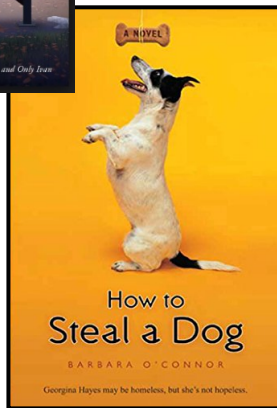


Homelessness in Children's Literature: Choices, Changes, and Unintended Consequences



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Lauren H. Shifflett
shiffllh@jmu.edu
Lynne Farrell Stover
stoverlf@jmu.edu

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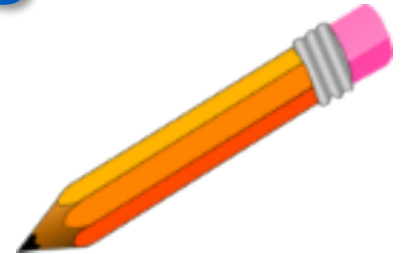
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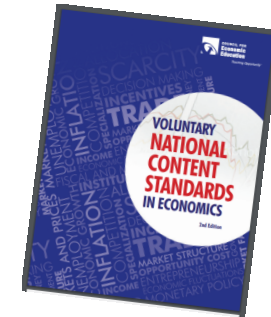
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Webinar Objectives

- Discuss economic concepts featured in this genre
- Define homelessness and its causes
- Focus on lessons and activities for 3 specific titles
- Review “generic” activities that apply to homelessness
- Suggest helpful websites
- Introduce titles included on bibliography



National Standards



CONTENT STANDARDS

STANDARD 1: SCARCITY..... 2

Productive resources are limited. Therefore, people cannot have all the goods and services they want; as a result, they must choose some things and give up others.

STANDARD 2: DECISION MAKING..... 5

Effective decision making requires comparing the additional costs of alternatives with the additional benefits. Many choices involve doing a little more or a little less of something: few choices are “all or nothing” decisions.

<https://www.councilforeconed.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/voluntary-national-content-standards-2010.pdf>

VIRGINIA HISTORY & SOCIAL SCIENCE STANDARDS OF LEARNING

Skills K.1 –C/E .1 The student will demonstrate skills for historical thinking, geographical analysis, economic decision making, and responsible citizenship by h) using a decision-making model to make informed decisions

K.9 The student will a) recognize that people make choices because they cannot have everything they want; and b) explain that people work to earn money to buy the things they want.

1.8 The student will explain that people make choices because they cannot have everything they want.

2.10 The student will explain that scarcity (limited resources) requires people to make choices about producing and consuming goods and services.

3.10 The student will identify examples of making an economic choice and will explain the idea of opportunity cost (what is given up when making a choice).

CE.11 The student will apply social science skills to understand how economic decisions are made in the marketplace by a) explaining that because of scarcity, consumers, producers, and governments must make choices, understanding that everyone's choice has an opportunity cost

CE.13 The student will apply social science skills to understand the role of government in the United States economy by
b) explaining how and why government provides certain goods and services

Why Teach Students About Homelessness?

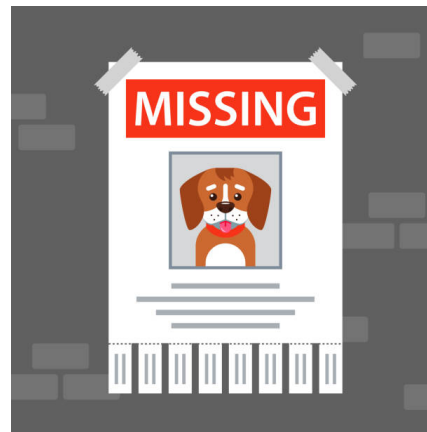
- It helps students develop an awareness of economic injustices and become more thoughtful, compassionate, and empathetic towards others.
- It prepares students to deal with critical social problems instead of "sheltering" them from the concerns of our society.
- It identifies stereotypes and challenges misconceptions about individuals and families who are homeless.



An act of selecting or making a decision when faced with two or more alternatives.

“The day I decided to steal a dog was the same day my best friend, Luanne Godfrey, found out I lived in a car.”

-Georgina Hayes, Elementary School Student



How to Steal a Dog

By Barbara O'Connor

Publisher: Square Fish
Copyright Date: 2007
Reading Level: 4.0
Interest Level: 4-7



Story Synopsis: Georgina Hayes, problem solver and list maker, is miserable. And she has every right to be. She, her hard-working mother, and annoying younger brother are all living in a car because they were evicted from their apartment. It's not like her mother isn't trying; she's managing to hold down two jobs. But neither of these jobs comes with a high salary and it looks like it will take time to save the money needed for the security deposit and first month's rent.

Then Georgina comes up with a plan to make some quick cash.

All she needs to do is find a missing dog and collect the reward money.

There is one major problem with this plan.

Georgina needs to decide if it would be wrong if she was the reason the dog was "missing" in the first place.

PACED Decision Model

State the **p**roblem

List the **a**lternatives

Identify the **c**riteria

Evaluate the alternatives

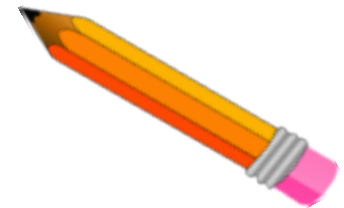
Make a **d**ecision

P.A.C.E.D Decision-Making Grid

- ✓ State the Problem.
- ✓ List the Alternatives.
- ✓ Identify the Criteria.
- ✓ Evaluate the choices.
- ✓ Make a Decision.

Directions:
Fill in each square with +1 if the answer to the alternative is yes,-1 if the answer is no, and 0 is it is neutral.

| | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|--|--|--|
| What is the problem? | | | | |
| Criteria (What's important to me?) | | | | |
| Alternatives (Choices) | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |



Georgina Makes a Choice Should She Steal a Dog?

Steps in Making a Decision

1. What is the PROBLEM?
2. What ALTERNATIVE actions can be taken to solve the problem?
3. What are the important CRITERIA to consider in making this decision?
4. EVALUATE what is important.
5. Make a DECISION.

Decision-Making Grid

In the top row are the important things Georgina needs to consider if she is going to take a dog that does not belong to her.

| | Easy | Safe | Legal | Profitable | Total |
|---|------|------|-------|------------|-------|
| Don't steal the dog but help Mom by taking care of Toby so she can keep working two jobs. | | | | | |
| Steal a dog, keep it in a safe place, and give it back to its owner for the reward money. | | | | | |
| Steal a dog, but let it go because the owner does not offer any reward money. | | | | | |
| Run away from Mom and Toby and try to find Dad. | | | | | |

In the column are the possible actions Georgina can take.

Directions: Fill in each square with a Plus (+), Minus (-), or Zero (0). For example, if you think it would be easy for Georgina not to steal a dog but to just help her mom take care of Toby, put a plus sign in the first space on the grid. If you think it would be difficult put a minus sign and if it does not matter one way or another, put in a zero.



EVALUATE THE ALTERNATIVES

Fill in each square with a Plus (+), Minus (-), or Zero (0).

| Problem: Georgia's mom needs money to rent an apartment. How can she help? | | | | |
|---|------------------|------------------|------------------------|-------------------|
| PACED Decision Grid | Criteria Easy | Criteria Safe | Criteria Profitable | Criteria Legal |
| Alternative Don't Steal the Dog but help take care of Toby so Mom can work two jobs | + | + | - | + |
| Alternative Steal the Dog and keep it in a safe place, returning it for reward money. | - | - | + | - |
| Alternative Run Away from Mom and Toby and try to find Dad | - | - | - | + |

Interpreting the PACED Decision Making Grid

The problem:

“Georgia’s mom needs money to rent an apartment. How can she help?”

The answer: **“It depends.”**

If Georgia wants to help her mom by making money, she steals a dog.

If Georgia wants to help her mom by staying safe, and keeping out of trouble, she does not steal a dog.



To make (someone or something) different; alter or modify

Page 7- The Richmond is bordered by some fancy neighborhoods...it's basically a normal neighborhood. It's where my family used to live. When we volunteered at the shelter, we learned that 25 percent of people who live in the Richmond are at high risk for food insecurity.

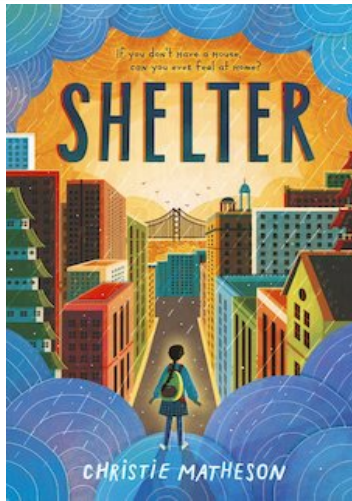
And now my family is too.

-Maya, age 10



Shelter

by Christie Matheson



Publisher: Random House

Copyright Date: 2021

Reading Level: 4.7

Interest Level: 4-7

Story Synopsis: Maya, a fifth grader at a distinguished private school, is having a tough time after tragedy strikes her family. Her father is in the hospital, her mother can no longer work, their landlord sold their house and they can no longer afford to pay rent. Deciding to keep these changes from her friends is taking its toll. As if living in a shelter with her mom and younger sister weren't challenging enough, dealing with dangerous environments, food insecurity, lack of privacy, and school bullies make her life difficult to navigate.

Food Insecurity



Experiencing food insecurity was one of the major changes in Maya's life.

The fact that her younger sister suffered from food allergies complicated where the family could find foods she could safely eat.



https://static1.squarespace.com/static/55808440e4b05e2c40bdb1d0/t/56254eebe4b0808b4bac2db4/1445285611406/Hunger_and_Food_Security-Lesson.pdf

Almost one in seven U.S. households—over 17 million—suffer from food insecurity, a condition that includes:

- Hunger, in more extreme cases;
- Having to skip meals;
- Having to compromise on nutrition;
- Relying on emergency food sources such as food banks, food pantries and soup kitchens.

Unintended Consequences

The unexpected and unplanned results of a decision or action.

Last fall we were at a neighborhood potluck dinner when Aretha ate a baby's disposable diaper. She had to spend two nights at the vet's until she pooped it out.

"Poop in, poop out," my dad said when we picked her up. "It's the cycle of life."

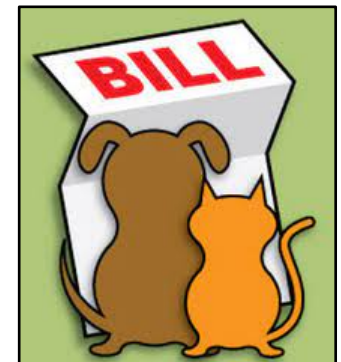
"The cycle of life is expensive," my mom said, staring at the bill. "Looks like rent's going to be late again this month."

When we got to the car, I came right out and asked if we had enough money for stuff. My dad said not to worry. That we just were a little financially challenged. He said sometimes it's hard to plan for everything, unless you have a crystal ball and can see the future, and if I knew someone with a crystal ball, he would love to borrow it.

My mom said something about winning the lottery, and my dad said if they won the lottery, could he please get a Ferrari, and she said how about a Jaguar, and then I could tell they wanted to change the subject.

I didn't ask any more hard questions after that.

Somehow I just knew my parents didn't want to give me hard answers.



by Kathrine Applegate



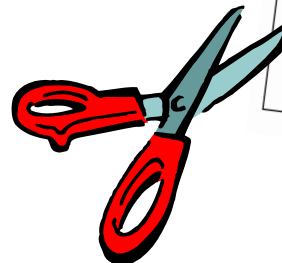
Publisher: Square Fish
Copyright Date: 2017
Reading Level: 3.8
Interest Level: 5-9

Story Synopsis: Nine-year-old Jackson Wade and his family are facing some very real problems; hunger, parental illness, joblessness, unpaid bills, and possible homelessness. When Jackson was five, he and his family were forced to live in their car due to their financial circumstances. Not wanting to repeat this experience, he finds himself assuming the role of an adult and is shouldering major stress. It's no wonder an imaginary friend from childhood shows up to help him cope with the seriousness of his family's situation.

Ranking Activity

Possible Scenarios

| |
|---|
| Rank the dilemmas from the scariest to the least scary. |
| Rank the dilemmas to most likely to cause the Wade family to lose their home to the least likely that they will be evicted. |
| Rank the dilemmas by the one that needs the most money to the one who needs the least money. |
| Rank the dilemmas to the ones that Jackson can control to the ones he has no control over. |



| |
|--|
| Dad gets sick |
| Dog needs surgery |
| Mom loses job |
| Jackson puts things in a "keepsake bag" <small>(everything else is sold at a yard sale)</small> |
| The family gets evicted from their house |
| The power is turned off <small>(because the electric bill was not paid)</small> |

Visual-

Homelessness

Homelessness is the condition of people who live without a regular dwelling. People who are homeless do not have regular, safe, secure and adequate housing, or lack a "fixed, regular, and adequate night-time residence."



Some Reasons People Lose Their Homes

- There is an unplanned major expense
- There is a natural disaster and the family has no insurance.
- The "bread winner" loses a job
- The car breaks down and it's not possible to get to work
- Rent goes up
- There is a major illness in the family
- The family gets behind in monthly payment



Scarce Housing “Musical Chairs”



Directions-

- Display Situation Card Example
- Instruct students to write a situation card based on a fictional character
- Introduce the activity by telling the students they will be playing an interactive game based on musical chairs. Explain that every chair represents a home.
- Play the game.
- When the music stops, the person without a “house” must read their situation card to the group and go to the back of the room.
- Play as time allows.
- Debrief the activity by discussing the situations of the various characters.

Scarce Housing "Musical Chairs" Situation Card Example

Name: Hansel Woodson

Age: 8 years

Living Situation: Currently living in the forest with my sister Gretel after being abandoned by our father.

We are looking for food and shelter.

| | |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Name: Age: Living Situation: | Name: Age: Living Situation: |
| Name: Age: Living Situation: | Name: Age: Living Situation: |
| Name: Age: Living Situation: | Name: Age: Living Situation: |

Possible Homeless Characters

- Peter Pan & the Lost Boys
- Maniac Magee
- Mowgli
- Tarzan
- Jane Eyre
- Sophie (The BFG)
- Snow White
- Violet, Klaus & Sunny Baudelaire



Create two lists.

In one column write positive things that happened in the book.

In the other column write the negative things that occurred.



Draw a picture depicting the theme
Everyone Deserves a Home.



Homelessness Generic Activities

Describe the main character in to book. Recount at least three ways homelessness impacted this character's life.



How did the following concepts impact the characters in the book?

- Scarcity
- Choice
- Wants
- Decision-making
- Investing in Human Capital

Homelessness Generic Activities

List ten types of dwellings that can be used for shelter.
Rank them from your most favorite to your least favorite.



1. Apartment

2. Cottage

3. Hotel

4. House Boat

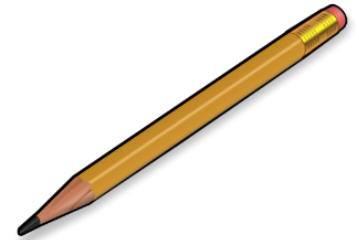
5. Igloo

6. Light House

7. Log Cabin

8. Mobile Home

9. Tent

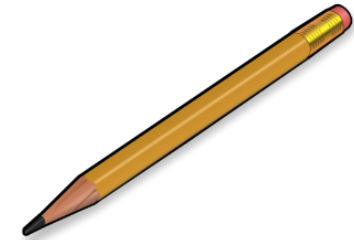


Homelessness Tic-Tac-Toe Challenge

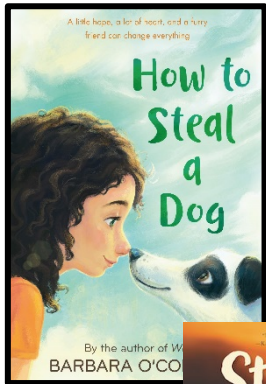
Directions: Select and read a book in which then main character must deal with homelessness. Then, based on this book, choose and complete three activities in this grid: horizontally, vertically, or diagonally. You may use the back of this paper if more space is needed. Record your choice numbers below.

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| <p>#1 List the reasons the characters in this book are homeless? Do you think this situation was avoidable? Why or why not?</p> | <p>#2 Create two lists. In one column write positive things that happened in the book. In the other column write the negative things that occurred.</p> | <p>#3 Describe the main character in to book. Recount at least three ways homelessness impacted his/her life.</p> |
| <p>#5 How did the following concepts impact the characters in the book?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scarcity • Choice • Wants • Decision-making • Investing in Human Capital | <p>#5 Write a short synopsis of the book.</p> <p>Include:</p> <p>Title:</p> <p>Author:</p> <p>Publisher:</p> <p>Copyright Date:</p> | <p>#6 Laura Ingalls Wilder s said "Home is the nicest word there is." Do you agree with this quote? How does it apply to content or characters in the book?</p> |
| <p>#7 List ten types of dwellings that can be used for shelter. Rank them from your most favorite to your least favorite.</p> | <p>#8 Draw a picture depicting the theme <i>Everyone Deserves a Home</i>.</p> | <p>#9 Write an acrostic poem for a type of dwelling. In this type of poem, the first letter the type of dwelling is the beginning of each line of the poem.</p> |

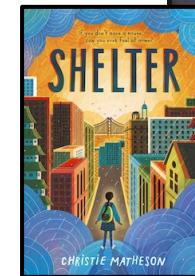
Activity choices include: # _____, # _____, # _____.



Children's Chapter Books Featuring Homelessness



| Title | Author | Copyright & Publisher | E/PF Concepts | Grade Level |
|---|----------------------|-------------------------------|---|-------------|
| <i>Crenshaw</i> | Applegate, Katherine | 2015 – Feiwel & Friends | Spending, Debt, Homelessness | 5-8 |
| <i>From the Mixed-Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler</i> | Konigsburg, E.L. | 1967- Aladdin | Choices, Budgeting, Opportunity Cost | 4-7 |
| <i>How to Steal a Dog</i> | O'Connor, Barbara | 2007 -Farrar, Straus & Giroux | Entrepreneurship (ill-gotten gains), Choice, Scarcity | 4-7 |
| <i>Maniac Magee</i> | Spinelli, Jerry | 1990- Little Brown & Co. | Scarcity, Poverty, Choices, Racism | 5-9 |
| <i>Shelter</i> | Matheson, Christie | 2021 – Random House | Scarcity, Choices, Human Capital, Saving, Opportunity Cost Insurance, Employment, Renting vs. Home Ownership, Government Agencies | 4-7 |
| <i>Stay</i> | Pyron, Bobbie | 2020- HarperCollins | Scarcity, Choices, Human Capital, Saving, Opportunity Cost Social Services, Documentation, Insurance, Fund Raising | 4-7 |
| <i>Survival Strategies of the Almost Brave</i> | White, Jen | 2015- Scholastic | Choices, Opportunity Cost, Money, Scarcity (Parent Abandonment) | 5-8 |
| <i>Watchdog</i> | McIntosh, Will | 2019- Random House | Post-apocalyptic social and economic failures | 4-7 |



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