

Who Is Hungry?

Groups at Risk in the United States

Activity suitable for grades 3 and above

Description

Students will list and discuss groups affected by hunger and food insecurity in the United States, and specifically in their community. Prevalent myths surrounding the hungry and the poor will be explored. Adjust this activity based on grade level to ensure comprehension.

Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Identify the groups affected by food insecurity
- List major barriers to obtaining food

Materials

Blank sheets of paper

Pens or pencils

Chalkboard or PowerPoint/Projector

Total time: 20-30 minutes

Activity

- Separate students into groups of 3-5 people, or complete activity as a class. Have groups brainstorm and make a list of groups of people that go hungry and reasons for their hunger/lack of food security. Encourage students to think of as many groups and causes as they can.
- Have each group appoint a spokesperson to contribute their group's ideas. Call on each spokesperson and write their group's idea on the chalkboard or PowerPoint slide. Add to the students' ideas as needed to cover the following list, but do not limit discussion to these groups.
- As students present their lists, make sure to debunk any myths. Use the following list to explain why certain groups of people are going hungry. For example, one common myth is that people are food insecure because they are too lazy to work. In this case it would be effective to refer to the populations of the unemployed (who lose their jobs and have difficulty finding consistent employment) and the working poor (who work minimum wage jobs that do not pay enough for high living costs).



| Food Insecure Population | Common Causes of Food Insecurity |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Children | Poverty, lack of family resources and support, unemployment or low wages among head of household, lack of transportation to summer meal programs |
| Seniors | Poverty or limited finances, lack of transportation, inadequate social support, physical limitations or chronic illness, medical bills, fixed income |
| Homeless | Poverty, few resources, no facilities to prepare food, low skill levels for potential employment, chronic illness, disabilities |
| Acute or Chronically Ill | Transportation barriers, unable to prepare food or shop for food, special dietary needs, medical bills, barriers to consistent employment |
| Unemployed | Poverty or limited finances, lack of financial stability or resources |
| Mentally Disabled | Medical bills, transportation barriers, low skill levels for potential employment |
| Undocumented Immigrants | Low wages, language barriers, no access to government assistance programs |
| Undereducated | Inability to attain higher wage jobs, difficulty navigating government assistance programs, low wages |
| Working Poor | Low wages, limited hours, transportation barriers |
| Ex-offenders | Barriers to finding steady employment, low wages, lack of resources |
| Veterans | Barriers to finding steady employment, lack of resources, homelessness |
| Women | Lower wages, poverty among female headed households, inadequate social support and/or child care |

