



YALE NATIONAL INITIATIVE

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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative
2023 Volume IV: Environmental Justice

Environmental Injustice in Chicago's Southwest Side: Pollution, Past and Present

Guide for Curriculum Unit 23.04.03, published September 2023
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This five-week science curriculum unit is designed for 8th grade students and explores the connection between the practice of redlining by the federally funded Home Owners' Loan Corporation (HOLC) during the 1930s and its direct effect on air pollution more than 80 years later. Students will use the Not Even Past: Social Vulnerability and the Legacy of Redlining site to compare redlining maps of the 1930s to contemporary maps of the Center for Disease Control's Social Vulnerability Index. Students will then use the EPA's EJScreen: Environmental Justice and Screening Mapping Tool to gather and compare data, such as particulate matter 2.5, asthma, and life expectancy of two Chicago neighborhoods, Back of the Yards and Little Village. Throughout the unit, students will learn about several environmental studies, grassroots efforts, and their influence on the environmental justice movement. This unit addresses the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) and the International Baccalaureate's key concepts, related concepts, and global contexts.

(Developed for Science, grade 8; recommended for Science and Social Studies, grades 7-10)

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