide detectors, window guards and fix dangerous situations such as lead paint and mold. Problems like this are considered either “hazardous” or “immediately hazardous.” They must also maintain security measures. What do you think that means?

- Door locks and chains, a buzzer/intercom system, window guards.

4 Landlords are required by law to fix “immediately hazardous” situations like lack of heat right away. For other “immediately hazardous” situations like lead paint, they have up to 21 days to fix the problem. Landlords have up to 30 days to fix “hazardous” situations like lack of lighting.

Write the word, “hazardous” on the board.

What do you think the word “hazardous” means in this context?

- Dangerous.

5 Let’s review our list of problems again. Which ones do you think would be classified as “hazardous” or “immediately hazardous”?

Circle items on the students’ list if included below:

- No heat/hot water
- Lack of/broken carbon monoxide and smoke detectors
- Lack of/broken front door or apartment door locks
- Lead-based paint
- Mold
- Pests (cockroaches, bedbugs, rats, mice, etc.)
- Window guards
- Gas Leaks
Building owners who do not fix these problems are violating housing regulations. What do you think someone should do if their apartment has any of these problems?

NOTE: It is fine if some student responses are inaccurate, as the correct procedure will be reviewed and practiced in the rest of the lesson.

» Tell the landlord, super or building manager.
» Call 311.
» Fix it yourself.

What might be some challenges to getting hazardous situations fixed?

» The landlord doesn’t take action to fix things.
» I don’t know how to follow-up if things don’t get fixed.
» I’m not sure who to complain to.
» I’m not sure what to do.
» I’m not sure whose responsibility it is to fix it.


Based on the title, what do you think the chart will show?

» What happens with a housing complaint once you call 311.
» How you can make a complaint to 311 about a housing problem.

This type of diagram is called a flow chart or a process chart. Why do you think that it is called that?

» Because it shows each step of the process and how one step leads to the next.

What do you think the arrows represent?

» Movement from one step to the next.

Why do you think there are three boxes on the bottom instead of just one?

» Because there are three possible outcomes depending on how the landlord reacts to the violation.
Divide the class into groups of three. Distribute *Interpreting a Flow Chart* handout. Answer the questions in the handout, based on the information in the flow chart.

Review the answers as a class.

What are some phrases you can say when calling 311 to file a complaint about a housing safety issue? Write a few on the board under the heading, “Helpful Phrases.”

```
Helpful Phrases
- I'm calling to make a complaint about...
- I'm calling to report a housing violation.
```

Have the class brainstorm other helpful sentence starters. Prompts can include:
- What can you say if you don’t understand what you are being told?
- What do you want to know about the process/what happens next?
- When you are on the phone with 311, what information should you write down?
- When are you on the phone with 311, what information should you be prepared to give?

Write student suggestions on the board. Student answers will vary.

Sample sentence starters and ways to ask for clarification can include:

```
- I’m sorry. Could you repeat that?
- I need a translator.
- What happens once I make a complaint?
- How long does my landlord have to fix the problem?
```

In the same groups of three, each group will read about a housing requirement, then role play what to do if the requirement is not being met. First, one member of the group will explain what the problem is and why it is hazardous by paraphrasing the information in the handout. Then the remaining two members will role play either calling 311 or role play a housing inspection.
13 Paraphrasing is restating a portion of text in your own words. It’s something we do all the time in our day-to-day lives. When someone asks, “What did she say?” and you rephrase someone’s words, that’s paraphrasing.

14 Distribute the 5 different housing problem readings, one to each group. If there are more than 5 groups, it is fine if more than one group gets the same housing problem. Ask students to choose one of the following role play scenarios:

**ROLE PLAY #1**
**Telling the Building Manager:** Act out a conversation with the building manager or landlord, explaining what the problem is.

**ROLE PLAY #2**
**Calling 311:** Act out a call between a concerned tenant and the 311 operator.

**ROLE PLAY #3**
**Housing Inspection:** Act out a visit from a housing inspector to address a tenant’s complaint.

15 Give groups 30 minutes to

A. Read and discuss the housing issue.

B. Develop a skit that shows how the tenant responds to the housing problem, and also shows the response from the landlord or building manager, 311 or housing inspector.

C. Practice their skit so that the problem and action taken by the tenant are clear to the audience.

NOTE: *Skits should be no more than 2-3 minutes long and include an explanation of the housing problem faced by the tenant.*

16 Have each group perform their scenarios in front of the class.

17 After each group presents, the class discusses the role play. Use the following questions or develop additional questions to prompt deeper engagement with the role plays:

- What do you understand about this housing safety issue? Why does it matter?

- What did the tenant do to advocate for their right to safe housing? What did you notice about their interaction?

- How was the situation resolved?

- What do you think happens next?

- What questions do you have after seeing the skit?
There are times when a complaint needs to be put in writing. 

What are some things that you should include in a complaint letter?

- A description of what is wrong.
- What you want done.
- When you will be home so someone can come to the apartment to fix the problem.
- The date the letter is written.

Distribute Writing Prompt: Housing Complaint Letter handout. Ask students to write a complaint letter about a housing problem. They should describe the problem and tell the landlord what needs to be done. Students can use one of the housing problems from the role plays or make up a problem of their own.

Ask for volunteers to read their response to the prompt. Discuss the sample student responses with the entire class. Sample questions can include:

- What works in this letter? How does it inform the landlord or building manager of the problem?
- What questions do you have? How could this letter be adapted to other problems?
Flow Chart: What Happens When You Call 311

Adapted from Calling 311 about a Housing Quality Issue: A General Guide for Tenants on What to Expect

First, the Landlord; Then, 311
Whether heat/hot water, roaches, leaks, or other needed repairs—contact your landlord first to fix it. If they do not respond, contact 311 (call, online, or mobile app) to make a complaint. The 311 operator will give you the “service request number” for your complaint so you can track it at the Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD)’s website or by calling 311 back. Know your rights! Your immigration status does not matter!

311 Response
311 will send the complaint to the Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD).

HPD Response
HPD notifies the building owner of the problem and calls the tenant to see if it was resolved. If the problem was fixed, they close the case. If not...

Code Violation Inspection
HPD sends a code inspector to your apartment. If a violation is found, the inspector will issue the owner a Violation and send a notice to the landlord to fix it. The timeframe will depend on the problem. See the box labeled “Immediately Hazardous Violations” for more information. If English is not your primary language, let the inspector know and they can call an interpreter to help!

Possible Building Owner Responses
- If the building owner certifies, or promises in writing, that they fixed the problem, and the problem is fixed, the case is closed.
- If the building owner certifies that they fixed the problem, and the tenant disagrees, HPD will reinspect the building. If HPD finds that the condition is not fixed, the case is referred to HPD’s Housing Litigation Division, which may pursue legal action against the owner.
- If the owner doesn’t respond to the violation, it remains OPEN on building record. Tenants should seek legal counsel and initiate a Housing Court Action, and may contact local elected officials for help.
IMMEDIATELY HAZARDOUS VIOLATIONS

1. HPD notifies the building owner to fix the violation immediately. (Within 24 hours for most Class C or immediately hazardous violations.)

2. HPD calls the tenant. If the problem is still not fixed, the violation is sent to HPD’s Emergency Repair Program. Appointment may be set up with tenant to get a scope for repair.

3. HPD staff visits the apartment to create a scope of work or a repair plan, contracts the appropriate Construction company to fix the problem, and bills the owner through the Department of Finance (DOF).

NOTE: If HPD is unable to access apartment, the inspector leaves a card and sends a letter in the mail. The tenant must call to make an appointment, or else no further action is taken.
Interpreting a Flow Chart

Use the information in the *Flow Chart: What Happens When You Call 311* handout to answer the following questions.

1. Based on the first step of the flow chart, what two actions do you need to take to start the complaint process?

2. What number should you expect the 311 operator to give you? Why is this number important?

3. What will the 311 operator do after you call?
4. What happens during a code violation inspection?

5. Based on the information in the box labeled, “Code Violation Inspection,” what do you think a violation is?

6. Why do you think the Code Violation Inspection box tells you to look at the “Immediately Hazardous Violations” chart on the next page?

7. How are immediately hazardous violations treated compared to other violations?
**Housing Problems: Heat and Hot Water**


Heat is required between October 1st and May 31st. This period is called “Heat Season.” Building owners are required to provide tenants with heat during these months under the following conditions:

- **Between the hours of 6 am and 10 pm:** Building owners must heat apartments to at least 68 degrees Fahrenheit when the outside temperature is below 55 degrees Fahrenheit. HPD can only issue violations if the owner fails to supply adequate heat when the outside temperature is below 55 degrees Fahrenheit.

- **Between the hours of 10 pm and 6 am:** Building owners must heat apartments to at least 62 degrees, regardless of the outside temperature.

- **Building owners also must ensure that tenants have hot water** 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, at a minimum constant temperature of 120 degrees Fahrenheit.

Building owners or landlords who have heat or hot water violations can be sued in Housing Court by the Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD). For the first violation, an owner who can provide proof that they fixed the problem quickly may have to pay a $250 fine. For a third or any following inspection that results in a heat violation within the same heat season (October through May) or a hot water violation within a calendar year, HPD will charge a fee of $200 for the inspection.
Housing Problems: Lead-Based Paint


Lead is a poison that is often found in old paint. Lead poisoning can cause behavior and learning problems in young children. Peeling lead-based paint is the most common cause of childhood lead poisoning. NYC banned lead-based paint in 1960, but older buildings may still contain it. Lead dust from peeling paint lands on household surfaces and toys. When children play and put their hands and toys in their mouths they can swallow lead dust. Property owners must identify and fix lead-based paint hazards in apartments where there are young children. Lead-based paint hazards are presumed to exist if:

- The building was built before 1960 (or between 1960 and 1978 if the owner knows that there is lead-based paint) and,
- The building has three or more apartments and,
- A child under the age of six resides in the apartment.

Owners of such buildings must ask tenants in writing, annually, whether children under the age of six are living there. If so, owners must visually inspect the apartments and common areas for lead-based paint hazards once a year. Property owners can hire qualified companies to conduct testing for lead-based paint in their buildings. Lead-based paint violations must be repaired by trained workers.

Tenants should report peeling paint in an apartment to the landlord. If the landlord does not fix peeling paint or if work is being done in an unsafe manner (for example, creating dust that is not being contained), tenants should call 311. Young children get tested for lead through blood tests done by their doctor at check-ups.

Tenants are required to:

- Fill out and return the Annual Notice regarding lead-based paint from the landlord.
- Notify the landlord in writing if a child under six comes to live with you or if you have a baby.

Tenants should:

- Wash floors, window sills, hands, toys, and pacifiers often.
- Remind their children’s doctor to test for lead poisoning at ages one and two.
Housing Problems: Mold

Photo: Thomas Anderson https://www.flickr.com/photos/senoranderson/4156168701

Mold is always present in our environment but mold growth indoors can be a problem. Mold may cause allergic reactions, irritation, or trigger asthma in some people. Mold needs water or moisture to grow so it is important for building owners to maintain their buildings and fix leaks promptly. Residents can help prevent mold growth on bathroom or kitchen surfaces by using exhaust fans or opening windows and frequently cleaning surfaces.

Tenants should report leaks and signs of mold growth to their building owners. If repairs are not made, call 311. In addition to issuing violations, HPD can issue an Order to Correct the underlying conditions that cause mold or water leak violations. An underlying condition is a problem that is hidden by, and which causes, a more obvious problem. For example, water pipe damage is an underlying condition that can lead to mold.

If several tenants in a building have a problem with mold or water leaks, the Underlying Conditions Program allows HPD to issue an administrative order requiring the building owner to investigate the cause of leaks or mold and to fix the underlying conditions and related problems within four months.

HPD may sue owners who do not follow these steps in Housing Court. The penalty is $1,000 for each dwelling unit or apartment. If the owner fails to comply with the Order, HPD may hire a contractor to make the repairs at the owner’s expense. Failure to pay the bill may result in a tax lien being placed against the property, and the building can be sold or foreclosed if it is not paid on time.
Housing Problems: Pests


Photo: http://www.yellowjacketpest.com/

Cockroaches and mice are best controlled by sealing up holes and cracks, cleaning up droppings, and using safe pesticides. Building owners should work with their pest control contractor to identify pest infestations and ways to keep pests out. Owners can pest-proof their buildings by fixing leaks and containing garbage. Tenants can help by keeping food and garbage covered and reducing clutter.

Bedbugs

Bedbugs are rusty-red colored insects that can grow to the size of apple seeds. Bedbugs feed on human blood, but do not carry diseases. Infestations can spread among apartments when bedbugs crawl through small crevices or cracks in walls and floors. Early detection of bedbugs is the key to preventing a severe infestation. For more information on bedbugs, detection, and information on how to treat bedbugs, take the free “Bedbug Management” course online in English or Spanish at the Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) website at nyc.gov/hpd or go to the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene’s Bedbug Portal: https://www1.nyc.gov/site/doh/health/health-topics/bedbugs.page.

New York State law requires that landlords hire only pest control professionals licensed by the NY State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) to treat apartments for bedbugs. The pest control professional should perform an inspection to confirm the presence of bedbugs, locate and eliminate hiding places, treat the apartment with cleanings or pesticides and make follow-up visits to ensure that the bedbugs are gone.

When calling 311 to make a bedbug complaint, the caller may be asked by the 311 operator about whether it would be acceptable for HPD to bring a dog trained to sniff out bedbugs to participate in an inspection. If the dog is not allowed, an HPD Inspector will conduct a visual inspection. Violations will be issued if the Inspector is able to visually confirm the presence of live bedbugs.

Infestations: An unusually large number or swarm of insects or other pests invading or over-running an area.
Housing Problems: Window Guards


Each year, young children are injured or die as a result of falls from unguarded windows. These are preventable deaths and injuries. Owners have a responsibility to ensure that window guards are properly installed. The window guard law requires owners to send an annual notice to tenants in buildings with three or more apartments regarding window guards. It also requires owners to provide and properly install approved window guards on all windows in all apartments where a child 10 years of age or younger resides, including first floor bathrooms, windows leading onto a balcony or terrace, and windows in each common area on any floor. The exceptions to this law are windows that open onto a fire escape, and windows on the first floor that are a required secondary exit, since the fire escapes start on the second floor.

If tenants or occupants want window guards for any reason, even if there are no resident children 10 years of age or younger, the tenant can request the window guards in writing and the landlord must install them. For example, occupants who have visiting grandchildren, parents who share custody and occupants who provide child care may wish to request window guards.

Tenants should call 311 if required or requested window guards have not been installed, if they appear to be insecure or improperly installed, or if there is more than four and a half inches of open unguarded space in the window opening. Tenants should not remove or unscrew window guards.
Writing Prompt: Housing Complaint Letter

Write a complaint letter about a housing safety issue. Describe the problem and tell the landlord what you want done. Also include information on when you will be available for someone to come and repair the problem. You can use one of the housing problems from the role plays or make up a problem of your own.
Do-It-Yourself Literacy: Basic Apartment Maintenance

Students read and annotate an article about basic apartment maintenance and repair. After reading and discussing the article, they activate critical thinking skills by applying the information in the reading to sample scenarios to determine how they should address various home maintenance needs.

PREP

- Be prepared to define the following terms:
  
  **Tenant:** Someone who pays rent to use an apartment or home or other property.
  
  **Security deposit:** Money that is paid by the tenant when they lease their apartment and held by the landlord until the end of the lease in case there are any damages to the property. When the tenant moves out, tenant and landlord compare the state of the apartment to the conditions during move-in. The tenant is responsible for the cost to repair the damages found during the move-out inspection—except when it qualifies as ordinary or normal wear and tear. The landlord will use part of the security deposit to cover the cost of these repairs.
  
  **Lease:** The contract under which the renter or tenant agrees to rent an apartment or house for a specific amount of money each month.

MATERIALS

- *Basic Apartment Maintenance* reading
- *Eight Essential Tools for Apartment Repair* handout
- *Apartment Scenarios* handout

EXPLAIN

1. Landlords are required to keep apartments and buildings clean, safe and in good repair. Think about your own apartment or the apartments of your friends and family members. I’d like everyone to stand up. You do not need to take pencils or your notebooks.

2. Find a partner. For the next minute, talk with your partner and name as many things as you can that landlords are required to maintain, keep in good working order, and fix when broken.
While the class is talking, write on the board:

**Things a landlord is required to maintain or fix:**

When the minute is up, have the class volunteer their answers. Write them on the board, then ask the class if there is anything that you missed. The finished list may include the following:

- Keep the hallways and public areas clean.
- Paint the apartment every three years.
- Exterminate rats, mice, roaches, bedbugs, other vermin.
- Maintain electrical systems.
- Fix or maintain plumbing and sanitary systems including sinks, toilets and showers.
- Maintain heating, and ventilating systems in good working order.
- Maintain appliances installed by the landlord, such as refrigerators or stoves, in good working order.
- Maintain windows and install window guards where necessary.

When you have a problem in your apartment that needs fixing, the first thing to do is to contact your landlord or building manager, who is responsible for maintaining the building. However, for minor problems, tenants sometimes make repairs themselves.

**What do you think the word, “tenant” means in this context?**

- *Someone who rents an apartment.*

**What do you think “minor problems” refers to?**

- *Problems that are not major, not serious; something that is annoying but not dangerous.*

Think about your own apartment or the apartments of your friends and family members. Find a new partner. In the next minute, with your partner, list as many things as you can think of that you or someone you know has fixed in their apartment.

While the class is talking write on the other side of the board:

**Things tenants fix in their apartments:**
When the minute is up, have the class volunteer their answers. Write them on the board. Student answers will vary and may include:

**Things tenants fix in their apartments:**

- Unclog sinks or plunge toilets.
- Stuff steel wool in holes to keep out mice.
- Repair minor damage in walls.
- Change lightbulbs or batteries in smoke detectors.

What are some reasons that tenants fix things in their apartment?
Student answers will vary. Sample answers can include:

- It takes too long for the landlord to fix things.
- It’s easier to fix minor things myself.
- I fix minor things while waiting for the landlord to take care of the bigger problem—for example, using steel wool to keep mice out while waiting for the landlord to send an exterminator.

There are some simple fixes tenants can do on their own, such as changing easy-to-reach light fixtures or unclogging the toilet. If there is an ongoing issue, however, such as a leaky pipe, the tenant should contact the landlord as major repairs can be dangerous, difficult, time-consuming or expensive. Tenants can make small fixes to make their apartments more livable while waiting for the landlord to respond.

Distribute *Basic Apartment Maintenance* reading. Ask students to read and annotate it, marking anything they find interesting, important, surprising or confusing. They should circle any unfamiliar words and write any questions they have in the margins.

Divide the class into groups of four. Ask students to discuss what they just read together and answer the following questions:

- What did you notice in the article? (write down as many things as you can.)
- What did you read that interests you?
- What do you want to know more about? Was anything confusing? What do you have questions about? (be specific)

Facilitate a discussion in which students share what they talked about in groups and also ultimately discuss:
DISCUSSION GUIDELINES

Content of the article

• According to the reading, what is the first thing that renters should do if their apartment needs repairs?
  › Contact their landlord.

• According to the reading, what are some reasons why tenants might want to make minor repairs?
  › To make the apartment livable while waiting for the landlord to address the problem.
  › To fix minor damage in order to get their security deposit back when they leave.

• What are some minor repairs tenants might want to make?
  › Unclogging drains, plunging toilets, installing energy efficient lightbulbs, replacing smoke detector/carbon monoxide batteries, using steel wool to keep mice out, filling in holes made by nails or picture hooks.

• What are some common kitchen supplies that can be used to unclog drains?
  › Baking soda, vinegar, salt, hot water.

Vocabulary

• The reading has a box titled “Getting Your Security Deposit Back.” Based on the information in the reading, what do you think a “security deposit” is?
  › Money that is paid by the tenant when they lease their apartment and held by the landlord until the end of the lease in case there are any damages to the property.

• The section on baths and showers recommends “flushing” the drain with boiling hot water once a week. What do you think the word “flushing” means in this context?
  › Cleaning by quickly pouring water through the drain.

• The section on Electricity, Lighting and Batteries states that LED lightbulbs “convert energy into light more efficiently.” What do you think the word, “convert” means in this context?
  › Change.
Purpose

- What do you think is the purpose of the article? Do you think the article achieves its purpose successfully? Why or why not? (NOTE: Student answers will vary.)
- The author tries to balance information on repairs tenants might make themselves and repairs that they should not try to make themselves. Do you think the reading was successful at balancing these two things? (NOTE: Student answers will vary.)
- What are some key points from the box titled, “Getting Your Security Deposit Back?” (NOTE: Student answers will vary.)

Structure and organization of the article

- Why do you think that the reading is divided by the kinds of things that need repair? Was this a helpful way to talk about repairs? Why or why not? (NOTE: Student answers will vary.)
- Why do you think each repair category has a section labeled “The landlord needs to fix this problem?” (NOTE: Student answers will vary.)
- There are two boxes in the reading—“Household Tip: Use Vinegar to Clean” and “Getting Your Security Deposit Back.” Why do you think these two items were set aside in boxes? (NOTE: Student answers will vary.)

Their own experience

- If you had one of the problems in the reading, what would you do? When would you have the landlord fix a problem and when would you try to repair it?

Distribute Eight Essential Tools for Apartment Repair handout. Let’s look at how the table in this handout is organized. What are the categories on the table?

- Tool name, picture, use and approximate price range.

Why do you think the information is organized this way?

- To make it easier to read than if the information had been presented in paragraphs.
- To make it easier to scan the table, find the tool you are looking for; then read across the row to find what it is used for and how much it costs.
Ask students to continue working in their groups of four, and distribute one copy of Apartment Scenarios worksheet to each group. Ask for a volunteer to read the instructions aloud. Then read through the first scenario and model how you might respond. Ask the groups to complete the remainder of the worksheet, citing evidence from the two handouts.

Facilitate a discussion where the groups share their answers. Ask follow-up questions that help students explain their thinking, delve more deeply into the questions, and cite evidence to support their responses. Some sample follow-up questions might include:

- Why do you think this? Where in the readings did you find evidence to support your position?
- What factors might influence when a tenant tries to fix a problem themselves and when the landlord needs to address it?
- What should tenants do if their repair attempts do not work?
- What are some reasons why tenants should not try complicated or serious repairs?
Basic Apartment Maintenance

Adapted from [https://www.popularmechanics.com/home/interior-projects/how-to/a25187/the-diy-renters-guide-to-fixing-up-your-place/](https://www.popularmechanics.com/home/interior-projects/how-to/a25187/the-diy-renters-guide-to-fixing-up-your-place/)
[https://home.howstuffworks.com/home-improvement/plumbing/how-to-unclog-a-drain.htm](https://home.howstuffworks.com/home-improvement/plumbing/how-to-unclog-a-drain.htm)
[https://www.cdc.gov/rodents/prevent_infestations/seal_up.html](https://www.cdc.gov/rodents/prevent_infestations/seal_up.html)

Landlords have to provide a safe place for people to live. They must keep their buildings and apartments in good repair. This includes keeping the hallways and public areas clean, painting apartments every three years and exterminating rats, mice, roaches, bedbugs and other pests. In addition to providing heat and hot water, landlords must maintain electrical, plumbing, sanitary and heating systems in good working order. They must keep all appliances that they installed, such as a refrigerator or stove, in good working order too.

If any of these areas need repair, renters should contact their landlord. Even if the problem seems small, like a leaky pipe, the landlord needs to know so they can make repairs before a little problem turns into a big one. However, some tenants, or people who rent apartments, choose to make minor repairs for themselves. Sometimes they do this to make their apartment livable while waiting for the landlord to fix the problem. For example, if an apartment has mice, the tenants may take short term steps to deal with the problem while waiting for the landlord to send professional exterminators. Even if tenants repair something on their own, they need to contact the landlord and make sure that the landlord addresses the larger issue.

Sometimes tenants also want to fix minor damage that they caused in order to make sure they get their security deposit back. A security deposit is money that is paid by the tenant when they lease their apartment and held by the landlord until the end of the lease in case there are any damages to the property. If there are damages to the property, the landlord will use part of the security deposit to cover the cost of these repairs. Typically, the amount of a security deposit is equal to one month’s rent.
Home maintenance fixes

We’re going to look at some common problems that tenants face with plumbing, electricity, rodents and other issues. What are some things that tenants successfully do, after talking to their landlord, to make their apartments more livable? Which problems must be solved by the landlord and should not be attempted by tenants?

Plumbing problems

A clogged sink that drains slowly or does not drain at all, or a clogged toilet that does not flush properly, are some of the most frequent household problems and ones that can often be solved easily and cheaply by tenants.

CLOGGED SINKS

One of the simplest things to try when dealing with a clogged sink drain is pouring 1/2 cup of baking soda down the drain followed by 1/2 cup of vinegar poured slowly down the same drain. Be careful. The two ingredients interact with foaming and fumes. Once the bubbling stops, slowly and carefully pour boiling water down the drain. After 10 minutes, run the water to see if the clog is cleared. If it is still clogged, try the process again, first pouring baking soda, then vinegar, and following with boiling water.

If that doesn’t work you may need to use a sink plunger. There are two different types of plungers. One is used for sinks and the other is used for toilets. Both are available at hardware stores. A sink plunger has a flat bottom so that when you place it at the bottom of the sink it forms a tight seal around the drain. Fill the clogged sink basin with enough water to cover the head of the plunger. Slide the plunger’s cup over the drain opening, then rapidly pump the plunger by pushing the handle down and pulling it up without breaking the seal. Repeat this up and down motion several times. You should feel water move in and out of drain.

This back-and-forth water pressure can eventually build up enough force to dislodge whatever is blocking drain. After about a dozen firm strikes, pull plunger up quickly. The plunger may bring up material that clogged the drain. It’s good to examine what it pulled up—hair, bits of plastic, etc. to try to prevent these things from going down the drain in the future. If it doesn’t pull up the clogged material, try the same procedure two or three more times.

Household Tip:
Use Vinegar to Clean

Vinegar can be used as an inexpensive household cleaner. Vinegar can be used for anything from removing stains, to unclogging drains, to disinfecting, to deodorizing. It can even be used to remove stickers from walls and other surfaces.

Combine white distilled vinegar with an equal amount of water and put in a spray bottle. Vinegar can be used to clean refrigerators, stovetops, microwaves, coffee makers, cutting boards, tiles, bathroom fixtures like toilets, tubs, showers and sinks and other glass or porcelain surfaces.
TOILETS
A clogged toilet can be cleared using a toilet plunger. A toilet plunger is similar to a sink plunger except that it has a bell-shaped flange or extension at the bottom so that it will fit into the bottom of the toilet drain and create a tight seal. As with a clogged sink, slide the plunger’s cup over the drain opening, then rapidly pump the plunger up and down. After about a few firm strokes, jerk the plunger up quickly. Water should rush out. If it doesn’t, try same procedure two or three more times, if necessary. A running toilet is another common issue which can usually be solved by adjusting the pull chain. The toilet is designed to handle human waste. Flushing other products including diapers, wet wipes, sanitary napkins, tampon applicators, cigarette butts, grease and other similar items can damage or clog a toilet.

BATH AND SHOWERS
Clogged bath or shower drains are often caused by hair. To prevent this from happening, always use a hair catcher or strainer (a small rubber or metal mesh screen), over any drains. Clean out the hair catcher each time you use the shower. You can also flush the drain, on a weekly basis by mixing 1 cup baking soda, 1 cup table salt, and 1/4 cup cream of tartar. Stir the ingredients together thoroughly and pour into a clean, covered jar. Pour 1/4 cup of mixture into drain, and immediately add 1 cup boiling water. Wait 10 seconds, then flush the drain with cold water. Flushing weekly with boiling water also works well. Hair catchers or strainers can be found at most hardware stores. Baking soda, vinegar and salt can be bought inexpensively at grocery or discount dollar stores.

THE LANDLORD NEEDS TO FIX THESE PLUMBING PROBLEMS
Any clogged drains that can’t be fixed easily should be repaired by the landlord who will hire a professional plumber to use equipment, including a plumber’s snake, which works by entering the drain to physically clear away whatever object is blocking the drain and causing the clog. Chemical-based drain cleaners, such as Draino or Liquid Plumbr, can make holes in the pipes causing damage that is costly to fix, and are more expensive to buy than vinegar, baking soda or asking a landlord to repair the clog. Flooding from broken pipes or busted water lines should also be left to the landlord, as well as problems related to water heaters or apartment water lines.
Electricity, Lighting and Batteries

Many tenants use energy efficient Light Emitting Diode (LED) lightbulbs. Although these lightbulbs cost more to purchase initially, they last 10–20 times longer than traditional incandescent lightbulbs. Because they convert electrical energy into light more efficiently, they also cost less to run, lowering the electric or utilities bill.

If you notice the power going out in one part of your home or apartment, an appliance probably turned the breaker switch in your circuit breaker from “On” to “Off,” shutting off the power. A circuit breaker is a device designed to shut off an electrical circuit when too much current is flowing. It is usually a rectangular box inset into a wall of a house or apartment. Electricity may stop running if too many appliances are plugged into an outlet or if there is a short circuit. In the short term, there’s usually no need to contact the landlord to fix this. Turn off the appliance, locate your breaker box, and flip the breaker switch back into the “On” position. A long-term solution may require a visit from an electrician but knowing how to operate your breaker box will help you restore power quickly.

Landlords should replace the batteries in smoke and carbon monoxide detectors, though it is also something tenants can do if the landlord is not responsive.

THE LANDLORD NEEDS TO FIX THESE ELECTRICAL PROBLEMS

Many electrical problems will need to be fixed by professional electricians and are dangerous for people without training to try to tackle themselves because electricity has the potential for damage and serious injury, including fires and electric shocks. Problems that the landlord will need to hire professional help for include light fixtures or ceiling fans that spark or pop when turned on, evidence of burning around light switches and damaged electrical outlets. Broken or non-working smoke and carbon monoxide detectors also need to be replaced by the landlord.
Mice and pest problems

Steel wool can keep mice from entering your home through tight spaces like cracks or holes in the wall, especially around doors, along baseboards, the narrow wooden board running along the bottom of a wall, in cupboards or closets or in gaps around water pipes. The Center for Disease Control (CDC) recommends filling any cracks or small holes with steel wool and then caulking the area around it to prevent mice from chewing through the steel wool. Caulking is a soft, waterproof, putty-like material. It is used to seal cracks and small holes to prevent air or water from getting in. Both steel wool and caulking can be bought at hardware stores. Steel wool can also be bought in supermarkets. Some people prefer to wear gloves when working with steel wool to lessen the risk of being scratched or getting splinters from the steel wool.

THE LANDLORD NEEDS TO FIX THESE MICE, RODENT AND PEST PROBLEMS

Steel wool is a temporary measure and won’t remove pests from the building. If an apartment has mice, roaches, bedbugs or other pests, the landlord must send a professional exterminator or pest control worker to deal with the problem. Pest control workers inspect buildings for rats, mice, cockroaches, bedbugs and other pests. They use poison and chemical sprays to kill them and may set traps to catch rodents and small animals. They should let tenants know how to stay safe around the toxic materials, especially if they have babies, children or pets in the home. Once they have treated an area, they will follow up to ensure it worked and educate people about pest control. Pest control workers are authorized to use toxic or poisonous chemicals that are not available at supermarkets or hardware stores to the general public. Pest control methods and level of toxicity in the chemicals used will vary depending on the situation and the customer.

VOCABULARY

**Lease**: The contract under which you agree to rent an apartment or house for a specific amount of money each month, for a specific duration, usually a year or two.

**Incandescent light bulbs**: bulbs that have a wire filament that gives off light when heated by an electric current.

**Toxicity**: Containing poisonous material.
Getting Your Security Deposit Back

A security deposit is a sum of money collected by your landlord when you sign your lease. The landlord will use part of it to cover the cost of any damages to the apartment made by you or any of your visitors that seem outside of the range of “normal wear and tear.” When you plan to move out, you and your landlord compare the state of the apartment when you moved in to when you move out, and you’re responsible for the cost to repair the damages found during inspection—except when it qualifies as ordinary or normal wear and tear.

Taking photographs of the apartment when you move in, particularly of any areas in need of repair can help you avoid arguments about damage when you move out.

What is normal wear and tear?
Think of wear and tear as the natural damage caused by normal living activity during the time you are renting the apartment. For example, the paint on your apartment wall may fade during your tenancy, or the time you are living in your apartment. Since this is caused by normal exposure to sunlight, it’s considered ordinary wear and tear. This means, if the wall needs to be repainted for the next tenant, your landlord is responsible for the costs associated with the repair and this cost should not be taken out of your security deposit. However, if you paint the walls a different color, you may be responsible for returning them to their original color. Otherwise your landlord could charge you the cost of repainting.

Other examples of normal wear and tear are carpets wearing down from use or scuffs and patches on hardwood from being walked on repeatedly. Normal wear and tear doesn’t include damage caused by misuse, negligence, or failure to take care leading to damage or injury, or general filth such as urine stains from pets or mold or mildew buildup that require professional cleaning. Things like holes in the wall, torn blinds or missing smoke or carbon monoxide detectors don’t count as wear and tear.

Repairing holes in walls
Tenants may try to fix some of the damage to the apartment in order to get as much of their security deposit returned as possible. For example, spackle, a putty-like paste can be used to fill nail holes and repair cracks in walls. A putty knife, which is a small knife with a flat blade, is used to apply spackle and to smooth the wall after it has been applied so no bumps or ridges remain. Sandpaper, available inexpensively at hardware stores, can also be used to ensure a smooth surface. A hardware store employee can advise customers on the correct texture of sandpaper to use on painted walls.
Eight Essential Tools for Apartment Repair
Adapted from https://www.amli.com/blog/nine-essentials-for-your-apartment-toolkit/

While your landlord is responsible for maintaining your apartment, there are some simple repairs you might want to make for yourself. And even something as simple as hanging a picture requires a tool. You can get most of these tools from your neighborhood hardware store, where the workers are often a good source of do-it-yourself advice, or from a large chain. You can buy each tool separately or look for an inexpensive toolkit that includes several different tools.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tool Name</th>
<th>Picture</th>
<th>Use</th>
<th>Approximate Price Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hammer and nails</td>
<td><img src="image1.png" alt="Hammer and Nails" /></td>
<td>A hammer can be used for hanging art, photos, and mirrors in your apartment as well as tacking down a carpet or television cables. The claw end of the hammer can be used to remove nails. As it has so many uses, keep nails of various sizes on hand.</td>
<td>$5 – $40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Screwdriver set</td>
<td><img src="image2.png" alt="Screwdriver Set" /></td>
<td>You’ll need a screwdriver for anything you want to assemble or disassemble in your apartment, including furniture, mounting things, like a coatrack, on a wall and repairing cabinets and drawers. You will need both Philips head and flat head screwdrivers in different sizes.</td>
<td>$10 – $60 per set</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sink and toilet plungers</td>
<td><img src="image3.png" alt="Sink and Toilet Plungers" /></td>
<td>You will need them to unclog drains in the sink or toilet. A sink plunger has a flat bottom so that it lays flat against the bottom of the sink and forms a tight seal around the drain. A toilet plunger is similar to a sink plunger except that it has a bell-shaped flange or extension at the bottom so that it will fit into the bottom of the toilet drain and create a tight seal.</td>
<td>$5 – $20 each (Sets: $10 – $30)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tape measure: CCO Public Domain; Level: Licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0 International license.
Step ladder: Use released for public domain; Spackle: “It's Spackle” by CG Hughes. Attribution-NoDerivs 2.0 Generic (CC BY-ND 2.0)
Putty knife: Image by Johnny Magnusson has been released to the public domain by the author. CC0 1.0 Universal (CC0 1.0)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tool Name</th>
<th>Picture</th>
<th>Use</th>
<th>Approximate Price Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wrench</td>
<td><img src="image1" alt="Wrench" /></td>
<td>Useful for furniture assembly and repair, as well as for some minor plumbing repairs. With 10- or 12-size wrench, you should be able to fasten or release just about any nut or screw in your apartment. An adjustable wrench has an adjustable jaw that can be widened or narrowed for use with any size nut or bolt.</td>
<td>$5 – $15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjustable wrench:</td>
<td></td>
<td>$5 – $25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tape measure</td>
<td><img src="image2" alt="Tape measure" /></td>
<td>A tape measure can be used to measure the size of an object or the distance between objects, such as measuring windows for blinds or drapes or to make marks to tell where to hammer in nails that are evenly spaced from the ceiling, floor, cabinets.</td>
<td>$5 – $10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level</td>
<td><img src="image3" alt="Level" /></td>
<td>Levels are used to hang framed photos and artwork. A level quickly shows you when the top and bottom of a frame are parallel to the ground, making it easy to hang art in your home. You can buy a manual level or, if you have a smartphone, download a free level app.</td>
<td>$5 – $25 (You can download a phone app for free.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step ladder</td>
<td><img src="image4" alt="Step ladder" /></td>
<td>A folding step ladder takes up little space, and it makes changing light bulbs, reaching the tops of cupboards, and reaching items stored on the highest shelves in your closet easy.</td>
<td>$5 – $50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spackle and putty knife</td>
<td><img src="image5" alt="Spackle and putty knife" /></td>
<td>Spackle can be used to fix small cracks in walls. You can mix it yourself or buy pre-mixed spackle. It is usually applied with a small putty knife, a small flat-edged knife.</td>
<td>Spackle: $3 – $10 Putty knife: $3 – $10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Apartment Scenarios**

Discuss each scenario in your group. Based on the two handouts, decide if the problem is something the tenant could fix on their own or something that should be left to the landlord to do. If you think the tenant can fix it themselves, decide what kind of tools will be needed. In your responses, cite evidence from the handouts.

**SCENARIO #1**

The kitchen sink in Sandra’s apartment is clogged. She tried using a mixture of vinegar and baking soda to unclog the drain, but it didn’t work. Should Sandra continue to try to unclog the drain, or should she ask the landlord to fix it? Why? Cite evidence from the readings to support your position.

If you think Sandra should try to fix the problem herself, what tools will she need?

**SCENARIO #2**

The toilet in Omar’s apartment is clogged. He tried plunging the toilet several times, but it didn’t work. Should Omar continue to try to fix the toilet, or should he ask the landlord to fix it? Why? Cite evidence from the readings to support your position.
If you think Omar should try to fix the problem himself, what tools will he need?

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SCENARIO #3

When Lucy turned on the light switch for the overhead light in her living room, the light switch sparked. She turned it off quickly. Is this something Lucy might want to try to fix on her own or is this something she should have the landlord fix? Why? Cite evidence from the readings to support your position.

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If you think Lucy should try to fix the problem herself, what tools will she need?

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SCENARIO #4

Hector’s children were playing ball in the house. They caused a small crack in the walls. Is this something Hector might want to try to fix for himself or is this something he should have the landlord fix? Why? Cite evidence from the readings to support your position.

---
If you think Hector should try to fix the problem himself, what tools will he need?

SCENARIO #5
Olga’s apartment has mice. Is this something Olga might want to try to fix for herself or is this something she should have the landlord fix? Why? Cite evidence from the readings to support your position.

If you think Olga should try to fix the problem herself, what tools will she need?
Measurement Math: Problem-Solving with Increments on a Ruler

Students build a conceptual understanding of fractions, focusing on halves, quarters, eighths, and sixteenths. Students then consider that understanding in the context of measurement, working with rulers.

PREP

- Teachers should cut copies of the Photograph of ruler (for Stand and Talk) handout in half. Teachers should make copies and cut out enough paper rulers for each student to get one. Teachers should do all of the activities, including the measurements, for themselves beforehand.

MATERIALS

- Blank sheets of paper
- Photograph of ruler (for Stand and Talk) handout
- Paper Rulers handout
- Inch rulers, tape measures (optional)
- Measurement Chart handout
- Finding the Center handout
- Making a Round Table handout

EXPLAIN

Introduction

1 Measurement is at the heart of construction. And it is also something that all of us do in our everyday lives. Turn and talk with a partner about an experience with measuring—talk about things they have measured and how they did the measurement.

2 After a few minutes, ask students to report out on what they discussed. Keep a list on the board of the different situations in which measurements were taken. Ask students to discuss which of the situations required precise measurements and which ones required only rough measurements (or estimates). Explain that today’s lesson focuses on situations in which precise measurements are required.
Ask students to consider the sector of Construction, and try to add professional situations to the list where precision in measurement would be important.

Launch: Folding Paper

1. Hand out the blank sheets of paper, giving one to each student. Each student should hold the paper in landscape view and draw a horizontal line completely across the bottom edge of the paper. Label the far left edge 0 and the far right edge 1. This width represents one length of paper.

2. Fold the paper in half from left to right. Make a crease in the middle. Open the paper. Ask: How far is it from 0 to the crease?
   - It is half the length to 1, half way across the paper.

3. Ask: “How do we write one-half?”
   - One over two.
   - \( \frac{1}{2} \)

4. Focus on the “\( \frac{1}{2} \).” Ask students what the “1” means and what the “2” means. The fraction tells us that we have something that is broken up into equal pieces. The bottom number tells us how many pieces it is broken into and the top number tells us how many of those pieces we are talking about. So “\( \frac{1}{2} \)” means we have something broken up into 2 pieces, in this case a sheet of paper. Since we are talking about length, starting at 0, when we reach that crease, we have moved over one of the two pieces.

5. Ask students what \( \frac{3}{2} \) means and where it belongs on our line.
   - In line with the 1

6. Close the paper so that it is folded in half again. Then fold it in half a second time from left to right and make a crease. What do you think we will see when we open up the paper? How many sections? How many creases?
7. Open up the paper and see whether student predictions were true. You should have two new creases, one between 0 and $\frac{1}{2}$ and one between $\frac{1}{2}$ and 1.

- How many equal sections do we have now?
  *Four*

- What can we call each of those four sections?
  $\frac{1}{4}$ or one-quarter or one-fourth

- How can we describe the distance from the 0 to the first crease?
  $\frac{1}{4}$

- How can we describe the distance from the 0 to the second crease?
  $\frac{2}{4}$, two-fourths, two-quarters.

8. Have students add in $\frac{3}{4}$ and $\frac{4}{4}$. If they need support, have them look at the new crease on the right side. **How far is this crease from 0? How should we label it?** We should write $\frac{3}{4}$ because it is three-fourths of the way across the paper. 3 out of 4 steps of equal size. Label the crease “$\frac{3}{4}$.”

9. When we say this crease is “three-fourths,” what do we mean—three-fourths of what?

- $\frac{3}{4}$ of the paper, starting at 0

10. Before we fold our paper again, what do you notice?

- $\frac{2}{4}$ and $\frac{1}{2}$ are on the same crease
- $\frac{2}{2}$, $\frac{4}{4}$, and 1 are all on the same crease.
- Our page is divided into quarters and halves.

11. Fold the paper in half and then in half again. That brings it back to where it was before. Now fold it in half one more time. **What do you think we will see when we open up the paper?** How many sections? How many creases?

12. Open up the paper and you should have eight sections and seven creases. Have students work with a partner to label all of the creases. Walk around and listen to the conversations. If students need support, you can ask:

- How many equal pieces did we have before?
  *Four*

- What did we do with that four?
  *We made it the bottom number in our fraction.*

- How many equal pieces do we have now?
  *Eight*

  Make sure students add $\frac{8}{8}$ with the $\frac{2}{2}$, $\frac{4}{4}$, and 1.
13 Repeat the procedure one final time. Fold the paper in half, then in half again, then in half again, and now add a new fold in half again. Then have students predict the number of sections and the number of creases.

14 Have students open the paper and label the creases.

15 What does it mean that some of these fractions are on the same crease? Students may say things like, “It means they are the same distance,” or “those fractions are equal.” Ask students to explain in their own words how 1/2, 2/4, 4/8, and 8/16 are all equal.

Stand and Talk: Looking at an Inch

1 The activity in this part of the lesson begins with an instructional routine called “Stand and Talk.” Ask your students to stand with nothing in their hands—no pencils, no phones, no papers, etc. Once everyone is standing, tell them you are going to give them something to look at with a partner. You want them to look closely at the details and notice at least 5 things. You want to hear them asking each other things they wonder about.

2 Have your students move around and find a partner. It can be anyone in the room, just not anyone sitting next to them. They'll only be talking for 4 minutes. If there is an odd number of students, you can have one group of three.

3 Once students are standing with a partner, give them one photograph of a ruler to share between them. Remind them to look closely at the details, hold the sheet between them and to point at what they notice as they discuss it.

4 After 4 minutes, have students return to their seats and give out the remaining photographs so that now every student has their own. Ask them to call out what they noticed and record their observations. You may hear things like:

- There are 19 lines
- Some of the lines are longer and some are shorter (There are 5 different sized lines)
- This is a ruler
- The ruler is divided up like our paper
- This is an inch
- This is an inch divided up into 16 sections
- That line is 1/2
- This is a little more than an inch
- This is an inch and 1/8
This is an inch and \(\frac{3}{16}\)

> This is an inch and \(\frac{2}{16}\)

For each observation that required some reasoning, ask students to explain their thinking. In order to have students explain inferences based on what they are seeing, you might use the question, “What do you see that makes you say that?”

Eventually, you want all students to understand the following:

1. Their folded paper with labeled creases can be used as a key to help interpret this ruler.
2. The two longest lines denote the 0 and the 1, and that 1 represents 1 inch.
3. The lengths of the lines correspond to the how many equal pieces the inch is broken into—whole inch, the half, the quarters, the eighths and the sixteenths.
4. Some of the tick marks correspond to more than one fraction (i.e. the equivalent fractions)
5. How to identify each tick mark.
6. The tick marks past the 1 inch mark represent measurements of 1 and \(\frac{1}{16}\) inches, 1 and \(\frac{2}{16}\) inches. (You might hear an argument that the total width of this ruler segment is 1\(\frac{3}{16}\) inches since you can see one more tick mark on the edge.)


**Paper Rulers**

1. If you have access to rulers and/or tape measures, you can use them in place of, or in addition to, the paper rulers included in this lesson.
2. Give each student a paper ruler/actual ruler/tape measure. If using the paper rulers, make sure students understand that the ruler is 8 inches long.
3. Ask students to draw some lines: Try one measuring \(\frac{5}{16}\), one measuring \(3\frac{5}{16}\), and one that measures \(4\frac{3}{16}\). Address any issues that come up and give students additional lengths if they need or want more practice.
4. At this point, depending on time and your students you can do either or both of the handouts, the *Measurement Chart* and *Finding the Center/ Making a Round Table*. The goal is to get students to practice reading the rulers and being as precise as they can.
The *Measurement Chart* asks students to make estimates and then calculate precise measurements. As an extension with the *Measurement Chart*, you can ask students to figure out how far off each actual measurement is from their estimate.

*Making a Round Table* looks at precision and tricks of the trade in a professional context. Read through the *Finding the Center* handout with students to address any questions before giving out the *Making a Table* handout.

If you are using the paper rulers, some students may start by labeling all the increments. You may have other students who only write the increments as needed. And still yet other students who have a different strategy. Let them figure out what works best for them. If they are struggling, you might help them break down the task by suggesting they focus on labeling the ruler first.

For additional practice reading the fractions of a ruler, students can go to [https://www.rulergame.net/](https://www.rulergame.net/).
Stand and Talk: Ruler
**Measurement Chart**

Working with a partner, complete the following chart. For each object, estimate how long you think it will be. Write your estimate in the table. Then measure with your paper ruler. Add that information to your chart and calculate how far off you were. Once you have done this with all of the objects, choose at least four more objects around you and add that data to the chart.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Estimate</th>
<th>Actual Measurement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Length of hand</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of arm</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of foot</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length between your eyes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length around your wrist</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of your wingspan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length around your head</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Bonus question:**
Approximately how many of your hands would it take to measure your height?

*Adapted from *About Teaching Mathematics* by Marilyn Burns*
Finding the Center

In carpentry, finding the centers of things is pretty important. For example, if you want to make a table with a support in the middle, you need to be able find the exact center. To find the center of a square or a rectangle, you can draw two diagonal lines from the opposite corners. The point where they cross is the center of your material.

Here’s how you can find the center:

1. Draw a diagonal line from one corner to the other.
2. Draw a diagonal line to connect the other two corners.
3. Mark the spot where the two lines intersect. That’s the center of the square!

Try it finding the center of these rectangles:

But what if you wanted to find the center of a circular piece of wood?

Circles don’t have corners that you can connect.
Finding the Center of a Circle

There are many tricks of the trade when it comes to finding the center of a circle. Here are two methods that require only a ruler and a square edge. A square edge is something that forms a right angle. The corner of a piece of paper or the corner of a ruler will work.

**THE CHORD METHOD**

Using a ruler, draw a line from one point of the circle to another point on the circle. Any line connecting two points on a circle is called a chord.

Once you draw a chord, make a tick mark halfway.

Next draw another chord, again marking the halfway point.

Draw a third chord and again mark the halfway point.

You will end up with something like the picture on the right.

Line up a straight edge with the halfway point on one of the chords and draw a perpendicular line. Perpendicular lines are lines that form 90° angles.

Repeat this step for all three chords.

The place where all three lines intersect is the center of the circle.
THE PARALLEL LINES METHOD

Draw a chord.

Draw a second chord. Two things need to be true about the second chord:
- It must be the same length as the first chord.
- The second chord must be parallel to the first chord.

Parallel lines are lines that never meet. They are always the same distance apart.

It’s a good idea to measure the distance between your two chords and make sure they are the same in a few different places.

If the distance is the same, the lines are parallel.

Once you are confident your lines are parallel, you are ready for the next step.

Connect the end of one of the chords with the end of the other chord, crossing over the middle of the circle.

Connect the other two ends of the parallel chords.

The point where the two lines intersect is the center of the circle!
How Precise Were Your Measurements?

The definition of a circle is the set of all points that are an equal distance from a point.

You can check to see if the point you found is actually in the center of your circle. Measure the distance from your center point to a few different points on the circle. If those distances are equal that you have a perfect center point. If the distances are different, your point isn’t in the exact center of the circle.

There is a special name for any line that connects the center of a circle to a point on the circle. It’s called the radius.
Making a Round Table

Imagine you are making a round table with a pedestal support in the middle. You would need to find the center so that the tabletop is supported evenly and won’t tip over.

As practice for finding the center of a round tabletop, use the **CHORD METHOD** or the **PARALLEL LINES METHOD** to find the center of the circles below.
Paper Rulers (note: print at 100%)