



## **Present, Past, and Future: Using a Consumer Lens to Help Students Envision a Future**

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### **Introduction**

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#### **Pull and Push Factors**

The pull factor that drew me to this specific seminar and this unit topic is what brings me to nearly everything I teach: the places where my students' experiences and interests interact with the curricular content. I came across one such place when listening to a panel discussion for the "Race Out Loud" series on our local National Public Radio station, WBEZ, about the pernicious segregation that exists, often unchallenged, as a reality in our city and what can be done to address the issues of race, poverty, and distance in Chicago. After the panelists' comments were finished, it was time for questions, and a young person from the audience stepped to the microphone and nervously asked: "How can we get more white people to move into our neighborhood so that it will improve?"<sup>1</sup> The silence that followed was noticeable on the other end of the radio, and I assumed that the panelists were working their way through the complexity of the question—not the least of all the myriad assumptions that this young woman must have held for her notion to be true? I wondered about the possibility of creating a curricular experience that would enable students like her, my students, to challenge these assumptions and to redefine the story of a neighborhood to develop the agency to work for change themselves. I am pulled to try to create that unit for us.

The push factors that inspired the specific ideas that make up this unit came from the amazing conversations in seminar, in lunchtime discussions about the commonalities in topics across seminars, and in nightly collaboration in the common areas of the residence hall at Yale. A consistent through-line in our seminar has been the notion of access or lack of access in finding the consumer goods one wants and/or needs within their community and the currency or feelings of legitimacy (both monetary and social) that one brings to the moment of exchange. The seminar experience pushed me to think critically about using the very lens that I will ask my students to use when evaluating the sources and data that we find through our research; it was a great reminder of the importance of living the experience we are asking our students to live.

These push and pull factors are representative of the reflective teaching that is celebrated at the Yale Teacher Institute. Units are not archival documents to be pulled out, dusted off and used again just as they were written. They are living documents that are revisited and refined based on new faces and new understandings. This unit, written for a Human Geography class, is an examination of our neighborhood and the ideas for

asset-based development that come from it can be used each succeeding year to create a layered model of how social studies can work for social change.

In this unit, we will explore the concept of consumer culture through three main foci: housing, retail/services, and education. By using these topics to explore the changes to the our local neighborhood, students will begin to see the root causes of the issues they experience every day. The consumer lens allows us to back away from the initial perceptions of the neighborhood and then to return to those perceptions with a more nuanced understanding.

## **Objectives-What content? What skills?**

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### **Geographic Content**

The objectives for this unit are guided by the content requirements of College Board's Advanced Placement Human Geography guidelines (as influenced by the National Geography Standards) and the skill requirements of the Common Core State Standards. The Advanced Placement course connections to this unit span multiple chapters of the text, including (but not limited to) population, migration, culture, ethnicity, urban patterns, and services. Issues of Chicago's growing and shrinking overall population, juxtaposed with the history of both European and African American migration to the city, play a key role in the narrative of the local neighborhood we will examine. Urban issues connect culture and ethnicity/race to the battles over housing (racial covenants, redlining, blockbusting, etc), education (de facto segregation), and consumer services (access), all of which are included in the AP curriculum and will guide the content objectives for this unit.

### **Common Core Skills**

The content is the medium through which students will develop critical skills of inquiry, analysis, and finally, the organization and synthesis of ideas into a final research project. While the entire, year-long curriculum will address nearly every Common Core Standard multiple times, this unit's main focus will be on identifying "the extent to which the reasoning and evidence in a text support the author's claims" and researching "to build and present knowledge." <sup>2</sup> (See appendix for a more detailed explanation of content and skill objectives)

## **Rationale-Why this content? Why these skills? Why now?**

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### **Distance Decay**

My unit will examine the consumer history and geography of the Englewood neighborhood where our school is located (much more on this in the section labeled "background"). My hope is to build on my students' prior knowledge about their own consumer identity and understanding of the city's history in order to help to extend this knowledge to examine the narrative of Englewood through the lens of consumer culture and using the tools and vocabulary of geography. There is great value in generating local- inquiry projects that increase student engagement through relevancy. The further we extend beyond the local, the more we have to work to find thematic connections to fight the decay of engagement due to distance. I have chosen to start with the

local for that purpose.

## **Relative Location**

This unit is situated at the beginning of our yearlong Human Geography laboratory course. It is meant to tap into the prior knowledge that students bring with them about their own consumer selves, the history of Chicago, and the lenses through which they see the neighborhood of Englewood. The students entering the lab course are a mixture of freshmen or seniors who all bring various experiences to our discussions. A science laboratory is guided by the inquiry process and driven by hypotheses, experiment, and conclusion. While not widely used in the humanities, there are many examples within the discipline that show how to model the laboratory format. <sup>3</sup>

## **Background**

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Cognitive scientists have consistently argued that building from student knowledge and student interest and having students practice the work of those in the discipline are the best ways to help information they are learning move from discovery and knowledge that can be applied in new situations. My unit begins with the place that is perhaps closest to all of us (though not always), the home. What is the meaning of a home and what do people look for when buying homes? Why has the battle over housing in Chicago been so contentious? What did "home" mean for African-Americans seeking to move out of their overcrowded neighborhood and what did "home" mean to the whites who fought desperately, and for so long, to maintain the neighborhoods they knew? From homes to the neighborhoods in which they exist, we will examine the history of changes to the economic anchors of the community: the retail stores and services available. What role do these economic anchors play in creating and sustaining communities? Who should own the stores? Is the price of goods more important than local ownership? Finally, we will return to their more direct experience by evaluating what role education plays in creating and sustaining community. What is the responsibility of a school to its community? What does a quality school look like?

The following sections are organized according to the sequence in which I plan to teach them. We will start with a mini-research project on the present day issues in the Englewood neighborhood. From there we will explore how the neighborhood developed. Finally, we will look at how the present story and past context can help us to think about a future for the neighborhood.

## **Present**

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Present-day Englewood has two dominant story lines. The first is the story that is told through the media. It measures Englewood by its murder and unemployment rate, which are both quite high. It relishes breaking news and offers very little in substance beyond the headline. This first story also, unfortunately, shapes the way most Chicagoans view the community and limits the ability of those working for change to shape the dialogue. The second story of Englewood comes from the people who live there and commute there every day for work. This story adds layers to the oversimplified media version. It is a neighborhood of families and block

clubs who see the violence first hand but who do not see it as an inevitability. It is a group of people fighting for change from within.

## **Past Part One: Housing Equity and Diversity**

### *Landscape*

Unfortunately, the struggle for equitable — quality housing— in Chicago is a story that has been largely forgotten in today's telling of the Second City's narrative. I want my students to examine the consumer symbolism behind home ownership by looking at real estate advertisements from today and comparing them with ads from the 1950s and 1960s, when the push for suburban living was at its peak. Home ownership has been the quintessential mark of middle-class respectability. In this part of the unit, we will look at the price differences between homes sold to whites and homes sold to Blacks in Chicago and at how the badge of home ownership, and the resource of home equity was made more difficult for Blacks to acquire. We will also examine the search by African Americans for quality housing outside of the institutionally-created ghetto of Chicago's Black Belt.

As Blacks were able to afford homes (despite the price increases) further outside their historical neighborhoods, efforts to exclude them grew increasingly aggressive, beginning with the creation and expansion of restrictive covenants written into house deeds. <sup>4</sup> According to Wendy Plotkin, "in 1939, Chicago Housing Authority vice-chairman Robert Taylor estimated that 80 percent of Chicago's land area was covered by racial restrictive covenants," but this number was challenged by people on both side, and others estimated the number to be closer to fifty percent. <sup>5</sup> To many scholars, it wasn't that Blacks believed that ending restrictive covenants would solve all the issues around the fight for quality housing but, as Preston Smith II argues, that "the average black person wanted the *choice* of whether to stay in an all-black setting or move into an integrated neighborhood." <sup>6</sup> Legal covenants were not the only tactics used. More radical segregationists resorted to violence in response to black families moving into all-white neighborhoods. Beryl Satter's *Family Properties* points out that "between July 1917 and March 1921, there were fifty-eight recorded bombings of properties rented or purchased by Blacks in white Chicago neighborhoods." <sup>7</sup>

While restrictive covenants were ruled illegal by the Supreme Court in 1948, Chicago's housing segregation continued even through the selected enforcement of the Servicemen's Readjustment Act (G.I. Bill) that offered soldiers returning from World War II guaranteed home loans and reduced mortgages. <sup>8</sup> The selective part was due to the process called "redlining" whereby mortgage companies drew lines on maps of neighborhoods identifying them as a risky investment and thereby lowering the home values and contributing to the further decline of the neighborhood. At the same time, middle-class whites were using the G.I. Bill's benefits to move to the quiet, tree lined streets of the newly built suburbs.

The mass construction of the Interstate Highway System in the 1950s and 1960s enabled white consumers to buy into the television advertisements of the suburban American dream of living in the suburbs. The Dan Ryan Expressway further drove a wedge into the blighted areas on the edges of Bronzeville and Englewood, forcing ousted residents to move into one of the two communities. The easy access to the city via automobiles, along with low mortgage rates, motivated many whites to escape the changing dynamic of their city neighborhoods and head to the suburbs.

Real estate agents played on the fears of these changes and used them to persuade remaining whites to sell quickly at a loss in order to get out before the neighborhood lost its value due to the increasing numbers of

African American residents. The agent would then turn around and sell the home at an above-market price to African Americans seeking better housing. This process, known as blockbusting, was further aided by the riots that broke out on 63rd street (and in the hallways of my school) in April 1968, upon hearing the news of the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. From that point on, Englewood changed quickly and efforts to revive it, most specifically in the late 1960s and early 1970s push for "urban renewal," failed for myriad reasons.

Today Englewood has been hit hard by foreclosures. Englewood, West Englewood, and one other neighborhood make up 20% of Chicago's foreclosures and it has one of "the highest concentration of vacant homes in the city." <sup>9</sup> The story my students know is largely that of a failed neighborhood. I wonder if my students, like the young woman who silenced the panel, connect that failure to the coloration of the neighborhood and do not know the larger historical events (the personal and institutional racism) that shaped the story of Englewood and the ability of individuals of all ages to affect change.

In this portion of the unit, I want my students to see what institutional choices and personal actions helped to create the housing problems that they walk past every day on their way to school (vacant lots and boarded up homes) and that other human institutional choices and personal actions can be made to help revive it.

### *Lingua Franca* <sup>10</sup>

Students will need to know the terms "mortgage," "restrictive covenant," "segregation," "redlining," "blockbusting," and "gentrification" to better understand this section of the unit. Rather than wholly demonizing one side in this historical moment, it might be more useful to help students see that both perspectives represent consumer dreams and fears. While middle-class Blacks were seeking better housing outside the overcrowded and often dangerous Black Belt, white middle-class families (often second or third generation immigrant) saw their homes as representing the equity that would pay for their children to move into a higher class and/or that would pay for their future retirement. Racial assumptions are central to this discussion but understanding the underlying consumer fears at work is an important layer in this complex story.

## **Past Part Two: Consumer Chicago-Englewood and the Black Belt**

### *Landscape*

Englewood began as a sleepy streetcar suburb and home to many of the middle managers of the meatpacking industry to its north. One recent *Chicago Tribune* article states that, "the commercial spine that began to develop along Halsted Street around Sixty-third in the 1880s had become a complete shopping district within a few decades, serving the many thousands of middle-class and prosperous working-class households that were moving to the South side...." <sup>11</sup> As the city grew and expanded, Englewood became the home to many second-generation immigrants from Ireland, Germany, and Sweden who filled their bungalows with the goods from locally owned shops catering to the needs of the neighborhood. By the 1930s, Englewood's business district was the second largest retail area in Chicago outside the Loop. The peak of consumer Englewood was the construction of a flagship Sears department store at the corner of 63rd Street and Halsted Avenue. As one article describes it, the "site and the configuration of the Englewood building suggested a large downtown store." <sup>12</sup> The neighborhood continued to thrive through the 1940s, but after World War II conflict over housing spilled over from neighboring communities, particularly the area to the East known as the "Black Belt."

The Black Belt was the area of Chicago that housed the massive "Great Migration" of African-Americans between 1900 and 1950. Its other name, Bronzeville, is known today as the hearth of Chicago's Black culture. The most famous street in the Black Belt was known as "The Stroll" and included very prominent black-owned business from law offices and banks to the quasi-legal and illegal cabarets. It was here that some of Chicago's Blacks made their fortunes. As the Black Belt tightened with the pressure of continuous in-migration, many middle- and upper-class African-Americans began to seek homes outside the overcrowded South Side. Like the immigrants who moved to Englewood before them, they were looking for a safer place to live and for better schools for their children. However, they found the only options available to them were often at the edges just beyond the Belt's border and at prices far higher than their market value.

As Blacks moved in to the neighborhood, they often met fierce resistance and the white residents' assumptions that housing values were at risk due to their presence in the community. As white residents fled to communities like Beverly or to the suburbs, businesses began to close their doors as well. The blight that resulted from the transition led to a dramatic attempt in the late 1960s to convert the former consumer haven into a pedestrian mall. While temporarily boosting the area's lagging sales, the lure of the nearby suburban malls proved too much competition and Englewood began its steep decline by the mid 1970s and early 1980s.

Today, according to census records, there are roughly 300 businesses in Englewood compared to between 1,800 and 2,000 in more prosperous neighborhoods. Around 20% of the residents are unemployed and well over 40% live below the poverty line. <sup>13</sup> With such weak purchasing power, many residents cannot even find grocery stores within a reasonable distance of their homes.. Yet Englewood was recently used for a Derrick Rose Adidas commercial in order to highlight connections between his roots in the ghetto neighborhood and his rise to the NBA's most valuable player in 2011.

In this first part of the unit, I want students to see both the commercial viability of an all-black neighborhood like Bronzeville as well as the former status of the Englewood business community. By helping them challenge their notions that successful communities must have white residents and their notions that Englewood has *always* been an impoverished neighborhood, I hope to help them see that changing the narrative has the power to help them believe that change can happen.

### *Lingua Franca*

It took me an embarrassingly long time to learn from the elementary and middle school teachers I know the value of preparing students for the vocabulary prior to the density of the lesson. This category is in each of the next two sections and is meant to guide the teacher in thinking about and preparing students for the vocabulary they will need to apply correctly to practice their geographic knowledge. Students will need some exposure to the following words to better understand the information presented in texts about Englewood: "streetcar suburb," "middle manager," "business district," "anchor store," "range," "threshold," "gravity model," "immigrant/migrant," "hearth," "blight," "purchasing power," and "development."

## **Past Part Three: Education Equity and Diversity**

### *Landscape*

Education was one of the principal motivations driving African Americans to move to Englewood and was largely responsible for the resistance that white residents gave to changes in their community. The desire to give our children the best education to help them succeed is a significant part of the oft-referenced American Dream. It drives those advocating for an expansion of school choice as well as the Dream Act activists seeking

the opportunity of a quality education. Chicago, during the bitter Civil Rights battles raging in the South, prided itself on a system of neighborhood schools that did not discriminate on the basis of color. Yet, as students will learn in Part One of the unit, neighborhoods were fiercely segregated and that, in turn, led to a segregated school system.

My high school, Lindblom, was at the heart of the school battles of the 1960s. It served as a neighborhood high school for much of its history and then in 1965 changed to a "technical" high school that selected students based on test scores. This transition to technical occurred because the original South side technical high school, Tilden, had become surrounded by an all-Black neighborhood. In order to restore the technical high school to a white neighborhood, the board of education selected the neighborhood of West Englewood which in 1965 was over 80% white.<sup>14</sup> Savvy middle-class black parents understood that "technical" meant better quality and completed the necessary steps to get their children into Lindblom. As with the earlier history of housing resistance, efforts were made to limit the acceptances of black students into Lindblom. One *Chicago Tribune* headline from the era announced: "10 Blacks Denied Entrance to Lindblom."<sup>15</sup> Yet, pressures by black organizations and the growing awareness of civil rights issues in the North increased black population at Lindblom and eventuated in a majority black freshman class by 1968. Again, efforts were made to redline education by returning Lindblom to a neighborhood school. Englewood remained majority white, barely) but, when those efforts failed at nearly the same time as the riots that broke out as a result of the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., the neighborhood of West Englewood followed the path of the adjacent Englewood neighborhood and quickly turned from nearly all-white to all-black by the mid-1970s.

Neighborhood high schools had been in rapid decline, but Lindblom remained a school of choice for many Blacks on the South side. Yet, the early mayoral reform efforts of the Daley-Duncan team (Mayor Richard J. Daley and, current Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan) threatened to close Lindblom in 1995. However, community, parent, and alumni resistance thwarted that initial attack. Decreased enrollment and test scores helped the school administration eventually close the school in 2000 as part of the Renaissance 2010 initiative. Lindblom reopened in 2005 as a selective enrollment high school serving students from all over the city. Meanwhile, other neighborhood schools, namely Harper and Englewood High Schools, continued a steep decline, eventually facing the same fate as Lindblom. Harper High School is a "turn-around" school that fired its entire staff in order to start over, and Englewood High School became home to two charter schools: the nationally known all-boys Urban Prep Charter School and TEAM Englewood Charter School. Both are housed in the same building.

As students in a selective enrollment school, most of my students have parents who advocate for them and communities of support to help them succeed. I hope this part of the unit will help them see education as a consumer civil right for all students in Chicago and see Englewood as ground zero for these battles over quality education.

### *Lingua Franca*

I am positioning education in the consumer world of shopping and home ownership. There are some problems with this approach as the people who lived the experience did not see the desire for quality education as a consumer product. I suggest making sure that students understand that the conceptual shift to pre-collegiate education as a consumer product to be shopped for and selected is a relatively new phenomenon. That said, I still think it is useful to place education and schooling within the conversation over access to retail and home ownership since they are so intertwined in the story of Englewood's past and present. To better understand the content in this unit, it would be useful if students knew the basics of the court cases *Plessy v. Ferguson*

and *Brown v. Board of Education*.

## **Future: It Takes a Garden to Build a Community**

### *Built Environment*

Part Four of this unit is the creation of the product (website) that brings their learning to life for a real-world audience. Each of the three previous sections build up to the final part of the unit. This portion asks students to find ways to rebuild consumer Englewood in the three ways discussed: shopping, housing, and education. Students will work on the areas that they find most interesting in order to reach out to community organizations and research programs implemented elsewhere to help revive struggling communities.

This section will be guided by the metaphor of the community garden. For a garden to grow, certain resources are required. First, a successful community needs good soil. Good soil is rich in nutrients and helps support the growth from seed to flower. The good soil represents what we focused on in parts one through three. Quality mixed-income housing, anchor stores that can weather economic storms, and quality schools. Part four will talk about other aspects necessary to create a flowering community. Water, a vital part of growth requires a balance between too much water and too little. I am reminded here of the importance of smart, purposeful, community-driven development. Students will research what development has already happened in Englewood along with what examples from other neighborhoods and cities might be useful to replicate. Plants cannot grow without sunlight. For Englewood, sunlight means a source of positive media to help change its reputation across the city. Such exposure would help to promote economic growth and encourage immigration that would strengthen the community. Finally, no garden can long survive competition from pernicious weeds. It would be easy here to make the "bad seed" argument, but true community sees its members as part of the solution. Weeding here can mean the effort of the people to be responsible for maintaining the community.

## **Summative Assessment-How will I know my students achieved the content and skill objectives?**

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### **End Point**

Education philosopher John Dewey believed, "Education is a process of living and not a preparation for future living." <sup>16</sup> This perspective demands that the products of learning are relevant and authentic for the students present lives. This unit is a four-part, year-long curriculum guided by the macro-objective of understanding the story of consumer Englewood's past in order to help re-imagine its future. It will have formal, formative assessments that will measure the preconceptions, mid-conceptions, and post-conceptions of their beliefs and understanding of the neighborhood but will conclude with a larger summative assessment that asks them to apply their learning to a new situation; in this case, to think about solutions to help design a neighborhood that serves the residents.

Working with a Chicago-based organization called Mikva Challenge <sup>17</sup>, my students will use parts one through three to build a historical frame through which to see present-day Englewood. From this new understanding, I hope to create projects that help existing community organizations to further promote their efforts to



revitalize the neighborhood's residential, commercial, and educational centers from within. <sup>18</sup> This final product will be a team-created website that synthesizes the information from parts one through three into a well-organized and coherent argument about the possible future of Englewood and defending it with information from its past and present. (See appendix for suggestions on teaching students how to make quality websites in content and design)

## Seeing Through a Critical Consumer Lens

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Critical reading is at the heart of helping students put ideas and arguments they come across in their lives into a larger perspective. This unit asks students to view the sources we examine through a consumer lens. This is no easy task and requires some careful scaffolding. Asking students to view the world through an objective consumer lens is like what economist Tomas Sedlacek says about asking an economist about the difference between price and value: "These questions are like asking a fish 'What is water?' A fish is so surrounded by it that it doesn't even realize what water is." <sup>19</sup> To read critically one must separate oneself from the content and identify unexamined assumptions.

Consistent critical questioning might be the best way to help students approach a source. For example, when evaluating a retail map of Englewood, students might answer questions like: What resources are available for purchase in the neighborhood? What resources are not available in the neighborhood? Who owns the retail establishments in Englewood? Additionally, when looking at a graph of the change in median income over time in Englewood, students might ask what is the relationship between median income and access to resources? Finally, students examining interview transcripts, might ask what is the relationship between resident perspectives and our assumptions about access to resources in the neighborhood?

I plan to begin with the imaginary. A house, neighborhood, and school that only exists as the students ideal. Not only will this add to my prior understanding of student knowledge and beliefs, but it will also help them connect, after questioning, to their own consumer assumptions. (More on this in the section labeled "Activities")

## Learning Activities and Strategies

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### *Part One: Present*

I will be using multiple articles, videos, blogs, etc. about present-day Englewood. Students will choose one issue they believe is the biggest issue facing the community and write a speech bringing attention to the issue and calling for action to solve it. As a guide for this part, I will use the Mikva Challenge "Project Soapbox" curricular resources. <sup>20</sup> The purpose of this is to help students become familiar with the current issues facing the neighborhood to build interest and relevance in exploring its past.

### *Cognitive mapping exercises* <sup>21</sup>

Students will begin by describing their dream home. Identifying what it looks like, what is in it, etc. Throughout I will push them to respond to questions about objects and aesthetic. From the description of the home, we will move to a description of the neighborhood where their dream home is located. Again, through their description, students will identify how the neighborhood is organized, who lives there, what kind of atmosphere is present in the neighborhood, etc. Finally, students will examine the schools that exist in their made up neighborhood. What are the schools like? Who attends the schools? What is their relationship, if any, to the community?

From these descriptions, students will create a map of their "dream neighborhood" complete with houses, stores and other services, transportation, schools, etc. This image will serve as the foundation for our examination of the personal and institutional choices that went into story of Englewood.

#### *Measuring Preconception (butcher block PreMidPost hung in classroom)*

This activity will enable me to understand the preconceptions that students have about the neighborhood. Following the KWL format and using massive butcher block paper, students will begin to name their perceptions about Englewood and their understandings of how it became the neighborhood they believe it to be.

### **Part Two: Past**

Each lesson in this section of the unit will begin with an inquiry warm-up, followed by an interactive mini-lecture and ending with a mapping exercise to apply some of the lesson to the present issues already discussed.

#### *Inquiry Challenges*

These challenges are meant to gain students' interest as they walk into class but also to connect directly to the topic for the day's lesson. I usually vary the challenges using images, maps, graphs, text, music, etc. that provoke conversation and interpretation. These sources serves as the anchor document for each lesson and are aimed at getting students to generate questions that will be answered through the day's lesson.

#### *Interactive Mini-Lecture*

The name of this activity is very purposeful. I believe that content delivery is often most efficient using lecture but that the lecture must include students through questions and challenges and must be kept to twenty minutes or less. The lecture builds directly from the inquiry challenge and provides a segue to the map exercise to follow.

#### *Map Exercises*

Each of these exercises incorporates old school paper mapping (print outs from the city planning website) and sites such as Google maps, yelp.com, and our state's school report card website. Students will divide into teams using a common system of labeling and take sections of the neighborhood to map. We will put the maps together on the wall to

### **Part Three: Present**

#### *Researching Solutions and Creating the Final Product*

Multiple resources listed in the appendix are useful in approaching this type of project. I have found Twitter a particularly useful place to start by getting students connected with geographers, urban planners, and neighborhood activists within and beyond our city who can serve as a resource for ideas about how to support the work that is already being done in the neighborhood.

## Differentiation

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### Relief

This unit is ideal for multiple learning styles and differentiated learning. It meets the needs of nearly every learning style and has multiple entry points for students with a range of abilities. For example, visual learners can analyze maps, graphs, and photos while linguistic learners will find their home in the primary and secondary sources that we will examine during each mini-lecture. Students will often work interpersonally on creating maps and analyzing their findings, but will also be asked to reflect on their own learning and changing perspectives. The mapping and graphing of data will speak to the mathematical students as well as the bodily-kinesthetic learners who need to be "doing" the work of map making and community walks.

This broad approach to the content also opens the way for students of various ability levels to find entry points to the material and contribute to the class from positions of confidence. The final product, a website, allows for the structure of a common outcome but can be approached from many content and technical directions.

## Appendix

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Advanced Placement Human Geography Content and Skill Standards from the College Board

### *Human Geography Skills*

1. Use and think about spatial data: "The goal is achieved when students learn to use maps and spatial data to pose and solve problems, and when they learn to think critically about what is revealed and what is hidden in different maps and spatial arrays."
2. Understand and Interpret Implications of Associations Among Phenomena in Places: "Students should thus learn not just to recognize and interpret patterns, but to assess the nature and significance of the relationships among phenomena that occur in the same place and to understand how tastes and values, political regulations, and economic constraints work together to create particular types of cultural landscapes."
3. Recognize and Interpret at Different Scales Relationships Among Patterns and Processes: "Students should understand that the phenomena they are studying at one scale (e.g., local) may well be influenced by developments at other scales (e.g., regional, national, or global). They should then look at processes operating at multiple scales when seeking explanations of geographic patterns and arrangements."

## Human Geography Content

1. Understand the development and changing nature of services within a community with particular focus on concepts of the central business district, streetcar suburbs, range, threshold, gravity model,
2. Understand the changing structures of urban patterns with particular focus on industrialization, rural-urban migration, segregation, restrictive covenants, redlining, blockbusting, white flight, changing demographics, uneven development, ghettoization, zoning, urban renewal, borders/boundaries, etc.

## Common Core Standards

### Reading

RH.9-10.1. Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information.

RH.9-10.3. Analyze in detail a series of events described in a text; determine whether earlier events caused later ones or simply preceded them.

RH.9-10.6. Compare the point of view of two or more authors for how they treat the same or similar topics, including which details they include and emphasize in their respective accounts.

RH.9-10.7. Integrate quantitative or technical analysis (e.g., charts, research data) with qualitative analysis in print or digital text.

RH.9-10.8. Assess the extent to which the reasoning and evidence in a text support the author's claims.

RH.9-10.9. Compare and contrast treatments of the same topic in several primary and secondary sources.

### Writing

WHST.9-10.7. Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

WHST.9-10.8. Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the usefulness of each source in answering the research question; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.

WHST.9-10.9. Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

WHST.9-10.1. Write arguments focused on *discipline-specific content*.

WHST.9-10.4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

WHST.9-10.5. Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.

WHST.9-10.6. Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products, taking advantage of technology's capacity to link to other information and to display information flexibly and dynamically.

## Approaches to student inquiry projects

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I think all teachers who are guided by inquiry have come to accept the reality that student inquiry projects are messier than teacher-directed learning but that the benefits and depth of understanding that makes its way out of the mess is far greater than what they learn from me presenting all the information. Inquiry, after all is at the heart of real learning. It is driven by questions and speaks directly to the latent detective in all of us.

Elizabeth Chin's ethnographic study of African American consumer culture offers great advice on helping students as young as elementary school to create surveys and do ethnographic work guided by larger questions. In Appendix B of her book, *Purchasing Power: Black Kids and American Consumer Culture*, she writes about her work with the "Children's Oral History Project" and states: "the children did a better job conducting this research than I ever could have. Their point of view and insight as children and as members of the community we were researching gave them countless advantages over me—as an outsider..."<sup>22</sup> (p. 214) Chin had students collaborate with adults in the creation, implementation, and analysis of surveys. They created their own graphs from the data they collected and analyzed the data in text as well as reflecting on the whole process.

It is useful to also look at prior local history projects by students to get ideas for how to organize and scaffold student learning and for samples of student products. Some of the best sources can be found on the History Matters website, the Local History Project from the iLearn Collaborative Centre, and University of Massachusetts' Local History Online.<sup>23</sup>

## Guide to Helping Students Create Project Websites

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I have come to really enjoy having students create websites as a cumulative assessment for projects for a variety of reasons. First, the act of creating something that they see every day makes them more critical consumers of that medium. While working on her website, one student suddenly realized, "Ms. Myers...anyone can make a website!" The fact that we as educators might take that understanding for granted is a danger. Second, quality websites allow for students to truly consider how to organize text and support that text with images or audio and/or video in the same way they would for a paper but in an interactive way. Finally, a website is meant for a larger audience and the creation of a product whose audience is not limited to the class and its teacher allows for a higher level of engagement and motivation.

I do, however, have some advice for first-time teachers helping students make websites. Students will need some time to work out their fascination with the template choices, color choices, fonts, multimedia options, etc. I recommend giving them time toward the end of the period to learn the basics of the web program in a way that does not require addition of academic content. I often have students complete a series of steps to

show that they know how to do basic operations (create text, create a new page, upload an image and a video, create a hyperlink, etc.), all while creating the "About Me" page of their website. This is also a great opportunity to discuss with students the realities of their digital footprints and make suggestions about how to identify themselves by only their first names and not give too much information that others might be able to use. I feel strongly about our role as educators in helping students navigate their web presence rather than banning it at school and assuming they will learn what they need to learn either at home or on their own.

After this first introduction to web design, I often return to the art of writing a great paragraph. We leave the computer behind and focus our attention on the arguments our research has uncovered and how to best convey those arguments in small chunk paragraphs. If I have time, I like to have students write a paper prior to transferring the argument to a website. This allows them to stay focused on their arguments and the evidence and analysis that supports their argument and not get distracted, once again, by the bells and whistles of templates and multimedia. I also like to use paper versions of the web templates that students can use to understand how their paragraphs fit into a coherent organizational system on the web.

After all this, we get back on the computers where students begin to transfer their edited and organized work into a website. This provides yet another opportunity to discuss the choices students made about pages and navigation choices to both keep their reader engaged and help them to understand the argument being presented. This is also the moment to ask students what visuals would best advance the argument of an individual page and how to cite Creative Commons images and create captions that help the reader see the connection between text and image (this applies to video as well). I also have students think about hyperlinks and the fine balance between too many that prove a distraction and take readers away from the page and too few that limit the interactivity and possibilities presented in the website format. Students often seek out examples of this on other websites that I suggest. Here, students are evaluating text and websites in a way that is directly practical to the skill they are learning.

My final step in the process of creating a website is peer and parent review. We create a rubric together based on what we have learned about making websites and use that rubric to evaluate and make final suggestions to the web designer groups.

My favorite web design sites are weebly.com (used for National History Day website competition), sites.google.com, and wix.com. They all include videos to help you and your students understand how to create a website and they all offer tech support to answer questions that come up. This is by no means a comprehensive list and other options might better serve your needs.

## **How to do this use this unit with information from your own city?**

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One of the best parts of writing this unit has been the joy of learning about the local history of Englewood. While you could obviously teach this lesson and use the history I have gathered as your content, I strongly urge that you take the time either in preparation for the unit or with students as a team research project to look at the local story. I do have some suggestions to help find the most useful data. My first suggestion is relatively obvious but perhaps bears stating: make friends with the reference librarian at your local library. He or she will be your best resource to finding the sources that help students begin to shape the story of your city or neighborhood from multiple perspectives. The sources I have used for this unit is our city's historic

encyclopedia, archives from the local papers, census data, and graphs/maps from secondary sources written about Chicago. All of these sources are available to you to a greater or lesser extent depending on the size of your city.

## Annotated Bibliography

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This book is a great analysis of the consumer culture of Chicago's African American community. It was particularly useful in my interactive lecture and source selection for our discussion of "The Stroll."

Danns, Dionne. *Something Better for Our Children: Black Organizing in Chicago Public Schools, 1963-1971*. New York: Routledge, 2003.

This book offers a great resource on the battle between the policies of CPS and the Freedom Movement in Chicago. Englewood High School plays a prominent role in the text.

*Encyclopedia of Chicago*. The Electronic Encyclopedia of Chicago Â© 2005 Chicago Historical Society. The Encyclopedia of Chicago Â© 2004 The Newberry Library.

This is an invaluable resource for every Social Studies teacher in Chicago (and beyond) and I will use multiple entries in class to provide concise, well-written background information and primary sources.

Gersmehl, Phil. *Teaching Human Geography*. New York: Guilford Press, 2008.

This book is an amazing resource for Human Geography teachers. It offers wonderful advice on organizing your class to connect the theoretical to the practical.

Hirsh, Arnold. *Making of the Second Ghetto: Race and Housing in Chicago, 1940-1960*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983.

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Lemann, Nicholas. *The Promised Land: The Great Black Migration and how it Changed America*. New York: Vintage, 1991.

I plan to use multiple excerpts of this text to show the growth of Chicago's Black community and the battle for housing and education.

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This article is useful to explain why Sears and other major department stores built stores away from downtown in the Englewood neighborhood.

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I used this article with *Family Properties* to help guide my interactive lecture and source selection for the lesson on housing in Englewood.

Satter, Beryl. *Family Properties: Race, Real Estate, and the Exploitation of Black Urban America*.

I used this book along with the Plotkin article to help guide my interactive lecture and source selection for the lesson on housing in Englewood. This book is very useful in explaining the concept of Restrictive Covenants and the fight to make them illegal.

Spear, Allan H. *Black Chicago: The Making of a Negro Ghetto 1890-1920*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967.

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I will use excerpts from this book to help explain the growing tensions within Chicago as the African American population increased during and after World War I.

## Endnotes

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<http://www.wbez.org/blogs/bez/2012-06/race-out-loud-live-bjs-100229>
2. >Common Core Standards  
<http://www.corestandards.org/the-standards/english-language-arts-standards/history-social-studies/grades-9-10/>
3. For various examples of History Labs, copy and paste the following links: <http://www.historylab.org/>,  
<https://sites.google.com/site/thehistorylab/>, <http://hlab.tielab.org/>,  
<http://www.stanford.edu/group/spatialhistory/cgi-bin/site/index.php>,
4. Wendy Plotkin defines such covenants as "Racial restrictive deed restrictions and covenants were legally enforceable provisions of deeds prohibiting owners from selling or leasing their residences to members of specific racial groups." Wendy Plotkin, "'Hemmed In': The Struggle Against Racial Restrictive Covenants and Deed Restrictions in Post-WWII Chicago." *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* (1998-) Vol. 94, No. 1, Race and Housing in Post WWII Chicago (Spring, 2001), p. 39.
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<https://teachers.yale.edu>

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