

Lesson 2: Fairness for All

OBJECTIVES

- Students will:
- Discuss the importance of the right to fair housing
 - Analyze scenarios involving housing discrimination
 - Apply current housing discrimination laws to new scenarios

STANDARDS

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.8 Assess the extent to which the reasoning and evidence in a text support (the author’s) claims.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.3 Evaluate various explanations for actions or events and determine which explanation best accords with textual evidence, acknowledging where the text leaves matters uncertain.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Front side poster reading “Know Your Family’s Rights” describing protected classes under the Fair Housing Act. Further explanation of the law is available from the Department of Housing and Urban Development at: http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/fair_housing_equal_opp/FHLaws/yourrights
- “Housing Scenarios” worksheet (provided as a reproducible below)

INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES

Pre-Activity:

Have students spend time considering the following discussion questions:

- Why is fairness in the rental, sale, and financing of housing, as well as fairness in securing homeowners insurance, so important?
- What groups might need to be protected from housing discrimination? Why?
- What problems may occur in society if fair housing is not a protected right?

Share your answers as a group.

Activity:

1. Read as a group the poster “Know Your Family’s Rights” for a brief summary on the Fair Housing Act.
2. Take time to brainstorm examples of each protected class to ensure they make sense to the students. For instance, what are examples of “National Origin” or “Disabilities?” (Refer to website listed above to see further examples of discrimination as defined by the government.)
3. Next, distribute the “Housing Scenarios” worksheet. Divide the class up into groups and assign

each group one scenario. For their scenario, ask them to answer the following questions and be ready to share their responses:

- *Summarize the issue at hand*
 - *Which protected class(es) are part of this scenario?*
 - *Is this a violation of the Fair Housing Act? If so, why? If not, why not?**
(*Each scenario is, in fact, a violation of the Act.)
 - *What actions should the people in the scenario take?*
4. Have students report about their examples. Discuss questions as they arise.

Assessment:

Choose from the potential options below:

- Create another example similar to the ones presented on the “Housing Scenarios” worksheet. Have students individually answer the same questions as they did with a group in order to show their understanding about the law.
- For additional examples of housing discrimination, please see page 4 of the Supplement.
- For information on recent fair housing cases, visit these websites:
www.hud.gov/fairhousing
www.nationalfairhousing.org
www.justice.gov/crt/housing/fairhousing/.

With your group, read your assigned scenario and answer the following questions:

- 1) What is happening in this scenario?
- 2) Which protected class(es) are part of this scenario?
- 3) Is this a violation of the Fair Housing Act? If so, why? If not, why not?
- 4) What actions should the people in the scenario take?

Scenario #1: Consuelo and Mitchell are looking for an apartment in the city. Consuelo calls a landlord regarding a recent ad for an apartment to rent. Upon hearing Consuelo's accent, the landlord tells her the apartment has been rented. The next day, Mitchell calls the landlord, not realizing his wife had called the day before. Not hearing an accent, the landlord tells Mitchell that he can come later that afternoon to see the apartment, as it is still available.

Scenario #2: Catherine just received a promotion. She is excited to rent a bigger apartment for her and her three children. She calls the landlord regarding an apartment for rent in a new complex. The landlord asks her, "Who will be renting?" Catherine replies that it will be her and her three children, ages 2, 6, and 11. The landlord replies, "The apartment has steep stairs that are too dangerous for children. I am sorry, but I cannot rent this apartment to you."

Scenario #3: Scenic Springs is a beautiful neighborhood. It is a community of white families and many families have lived there for generations. A non-white family, the Millers, looks at a home they can definitely afford in Scenic Springs that was recently put on the market. It's their dream house with a large backyard where their three young children would be able to play. The real estate agent showing the house informs the Millers that they would probably feel more comfortable in a different neighborhood on the other side of town and gives them a list of houses for sale there.

Scenario #4: Roberto and Maria are very excited about a new apartment that they are interested in renting. Their son, Jorge, has Autism and is in need of a place with more space for his homeschooling and physical therapy. The landlord, upon meeting the family, says that she can rent them the apartment but they will need to take out an extra insurance policy to cover any damages that may be caused by their son. They will also need to give a larger security deposit than other renters. Roberto and Maria do not think this is right, but they agree to it because they need the apartment.

Scenario #5: NhuHan wants to buy a condominium. She visits a lender to find out how much mortgage she can afford. The loan officer asks NhuHan if she will be married soon so her husband can help her make the payments. NhuHan says she is going to buy the condo by herself. The lender suggests that since she will be buying it without a husband, she should not spend more than \$130,000.

