



**End Poverty Now Lessons and Activities**

**ENDPOVERTYNOW**

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This section describes a wide variety of ways that you can help secondary school students learn about poverty. It includes a sections of hooks to engage students, another with exploratory activities that would help students learn more about a given aspect of poverty, and a final section where students demonstrate their knowledge and put it to use. Each lesson or activity if followed by a suggested range of grades.

### **Hooks**

**Use one of these activities or a combination of them to get students thinking about the subject and to address some of the misconceptions they may have.**

#### Group or individual tableaux (grades 7-9)

Have students form small groups (3-5) and ask them to consider and present a group pose or frozen shot that represents what poverty means to them. Alternatively, make this a series of poses that share the same theme or tell a story. Once they have presented, ask them to explain their tableaux to the class. Be sure to correct or discuss any misconceptions students may have.

#### Picture or describe Poverty (grades 7-12)

Ask students to write a description, draw a picture, or make a collage of what poverty means to them. Using examples from the class, challenge any assumptions that you witness in the pictures and discuss them as a class.

#### Photograph what poverty means to you (grades 7-12)

Have students choose photographs of what poverty means to them from an online database or, if possible, have them take these pictures themselves. Present these in a gallery or have each student present and explain their picture individually. Be sure to address any misconceptions you see displayed in the pictures or the explanation of them.

#### Building activity (grades 7-12)

Gather various materials necessary for students to build a small structure. These can include cardboard, glue, tape, toothpicks, balsa wood, scissors, pipe cleaners, or whatever is available. Divide the class into three groups and give one group every type of tool and material available, give another broken or limited tools and/or less building materials (ex. Broken scissors, empty or nearly empty glue and tape, or simply not as many materials). Give another group nothing but basic materials. Ask each group to build a structure as tall as they can. At the end of the project, ask how each group felt about the resources they were given, how it affected their ability to build a larger structure, and how these may relate to poverty.

\*Consider giving students a sense of their growing understanding by using this activity with the “Building activity extension” in the Exploration section.

### Card Game (grades 9-12)

Divide two decks of cards into face cards and number cards and have each student choose one face card and three number cards. Then split the class into groups of four and tell them that whoever has the highest face card will be making their own card game. If several students have the highest card in their group, they share this role. Consider giving some incentive to win the game. Have them play this game, then discuss how the games went and how each group member felt.

\*This also makes a great introduction to a specific focus on how poverty relates to international relations, environmentalism, or trade justice.

### **Exploration**

**Use these activities and the resources provided by this website and others to have students explore the subject of poverty further and learn about its causes and manifestations.**

### Research presentations (grades 7-12)

Have groups of students research and present on a variety of topics related to poverty. Students can use a range of sources to research these, including news, analysis, and statistics. The topics can range from approaches to poverty to its causes to specific concepts such as the poverty cycle.

\*You can also assign topics and give students basic statistics and descriptions with our Situation Slips or Expert Slips. Each series of slips includes a worksheet where students can take notes as others present.

### Skits or videos (grades 7-9)

Give students real or fictional descriptions of the lives of certain people or groups who live in poverty and have them describe a typical day or an isolated experience in writing, by presenting it, or by having them do both. Alternatively, have them find a situation that they would like to write about. Such descriptions are readily available on the websites of the Red Cross and Doctors Without Borders

\*Consider assigning roles with our Situation Slips

### Worksheets by topic (grades 7-12)

Give students a variety of worksheets that focus on specific elements of poverty, allowing them to learn and consider the topics on their own.

\*Such worksheets can be found on the websites of many development organizations and TakingITGlobal, a social networking site for social issues. End Poverty Now is also currently developing their own inquiry-based worksheets. If you would like to try them and/or tell us how they might be improved, please email our Officer of Classroom Resources at [andreas@endpovertynow.ca](mailto:andreas@endpovertynow.ca).

### Jigsaw activity (grades 7-12)

Have students become classroom experts in a specific field or focus of poverty. Assign certain topics to groups of students and give them the necessary information to become experts or have them research their assigned expertise. You could also have them do a combination of the two. If you have the same number of groups as there are students in each group, you can simply have them go into new groups

where there is one of each type of expert and each share what they have learned with the larger group. If this is not possible, periodically have students form new groups with experts they have not heard from until each student has heard what every type of expert has to say.

\*Consider using End Poverty Now's Situation Slips or Expert Slips to assign a group's focus. Each of these includes a worksheet where students can take notes as they listen to each type of expert.

### Compare cities (grades 7-12)

Have students research economic discrepancies between and within cities and write about what they have found, present it, or do both. Students can use mapping software such as Google Earth or the street view of Google Maps as visual aids by showing the type of housing that different classes or countries reside in.

### The UN's Millennium Development Goals (9-12)

Assign groups of students or individual students one of the UN's 8 Millennium Development Goals and ask them to see where it is being met. Statistics software such as the one featured on Gapminder.org can be incredibly helpful in researching and presenting these changes. This can be paired with research papers, research presentations, or a jigsaw activity.

### Building activity extension (grades 7-12)

After students have learned about different ways that poverty is caused or maintained, have students complete another building project with new rules that demonstrate these elements. For example, you can make it necessary for the groups with broken tools and no tools to use the box that the material comes in, explaining that doing so would make it unavailable for future classes. This represents the environmental degradation that poverty can ensure. Similarly, you can represent the effects of racism and sexism by silencing some members of each group or not allowing them to help physically build the structure based on arbitrary factors such as eye color or having an "innie" or "outie" belly button. You can also give the group with more tools more materials, possibly even taking these from the other groups, to demonstrate some of the negative effects of globalization. Also consider including a natural disaster and having it affect the less fortunate groups more severely.

\*For more materials to use with these activities or your own, visit EPN's education section at <http://endpovertynow.ca/home/education>, where you will find our newsletters, podcasts, and Poverty in the News feed.

## **Taking a Stand**

**Use these activities to allow students to demonstrate what they have learned by creating something that declares and explains their opinion or by making a choice using their new knowledge.**

### My Poverty Plan (7-12)

Have students form and explain their own idea for alleviating poverty. These plans can range from grassroots movements to adding to or changing their government's efforts. Consider having them

videotape these and submit them to End Poverty Now's alternative media officer at [alternativemedia@endpoertynow.ca](mailto:alternativemedia@endpoertynow.ca).

\*For examples of these, visit this website's My Poverty Plan section at <http://www.endpoertynow.ca/mypoertyplan> or look at our existing My Poverty Plans on YouTube.

### Pictures of poverty (7-12)

Have students create or find pictures that demonstrate the complexities of poverty. Coupled with an explanation of why they chose or took this particular picture, these can be used to evaluate students' understanding of the subjects. Consider having students create an art gallery in the halls of your school or in your classroom.

\*Start with the hook "Photograph what poverty means to you" to let students see how their knowledge has progressed. Consider submitting your class' pictures to our photo blog <http://www.endpoertynow.ca/inourbackyard>.

### Choosing grassroots projects (9-12)

Have students examine a variety of grassroots projects that different organizations or individuals support and choose one that they believe is ideal. This can be done in groups, individually, or as a class. Sites such as [kiva.org](http://kiva.org) and [endpoertynow.ca/grassroots](http://endpoertynow.ca/grassroots) offer descriptions of such projects.

### Designing a local project (7-12)

Have students evaluate the needs of those who live in poverty in their area or one that they have studied and come up with projects that would permanently help them. Students can do this in small groups, individually, or working with the class. Try to get students to think beyond soup kitchens and blanket drives and consider ideas that would permanently lift people out of poverty. If you or your students are particularly interested, you can even submit the proposal to EPN for evaluation and potentially start your own grassroots project.



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