

LESSON 1: PUBLIC HEALTH AND CITIES

OVERVIEW:

This lesson introduces students to the module about public health by getting them to consider what does it mean for a country, city or neighborhood to be “healthy”, what factors impact the health of people and what unique challenges do cities face in terms of public health. The goal of the lesson is to get students to brainstorm ideas and begin to start thinking about this topic. The concepts in this lesson will be revisited throughout the module. Students analyze public health data from across the world. These data sets are used to introduce the driving question for the module – How can I make my neighborhood a healthier place to live? Before looking at their specific neighborhood, this lesson has students consider what it means to be “healthy” and what factors impact health from an international perspective.

SUB-QUESTION:

What are the factors that give rise to healthy urban neighborhoods and are they equally distributed throughout the world?

Ways of Knowing Urban Ecology:



Students will...

Understand

- Understand that advancements in sewage management and medicine greatly enhanced the health of urban neighborhoods. (*forces and drivers, human impact*)

Talk

No specific goals connected with talking about urban ecology in this lesson.

Do

- Analyze and interpret public health data from across the world.

Act

No specific goals connected with acting on urban ecology in this lesson.

SAFETY GUIDELINES:

No specific safety issues are associated with this lesson

PREPARATION:

Time:

1 class period

Materials:

Activity 1.1

For each student:

Copies of activity sheet with international health data

INSTRUCTIONAL SEQUENCE

Activity 1.1: Analyze Public Health Data from Around the World

1. Introduce the driving question for this module to students - How can I make my neighborhood a healthier place to live? Tell students that throughout the module they will be learning about different factors that impact the public health in their neighborhood.
2. Before focusing on their neighborhood or even their city, first they will take a look at some public health data from across the world. The purpose of looking at this data is to get them to think about how they would define “health” and to think about what factors they think impact health.
3. Have students work in small groups to analyze the international data set. Pass out the student activity sheet – Lesson 1.1 – Investigating Public Health Data.
4. After students have completed analyzing the data, discuss the three questions at the end of the activity under “Summary Across Data Sets”. The first question provides an avenue for discussion across the three graphs that students analyzed. The second and third questions push students to define health and consider what impacts the health of people living in cities (See teacher version of student sheet for possible responses).

Concluding the Lesson

1. Have students answer the following reflection question either as a class discussion or in their journals – The driving question for this module is - How can I make my neighborhood a healthier place to live? What do you think you will need to learn about your neighborhood in order to address this questions? What information about your neighborhood or the people living there do you need to acquire?
 - *Use this question to encourage students to brainstorm some of the topics that you will be investigating in the module. Topics include – water quality, air quality, disease, food, green space, social networks, crime, wealth and culture. Culture may be difficult for students to come up with on their own. This is the focus of the next lesson so it will be discussed then if it does not come up here.*

Teacher Background Knowledge

- Until the past 100 years or so, the death rates in European and American cities exceeded the birth rate. Cities maintained their populations through immigration, not internal growth. In some cities one out of every three babies born died before their first birthday. Overall, even the poorest neighborhoods in American cities have improved dramatically over the past 100 years. However, much work remains to be done.