



Subject: Fair Housing Act

Grade(s): 6th – 12th

Summary

On April 11, 1968, seven days after the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr., President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Fair Housing Act into law. This seminal piece of civil rights legislation was a direct response to the demands of civil rights leaders across our country, and marked the beginning of housing **choice** for all families, regardless of their race, color, religion, national origin, or sex (protections were later added for disability and family status). The Fair Housing Act is also designed to promote and protect the **mobility** of all people to move to the city, town, or neighborhood where they will have the best opportunity to thrive. Finally, the Fair Housing Act promotes the **equity** of all citizens by working to undo the discriminatory policies of the past that created segregation and requiring state and local governments to work towards fair housing for everyone. Learn more about fair housing here.

Objectives

- After brief presentation of the Fair Housing Act, and viewing of video, students will understand the historical context that helped achieve the passage of the Fair Housing Act.
- After interactive building of vocabulary students will have learned how choice, mobility, and equity affect housing.
- After presentation of primary source material students will understand how neighborhoods became segregated and the path to the Fair Housing Act.
- After brief discussion students will understand the status of desegregated housing in Connecticut.

Activities & Resources

These follow the slides provided.

<https://goo.gl/si686b>

Fair Housing Act – Brief explanation

Fair Housing Act

In 1968, Congress passed the Federal Fair Housing Act (Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968)¹ expanding the number of people protected from discrimination. The Federal Fair Housing Act prohibits discrimination on the basis of **race, color, creed, religion, national origin, or sex**.

¹ 42 U.S.C. §3604ff.

In 1988, Federal Fair Housing Amendments Act² was passed and added two additional groups to the list of those protected under the law. The FHAA includes protections for people with **disabilities** and for **families with children**.

The Connecticut law also makes it illegal to discriminate against anyone based upon their race, color, national origin, sex, religion, familial status, and disability.³ In addition, Connecticut laws protect individuals based upon their **marital status, sexual orientation, age, and lawful source of income**.

Choice. Mobility. Equity. – Discussion

You can utilize a word map here like <https://worditout.com/word-cloud/create>



Choice

Depending on engagement of class, ask students what the word *choice* means. Explain how it might work... For example: I know I get really hungry around noon, and I get really cranky when I'm hungry. So, I make a choice to avoid scheduling meetings around lunch.

Ask Class:

How might this be related to housing? Should we be able to choose where we live? Continue to fill in word cloud with key words students say.

Mobility

Ask students what they think mobility means? How is it related to housings? Explain that mobility might mean being able to achieve more tomorrow than you did yesterday. Continue to fill in word cloud with key words students say.

Equity with Hershey Kisses and Gummy Bears

Ask students what they think equity means. Then ask is equity the same for everyone?

Ask the class who does *not* like Hershey Kisses?

Ask the class who does *not* like Gummy Bears?

Now explain to the class that you have a learned knowledge of what everyone's candy preference is... but you have decided to ignore it, and give everyone Hershey Kisses as the only option, and even the students who don't like Hershey Kisses still have to take them...

Ask how this makes students feel, and continue to add words used by students to word cloud.

Now give everyone their own choice of what candy they would like and distribute, even suggest if someone is really hungry, they can take two pieces, and if someone doesn't want a candy that is fine as well. You could also suggest that someone take one Hershey Kiss and one Gummy Bear. The goal is to get a diversity of needs and wants.

² Federal Fair Housing Act (Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968) as amended, 42 U.S.C. §3601ff.

³ Con.Gen.Stat. 46a-64c.

Use diversity of students' candy selection to explain equity. That every person at different times needs different things, and how equity in housing is extremely important.

History that Lead to Fair Housing Act – What happened?

This is an extremely brief summary of some historical policy decisions that lead to segregated cities and towns. Each link connects to original source material.

Zoning

Residential zoning policy divided neighborhoods by housing type, and by default, blocked many citizens from many communities with restrictive residential zoning.

The 1924 zoning regulations from West Hartford (on page 12) show how neighborhoods were divided up by housing type, and the larger lot size requirements for multifamily homes.

Redlining

The Federal Housing Authority (FHA) created the Home Owners Loan Corporation (HOLC) that graded neighborhoods to measure the risk of mortgage investments in different neighborhoods across the country. Neighborhoods with non-white, immigrant, and poor residents were graded lower, making it difficult or impossible to receive a mortgage in that neighborhood.

Housing Act of 1937

The Housing Act of 1937 provided federal subsidies to housing authorities to improve or develop subsidized housing for low income citizens. The act is responsible for the development of over 16,000 units of subsidized housing.

GI Bill 1944

Commonly referred to as the “GI Bill” it provided veterans opportunities to attend college, and purchase low interest mortgages to buy homes. African American soldiers were not able to use or access these low-interest mortgages. Redlining and other activities had devalued African American neighborhoods so drastically that banks would not underwrite mortgages for them. Second, African Americans were often barred from entry into white neighborhoods, by restrictive covenants, steering, and racism.

Video

Nationwide National Fair Housing Alliance “Seven Days” – The 8:49 video explains what happened across the country in the seven days between the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. and the passage of the Fair Housing Act.

<https://youtu.be/0EKo5rBBzpl>

Word Sneak Vocabulary

Fair Housing Vocabulary game cards are provided, and it is based on Jimmy Fallon's game.

Fair Housing Act of 1968

Discrimination

Protected Class

Redlining

Lyndon B. Johnson

Choice

Mobility

Equity

Verification

Successful execution of theme appropriate Fair Housing poster, and submission to the Connecticut Fair Housing Center.

If you have any questions, or would like additional resources please contact Fionnuala Darby-Hudgens at The Connecticut Fair Housing Center

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