

# The Ghetto: What's In a Name?

## Overview

### Description

This assignment assesses students' abilities to analyze the interplay between individual environments, the communities produced by these environments, and the opportunities afforded to their inhabitants. Students will examine a poem, a song, and two articles, and then discuss the benefits, drawbacks, causes, and consequences of life in these neighborhoods. They will also explore present-day realities and compare them to the life presented in the reading samples. After individual reflection, followed by a group analysis of the issues, students will write a 3-4 page response paper on their perceptions of ghetto life, including the factors that affect it and the consequences it produces.

### Subject

Social Studies

### Task Level

Grades 9-12

### Objectives

Students will:

- Engage in scholarly analysis and dialogue of different reading samples as they read, annotate, and analyze texts.
- Analyze the interaction between communities and their subsequent environments.
- Speak and listen actively and effectively in a group discussion.
- Examine the critical significance of perspective and how it influences people, their beliefs, and their circumstances.
- Recognize the role of each reading sample in helping people process important societal issues.
- Identify how certain social groups form in response to their geographic circumstances.
- Draw and support complex inferences and analyze and evaluate the author's message as well as classmates' positions during the discussion.
- Practice constructing newly formed conclusions through an analytical essay.

## Preparation

- Read the Instructor Task Information and the Student Notes.
- Prepare student copies of the Student Notes pages and the handouts: *History of the Ghetto*, “Chicago,” “In the Ghetto,” “The Ghetto Made Me Do It,” and “Just Walk on By: A Black Man Ponders His Power to Alter Public Space.”
- Find suitable videos on ghetto history or life in the ghettos to accompany the discussion.
- Review the material provided within the handouts and develop any additional discussion questions as needed.
- Review the basic principles of the formation of ghettos: prejudice, stereotypes, environmental factors, geographic segregation, the pros and cons of community, and conducting an analysis.
- Prepare to model analytical essay construction if needed.

## Prior Knowledge

Students should have had practice in persuasive writing techniques and participating in active classroom discussions. They should also be able to apply appropriate reading strategies to decipher a text's meaning and understand how these same strategies apply to different kinds of readings (songs, poems, and articles). Furthermore, they should understand the basic idea behind time as a factor of change, the effects of prejudice, and the influence of perspective from differing viewpoints.

## Key Concepts and Terms

- Bias
- Cause and consequence
- Community
- Concepts of race
- Conflicting viewpoints
- Environmental benefits and limitations
- Ethnocentrism
- Ghetto
- Multicultural societies
- Prejudice
- Socioeconomic stratification
- Stereotyping

## Time Frame

This assignment will require five one-hour class periods. On Day 1, the instructor will introduce the assignment and distribute the *History of the Ghetto* handout to discuss as a group. Relevant videos on the creation of ghettos or ghetto life (selected by the instructor) should accompany this discussion. The class will then examine the poem “Chicago” as a group to decipher its meaning and its contribution to the ideas of

urbanization and environmental segregation. Students will complete the Reflection Questions individually. On Day 2, students will read the lyrics to *"In the Ghetto"* and explore its intentions and its contributions to the ghetto stereotype. After completing the Reflection Questions individually, they will review relevant aspects of their answers with the group. They will then read the article *"The Ghetto Made Me Do It,"* process it as a group and individually complete the accompanying Reflection Questions outside of class. On Day 3, the class will consider each other's answers and try to identify the differing perspectives for this issue. The instructor should previously identify as many possible ways of viewing the issue (victim, perpetrator, someone who left the ghetto, those still struggling to get out, outsiders, local government, etc.) and ask students to define the beliefs for each viewpoint. The result should be a multidimensional lens on the role of ghettos on an individual's actions. Students should then preview the reading of *"Just Walk on By: A Black Man Ponders His Power to Alter Public Space"* essay, and complete it, along with the Reflection Questions, outside of class. On Day 4, students will discuss the reading, and the instructor will model how to write a response paper. Allow students a week to complete their 3-4 page response papers outside of class. They should question the ideas behind ghettos—their causes, consequences, biases, and realities—and ultimately answer whether the devoted space and resulting community is real, imagined, or somewhere in between. For the final day, instructors should review student responses, guide them through the revision process, and have them finalize their drafts as homework. Readings and reflection questions can be assigned outside of class to save class time or within class if guided reading is necessary. Instructors should adjust the time frame accordingly. This assignment can be modified to meet the needs of different classroom schedules and student ability levels.

## *Instructional Plan*

### **Getting Started**

#### ***Learning Objectives***

Students will:

- Engage in scholarly analysis and dialogue of different reading samples as they read, annotate, and analyze texts.
- Analyze the interaction between communities and their subsequent environments.
- Speak and listen actively and effectively in a group discussion.

#### ***Procedure***

1. Ask students to read through the Student Notes.
2. Introduce the topic and review any necessary background information.
3. Lead students through a discussion of the *History of the Ghetto* handout as a group, making sure they understand how and why ghettos came to be.
4. Show and discuss any relevant videos on the creation of ghettos or ghetto life.

### **Investigating**

#### ***Learning Objectives***

Students will:

- Examine the critical significance of perspective and how it influences people, their beliefs, and their circumstances.
- Recognize the role of each reading sample in helping people process important societal issues.
- Identify how certain social groups form in response to their geographic circumstances.

#### ***Procedure***

1. Walk students through the poem “*Chicago*” as a group. Determine its meaning and its contribution to the ideas of urbanization and environmental segregation.
2. Ask students to complete the Reflection Questions individually.

3. Lead students through the lyrics for “*In the Ghetto*” and explore its intentions and its contributions to the ghetto stereotype.
4. Direct students to complete the Reflection Questions individually.
5. Ask students to share and compare their individual results for both question sets with the group.
6. Have students compare and contrast the two reading samples.
7. Question students about their general understanding of ghettos and the corresponding issues up to this point.

## Drawing Conclusions

### *Learning Objectives*

Students will:

- Draw and support complex inferences and analyze and evaluate the author’s message as well as classmates’ positions during the discussion.
- Practice constructing newly formed conclusions through an analytical essay.

### *Procedure*

1. Lead the students through a reading and discussion of “*The Ghetto Made Me Do It.*” Make sure students understand what the article says and implies before moving on.
2. Direct students to individually complete the Reflection Questions for this article and provide any necessary guidance.
3. Ask students to share their responses. As they do so, ask them to identify as many differing viewpoints as possible.
4. Should they miss any viewpoints, have some ready for the group to define. Name a viewpoint and ask the group to identify the beliefs and biases for that perspective. Examples for differing viewpoints might be: the victim, perpetrator, someone who left the ghetto, those still struggling to get out, outsiders, local government, etc.
5. Construct a varied and multidimensional picture for the issues raised in the reading.
6. Repeat steps 1-5 for the reading the “*Just Walk on By: A Black Man Ponders His Power to Alter Public Space.*”
7. Ask students to convert their views into a 3-4 page response paper for homework that questions the ideas behind ghettos—their causes, consequences, biases, and realities—and ultimately answers whether the

devoted space and resulting community is real, imagined, or somewhere in between.

8. Once they have completed their response, review their work, provide feedback, and walk students through the process of revision of their papers.
9. Ask the students to finalize their drafts as homework.

## *Scaffolding/Instructional Support*

The goal of scaffolding is to provide support to encourage student success, independence, and self-management. Instructors can use these suggestions, in part or all together, to meet diverse student needs. The more skilled the student, however, the less scaffolding that he or she will need. Some examples of scaffolding that could apply to this assignment include:

- Include additional materials that provide deep historical background about ghettos and the term itself. Background topics such as Upton Sinclair's "The Jungle" and the Great Migration of African Americans from the rural south to factory cities of the north, such as Chicago, might be helpful.
- Provide some historical context of how the original ghettos were started and how they have transformed into what they are today.
- View videos clips and photos of ghetto life.
- To reduce the number of reflection questions, assign certain questions and allow the students to choose the others they would answer.
- Reflection questions can be answered as a group rather than individually.
- Find and distribute samples of other viewpoints if the idea of perspective needs to be more concrete.
- Provide specific, guided instruction on issue identification and how to identify viewpoints within a text.
- Check a student's assignment more frequently during its development.
- Permit students to consult with a peer for the individual components.
- Provide exemplar essay samples to students needing extra support. These students should be allowed to use the exemplar samples more heavily than other students in guiding their own writing.

## *Solutions*

The information below is intended to help you assess students' final work products. It may not represent all possible strategies and ideas. The accompanying scoring guide provides specific examples of ways a student might demonstrate content understanding and mastery of cross-disciplinary skills.

### ***Necessary Elements***

- Insightful, complex, and intriguing ideas on the role of viewpoint, environment, community, and the passage of time on an individual's actions, beliefs, and opportunities.
- A complete response on the content ideas for this assignment and how the reading samples add to those ideas.
- Clear and focused main idea with supporting details.
- Logical organization of the written responses.
- Effective and correct use of language.
- Active, productive participation in-group discussions.

### ***Key Connections***

- Clear understanding of the content area.
- Clear understanding of the issues, author's message, and the impact of this message from the different formats (poem, song, or article).
- Understanding of appropriate grammar, structure, and language for the written responses.
- Well-developed essay that engagingly persuades the reader to critically consider a unique perspective or way of viewing the issue under investigation.

### ***Common Misconceptions***

- Just because students know how they feel about an issue does not mean it will be easy for them to identify the feelings or viewpoints of others. Encourage students to have open minds, try and decipher separate points, and truly hear what their peers or the author are saying without immediately reacting.
- The idea of producing an essay does not have to be entirely formal. Students should feel free to explore their perspective and present all angles of the issue without worrying too much about *how* they are writing instead of *what* they are saying. They should still produce a complete and well-checked final draft, but instructors should attempt to strike a balance between thoughtful production and concern for quality.

## TCCRS Cross-Disciplinary Standards Addressed

Performance Expectation	Getting Started	Investigating	Drawing Conclusions
<i>I. Key Cognitive Skills</i>			
A.1. Engage in scholarly inquiry and dialogue.	✓	✓	✓
B.1. Consider arguments and conclusions of self and others.	✓	✓	✓
B.2. Construct well-reasoned arguments to explain phenomena, validate conjectures, or support positions.	✓	✓	✓
E.1. Work independently.		✓	✓
E.2. Work collaboratively.	✓	✓	
F.1. Attribute ideas to source materials and people.			✓
F.2. Evaluate sources for quality of content, validity, credibility, and relevance.	✓	✓	✓
F.3. Include the ideas of others and the complexities of the debate, issue, or problem.		✓	✓
F.4. Understand and adhere to ethical codes of conduct.	✓	✓	✓
<i>II. Foundational Skills</i>			
A.3. Identify the intended purpose and audience of a text.	✓	✓	✓
A.4. Identify the key information and supporting details.	✓	✓	✓
A.5. Analyze textual information critically.	✓	✓	✓
A.6. Annotate, summarize, paraphrase, and outline texts when appropriate.	✓	✓	✓
A.7. Adapt reading strategies according to structure of texts.	✓	✓	✓
A.8. Connect reading to historical and current events and personal interest.	✓	✓	✓
B.1. Write clearly and coherently using standard writing conventions.			✓
B.2. Write in a variety of forms for various audiences and purposes.		✓	✓

C.4. Evaluate the validity and reliability of sources.	✓	✓	✓
C.5. Synthesize and organize information effectively.			✓
C.6. Design and present an effective product.			✓
C.7. Integrate source material.			✓
E.4. Use technology appropriately.			✓

### TCCRS Social Studies Standards Addressed

Performance Expectation	Getting Started	Investigating	Drawing Conclusions
<i>I. Interrelated Disciplines and Skills</i>			
A.2. Analyze the interaction between human communities and the environment.	✓	✓	✓
A.3. Analyze how physical and cultural processes have shaped human communities over time.	✓	✓	✓
A.5. Analyze how various cultural regions have changed over time.	✓	✓	✓
A.6. Analyze the relationship between geography and the development of human communities.	✓	✓	✓
B.2. Identify and evaluate sources and patterns of change and continuity across time and place.	✓	✓	✓
B.3. Analyze causes and effects of major political, economic and social changes in U.S. and world history.	✓	✓	✓
E.1. Identify different social groups and examine how they form and how and why they sustain themselves.	✓	✓	✓
E.2. Define the concept of socialization and analyze the role socialization plays in human development and behavior.	✓	✓	✓
E.4. Identify and evaluate the sources and consequences of social conflict.	✓	✓	✓
<i>II. Diverse Human Perspectives and Experiences</i>			
A.2. Evaluate the experiences and contributions of diverse groups to multicultural societies.	✓	✓	✓
B.1. Explain and evaluate the concepts of race, ethnicity, and nationalism.	✓	✓	✓

B.4. Evaluate how major philosophical and intellectual concepts influence human behavior or identity.	✓	✓	✓
B.6. Analyze how individual and group identities are established and change over time.	✓	✓	✓
<i>III. Interdependence of Global Communities</i>			
A.3. Analyze how and why diverse communities interact and become dependent on each other.	✓	✓	✓
<i>IV. Analysis, Synthesis, and Evaluation of Information</i>			
A.1. Identify and analyze the main idea(s) and point(s)-of-view in sources.	✓	✓	✓
A.2. Situate an informational source in its appropriate contexts.	✓	✓	✓
A.3. Evaluate sources from multiple perspectives.		✓	✓
A.5. Read narrative texts critically.		✓	✓
B.2. Explain how historians and other social scientists develop new and competing views of past phenomena.			✓
<i>V. Effective Communication</i>			
A.2. Use conventions of standard written English.			✓
B.1. Attribute ideas and information to source materials and authors.			✓

## TEKS Standards Addressed

<b><i>The Ghetto: What's in a Name? - Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS): Social Studies, United States History Studies Since 1877</i></b>
113.41.c.3. History. The student understands the political, economic, and social changes in the United States from 1877 to 1898. The student is expected to: 113.41.c.3.B. analyze economic issues such as industrialization, the growth of railroads, the growth of labor unions, farm issues, the cattle industry boom, the rise of entrepreneurship, free enterprise, and the pros and cons of big business; 113.41.c.3.C. analyze social issues affecting women, minorities, children, immigrants, urbanization, the Social Gospel, and philanthropy of industrialists; and 113.41.c.3.D. describe the optimism of the many immigrants who sought a better life in America.
113.41.c.5. History. The student understands the effects of reform and third-party movements in the early 20th century. The student is expected to: 113.41.c.5.A. evaluate the impact of Progressive Era reforms, including initiative, referendum, recall, and the passage of the 16th, 17th, 18th, and 19th amendments.

<p>113.41.c.6. History. The student understands significant events, social issues, and individuals of the 1920s. The student is expected to:</p> <p>113.41.c.6.A. analyze causes and effects of events and social issues such as immigration, Social Darwinism, eugenics, race relations, nativism, the Red Scare, Prohibition, and the changing role of women.</p>
<p>113.41.c.9. History. The student understands the impact of the American civil rights movement. The student is expected to:</p> <p>113.41.c.9.A. trace the historical development of the civil rights movement in the 19th, 20th, and 21st centuries, including the 13th, 14th, 15th, and 19th amendments;</p> <p>113.41.c.9.B. describe the roles of political organizations that promoted civil rights, including ones from African American, Chicano, American Indian, women's, and other civil rights movements;</p> <p>113.41.c.9.D. compare and contrast the approach taken by some civil rights groups such as the Black Panthers with the nonviolent approach of Martin Luther King Jr.;</p> <p>113.41.c.9.F. describe presidential actions and congressional votes to address minority rights in the United States, including desegregation of the armed forces, the Civil Rights acts of 1957 and 1964, and the Voting Rights Act of 1965; and</p> <p>113.41.c.9.H. evaluate changes and events in the United States that have resulted from the civil rights movement, including increased participation of minorities in the political process.</p>
<p>113.41.c.10. History. The student understands the impact of political, economic, and social factors in the U.S. role in the world from the 1970s through 1990. The student is expected to:</p> <p>113.41.c.10.C. compare the impact of energy on the American way of life over time; and</p> <p>113.41.c.10.F. describe significant societal issues of this time period.</p>
<p>113.41.c.11. History. The student understands the emerging political, economic, and social issues of the United States from the 1990s into the 21st century. The student is expected to:</p> <p>113.41.c.11.B. identify significant social and political advocacy organizations, leaders, and issues across the political spectrum;</p> <p>113.41.c.11.E. discuss the historical significance of the 2008 presidential election; and</p> <p>113.41.c.11.F. discuss the solvency of long-term entitlement programs such as Social Security and Medicare.</p>
<p>113.41.c.12. Geography. The student understands the impact of geographic factors on major events. The student is expected to:</p> <p>113.41.c.12. B. identify and explain reasons for changes in political boundaries such as those resulting from statehood and international conflicts.</p>
<p>113.41.c.13. Geography. The student understands the causes and effects of migration and immigration on American society. The student is expected to:</p> <p>113.41.c.13. A. analyze the causes and effects of changing demographic patterns resulting from migration within the United States, including western expansion, rural to urban, the Great Migration, and the Rust Belt to the Sun Belt; and</p> <p>113.41.c.13. B. analyze the causes and effects of changing demographic patterns resulting from legal and illegal immigration to the United States.</p>
<p>113.41.c.14. Geography. The student understands the relationship between population growth and modernization on the physical environment. The student is expected to:</p> <p>113.41.c.14.A. identify the effects of population growth and distribution on the physical environment.</p>
<p>113.41.c.16. Economics. The student understands significant economic developments between World War I and World War II. The student is expected to:</p> <p>113.41.c.16.C. analyze the effects of the Great Depression on the U.S. economy and society</p>

<p>such as widespread unemployment and deportation and repatriation of people of European and Mexican heritage and others; and</p> <p>113.41.c.16.E. describe how various New Deal agencies and programs, including the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, the Securities and Exchange Commission, and the Social Security Administration, continue to affect the lives of U.S. citizens.</p>
<p>113.41.c.17. Economics. The student understands the economic effects of World War II and the Cold War. The student is expected to:</p> <p>113.41.c.17.A. describe the economic effects of World War II on the home front such as the end of the Great Depression, rationing, and increased opportunity for women and minority employment;</p> <p>113.41.c.17.C. describe the economic impact of defense spending on the business cycle and education priorities from 1945 to the 1990s; and</p> <p>113.41.c.17.D. identify actions of government and the private sector such as the Great Society, affirmative action, and Title IX to create economic opportunities for citizens and analyze the unintended consequences of each.</p>
<p>113.41.c.21. Government. The student understands the impact of constitutional issues on American society. The student is expected to:</p> <p>113.41.c.21.B. discuss historical reasons why the constitution has been amended; and</p>
<p>113.41.c.23. Citizenship. The student understands efforts to expand the democratic process. The student is expected to:</p> <p>113.41.c.23.A. identify and analyze methods of expanding the right to participate in the democratic process, including lobbying, non-violent protesting, litigation, and amendments to the U.S. Constitution;</p> <p>113.41.c.23.B. evaluate various means of achieving equality of political rights, including the 19th, 24th, and 26th amendments and congressional acts such as the American Indian Citizenship Act of 1924; and</p> <p>113.41.c.23.C. explain how participation in the democratic process reflects our national ethos, patriotism, and civic responsibility as well as our progress to build a "more perfect union."</p>
<p>113.41.c.26. Culture. The student understands how people from various groups contribute to our national identity. The student is expected to:</p> <p>113.41.c.26.A. explain actions taken by people to expand economic opportunities and political rights, including those for racial, ethnic, and religious minorities as well as women, in American society;</p> <p>113.41.c.26.B. discuss the Americanization movement to assimilate immigrants and American Indians into American culture; and</p> <p>113.41.c.26.C. explain how the contributions of people of various racial, ethnic, gender, and religious groups shape American culture.</p>
<p>113.41.c.27. Science, technology, and society. The student understands the impact of science, technology, and the free enterprise system on the economic development of the United States. The student is expected to:</p> <p>113.41.c.27.A. explain the effects of scientific discoveries and technological innovations such as electric power, telephone and satellite communications, petroleum-based products, steel production, and computers on the economic development of the United States;</p> <p>113.41.c.27.B. explain how specific needs result in scientific discoveries and technological innovations in agriculture, the military, and medicine, including vaccines; and</p> <p>113.41.c.27.C. understand the impact of technological and management innovations and their applications in the workplace and the resulting productivity enhancements for business and labor such as assembly line manufacturing, time-study analysis, robotics, computer management, and just-in-time inventory management.</p>

113.41.c.28. Science, technology, and society. The student understands the influence of scientific discoveries, technological innovations, and the free enterprise system on the standard of living in the United States. The student is expected to:

113.41.c.28.A. analyze how scientific discoveries, technological innovations, and the application of these by the free enterprise system, including those in transportation and communication, improve the standard of living in the United States; and

113.41.c.28.C. understand how the free enterprise system drives technological innovation and its application in the marketplace such as cell phones, inexpensive personal computers, and global positioning products.

113.41.c.29. Social studies skills. The student applies critical-thinking skills to organize and use information acquired from a variety of valid sources, including electronic technology. The student is expected to:

113.41.c.29.A. use a variety of both primary and secondary valid sources to acquire information and to analyze and answer historical questions;

113.41.c.29.B. analyze information by sequencing, categorizing, identifying cause-and-effect relationships, comparing and contrasting, finding the main idea, summarizing, making generalizations, making predictions, drawing inferences, and drawing conclusions;

113.41.c.29.C. understand how historians interpret the past (historiography) and how their interpretations of history may change over time;

113.41.c.29.D. use the process of historical inquiry to research, interpret, and use multiple types of sources of evidence;

113.41.c.29.E. evaluate the validity of a source based on language, corroboration with other sources, and information about the author, including points of view, frames of reference, and historical context;

113.41.c.29.F. identify bias in written, oral, and visual material;

113.41.c.29.G. identify and support with historical evidence a point of view on a social studies issue or event; and

113.41.c.29.H. use appropriate skills to analyze and interpret social studies information such as maps, graphs, presentations, speeches, lectures, and political cartoons.

113.41.c.30. Social studies skills. The student communicates in written, oral, and visual forms. The student is expected to:

113.41.c.30.A. create written, oral, and visual presentations of social studies information;

113.41.c.30.B. use correct social studies terminology to explain historical concepts; and

113.41.c.30.C. use different forms of media to convey information, including written to visual and statistical to written or visual, using available computer software as appropriate.

113.41.c.32. Social studies skills. The student uses problem-solving and decision-making skills, working independently and with others, in a variety of settings. The student is expected to:

113.41.c.32.A. use a problem-solving process to identify a problem, gather information, list and consider options, consider advantages and disadvantages, choose and implement a solution, and evaluate the effectiveness of the solution; and

113.41.c.32.B. use a decision-making process to identify a situation that requires a decision, gather information, identify options, predict consequences, and take action to implement a decision.

# The Ghetto: What's In a Name?

## *Introduction*

LeAlan Jones said, “We live in a second America where the laws of the land don’t apply and the laws of the street do. You must learn our America as we must learn your America, so that maybe, someday, we can be one.” What does this quote mean? How does where one lives affect the divisions between Americans? Is the resulting picture accurate today? How does the result affect the choices of people living in these environments? This assignment gives you the chance to evaluate these and other issues. You will examine multiple readings and decipher their perspectives. Ultimately, you must decide the causes and consequences of these perspectives. Are the results real and/or a result of society’s biases?

## *Directions*

### **Getting Started**

1. Listen as your instructor introduces the topic and reviews any material you might need for this assignment.
2. Participate in a discussion of the *History of the Ghetto* handout.
3. Discuss your answers with your class as directed by your instructor.
4. Watch and give feedback on relevant supporting videos.

### **Investigating**

1. Read and discuss the poem “*Chicago*” as a group.
2. Complete the Reflection Questions individually.
3. Read and discuss the lyrics for “*In the Ghetto*.”
4. Complete the reflection questions individually.
5. Share and compare your results for both question sets with the group.
6. Compare and contrast the two reading samples.
7. Participate in a discussion about your general understanding of ghettos and the corresponding issues up to this point.

### **Drawing Conclusions**

1. Read and discuss “*The Ghetto Made Me Do It*.”
2. Individually complete the reflection questions for this article.

3. Share your responses, identifying as many differing viewpoints as possible as you discuss your results.
4. Continue to identify differing viewpoints with the group and discuss the beliefs and biases of each perspective. Construct a varied and multidimensional picture for the issues raised in the reading.
5. Repeat steps 1-4 for the reading "*Just Walk on By: A Black Man Ponders His Power to Alter Public Space.*"
6. Convert your views into a 3-4 page response paper for homework that questions the ideas behind ghettos—their causes, consequences, biases, and realities—and ultimately answers whether the devoted space and resulting community is real, imagined, or somewhere in-between.
7. Bring your completed response with you to class.
8. Review your work with your instructor, paying careful attention to revision and content suggestions.
9. Finalize your drafts as homework.

## *History of the Ghetto*

By Amy Leonard and Sarah Lisha

[http://www.deanza.edu/faculty/leonardamy/Lart\\_coursepacket\\_2012.pdf](http://www.deanza.edu/faculty/leonardamy/Lart_coursepacket_2012.pdf)

### **Background on the term:**

During the Middle Ages, the church enacted a series of laws that isolated Jews from their Christian neighbors. In many places in Europe, Jews were forced to live in a ghetto—a separate section of a town or city. Sometimes officials built high walls around that section of the city and placed Christian guards at every gate. In the 1700s and 1800s those walls began to crumble. Most countries now allowed Jews to mix freely with others in the community. The ghettos were abandoned until Adolf Hitler reestablished them during World War II.

### **History of the Ghettos in Chicago:**

In the 1930s and 1940s African Americans were separated from other Americans in Chicago and other cities by laws that permitted discrimination. Employers were free to choose job applicants on the basis of their race, religion, or ethnicity. As a result, most African Americans in Chicago were crowded into a few neighborhoods with little or no opportunity to buy or rent housing elsewhere. When the Ida B. Wells housing project was completed in 1941, many African American families were eager to live there. The townhouses and low-rise buildings that made up the complex at the time were a vast improvement over the crowded and often dangerous buildings they replaced. The Ida B. Wells was the first public housing project in the city open to African Americans—and one of the first in the nation. It provided not only safe, affordable housing for over 1,600 poor African American families but also jobs for African American contractors, masons, plumbers, carpenters, engineers, artisans, and other workers. Both were critical at a time when local, state, and federal governments permitted and even encouraged landlords, realtors, and employers to discriminate against African Americans. In the 1940s and 1950s Chicago's African American population grew rapidly even as many of the city's white residents moved to the suburbs. For example, in the 1940s the number of white residents in the city fell slightly, while the number of African Americans increased by 50.5 percent. As one historian has noted, "While blacks crowded into ghettos, whites found ample space in the mushrooming suburbs. In Chicago 77 percent of home building between 1945 and 1960 took place in suburban areas. Yet by 1960, only 2.9 percent of the people in these suburbs were black, roughly the same percentage as had lived in Chicago suburbs in 1940." In the 1960s, riots broke out and as a result, Congress, state legislatures, and city councils responded with new laws and new programs. Most were well-intentioned but few altered life for the better on the South Side of Chicago or other inner city neighborhoods. In fact, in the years that followed, as

LeAlan Jones's grandmother notes, poverty, hopelessness, and deterioration increased, not "all of a sudden" but "gradually. Day by day, year by year."

### Reflection Questions

1. How would you summarize this reading? What are the main argument and key points?
2. What is our current idea of ghettos? From where does this view come?
3. How is the initial idea behind ghettos similar to its present-day meaning? How is it different?
4. Overall, would you say the views associated with today's ghettos are positive or negative? Why?
5. Are these views accurate? Why or why not?
6. This reading sample talks about Chicago. Do you think the content pertains to ghettos in other areas? Why or why not?
7. How do you think the information from this reading will affect what we will read next? Why is it important?
8. In your opinion, how does geography affect a person's circumstances?

## ***“Chicago”***

By Carl Sandburg, 1914

Hog Butcher for the World,

Tool Maker, Stacker of Wheat,

Player with Railroads and the Nation's Freight Handler;

Stormy, husky, brawling,

City of the Big Shoulders:

They tell me you are wicked and I believe them, for I have seen your painted women under the gas lamps luring the farm boys.

And they tell me you are crooked and I answer: Yes, it is true I have seen the gunman kill and go free to kill again.

And they tell me you are brutal and my reply is: On the faces of women and children I have seen the marks of wanton hunger.

And having answered so I turn once more to those who sneer at this my city, and I give them back the sneer and say to them:

Come and show me another city with lifted head singing so proud to be alive and coarse and strong and cunning.

Flinging magnetic curses amid the toil of piling job on job, here is a tall bold slugger set vivid against the little soft cities;

Fierce as a dog with tongue lapping for action, cunning as a savage pitted against the wilderness,

Bareheaded,

Shoveling, Wrecking,

Planning,

Building, breaking, rebuilding,

Under the smoke, dust all over his mouth, laughing with white teeth,

Under the terrible burden of destiny laughing as a young man laughs,

Laughing even as an ignorant fighter laughs who has never lost a battle,

Bragging and laughing that under his wrist is the pulse, and under his ribs the heart of the people,

Laughing!

Laughing the stormy, husky, brawling laughter of Youth, half-naked, sweating, proud to be Hog Butcher, Tool Maker, Stacker of Wheat, Player with Railroads and Freight Handler to the Nation.

## Reflection Questions

1. What is the main point of this poem?
2. What are its most effective points? Why did you choose these points?
3. Which portions are difficult to understand? How can you determine what these portions are trying to say?
4. How does this poem relate to your idea of a ghetto?
5. Do you think this is a typical portrayal of the ghetto? Why or why not?
6. Why is the poem entitled "Chicago"? Would another city name have the same effect? Why or why not?
7. How is this poem representative of the time in which Sandburg wrote it, 1914?
8. What do you think life was like in 1914?
9. What would need to change to update this poem to current times?
10. What would remain the same?
11. How do you feel about this poem? Why do you feel this way?
12. What will you take away from this poem about ghettos?

## ***“In the Ghetto”***

Performed by Elvis Presley, 1969; written by Mac Davis

As the snow flies on a cold and gray Chicago mornin'  
A poor little baby child is born in the ghetto

And his mama cries 'cause if there's one thing that she don't need  
It's another hungry mouth to feed in the ghetto

People, don't you understand the child needs a helping hand?  
Or he'll grow to be an angry young man some day

Take a look at you and me, are we too blind to see?  
Do we simply turn our heads and look the other way?

Well the world turns and a hungry little boy with a runny nose  
Plays in the street as the cold wind blows in the ghetto

And his hunger burns, so he starts to roam the streets at night  
And he learns how to steal and he learns how to fight in the ghetto

Then one night in desperation a young man breaks away  
He buys a gun, steals a car, tries to run, but he don't get far  
And his mama cries

As a crowd gathers 'round an angry young man  
Face down on the street with a gun in his hand in the ghetto

As her young man dies on a cold and gray Chicago mornin'  
Another little baby child is born in the ghetto

And his mama cries

**Reflection Questions**

1. What is the main point of this song?
2. Which stereotypes does the poem convey?
3. What are the similarities between this song and Sandburg's "Chicago"?
4. What are the differences?
5. How does this song relate to your idea of a ghetto?
6. Do you think this is a typical portrayal of the ghetto? Why or why not?
7. Does the young man have to die? Why or why not? What is the impact of his death?
8. How is this song representative of 1969, the year Presley released it?
9. What is your image of life in 1969?
10. What would need to change to release this song today?
11. What would remain the same?
12. How do you feel about this song? What aspects of the song create this reaction?
13. Does there seem to be an option for "choice" in this song? Why or why not?
14. How does the answer to #13 affect the concept of ghettos?

## ***“The Ghetto Made Me Do It”***

By Francis Flaherty, 2011

1) When Felicia "Lisa" Morgan was growing up, her parents would sit down to meals with guns next to their plates. They were defending themselves—against each other.

2) "This was Lisa's dinner," explains attorney Robin Shellow. "She was seven at the time."

3) If nothing else, Lisa Morgan's childhood in a poor, inner city Milwaukee neighborhood starkly illustrates the tragic effects of omnipresent urban violence. "Mom shot dad," Shellow says. "And Mom shot boyfriend.... [Lisa's] uncle, who was actually her age, was murdered. Two days later, her other uncle was murdered. Her sister's boyfriend was paralyzed from the neck down by gunfire. Her brother was shot at and injured. Her mother once had set her father on fire."

4) If this weren't enough tragedy in one young life, Lisa Morgan's mother was a drug addict and Lisa was raped at age 12.

### **The Ghetto Defense**

5) So perhaps it's not too surprising that Morgan, as a teenager, committed six armed robberies and one intentional homicide in the space of 17 minutes in October 1991. The victims were girls; the stolen objects were jewelry, shoes and a coat. The dead girl was shot at point-blank range.

6) What is surprising—to the legal establishment, at least—is the approach Robin Shellow used in defending Morgan. In the girl's neighborhood and in her family, Shellow argued, violence is a norm, an occurrence so routine that Morgan's 17 years of exposure to it have rendered her not responsible for her actions.

7) This "ghetto defense" proved fruitless in Morgan's case. In court, the young woman was found both sane and guilty. Unless Shellow wins on appeal, Morgan will be behind bars well into [this] century.

8) But despite its failure for Morgan, Shellow's "cultural psychosis" or "psychosocial history" strategy has taken hold. "I've gotten hundreds of calls from interested attorneys," Shellow says. Already, the defense is being floated in courtrooms around the nation. It's eliciting both enthusiasm and outrage.

### **The Defense Is a Medical One**

9) Technically, Shellow's defense is a medical one. She believes that Morgan suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and other psychological ailments stemming from her lifelong exposure to violence.

10) Like other good lawyers, Shellow knows that the law abhors broadly applicable excuses, so she emphasizes the narrowness of her claim. Morgan belongs to a very small group of inner city residents with "tremendous intrafamilial violence," only some of whom might experience PTSD. She also stresses the unrevolutionary nature of the defense, medically and legally. PTSD has been recognized as a malady in standard diagnostic texts since 1980, she says, and it has been employed as a criminal defense for Vietnam veterans, battered wives, and many other trauma victims.

11) Despite Shellow's attempts to show that her defense is neither new nor broad, the case is ringing loud alarms. For, however viewed, her strategy sets up an inflammatory equation between inner city conditions and criminal exculpation. The implication is that if you grew up in a poor, violent neighborhood and you commit a crime, you may go scot-free.

12) Yet, why not a ghetto defense? After all, if a Vietnam veteran can claim PTSD from the shock of war, why shouldn't a similar defense be available for a young black reared in the embattled precincts of Bed-Stuy (Bedford-Stuyvesant neighborhood of New York City)? Sounds sensible, no?

### **Isn't a Ghetto Like a Battlefield? Compare These Neighborhoods to War Zones**

13) Alex Kotlowitz, who chronicled the lives of two Chicago black boys in "There Are No Children Here," goes even further. He says the inner city can be worse than war. "You hear constant comparisons of these neighborhoods to war zones, but I think there are some pretty significant differences," he says. "In war, there's at least a sense that someday there will be a resolution, some vision that things could be different. That is not the case in the inner cities. There is no vision. And there's no sense of who's friend and who's foe."

14) There are other analogies that make the ghetto defense seem very legitimate. For instance, despite traditional self-defense principles, a battered wife in some jurisdictions can kill her sleeping husband and be legally excused for the homicide. The reason is the psychological harm she has sustained from her life of fear and violence.

15) Why not Lisa Morgan? Hasn't her life been debilitatingly violent and fearful?

16) These arguments make some lawyers hopeful about the future of Shellow's pioneering strategy. But most observers are pessimistic. "We'll get nowhere with it," says famous defense lawyer William Kunstler.

**The Poor Instead of the Powerful**

17) Why? One reason is that the American justice system often favors the powerful over the poor. For generations, for instance, the bloodiest crime in the nation—drunk driving—was punished with a relative wrist slap. By contrast, a recent federal law mandates that those convicted of the new crime of carjacking get socked with a minimum and mandatory 15-year sentence.

18) What explains these disparate approaches? Simple: protection of the affluent classes. Light penalties for drunk driving protect the affluent because they often drive drunk. Harsh carjacking penalties protect the affluent because they are the usual carjacking victims. "The middle class sees carjacking [laws] as protecting them from people coming out of some poor neighborhood and just showing up in their neighborhood and committing a crime in which they are at risk of dying," says Professor James Liebman of Columbia University School of Law.

19) Because the ghetto defense protects the poor instead of the powerful, Kunstler and others doubt it has a bright future. Other factors further dim the strategy's chances. Fear is a main one, says Professor Liebman. The ghetto defense brings a gulp from jurors because "their first thought is, 'If he's not responsible, then none of those people are,'" he reasons. And we all know what that means: riots, mayhem, Los Angeles.

20) Social guilt raises even higher the hurdles for the ghetto defense. To allow such a defense is a tacit admission that we—society—tolerate a situation so hobbling that its victims have become unaccountable for their actions. "If it ain't them who's guilty, it's us," says Michael Dowd, director of the Pace University Battered Women's Justice Center in New York. And "it's just too horrific for us to accept responsibility, too horrific to say, 'I'm responsible for what happened in L.A.'" We will be able to accept the [ghetto] defense at the same moment that we are seriously moved to eradicate the realities behind that defense."

21) What are the biggest criticisms of the ghetto defense? One focuses on the victim's identity. Battered spouses and battered children are accused of killing precisely those who hurt them. This endows the crime with a certain rough justice. But in a ghetto defense case, the victim is usually an innocent stranger.

22) Others, like Kotlowitz, worry that the ghetto defense might dislodge the cornerstone of our justice system: personal responsibility. "We have to be careful not to view people growing up in neighborhoods completely as victims; they are both victims and actors," he warns. "We can't absolve them from responsibility."

23) Lisa Morgan "went up to someone she didn't know, stole a jacket from her, and then just blew her away," he says. "There's no way as a society that we can excuse that. We can understand it, but we can't excuse it."

24) He raises a fundamental question. Everyone can point to scars from the past— alcoholic parents, tragic love, etc.— and claim exculpation. And if all are excused, who is responsible?

25) Another worry is diminished standards. "[The ghetto defense] lowers expectations," Kotlowitz continues. "It says, 'OK, I understand what you've been through, so it's OK to go out and hurt somebody.' And once you lower your expectations, particularly with kids, they will meet only those lower expectations."

### **A Disease Is a Disease**

26) It's only fair to note that other criminal defenses also have these weaknesses. For instance, the victim of a PTSD-afflicted veteran is often an innocent passerby, and the battered-spouse doctrine certainly raises questions about personal responsibility and lowered expectations.

27) And if, as seems likely, some ghetto residents do have PTSD largely as a result of their living conditions, it's hard to see why this ailment should be exculpatory for veterans, say, but not for ghetto residents. After all, a disease is a disease, and how you got it is irrelevant.

28) How deep go the wounds from the ghetto? Here are two incidents in Morgan's life: "When Felicia was about 11, her mother put a knife to her throat and threatened to kill her," according to a psychologist's report in the case. "Felicia escaped by running into the basement, where she `busted the lights out with my hand' so that her mother could not see her." Then, when she was 12, the landlord attacked her. "Felicia fought him off by throwing hot grease onto him, but he finally subdued her, tied her hands to the bed, stuffed her mouth with a sock and raped her."

29) How does one live like this? Morgan gives a hint. "My ears be open," she told the psychologist, "even when I'm asleep."

30) This was a child. Society did nothing to stop these daily depredations upon her. While the legal propriety of the ghetto defense is an important question, the biggest question of all in this story has nothing to do with personal responsibility. It has to do with society's responsibility to poor children like Morgan. What does it say about our society that such a defense was conceived? How can things have come to this pass?

### **Reflection Questions**

1. Why is this reading numbered? What is the significance of each section?
2. What is the "ghetto defense"?
3. In your opinion, is the ghetto defense logical? Why or why not?

4. Why is the ghetto to blame for these actions? How feasible is it to place blame on a location or environment?
5. What are other possible explanations for the actions of people in this reading?
6. How does this reading contribute to the developing understanding of “ghetto” from our class discussion?
7. Which messages are stated explicitly through the author’s words?
8. Which messages are implied but not directly stated?
9. Which are more convincing, the stated or unstated messages? Why?
10. In paragraph 30, the author says, “Society did nothing to stop these daily deprivations upon her.” In your opinion, what could society do to help the child in question?
11. Is your answer to #10 reasonable? Why or why not?
12. Why do you think the ghetto defense is so readily believed or accepted by others? What causes this acceptance?
13. What are possible solutions to the problems created by ghetto life?
14. What is society’s role in the creation of ghettos and the situations encountered by those who live there?
15. What is society’s role in the solution to any encountered difficulties or hardships? How can society work to reverse stereotypes?
16. What examples from this article might help explain how human communities interact with their environment?

## ***“Just Walk on By: A Black Man Ponders His Power to Alter Public Space”***

By Brent Staples, 1986

My first victim was a woman—white, well dressed, probably in her early twenties. I came upon her late one evening on a deserted street in Hyde Park, a relatively affluent neighborhood in an otherwise mean, impoverished section of Chicago. As I swung onto the avenue behind her, there seemed to be a discreet, uninflamatory distance between us. Not so. She cast back a worried glance. To her, the youngish black man—a broad six feet two inches with a beard and billowing hair, both hands shoved into the pockets of a bulky military jacket—seemed menacingly close. After a few more quick glimpses, she picked up her pace and was soon running in earnest. Within seconds she disappeared into a cross street.

That was more than a decade ago, I was twenty-two years old, a graduate student newly arrived at the University of Chicago. It was in the echo of that terrified woman's footfalls that I first began to know the unwieldy inheritance I'd come into—the ability to alter public space in ugly ways. It was clear that she thought herself the quarry of a mugger, a rapist, or worse. Suffering a bout of insomnia, however, I was stalking sleep, not defenseless wayfarers. As a softy who is scarcely able to take a knife to a raw chicken—let alone hold one to a person's throat—I was surprised, embarrassed, and dismayed all at once. Her flight made me feel like an accomplice in tyranny. It also made it clear that I was indistinguishable from the muggers who occasionally seeped into the area from the surrounding ghetto. That first encounter, and those that followed, signified that a vast, unnerving gulf lay between nighttime pedestrians—particularly women—and me. And I soon gathered that being perceived as dangerous is a hazard in itself. I only needed to turn a corner into a dicey situation, or crowd some frightened, armed person in a foyer somewhere, or make an errant move after being pulled over by a policeman. Where fear and weapons meet—and they often do in urban America—there is always the possibility of death.

In that first year, my first away from my hometown, I was to become thoroughly familiar with the language of fear. At dark, shadowy intersections, I could cross in front of a car stopped at a traffic light and elicit the *thunk, thunk, thunk* of the driver—black, white, male, or female—hammering down the door locks. On less traveled streets after dark, I grew accustomed to but never comfortable with people crossing to the other side of the street rather than pass me. Then there were the standard unpleasanties with policemen, doormen, bouncers,

cabdrivers, and others whose business it is to screen out troublesome individuals *before* there is any nastiness.

I moved to New York nearly two years ago and I have remained an avid nightwalker. In central Manhattan, the near-constant crowd cover minimizes tense one-on-one street encounters. Elsewhere—in SoHo, for example, where sidewalks are narrow and tightly spaced buildings shut out the sky—things can get very taut indeed.

After dark, on the warren-like streets of Brooklyn where I live, I often see women who fear the worst from me. They seem to have set their faces on neutral and with their purse straps strung across their chests bandolier-style, they forge ahead as though bracing themselves against being tackled. I understand, of course, that the danger they perceive is not a hallucination. Women are particularly vulnerable to street violence, and young black males are drastically overrepresented among the perpetrators of that violence. Yet these truths are no solace against the kind of alienation that comes of being ever the suspect, a fearsome entity with whom pedestrians avoid making eye contact.

It is not altogether clear to me how I reached the ripe old age of twenty-two without being conscious of the lethality nighttime pedestrians attributed to me. Perhaps it was because in Chester, Pennsylvania, the small, angry industrial town where I came of age in the 1960s, I was scarcely noticeable against a backdrop of gang warfare, street knifings, and murders. I grew up one of the good boys, had perhaps a half-dozen fistfights. In retrospect, my shyness of combat has clear sources. As a boy, I saw countless tough guys locked away; I have since buried several, too. They were babies, really—a teenage cousin, a brother of twenty-two, a childhood friend in his mid-twenties—all gone down in episodes of bravado played out in the streets. I came to doubt the virtues of intimidation early on. I chose, perhaps unconsciously, to remain a shadow-timid, but a survivor.

The fearsomeness mistakenly attributed to me in public places often has a perilous flavor. The most frightening of these confusions occurred in the late 1970s and early 1980s, when I worked as a journalist in Chicago. One day, rushing into the office of a magazine I was writing for with a deadline story in hand, I was mistaken for a burglar. The office manager called security and, with an ad hoc posse, pursued me through the labyrinthine halls, nearly to my editor's door. I had no way of proving who I was. I could only move briskly toward the company of someone who knew me. Another time I was on assignment for a local paper and killing time before an interview. I entered a jewelry store on the city's affluent Near North Side. The proprietor excused herself and returned with an enormous red Doberman pinscher straining at the end of a leash. She stood,

the dog extended toward me, silent to my questions, her eyes bulging nearly out of her head. I took a cursory look around, nodded, and bade her good night.

Relatively speaking, however, I never fared as badly as another black male journalist. He went to nearby Waukegan, Illinois, a couple of summers ago to work on a story about a murderer who was born there. Mistaking the reporter for the killer, police officers hauled him from his car at gunpoint and but for his press credentials would probably have tried to book him. Such episodes are not uncommon. Black men trade tales like this all the time.

Over the years, I learned to smother the rage I felt at so often being taken for a criminal. Not to do so would surely have led to madness. I now take precautions to make myself less threatening. I move about with care, particularly late in the evening. I give a wide berth to nervous people on subway platforms during the wee hours, particularly when I have exchanged business clothes for jeans. If I happen to be entering a building behind some people who appear skittish, I may walk by, letting them clear the lobby before I return, so as not to seem to be following them. I have been calm and extremely congenial on those rare occasions when I've been pulled over by the police.

And on late-evening constitutionals I employ what has proved to be an excellent tension reducing measure: I whistle melodies from Beethoven and Vivaldi and the more popular classical composers. Even steely New Yorkers hunching toward nighttime destinations seem to relax and occasionally they even join in the tune. Virtually everybody seems to sense that a mugger wouldn't be warbling bright, sunny selections from Vivaldi's "Four Seasons." It is my equivalent of the cowbell that hikers wear when they know they are in bear country.

### Reflection Questions

1. Although this reading does not explicitly have to do with ghettos, it does have to do with concepts of space, community, and environment. How do these references relate to our current discussion?
2. Why is race a factor in this reading?
3. How do you feel about the author's presentation of prejudice? Is it accurate in your opinion? Why or why not?
4. How would this reading differ if it discussed daytime public spaces?
5. Staples talks about changes in others' perceptions of him since his childhood. What does he feel has changed?

6. What do you think has changed within the time period covered by the reading? Compare your answers to what life might have been like in Sandburg's time (specifically 1914) and in 1969 ("In the Ghetto" time reference).
7. Summarize your answer to #6 by stating the relationship between time, community, environment, and the perceptions of others.
8. The author's solution to being stereotyped as a criminal is to assimilate, or blend in, to appear less threatening. How do you feel about this adopted strategy? Explain your response.
9. What other strategies could Staples use? How effective would these strategies be?
10. Staples states: "I never fared as badly as another black male journalist." What do you think makes one individual "fare" worse than another?
11. How might environment or geography play into how an individual is treated?
12. What experience have you had that resembles the stereotyping described in this story?
13. Look at the title of this reading. What is Staples trying to say in that statement?
14. After comparing each of the readings, how would you answer the main question posed in this activity—The Ghetto: What's in a Name?