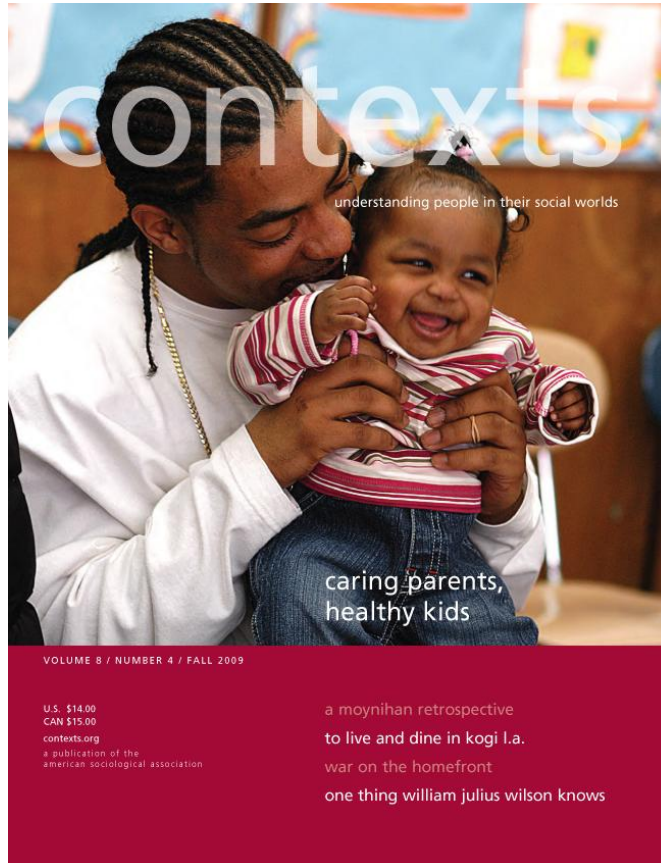


# Using *Contexts* in the Classroom



## A Collection of Case Studies and Active Learning Exercises to Accompany *Contexts* Feature Articles

Compiled by Kia Heise and Hollie Nyseth; Fall 2009

# Table of Contents

## Active Learning Exercises

### Aging Facts Quiz

To be used with “Facts and Fictions about an Aging America” by The McArthur Foundation Research Network on an Aging Society. *Contexts*. Fall 2009.

### Are You Cool?

To be used with “Roll Over Beethoven, There’s A New Way to Be Cool” by Richard A. Peterson. *Contexts*. Summer 2001.

### How Important is Marriage?

To be used with “Should the Government Promote Marriage?” by Andrew Cherlin. *Contexts*. Fall 2003.

### To Thumbs Up—Rating Human Rights

To be used with “Rights Activism in China.” By Ching Kwan Lee. *Contexts*. Summer 2008.

### Beliefs About Immigrants

To be used with “Muslims in America” by Jen’nan Ghazal Read. *Contexts*. Fall 2008.

### The N-Word

To be used with “Hip Hop Culture and America’s Most Taboo Word.” By Geoff Harkness. *Contexts*. Summer 2008.

### The State of the World

To be used with “The Scarcity Fallacy,” by Stephen J. Scanlan, J. Craig Jenkins, and Lindsey Petersen. *Contexts*. Winter 2010.

### Small Group Discussion on Teen Sex

To be used with “After the Sexual Revolution: Gender Politics in Teen Dating.” By Barbara Risman and Pepper Schwartz. *Contexts*. Spring 2002.

### Criminal Minds

To be used with *Safe at Home* by Mark Warr. *Contexts*. Summer 2009.

### Who’s A Minority?

To be used with “Why Are There So Many ‘Minorities?’” by Mitch Berbreier. *Contexts*. Winter 2004.

### A Discussion About Power

To be used with “Community Organizing and Social Change” by Randy Stoecker. *Contexts*. Winter 2009.

### Coping With Innocence After Death Row

To be used with “Coping with Innocence After Death Row.” By Sandra D. Westervelt and Kimberly J. Cook. *Contexts*. Fall 2008.

### A Matter of Degrees

To be used with “A Matter of Degrees” by William Beaver. *Contexts*. Spring 2009.

### **Legalize It: A Value Line**

To be used with “Legalize It? A Bulletin from the War on Drugs” by Erich Goode. *Contexts*. Summer 2004.

### **How Much Do You Know About U.S. Immigration?**

To be used with “Rethinking Crime and Immigration” by Robert J. Sampson. *Contexts*. Winter 2008.

### **Issues in Autism**

To be used with “Autism, Through a Social Lens.” By Stephen Poulson. *Contexts*. Spring 2009.

### **Sociology at the Movies**

To be used with “Enlightened Teenage Masculinity” by Robert C. Bulman and Nicole S. McCants. *Contexts* Summer 2008.

### **Crime on TV**

To be used with *Safe at Home* by Mark Warr. *Contexts*. Summer 2009.

### **Should English Be the Official Language of the U.S.?**

To be used with “English-Only Triumphs, but the Costs are High” by Alejandro Portes. *Contexts*. Spring 2002.

## **Case Studies**

### **Rights, Religion and Relativism**

To be used with “Keyword: Culture” by Joseph R. Gusfield. *Contexts*. Winter 2006

### **The Danger of Video Games**

To be used with “Do Video Games Kill?” by Karen Sternheimer. *Contexts*. Fall 2006

### **Soda Cola**

To be used with “Consumers with a Conscience: Will They Pay More?” by Howard Kimeldorf, Rachel Meyer, Monica Prasad, and Ian Robinson. *Contexts*. Winter 2006.

### **Coping With Innocence After Death Row**

To be used with “Coping with Innocence After Death Row.” By Sandra D. Westervelt and Kimberly J. Cook. *Contexts*. Fall 2008.

### **Sex Offenders and Space**

To be used with a forthcoming *Contexts* article on sex offenders and space.

### **Robin’s Story**

To be used with “Autism, Through a Social Lens.” By Stephen Poulson. *Contexts*. Spring 2009.

### **A Living Wage Campaign**

To be used with “Community Organizing and Social Change” by Randy Stoecker. *Contexts*. Winter 2009.

### **Community Organizing and Social Change**

To be used with “Community Organizing and Social Change” by Randy Stoecker. *Contexts*. Winter 2009.

### Intensive Mothering: What is a Mother's Role?

To be used with "Breastfeed at Your Own Risk" by Julie E. Artis. *Contexts*. Fall 2009.

### Praying in Class

To be used with "Muslims in America" by Jen'nan Ghazul Read. *Contexts*. Fall 2008.

### A Day in the Park

To be used with "Living Under the Trees." By David Bacon. *Contexts*. Fall 2008.

## Aging Facts Quiz

To be used with “Facts and Fictions about an Aging America” by The McArthur Foundation Research Network on an Aging Society. *Contexts*. Fall 2009.

After reading the following statements, indicate whether you think the statement is True or False.

- 1) \_\_\_\_ The large population of elderly people in the United States is a temporary phenomenon caused by the baby boom.
- 2) \_\_\_\_ Of the babies born in 2000, 83% are expected to survive past 65.
- 3) \_\_\_\_ Physical and mental capacity inevitably decline with biological aging.
- 4) \_\_\_\_ The consequences of aging mainly affect the elderly.
- 5) \_\_\_\_ Younger people are disproportionately minorities, and older people are disproportionately non-minorities.
- 6) \_\_\_\_ With the increasing deficit in the United States, policy makers will have to choose between investments in programs for the youth or the elderly.
- 7) \_\_\_\_ The biggest public problems facing the United States stem from Social Security and Medicare/Medicaid.
- 8) \_\_\_\_ The life expectancy could decrease within this century, meaning that people would not live as long they do today.

Answers: F, T, F, F, T F, F, T

Prepared by Kia Heise and Hollie Nyseth

## Are You Cool?

---

To be used with “Roll Over Beethoven, There’s A New Way to Be Cool” by Richard A. Peterson. *Contexts*. Summer 2001.

For generations, preference for “high” culture included an interest in cultural mediums not readily available to the masses and signified a marked difference between the elites and everyone else. Today, “elite” status requires a familiarity with *more* – not just higher – forms of culture. This has significantly changed the way fine arts are depicted in the media and thus understood by the public.

Fill out the questionnaire below on your demographic information and your taste in fine arts. After you’ve completed the questions, turn to the neighbor and discuss your answers.

1. Male or Female
2. Age
3. Where is your hometown?

*Answer never, rarely, sometimes, or often to the questions below:*

4. How often do you read a book for pleasure? \_\_\_\_\_
5. How often do you go to the movies? \_\_\_\_\_
6. How often do you read a newspaper? \_\_\_\_\_
7. How often do you watch the news on television? \_\_\_\_\_
8. How often do you watch other types of live (non-DVRed) television? \_\_\_\_\_
9. When was the last time you visited an art museum? \_\_\_\_\_
10. When was the last time you visited the theater? \_\_\_\_\_

*Provide your top three answers to the questions below:*

11. Who are your favorite musical artists?
12. What are your favorite musical genres?
13. What are your favorite plays?
14. What are your favorite ballets?
15. What are your favorite operas?

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- Are you and/or your partner cultural “omnivores” or “univores?”
- Are your tastes reflective of your demographic information?
- Do you think your answers are reflective of changes in medium preferences among the greater population?
- What implications do the aforementioned changes in medium likes/dislikes have for the future of mass media as a whole?

## How Important is Marriage?

To be used with “Should the Government Promote Marriage?” by Andrew Cherlin. *Contexts*. Fall 2003.

Directions: Get into groups of 3 or 4. As a group, find evidence given in the article that supports both sides of this debate.

- Imagine that you are a proponent of the “Marriage Movement.” What evidence can you find in this article that supports your argument that marriage is the best family form?
- Now, imagine you are part of the “Diversity Defenders.” What evidence can you find in the article that supports your argument that marriage is one of many positive family forms?

Now that you have examined some evidence for both sides of the debate, discuss and answer these questions with your group:

1. Do you think the government should promote marriage? If so, is there a specific group that should be targeted? If not, why not?
2. Do you think that a child who is raised by married parents benefits from their marriage?
3. Do you think that children who are raised in other family forms (e.g. single mothers, single fathers, gay and lesbian couples, etc.) benefit just as much as children who are raised by a married mother and father?

## Two Thumbs Up: Rating Human Rights

To be used with “Rights Activism in China.” By Ching Kwan Lee. *Contexts*. Summer 2008.

Below is a simplified list of the 30 human rights accorded to every human being in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Place a “+” by the 5 human rights that you think are the most important and an “-” by the 5 rights that you think are the least important.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Right to Equality
- \_\_\_\_\_ Freedom from Discrimination
- \_\_\_\_\_ Right to Life, Liberty, Personal Security
- \_\_\_\_\_ Freedom from Slavery
- \_\_\_\_\_ Freedom from Torture and Degrading Treatment
- \_\_\_\_\_ Right to Recognition as a Person before the Law
- \_\_\_\_\_ Right to Equality before the Law
- \_\_\_\_\_ Right to Remedy by Competent Tribunal
- \_\_\_\_\_ Freedom from Arbitrary Arrest and Exile
- \_\_\_\_\_ Right to Fair Public Hearing
- \_\_\_\_\_ Right to be Considered Innocent until Proven Guilty
- \_\_\_\_\_ Freedom from Interference with Privacy, Family, Home and Correspondence
- \_\_\_\_\_ Right to Free Movement in and out of the Country
- \_\_\_\_\_ Right to Asylum in other Countries from Persecution
- \_\_\_\_\_ Right to a Nationality and the Freedom to Change It
- \_\_\_\_\_ Right to Marriage and Family
- \_\_\_\_\_ Right to Own Property
- \_\_\_\_\_ Freedom of Belief and Religion
- \_\_\_\_\_ Freedom of Opinion and Information

- \_\_\_\_\_ Right of Peaceful Assembly and Association
- \_\_\_\_\_ Right to Participate in Government and in Free Elections
- \_\_\_\_\_ Right to Social Security
- \_\_\_\_\_ Right to Desirable Work and to Join Trade Unions
- \_\_\_\_\_ Right to Rest and Leisure
- \_\_\_\_\_ Right to Adequate Living Standard
- \_\_\_\_\_ Right to Education
- \_\_\_\_\_ Right to Participate in the Cultural Life of Community
- \_\_\_\_\_ Right to a Social Order that Articulates this Document
- \_\_\_\_\_ Community Duties Essential to Free and Full Development
- \_\_\_\_\_ Freedom from State or Personal Interference in the above Rights

Questions to consider:

1. Explain the rationale behind the rights you chose as most important and those that you listed as least important.
2. How do you think your culture impacts what you view as important human rights?
3. Are there any rights that you think should be included that are not on this list? Are there any rights that you think are unnecessary?
4. Does it seem like some rights are prioritized more than others today?

# Beliefs About Immigrants

To be used with “Muslims in America” by Jen’nan Ghazal Read. *Contexts*. Fall 2008.

**Method:** This active learning exercise can be used to discover the general beliefs held by students regarding immigrants. It is also a good tool for discussing commonly held beliefs and how we form our beliefs. This activity will also present information to dispel myths about immigrants. You will want to use this learning activity before the topic is explored through reading or class discussion.

## Directions:

1. Give the activity to students and ask them to complete.
2. When the students have entered their answers, ask students to raise their hand if they have agreed with 8 or more questions, then 5 or more questions, then less than 5.
3. Explain to students that all of the questions are myths about immigrants and untrue.
4. Send the students home with the readings above and ask them to find information that disputes these myths.
5. During the next class period have students break up into small groups.
6. Have them discuss the questions. Are there any questions they still can't believe are false? Why? Do other students have different views on it? Did they find that the information they read changed their minds? Why? What questions do they still have?
7. Once they have had a chance to discuss the statements in a small group, assign each of them a statement to present to the class. The students will present the data and information to the class on why the statement is false.
8. After they present, the other students in the class will have an opportunity to question them about the information, and can discuss any lingering doubts.
9. End the class with a discussion around why we believe what we believe and how we develop our beliefs. Discuss methods for thinking about information critically and how to gather information that is accurate.

## Websites:

Immigration: The Demographic and Economic Facts  
Summary of Important Facts about Immigration  
Published by the Cato Institute and the National Immigration Forum  
[http://www.cato.org/pubs/policy\\_report/pr-imsum.html](http://www.cato.org/pubs/policy_report/pr-imsum.html)  
Website: [migrationpolicy.org/foreignborn](http://migrationpolicy.org/foreignborn)

## Beliefs About Immigrants

This is not an exam or a quiz but a survey of your opinions. Please respond to all the questions with true or false.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Immigrants are taking jobs away from Americans.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ Most Muslims are Arab.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ Most immigrants are illegal.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ Illegal immigrants don't pay taxes.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ Most immigrants are uneducated.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ Most Muslims are recent immigrants to the U.S.
7. \_\_\_\_\_ Most immigrants don't speak English and don't want to.
8. \_\_\_\_\_ Muslims do not believe in the democratic process.
9. \_\_\_\_\_ Immigrants use a vast amount of resources and weaken the U.S.
10. \_\_\_\_\_ A majority of Muslims tend to be very strict in their religious practices, ie:  
extremists.
11. \_\_\_\_\_ Immigrants drain resources and cause taxes to increase because of the amount of  
services they need, i.e.: paying for immigrant children to go to school.

Total:                      # Agree       \_\_\_\_\_  
                                  # Disagree    \_\_\_\_\_  
                                  # Not Sure   \_\_\_\_\_

## The N-Word

To be used with “Hip Hop Culture and America’s Most Taboo Word.” By Geoff Harkness. *Contexts*. Summer 2008.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Position: ***It should not acceptable for anyone to use the “n-word.”***

Work with your small group to create 4 arguments for this position.

1.

2.

3.

4.

### The Debate

Pick one or two people from your group to be the group’s debate leaders. The leader(s) will each argue their position to the rest of the class. After every leader from one position is finished presenting their arguments, the other three position groups will each be allowed 1 counter argument based on the statements made by the presenting position leader(s). We will follow this process for all 4 positions. After every group has presented their positions, we will open the floor up for debate. After 5 minutes of open debate, we will step out the assigned positions and everyone will have the opportunity to share her or his own opinions on this matter.

Name\_\_\_\_\_

Position: ***It should only be acceptable for Black people to use the “n-word.”***

Work with your small group to create 4 arguments for this position.

1.

2.

3.

4.

### The Debate

Pick one or two people from your group to be the group's debate leaders. The leader(s) will each argue their position to the rest of the class. After every leader from one position is finished presenting their arguments, the other three position groups will each be allowed 1 counter argument based on the statements made by the presenting position leader(s). We will follow this process for all 4 positions. After every group has presented their positions, we will open the floor up for debate. After 5 minutes of open debate, we will step out the assigned positions and everyone will have the opportunity to share her or his own opinions on this matter.

Name\_\_\_\_\_

Position: ***It should be acceptable for anyone to use the “n-word.”***

Work with your small group to create 4 arguments for this position.

1.

2.

3.

4.

### The Debate

Pick one or two people from your group to be the group's debate leaders. The leader(s) will each argue their position to the rest of the class. After every leader from one position is finished presenting their arguments, the other three position groups will each be allowed 1 counter argument based on the statements made by the presenting position leader(s). We will follow this process for all 4 positions. After every group has presented their positions, we will open the floor up for debate. After 5 minutes of open debate, we will step out the assigned positions and everyone will have the opportunity to share her or his own opinions on this matter.

Name\_\_\_\_\_

Position:

***It should only be acceptable for Blacks and Latinos to use the “n-word.”***

Work with your small group to create 4 arguments for this position.

1.

2.

3.

4.

### The Debate

Pick one or two people from your group to be the group's debate leaders. The leader(s) will each argue their position to the rest of the class. After every leader from one position is finished presenting their arguments, the other three position groups will each be allowed 1 counter argument based on the statements made by the presenting position leader(s). We will follow this process for all 4 positions. After every group has presented their positions, we will open the floor up for debate. After 5 minutes of open debate, we will step out the assigned positions and everyone will have the opportunity to share her or his own opinions on this matter.

## The State of the World: A Quiz

To be used with "The Scarcity Fallacy," by Stephen J. Scanlan, J. Craig Jenkins, and Lindsey Petersen. *Contexts*. Winter 2010.

1. How many people live on less than \$2 a day?
  - a. 2.5 billion
  - b. 2.7 billion
  - c. 3 billion
  - d. 3.2 billion
2. What percentage of the people who live in extreme poverty are women?
  - a. 50
  - b. 60
  - c. 70
  - d. 80
3. Someone dies from starvation every \_\_\_\_\_ seconds.
4. Approximately how many people do not have access to safe drinking water?
  - a. 100 million
  - b. 500 million
  - c. 750 million
  - d. 1 billion
5. How many people are hungry every day?
  - a. 200 million
  - b. 600 million
  - c. 800 million
  - d. 900 million
6. \_\_\_\_\_ people lack access to basic healthcare.
7. How many children die from malnutrition before their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday every year?
  - a. 3 million
  - b. 4 million
  - c. 5 million
  - d. 6 million
8. A woman dies in pregnancy or childbirth every \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. 1 minute
  - b. 2 minutes
  - c. 3 minutes
  - d. 4 minutes

9. How many people die from malaria each year? \_\_\_\_\_

10. Approximately \_\_\_\_\_ people are homeless.

- a. 50 million
- b. 75 million
- c. 100 million
- d. 125 million

Answer Key:

- 1. B
- 2. C
- 3. 3.6
- 4. D
- 5. C
- 6. 1.3 billion
- 7. D
- 8. A
- 9. 3 million
- 10 C

All answers can be found at the UN Millenium Project website. See the websites of the following organizations for more information: UN Development Program, World Bank, UNIFEM, Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.

## Small Group Discussion on Teen Sex

To be used with “After the Sexual Revolution: Gender Politics in Teen Dating.” By Barbara Risman and Pepper Schwartz. *Contexts*. Spring 2002.

Video 1: <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/21134540/vp/6875283#6875283> (MSNBC )

Video 2: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x1112TfojXY> (20/20)

Video 3: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kb5JfgMIGzE> (Tyra Banks)

### **PART I**

*After watching the videos, discuss and answer these questions with your small group:*

1) Do you think there is a sexual double standard for female and male teenagers? Did you observe this in your high school? Here at college? In your family?

2) Do you think that the double standard endures throughout life or do you think it disappears after the teenage years?

3) Do you consider teenagers having sex a social problem? Would your parents agree?

4) If it is a social problem, what are some specific problems/dangers/concerns that you see with teenagers having sex?

5) Do you think there are emotional consequences for sexually active teenagers? If so, what are they?

6) What was your high school sex education class like? Do you think the class had any effect on students' sexual activity or their views on sexuality? Did it help prevent sexual activity or not? What do you think were the goals of the class?

7) What do you think the focus of sex education classes should be? Should they promote abstinence or focus on prevention of physical, emotional, and/or social problems of teenage sex?

## Part II

Based on what your group discussed, create a “curriculum” for a high school sex education course that would confront the issues that you brought up about teenage sexuality.

Questions to think about:

- 1) What were the issues that your group talked about? Did you identify physical, social, cultural, and/or psychological issues?
- 2) How do you think an educator should approach these issues with high school students?

---

Our “curriculum” would include these topics and strategies:

- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
-

## Criminal Minds

This exercise requires that you give an HONEST depiction of your past illegal behaviors. All answers will be anonymous. Part 1 requires that you report your personal engagement in illegal acts whether as a perpetrator or victim. Part 2 requires that you guess the % of engagement in these acts by fellow classmates. Part 3 requires that you guess the rate per 100,000 of a variety of specific crimes committed in the US.

Please indicate if you are Male or Female (circle one).

<u>Illegal Acts</u>	Part 1 You	Part 2 Class	Part 3 U.S.
• Have you ever shoplifted	Y/N	_____ %	_____
• Have you ever hit someone	Y/N	_____ %	_____
• Have you ever driven above the speed limit	Y/N	_____ %	_____
• Have you ever had a drink and driven	Y/N	_____ %	_____
• Did you/do you drink alcoholic beverages under the legal age	Y/N	_____ %	_____
• Have you ever smoked marijuana	Y/N	_____ %	_____
• Have you ever sold illegal drugs	Y/N	_____ %	_____
• Have you ever smoked/snorted/sniffed/drunk/swallowed/ injected an illegal drug	Y/N	_____ %	_____
• Have you ever stolen someone's personal property	Y/N	_____ %	_____
• Have you ever committed arson	Y/N	_____ %	_____
• Have you ever stolen a car	Y/N	_____ %	_____
• Have you ever committed vandalism	Y/N	_____ %	_____
• Have you ever committed robbery	Y/N	_____ %	_____
• Have you ever committed murder	Y/N	_____ %	_____
• Have you ever been arrested	Y/N	_____ %	_____
<u>Victimization</u>			
• Have you ever been robbed	Y/N	_____ %	_____
• Have you ever been hit	Y/N	_____ %	_____
• Have you ever been a victim of a drunken driver	Y/N	_____ %	_____
• Have you ever been offered alcoholic beverage during which you were under age	Y/N	_____ %	_____
• Have you ever been offered marijuana	Y/N	_____ %	_____
• Has anyone ever sold marijuana or any illegal drugs to you	Y/N	_____ %	_____
• Have you ever witnessed someone smoke/snort/sniff/drink/ swallow/inject an illegal substance	Y/N	_____ %	_____

- |   |     |         |       |
|---|-----|---------|-------|
| • Has anyone ever broken into your home   | Y/N | _____ % | _____ |
| • Has anyone ever burnt any of your property  | Y/N | _____ % | _____ |
| • Has anyone ever stolen your car   | Y/N | _____ % | _____ |
| • Have you been a victim of vandalism   | Y/N | _____ % | _____ |
| • Has anyone murdered someone close to you (family or close friend)                 | Y/N | _____ % | _____ |
|   |     |         |       |
| • Has anyone ever sexually assaulted you  | Y/N | _____ % | _____ |
| • Have you been the victim of domestic violence                                     | Y/N | _____ % | _____ |
| • Have you ever been kidnapped  | Y/N | _____ % | _____ |
| • Have you ever had to make a 911 call that resulted in the arrest of a perpetrator | Y/N | _____ % | _____ |

\*Note: rates will be retrieved from BJS- Bureau of Justice Statistics website to compare answers with reported data.

Violent crimes: <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/glance/tables/viortrdtab.htm>

Property crimes: <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/glance/tables/proptrdtab.htm>

Victimization: [http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/cvict\\_v.htm](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/cvict_v.htm)

Prepared by Jessica Molina

To be used with *Safe at Home* by Mark Warr. *Contexts*. Summer 2009.

## Who's a Minority?

To be used with "Why Are There So Many 'Minorities?'" by Mitch Berbreier. *Contexts*. Winter 2004.

The following is a list of social groups that have advocated or could potentially advocate to be considered "minorities," awarding them protection from discrimination under the law in the United States. Put a checkmark by the groups that you think should legally protected from discrimination. Briefly explain your decisions.

\_\_\_ African Americans

\_\_\_ People with disabilities

\_\_\_ Women

\_\_\_ Gay and Lesbian people

\_\_\_ Transgender and transsexual people

\_\_\_ The elderly

\_\_\_ Obese people

\_\_\_ Latinos

\_\_\_ Asian Americans

\_\_\_ Legal Immigrants

\_\_\_ Illegal Immigrants

\_\_\_ Felons

\_\_\_ Native Americans

\_\_\_ Poor people

\_\_\_ Muslims

\_\_\_ White supremacists

\_\_\_ Non-English speakers

\_\_\_ Atheists

Prepared by Kia Heise and Hollie Nyseth.

## Active Learning Exercise: Discussion about Power

To be used with “Community Organizing and Social Change” by Randy Stoecker. *Contexts*. Winter 2009.

Understanding power – what it is, why organizations should seek it, and how to use it – is essential to community organizing. This exercise is meant to stimulate a robust conversation among students about power and get them engaged with the topic. The instructor can then introduce the way in which community organizers think about power.

### Instructions for the Instructor

1. Before class, make four signs labeled, “agree,” “strongly agree,” “disagree,” and “strongly disagree.” Hang one sign in each corner of the classroom.
2. Tell students that you will be reading a series of statements about power. After each statement, they should go stand under the sign that most closely reflects their own reaction to the statement.
3. Read the first statement (listed below). After students have assembled in groups under the signs, ask each group to discuss why they picked that particular position and to choose a spokesperson to explain their position to the class.
4. Give the students about 3 minutes (depending on the class size) to discuss their position and choose a spokesperson. Then have the four spokespeople explain their group’s positions.
5. Now ask everyone to leave their group and go to the center of the room. Then ask students to again go stand under the sign that most closely reflects their own reaction to the statement. (This gives students the opportunity to change their positions, if they choose to do so.) Ask whether, after hearing the various arguments, any students changed their position. Then ask a few volunteers to explain why they decided to change their positions.
6. Repeat this exercise for the following statements. You can manage the length of the exercise based on how many statements you discuss.

### Statements about Power

- Power corrupts.
- You can’t get anything done without power.
- Power comes from position or money.
- Organizations that want to change things in their community should seek power.

## Active Learning Exercise: “Coping with Innocence After Death Row”

To be used with “Coping with Innocence After Death Row.” By Sandra D. Westervelt and Kimberly J. Cook. *Contexts*. Fall 2008.

Imagine you're an eyewitness to an armed robbery in a convenience store. Later, when the police arrive, you're going to be able to tell the investigating officers explicit details of the event and give an accurate description of the robber.



Figure 1. Note- Put this picture on the projector.

This man was caught on a security camera video. A short while after this video was taken, this man shot and killed a security guard. Look at this man for a brief moment. Then look at the "lineup" (below) to see if you can identify him.

Having seen the gunman, you should now be able to pick him out from a photospread. In examining the photospread below, keep in mind that the gunman's appearance might have changed somewhat. Take your time and examine every person. When you are sure of your decision, simply circle your choice.

Questions:

## A Matter of Degrees

To be used with “A Matter of Degrees” by William Beaver. *Contexts*. Spring 2009.

Below is a list of reasons for attending college that students commonly cite. Please check the reasons that were motivating factors for you to attend college.

- \_\_\_\_\_ To get a better job
- \_\_\_\_\_ To acquire a set of skills
- \_\_\_\_\_ To earn a higher income
- \_\_\_\_\_ To follow a significant other
- \_\_\_\_\_ To meet new people
- \_\_\_\_\_ Due to doubts about what to do with one’s life
- \_\_\_\_\_ To get a degree
- \_\_\_\_\_ To get out of parents’/guardians’ house
- \_\_\_\_\_ To meet a future husband or wife
- \_\_\_\_\_ Pressure from parents
- \_\_\_\_\_ To make a difference
- \_\_\_\_\_ Pressure from high school (teachers, guidance counselor)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Friends were going to college
- \_\_\_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Discussion questions:

1. Why do you think most students go to college?
2. Do you think that you are learning skills in college that you will use in your job someday? Does you think some majors teach more practical skills than others? If so, how?

3. What was *your* main reason for going to college?
  
4. In your opinion, what is the value of a college degree? In other words, what does it show?

## Legalize It: A Value Line

To be used with “Legalize It? A Bulletin from the War on Drugs” by Erich Goode. *Contexts*. Summer 2004.

Directions for Instructors: Create a “value line” in your classroom. On one side of the room, put up a sign that says “strongly agree.” Put up a sign that says “strongly disagree” at the other end. Then read the following statements one by one in any order. After you read each statement, students will have the chance to position themselves in the line to represent the extent to which they agree with the statement. Once students are standing in the line, ask a few of them to share why they chose that particular spot. As students are sharing their opinions, other students are free to change their places on the line. You can then ask students that moved why they moved (i.e. what about their fellow classmates’ arguments was convincing).

All illicit drugs should be legalized.

Enforcing drug laws has made the drug problem worse.

Marijuana should be legal for medicinal uses.

Only marijuana should be legalized.

Marijuana should be legalized and controlled and taxed by the government.

Marijuana should be legalized but only in small, personal use amounts.

Club drugs, like ecstasy and speed, should be legalized.

Cocaine should be legalized.

Heroin should be legalized.

The Government should promote programs that supply clean needles to intravenous drug users.

Alcohol is more dangerous than marijuana.

Cigarettes are more dangerous than marijuana.

The government should spend more money on treatment programs for drug users than on enforcement of drug laws (i.e. locking up drug users).

Legalizing drugs would be very dangerous for society.

## How Much Do You Know About U.S. Immigration?

To be used with “Rethinking Crime and Immigration” by Robert J. Sampson. *Contexts*. Winter 2008.

Answer the following questions regarding recent immigration to the United States:

1. True or False: Immigration is associated with lower crime rates in most urban, disadvantaged neighborhoods.
2. Where are most recent immigrants in the U.S. originally from? You can choose more than one.
  - a. The Middle East
  - b. Africa
  - c. Asia
  - d. Latin America
3. What percentage of the world’s immigrants come to the United States?
  - a. 40%
  - b. 25%
  - c. 10%
  - d. Less than 1%
4. What is the most common reason that people emigrate to the U.S.?
  - a. Employment
  - b. Escape persecution or harsh conditions (seeking refugee or asylum status)
  - c. To join a family member
  - d. Fleeing criminal charges
5. True or False: Most immigrants come to the U.S. legally.
6. Where did most refugees who resettled in the U.S. come from in 2002?
  - a. Iran
  - b. Former Soviet Union
  - c. Afghanistan
  - d. Sudan
  - e. Vietnam
7. Immigrants made up \_\_\_\_ percent of the U.S. population in 2000?
  - a. 5
  - b. 11
  - c. 22
  - d. 29

8. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, the total number of immigrants living in the U.S. was more than 31 million. How many undocumented immigrants were living in the U.S. that same year (estimated)?
- a. 7 million
  - b. 10 million
  - c. 15 million
  - d. 20 million
9. In 2000, almost three quarters of immigrants settled in \_\_\_\_ states?
- a. 4
  - b. 5
  - c. 6
  - d. 7
10. About what percent of recent immigrants do not speak English in the home?
- a. 55
  - b. 65
  - c. 75
  - d. 85

Answers: True, F., D., C., True, B., B., A., C. (California, New York, Texas, Florida, New Jersey and Illinois), D.

Prepared by Hollie Nyseth.

Adapted from PBS Independent Television Series "Immigration Myths and Realities Quiz." Detailed explanations of the answers are found at this website:

<http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/newamericans/quiz.html>.

# Issues in Autism

To be used with “Autism, Through a Social Lens.” By Stephen Poulson. *Contexts*. Spring 2009.

## Purpose

The purpose of this exercise is to provide you with an opportunity to examine autism through a social lens. Upon completion of this activity, you will be able to:

1. Understand the increasing medicalization of society and how it influences trends in the diagnosis of autism;
2. Outline social factors that affect the distribution of autism and inequalities in access to treatment;
3. Understand how families cope with caring for autistic children; and
4. Understand gender differences in how parents respond to autistic children.

## Procedure

1. Complete the quiz (8 minutes).
2. Discuss your answer with a person sitting next to you (10 minutes).
3. Your instructor will lead a review of the correct answers to the exercise in class (12 minutes).

Indicate whether each of the following statement is true or false.

	True	False
1. Today, the prevalence of autism is 10 times greater than that in the 1980s. This means that there are more people today with autism than just a few decades ago.	_____	_____
2. Girls are affected with autism more frequently than are boys because parents tend to ignore their daughters' needs and pay more attention to their sons.	_____	_____
3. Bad parenting leads to autism.	_____	_____
4. All children with autism are withdrawn, avoid eye contact, engage in self-injurious behavior, and lack the ability to form emotional attachments.	_____	_____
5. Once a child with autism is cured, people would regard him/her as normal again.	_____	_____
6. Given that autism affect children irrespective of gender, race or socioeconomic status, we do not need to worry about social inequality issue in autism studies.	_____	_____
7. Fathers are more likely to leave their employment to care for their autistic children compared with mothers.	_____	_____
8. The highest levels of emotional distress for parents with autistic children occurred when they were first identifying their children's disorder.	_____	_____

## Sociology at the Movies

To be used with “Enlightened Teenage Masculinity” by Robert C. Bulman and Nicole S. McCants. *Contexts* Summer 2008.

**Directions:** “Enlightened Teenage Masculinity” analyzes the movie *Superbad* through a sociological lens. Use this review as a guide to write your own review of a popular movie. While watching the movie, take notes on themes that relate to course material. Write down quotes from the film that exemplify your themes. After you’ve watched the movie and organized your observations into sociological themes, write a review of the movie.

## Crime on TV

To be used with *Safe at Home* by Mark Warr. *Contexts*. Summer 2009.

**Directions:** Form groups of 4-5 students. Remember to assign each person in the group a role (note-taker, timer, leader, observer, etc), and answer the following questions.

1. Brainstorm all of the television shows that you can think of that are about crime.
2. Why do you think that these types of shows are so popular?
3. What do you think is the main audience for these shows?
4. Do you think that these shows instill a fear of crime in people? Why or why not?

## Should English be the Official Language of the United States? In-Class Debate

To be used with “English-Only Triumphs, but the Costs are High” by Alejandro Portes. *Contexts*. Spring 2002.

Directions: Students will read the article before the class period and come to class prepared with 3 arguments in favor of English being the official language of the United States (check out <http://us-english.org> for arguments on this side) and 3 arguments opposed to English being the official language. Students will be assigned a side to take when they come into class. The two sides will break into smaller groups of 4-5 and discuss their arguments supporting their assigned side. Each small group will have 1 or 2 representatives who will be responsible for presenting their arguments to the other side. All representatives from one side will present their groups arguments, followed by all representatives from the other side. While one side is presenting, each student on the opposing side will come up with a rebuttal to an argument presented. After both sides have presented, the floor will be open for debate. After the debate, all students will come out of character and will have the opportunity to express their opinions on the issue. Afterwards, all students will write an in-class reflection on what they learned from the debate and how they feel about this issue.

To be completed before class:

English should be the official language of the United States because:

1)

2)

3)

English should not be the official language of the United States because:

1)

2)

3)

### In-class Small Group Work:

After all members of your group have presented their arguments, pick 3 that the group agrees are the best arguments for the debate:

1)

2)

3)

As the other side presents their arguments, think of a rebuttal to one or more of their points.

Rebuttal(s):

---

Individual Reflection (after the debate):

What was your position on this issue before the debate?

What did you learn from this debate?

What is your position on this issue now?

# Rights, Religion and Relativism

To be used with “Keyword: Culture” by Joseph R. Gusfield. *Contexts*. Winter 2006.

Kelly is discussing women’s rights with a group of her friends before their International Law class starts. As an avid feminist, she prides herself in her belief that women and men are equal. She says to her friends, “I feel sorry for the women that feel like they have to submit themselves to men. I mean, look at Muslim women. Why should they have to cover their heads or faces? They are beautiful. It’s a violation of their human rights to be treated as inferior to men. Why should they have to wear one if men don’t have to?”

Several of Kelly’s friends look uncomfortable and motion with their eyes to the right of Kelly. She glances over and realizes that Salma, who is originally from Kenya, is sitting next to them wearing her hijab. Thankfully for Kelly, their professor enters the room and begins the day’s lecture.

After class, Salma approaches Kelly as she putting her things away in her backpack. Salma explains that she heard Kelly’s conversation and that she wears a hijab because in her culture it is empowering. To her, a hijab is a sign of her submission to Allah. It also makes it so that men judge her by her personality rather than by her appearance. Surprised, Kelly apologizes. Yet, she is confused. She thought hijabs were degrading and a violation of women’s fundamental rights. How could two people view women’s right so differently?

## Discussion Questions:

1. Do you agree with Kelly that hijabs violate women’s rights?
2. If human rights are universal, how do we account for cultural differences?
3. Are human rights and cultural relativism fundamentally incompatible? Which one is more important?
4. Who has the power to decide how human rights are interpreted?

## Case Study – The Danger of Video Games

---

To be used with “Do Video Games Kill?” by Karen Sternheimer. *Contexts*. Fall 2006

A masked 18-year-old man stormed Mayberry High School on last Monday in the North Carolina town of Mayberry, killing 14 and wounding as many as 57 people before killing himself. You were in class when the barrage of gunfire began and luckily escaped unharmed thanks to your quick thinking teacher who locked the door in your windowless classroom before the gunman tried to enter. A few of your friends, including your best friend and neighbor, were among the 14 killed when the gunman opened fire on the students eating lunch in the cafeteria.

The young man, identified only as Robert B., was known to authorities and due in court on Tuesday for weapons violations, local police said. According to media reports, he had a fondness for war simulation and computer games. You can personally attest to this as you have had numerous conversations with Robert over the past year regarding your common love for war-themed video games. In fact, you’ve even been to his house to play on occasion and never noticed anything strange. In fact, Robert was pretty well liked among his peers.

The autopsy report indicated high levels of illegal narcotics in Robert’s system. The school guidance counselor reported that Robert had been having difficulty with his parents’ recent divorce but never exhibited behavior to cause concern that he might harm himself or others. He often talked about his video game play but not in way that seemed obsessive or out of touch with reality. All-in-all, this outburst of violence came as a complete shock.

The families of the victims have filed a class action suit against the video game company that manufactures the games Robert (and you) played and have personally requested that you testify against the company in a court of law to highlight the excessive violence of the games and the negative impact they may have on already emotionally or mentally fragile youth. The families are hoping this lawsuit will result in a hefty monetary penalty but also a potential state or nationwide ban on games that simulate gratuitous killing.

1. Would you testify against the video game manufacturer? If so, what would you say?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Should video game manufacturers shoulder some of the blame when youths commit violent attacks that mirror those from their games?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. How has the media shaped public opinion on violent video games?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. Is this public opinion warranted? Why or why not?

# Soda Cola

To be used with “Consumers with a Conscience: Will They Pay More?” by Howard Kimeldorf, Rachel Meyer, Monica Prasad, and Ian Robinson. *Contexts*. Winter 2006.

As a University of Pleasantville Board Member, Mike has a large decision ahead of him. Two years ago, his university signed a 5-year contract with Soda Cola. The university only sells and serves Soda Cola brand beverages on campus, and in return the university receives financial support from Soda Cola for research, new buildings, and student activities.

However, a group of several hundred students on campus have prepared a petition that asks the university to switch soda venders on the basis of alleged human rights violations by Soda Cola in other countries. In some countries, Soda Cola companies have been accused of having unsafe working conditions. In other countries, Soda Cola has also been accused of damaging the environment and contributing to pollution in rivers that the locals rely on for drinking water. While Mike understands these students’ concerns, he also has to consider his obligations to the university. Times are tough, and the money the university receives from Soda Cola goes toward education and research. Furthermore, he wonders if other soda vendors have better human rights records.

Either way, the Board of Directors of the university will be reviewing the petition; and Mike will have to express his opinion on whether or not the university should continue business with Soda Cola.

## Discussion Questions:

1. If you were Mike, what would you suggest that the Board do?
2. If the university ends their contract with Soda Cola, they will lose a substantial amount of research and education funding from the company. Is it worth it?
3. Do Soda Cola consumers have the right to ask the company to investigate their practices?

## Case Study: “Coping with Innocence After Death Row”

To be used with “Coping with Innocence After Death Row.” By Sandra D. Westervelt and Kimberly J. Cook. *Contexts*. Fall 2008.

Factual background: In two separate incidents in July 1984, a male assailant broke into an apartment, severed phone wires, sexually assaulted a woman, and searched through her belongings, taking money and other items.

On August 1, 1984, Ronald Cotton was arrested for the rapes. In January 1985, Cotton was convicted by a jury of one count of rape and one count of burglary. In a second trial in November 1987, Cotton was convicted of both rapes and two counts of burglary. A County Superior Court sentenced Cotton to life plus 54 years.

Prosecutor's evidence at trial: Cotton's alibi was supported by family members. The jury was not allowed to hear evidence that the second victim failed to pick Cotton out of either a photo array or a police lineup. The prosecution based its case on several points:

- A photo identification was made by one of the victims.
- A police lineup identification was made by one of the victims.
- A flashlight in Cotton's home resembled the one used by the assailant.
- Rubber from Cotton's tennis shoe was consistent with rubber found at one of the crime scenes.

Postconviction challenges: Cotton's attorney filed an appeal. The North Carolina Supreme Court overturned the conviction because the second victim had picked another man out of the lineup and the trial court did not allow this evidence to be heard by the jury.

In November 1987, Cotton was retried for both rapes. The second victim had decided that Cotton was the assailant. Before the second trial, a man in prison who had been convicted for crimes similar to these assaults stated to another inmate that he had committed Cotton's crimes. The superior court judge refused to allow this information into evidence, and Cotton was convicted of both rapes and sentenced to life.

The next year Cotton's appellate defender filed a brief that did not argue the failure to admit the second suspect's confession. The conviction was affirmed. In 1994, two new lawyers, at the request of the chief appellate defender, took over Cotton's defense. They filed a motion for appropriate relief on the grounds of inadequate appeal counsel. They also filed a motion for DNA testing that was granted in October 1994. In the spring of 1995, the Burlington Police Department turned over all evidence that contained the assailant's semen for DNA testing.

DNA results: The samples from one victim were too deteriorated to be conclusive, but the samples from the other victim's vaginal swab and underwear were submitted to PCR testing and showed no match to Cotton. At the defense attorneys' request, the results were sent to the State Bureau of Investigation's DNA database containing the DNA patterns of convicted, violent felons in North

Carolina prisons. The State's database showed a match with the convict who had earlier confessed to the crime.

Conclusion: After Cotton's attorneys received the DNA test results in May 1995, they contacted the district attorney, who joined the defense attorneys in the motion to dismiss the charges. On June 30, 1995, Cotton was officially cleared of all charges and released from prison. In July 1995, the governor of North Carolina officially pardoned Cotton, making him eligible for \$5,000 compensation from the State. Cotton had served ten and one-half years of his sentence.

Discussion Questions:

1. Do you think Cotton's wrongful conviction could have been prevented? In what stages of the investigation and trial? How?
2. Do you think the use of DNA evidence can prevent any wrongful conviction? Why or why not?
3. Do you think Cotton should receive any monetary compensation from the state? Why or why not?
4. If you are for monetary compensation, what would be a reasonable amount of compensation?
5. Does Cotton deserve any non-monetary compensation (e.g. formal apology from the victim who mistakenly identified him as the offender)?

## Sex Offenders and Space: A Case Study

To be used with a forthcoming *Contexts* article on sex offenders and space.

Several years ago, Frank Smith was convicted of a sexual offense. He served 3 years in jail; but since he is 60 years old and behaved well while imprisoned, he was able to leave jail on probation. He was happy to return to his house, even though he has to wear an ankle bracelet for a year that tracks his whereabouts. He was also embarrassed to return home, since he is from a small town and his case was heavily covered by local news station.

Several days after he returned home, his neighbor, Julia Wilson, started a campaign to force him out of the neighborhood. Julia insists that her young children are not safe living next to a sex offender, and she is rallying other neighbors in an attempt to force Frank to move.

Realizing that he is not wanted, Frank starts to think about his options. He could move, but anyone in his new neighborhood would be able to search a national database of sex offenders and identify him. On top of this, he also has to consider employment opportunities. He is not able to retire, but he doubts that anyone would hire him due to his conviction. Where does he go?

1. Do you think Frank should willingly leave his neighborhood?
2. Do you think Frank's neighbors have a right to request that he leave the neighborhood?
3. What would you do if you were Frank's neighbor?

# Robin's Story

To be used with "Autism, Through a Social Lens." By Stephen Poulson. *Contexts*. Spring 2009.

## Purpose

The purpose of this case study is to provide you with an opportunity to examine how social inequality manifests itself in the diagnosis and treatment of autism.

## Procedure

1. Complete the questions (15 minutes).
2. Your instructor will lead a discussion of this case in class (25 minutes).

Read the following case study, prepare written responses to the questions at the end of the study and prepare to discuss your responses later with other classmates.

Robin is the son of Kathleen, a Filipino immigrant, and Tom, an immigrant from Jordan. Since Robin was three years old, his mother Kathleen had been aware of his difficulties. He was not talking, making eye contact or showing interest in other children. However, many of Tom's Jordanian family members told her, "He's fine. Boys develop slower than girls." Kathleen and her Filipino family knew something was wrong, but the word for autism doesn't even exist in either of the two cultures. Despite several visits to professionals to express her concerns, diagnosis of autism was not suggested as an explanation of Robin's difficulties (perhaps due to Kathleen's poor English).

During Robin's time in Kindergarten, Kathleen was frequently called in by teachers who complained about his anti-social behavior. The teachers said that he needed to be taught appropriate social skills, but Kathleen did try very hard to teach Robin how to share and to recognize the feelings of others. All of these efforts failed, though. At primary school, reports from teachers continued to be negative. He was described as inattentive, lazy, defiant and insolent. Kathleen and Tom finally received the diagnosis of autism when Robin was nine, after referral to a psychiatrist. They were relieved at first as the blame was lifted from both their son and them. They could now start to make sense of Robin's problems and devise solutions. It did not, though, solve all the problems coming from Tom's family. It was difficult to make them understand the meaning of autism. In their culture, they believe that Robin will eventually speak "normally" and that he will "grow out of it." Moreover, there is stigma involved with special education needs.

A still bigger challenge is a more practical one. According to the psychiatrist, Robin would need at least 20 to 25 hours of direct contact per week with a trained therapist for at least two years. However, autism is not covered by most health insurance providers; and given the high costs of the intervention programs, many schools do not provide the therapy for autistic children. In fact, the school where Robin studied simply refused to identify Robin as autistic because officials regarded the cost of providing services as too expensive. The family has to move to another school district that had established autism programs. However, tuition at these schools that provide 16-hour-per-week therapy cost as much as \$80,000 per academic year; and Robin's family had to pay the additional 10 hours of therapy each week at a cost of \$8,000 annually. It is far beyond what the family can afford. Luckily, Filipinos have a culture of sacrificing individual desires for the benefit

of the family. Therefore, Kathleen and Tom have received much financial support from Kathleen's extended family. Nevertheless, Kathleen finally made a tough decision in order to better care for Robin: quit her job.

Questions:

1. Robin was diagnosed of having autism relatively late and thus missed the most effective early interventions. What contributed to this late diagnosis?
2. How do cultural traditions, values and beliefs affect people's attitudes towards autism? Would there be any difference if this were an American family?
3. To some extent, Robin is lucky because he can afford the cost for the therapy. According to a Harvard School of Public Health study published in 2007, it typically costs \$3.2 million to raise an autistic child into adulthood, compared with \$290,000 to raise a neurotypical child. How would this affect people's access to treatment, and what should our society do to address this issue?
4. In this story, who is responsible for the task of taking care of Robin? If you were Kathleen or Tom, would you make the same decision? Why or why not?

## Case Study: A Living Wage Campaign

To be used with “Community Organizing and Social Change” by Randy Stoecker. *Contexts*. Winter 2009.

Laura Delgado faces a dilemma. As a community organizer for a progressive advocacy group called the Center on Policy Initiatives (CPI) in San Diego, California, Laura has spent the last two years leading a campaign to win a living wage ordinance for the city of San Diego. It has been a tough fight, but Laura believes that victory may be within sight. A pivotal city council meeting is taking place next week. Hundreds of living wage activists will pack the city council’s chambers, and community leaders, clergy members, and students will speak to encourage council members to vote for the ordinance.

Laura is convinced that a low-wage worker who would benefit from a living wage must speak as well; living wage advocates need to put a human face on the issue in order to win. Luckily, in the past few months, Laura has gotten to know Sarah Brown, an attendant for a city public restroom downtown. Sarah has a compelling story, and Laura knows that she would do a great job speaking in front of the city council. But for Sarah to take such a public position may entail some risk; Sarah’s employer could be upset, or even fire Sarah, if he finds out that she is lobbying for a living wage ordinance. Should Laura encourage Sarah to speak?

Sarah Brown is an attendant at a street-level public restroom just around the corner from the city council building. Sarah – a grandmother with a shy smile and a gracious manner - spends almost forty hours a week there, cleaning toilets, mopping floors, restocking toilet paper, and buzzing people in and out from a tiny stall squeezed in between the men’s and women’s rooms. Because she doesn’t make enough from her full time job to support her family, she works an additional 25 hours a week at a McDonald’s. Both jobs pay minimum wage and provide no benefits. Even with two jobs, it is a constant struggle for Sarah to make ends meet. “Each month,” Sarah told Laura, “I worry that I will not be able to pay my rent or feed my grandson. Sometimes he cries because there is not enough to eat.”

Laura knows that, in order for CPI to win a living wage ordinance and improve the lives of thousands of city workers, including Sarah, a worker who would benefit from a living wage must speak at the city council meeting. Half-measures, like video-taping a worker but obscuring her identity, just won’t do. But for a worker to speak in public will entail some risk. Laura knows that in union organizing campaigns, one out of four worker activists is fired, illegally, because they are trying to form a union. The stakes are equally high in this case. What should Laura do?

## Questions

1. Should Laura ask Sarah to speak at the city council meeting? Whether you answer yes or no, how do you arrive at your conclusion?
2. Imagine that Laura asks Sarah to speak. Sarah responds that she wants to do so because she believes in the importance of a living wage. But she tells Laura that she is afraid of losing her job if her employer finds out that she spoke at the meeting. What should Laura tell her?
3. Imagine that Laura also needs to recruit a pastor from an affluent congregation in the suburbs to speak at the meeting. The pastor wants to do so, but is concerned that his conservative congregation will be upset about his activism; perhaps he could even lose his job. How would your answers to questions 1 and 2 change, if at all, in this case?
4. Imagine that the worker Sarah needs to ask to speak happens to be undocumented. In this case, the worker could potentially not only lose his or her job, but also be deported. How would your answers to questions 1 and 2 change, if at all, in this case?

## Case Study: Community Organizing & Social Change

To be used with “Community Organizing and Social Change” by Randy Stoecker. *Contexts*. Winter 2009.

### **Directions:**

You are a community organizer working to address some major social problems in your community. Read the scenario below and discuss with group members which strategies and tactics you will employ to address these problems. After you read the scenario, answer the questions below through discussing them with your group members. For Question #3, use the supplies given to you to create posters with slogans.

Scenerio:

**You live in a large urban neighborhood in Minneapolis that is strongly stratified by class. The houses on the Southern side of your neighborhood are quite dilapidated, crime is rampant, vital businesses and jobs are scarce, and the neighborhood is in need of revitalization. Most people in this section of the neighborhood make a median income below the poverty line. The Northern side of the neighborhood is more affluent. There are numerous businesses within walking distance, crime has generally remained minimal, and there is a Neighborhood Watch program in place.**

**Recently, the local news media has exposed an upsurge in crime in the entire neighborhood. A housing crisis is occurring, drug use in the community is extensive and progressively visible, and the school district is in shambles after dropout rates have surged and teacher retention has dwindled. Community members on both the Northern and Southern ends of the neighborhood have increasingly expressed concern about the state of their community. There is a neighborhood organization in place, but most members are from the affluent section of the community. All regular members are upper-middle class; and most neighborhood projects and initiatives focus on beautifying the Northern section of town.**

**Community members from the Southern part of town have recently expressed anger and frustration about their lack of status in community operations. Local government representatives are deliberating on whether or not to install a community policing program in the community or to explore other options. The housing crisis is becoming a wide-scale dilemma, now affecting the middle class and not simply impoverished community members. All families are concerned about the poor resources in their schools and the lack of quality educators. A public community meeting is scheduled in the near future where community members can rally to discuss the problems facing the community. The existing neighborhood group now realizes that they have a crucial role in rallying *ALL* community members to address the various problems facing the community.**

### Worksheet: Community Organizing & Social Change

(1) List the social problems in the order in which you will address them. (There are 10 spaces, but if you identify more or less than this, feel free to add or subtract spaces).

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_

(2) Why did you decide to address social problems in this particular order? Explain your rationale for choosing the first social problem. Why does is this problem top priority? Why is the last concern you listed a lower priority?

---

---

---

---

---

(3) Use the poster board and markers to create slogans to generate support for your cause. List the slogans you use in the space below.

---

---

---

(4) Why did you choose these slogans? Do they appeal to emotions, humor, or moral shocks?

---

---

---

---

---

(5) What strategies and tactics will you use to spread your message? Will your tactics center on protest, direct action, education, garnering media attention, etc.— or a combination of these activities? Did your group choose strategies and tactics *within* or *outside of* societal norms and institutionalized means? Were tactics legal or illegal?

---

---

---

---

---

(6) List your affiliates and opponents. With which organizations, community groups, social movements, and politicians will you align? Which groups will you oppose? Name movement resources (ie: networks, affiliated organizations, money sources, and advocates) from which you will draw.

---

---

---

---

---

**Instructor/Facilitator Directions: (Detach before handing out to students)**

Directions: Have students divide into groups of 5 people. Give the groups one worksheet per group and assign the group member roles as follows: one recorder, two reporters, one time-keeper, and one creative director. The creative director will be responsible for making posters with slogans with the poster board and markers provided to each group. Each group will act as community organizers who desire to address the dire conditions of the neighborhood. At the beginning of the class period, you may choose to assign each group different strategies and tactics to help provoke debate or allow group members to choose their own.

Have group members read the vignette and answer the questions on the worksheet. Allow group members 15-20 minutes of class time to organize a plan of action.

Then, in a simulation of a community meeting, act as a facilitator. Allow members of each group to take turns presenting social issues of primary concern, networks, resources, slogans and plans of action. Then, initiate a debate on these issues. Let each group present the social issues of primary importance and their strategies and tactics to address these issues first. Then, ask each group to defend their positions. Have students share slogans and explain who they consider to be allies and who they consider to be opponents. The debate and discussion will end when each group has shared their approach.

Written by: Amy Alsup

## Intensive Mothering: What is a Mother's Role?

At the age of 38, Monique gave birth to her fourth child, a daughter named Kayla. Kayla was born with severe developmental and physical disabilities. As Kayla grew older, Monique and her husband tried diligently to get her the help she needed in order to maximize her development. They put her in speech and physical therapy programs and brought her to many health specialists. Caring for Kayla was expensive and time consuming. All of the doctors and specialists Monique talked to told her she needed to spend more time helping Kayla one on one; but Monique couldn't afford to stay at home, and she and her husband often spent more than 50 hours a week working. Kayla was cared for during the day by a nurse who came to Monique's home, but after 5:00 p.m. Monique was responsible for all her care.

As Kayla got older, Monique was falling behind at work and spending less time caring for her three older children. Monique could tell they were resentful of Kayla for this. Kayla required constant supervision and needed help eating, changing clothes and using the bathroom. Kayla became easily frustrated and had trouble sleeping, which kept Monique up many nights. Monique was often discouraged and irritated and felt less happy overall. When Kayla was 5 years old, Monique became pregnant again. Overwhelmed at the prospect of caring for Kayla, her three other children and a newborn baby, Monique considered other options. She found out about a live-in care center about 3 hours away from her home that specialized in taking care of children with disabilities. Monique thought that the care center would be a better home for Kayla than her own. She thought the nurses and the teachers at the center would help Kayla more than she could.

But, the center was very expensive and paying for Kayla to live there until age 18 would prevent Monique from helping any of her other children with their college tuition someday. Also, many of the specialists had told Monique that Kayla might be better off if her mother cared for her. Monique considered the negative things other people would think of her if she brought her daughter to live at the care center instead of caring for her in the home. But, she also considered how much better her life and the lives of her other children might be if they did not have the responsibility of caring for Kayla on a daily basis. She would have more time for her other children *and* more time to develop her career.

Discussion Questions:

- 1) If you were in Monique's shoes, what would you do?
  
- 2) What do you think a mother's role is in this situation?
  
- 3) What responsibilities do the larger community and the government have with respect to childcare? Childcare for disabled children?

## Praying in Class: A Case Study

Lisa is a new professor at a large public university. Her class just finished a unit on gender, and her students are taking an essay test. Lisa sits up near the front of the room and keeps a watchful eye over her students. The classroom is completely silent except for their pencils scribbling furiously.

Suddenly, one of her students stands up and faces a corner. He starts to bow, and Lisa realizes that he is praying. Many of the students look up and start watching him instead of continuing their exam. Lisa can tell that they are distracted, but she also realizes that the student has religious freedom. Thus, she decides to pretend that nothing is happening.

After class, a few students approached Lisa and complained about the student who was praying. They said that they were seriously distracted during the exam and would like 10 more minutes to work on it.

1. What should Lisa do?
2. Did Lisa make the right choice to ignore the student instead of asking him to stop?
3. Should a student be allowed to observe their religious rituals during class?

To be used with “Muslims in America” by Jen’nan Ghazul Read. *Contexts*. Fall 2008.

Written by Hollie Nyseth

## How To Use this Case Study

**Method:** This Case Study will help students identify how they make judgments about people they meet, what information they use and how culture affects the perceptions. It can be used in conjunction with conversations around the sociological imagination and social construction of reality.

**Directions:**

1. Before handing out the scenarios, inform the class that they will be reading some stories and practicing their skills of observation and information gathering. This can be used with an explanation of sociological imagination. Tell the class that there are several questions at the end of the story that they will need to answer. The groups should read the stories individually and then answer the questions as a group. The questions ask them to describe a character from the story, a man at the park. Each scenario looks at the man from a different point of view. They will need to create a report for the class on what they learned.
2. Break the students into 8 groups (you can use less groups if the class is small). Give each group a scenario to read and ask them to answer the questions at the end of the scenario as a group. If you have fewer than 8 groups, be sure to hand out scenario 1, as this is the scenario that gives factual information about the man.
3. After the groups have completed the above exercise, ask each group with scenarios 2 through 8 (not scenario 1) to report their findings. They can do this verbally, on the board, on a large piece of paper which they post, or a combination of any of these methods.
4. Make note of the differences between the groups. Then ask the group with scenario 1 to report on what they know about the man.
5. Ask the groups to go back and discuss how their description was accurate or inaccurate. Have them underline the key items in the story that led them to their description. What assumptions did they make? What clues did they see?
6. Ask groups to share their insights. Discuss how our perceptions are shaped by our beliefs and our understanding of culture.
7. Finally apply this to the student's world. Do they ever make assumptions about people based on how they are dressed, the way they speak, etc.

## A Day at the Park - 1

Jose Ramirez loved taking his children, Mariana and Geraldo, to the park that was by the little neighborhood grocery store. It was one of his favorite activities to play games with them on the jungle gym. Sometimes he told them stories about pirates or desperados. His son especially loved to hear the tales of Zorro, while his daughter was a big fan of the Pirates of the Caribbean movies. He would build a story for the two children making them the heroes, and they would victoriously defeat the bad guy he played.

Today was a bright sunny day and he couldn't resist visiting the park with the children before heading off to work that evening. He had been playing with the kids for at least an hour, sometimes inviting some of the other boys he knew at the park to join them, when Jessie and her mother arrived. He liked the bright little girl who was quickly becoming one of his daughter's favorite playmates. He wasn't as sure about her mother, who didn't seem to care for him. The last time he'd seen her at the school picking up Jessie, she'd gone out of her way to avoid him. He knew all too well that some of the parents were suspicious of his family because they are Hispanic. He had been dealing with this type of racism all his life.

He'd been born into a traditional Hispanic family in Amarillo, Texas, in a home birth. He was the first of ten children. His family had been very poor, but they had proudly owned their own land, which they had held in their family for generations. As the oldest child in a poor family, he had left high school early to help support the family. For a while he'd felt hopeless, working and partying with his friends too much to get rid of the sorrow he felt over not going to college. Then, when he was 19, he had met his beautiful wife, Anna Maria. She and her family had moved back to Amarillo from Peru, where they had lived for fifteen years, when her father's work had transferred him home. Jose had felt sorry for the beautiful young girl who was having such a hard time adjusting to America after living in Peru. He started to go to church just so he could see her. Eventually he'd started to court her and they had married the following year in a traditional marriage ceremony. Anna Maria was a very devote Roman Catholic and he credited her with helping him grow into a man, not just a fun loving boy.

It was after Geraldo had been born that he and Anna Maria had made the hard decision to move away from home. The economy had worsened and he couldn't find work. The family had let them live in one of the old houses on the family farm, but he wanted more for his children. So even though he and Anna Maria wanted to raise their children traditionally, they had left the family home. He promised himself that his children would not forget their Hispanic background. Whenever they could they would attend cultural events and Anna Maria had even found a store that sold items from Peru. The move had been hardest on Anna Maria who felt isolated and separated from so much that she grew up with. He tried to help her with her English, but she was proud of her Spanish ancestry and not comfortable in changing.

When Jessie's mother glared at him from her bench, he decided that he had better let the children play by themselves. He was tired anyway, so he found a bench nearby to sit on, stumbling over the boarder of the playground as he went. He'd worked from 5 pm to 3 am all week. It was a good job, but because of his lack of education, it did not pay a lot of money, and the company didn't pay overtime. He knew that wasn't right, but he didn't complain because he knew that some of the

families who worked there were not legal residents of the country and he did not want to get them in trouble. He knew what it was like to be harassed. Because he'd been home-birthed, he hadn't had a birth certificate and had once been held as an illegal immigrant. He made sure he always had his papers with him these days so that he didn't have to go through that situation again.

He sat at the bench wearily, thinking he should leave soon and go home for a nap. In addition to his full time job, he is also the caretaker for his apartment complex, and this morning he'd been working on a project for the owner before bringing the kids down to the park. He'd started that job at 8 am, which had only given him four hours of sleep. He was happy with the work, though. It would give him some extra money for the college fund he was building for his children. He was determined his children wouldn't have struggle the way he and Anna Maria had to.

### Questions

Answer each question and be prepared to say why you came to your answer.

1. What can you tell us about Jose? How old do you think he is? What is he like as a father? What were his actions at the park?
2. What ethnicity is Jose's family? What religion? What country is he from? Etc?
3. What is the story of Jose's family? How did he meet his wife? Where was she from?
4. What do you think Jose is like as a person??

## A Day at the Park - 2

Jessie loved to go to the little neighborhood park with her mother. They had a great playground and she usually found friends there she could play with. So she begged her mom to go on Saturday and was excited when her mother finally said yes. It was only a couple short blocks from their home and the day was bright and sunny. When they arrived at the park, Jessie ran over to the swing set excited to see one of her friends, Mary, playing there with Mary's dad and baby brother, Harry. Her mother went over to a bench and sat down so that she could see Jessie while she played.

Jessie and Mary went to school together, they had the same teacher, Mrs. West. Jessie knew that Mary's name wasn't really Mary, but all the kids in her grade called her Mary because it was easier to say. That was the same with Mary's brother Harry. Jessie loved playing with Mary because she could tell the best stories. Her dad was the same way. They would often play at the playground and sometimes her father would play with them, telling these wild stories of pirates and robbers. They would each take a role and act out a part, with the playground being their hideout.

Today Mary was wearing one of her mother's old scarves. She said it was a special scarf her mother used to be good and to pray. Jessie thought the scarf was very pretty on Mary's dark hair. Mary's brother was acting out the part of a hero, saving Mary from a mean dragon played by their father. He pulled off the scarf and used it as a shield, and all the children laughed as the father told the story. Jessie especially loved the way his voice was one he spoke; he had a funny accent that sounded so mysterious. After a short while of playing, Mary's dad said he was tired and went over to sit on a bench by himself. Mary's dad was often tired, Jessie had noticed. He just didn't seem to have very much energy. Mary had a lot of energy. She screamed when Harry started chasing her and pulled Mary along with her as they ran away from the new dragon.

### Questions

Answer each question and be prepared to say why you came to your answer.

5. What can you tell us about Mary's family?
6. What can you tell us about Mary's dad? How old do you think Mary's dad is? What is he like as a father? What were his actions at the park?
7. What ethnicity do you think Mary's family is? What religion? What country? Etc?
8. What else can you tell us about Mary's family?
9. What does Jessie think of Mary's family? What does she base her views on?

## A Day at the Park - 3

It had been a busy week and all she really wanted to do was stay home and relax for a while. But Jessie really wanted to go to the park and play. She'd already put her off from going to the park two other times, so reluctantly she agreed to take her daughter there. "For one hour only," she told her.

They walked the two blocks through their middle class neighborhood to get there. It was a nice day with the sun shining. When they got to the park, Sally was relieved to see that there were several adults present. The park made her a little nervous because it was closer to the apartments on the other side of the neighborhood and sometimes those kids came down without any adult supervision. She disliked the way they seemed to take over the park so that children like Jessica couldn't use it.

She sat down on a bench in the sun as Jessie ran off to play on the swings. She noticed with dread that the Mexican family was back. Jessie knew the little girl from school and liked to play with her. But Sally didn't like it, the father made her nervous. He always wore dirty, old work clothes, and his eyes were often red. She suspected that he was a drunk. Today he was making mean faces at the kids. Once in a while she heard him yell out loudly in his dreadful accent. He seemed angry. The kids shrieked and Sally almost got up and went over, but then they started laughing as the little boy pulled at the scarf the girl was wearing. They often wore old clothes that were unusual. Sally suspected that the father wouldn't let the girl dress like a normal child. She always wore skirts and often wore a scarf.

Lately she and her husband had started to talk about why the girl was in kindergarten with Mary anyway. The family was obviously illegal. She and her husband had been talking about calling in and reporting them. It wasn't right for Jessie to have to have less attention because of these illegal students. The school didn't have enough money as it was and these people didn't pay taxes like the rest of them.

Over at the swings the girls were giggling as the father yelled at the son to return the scarf and swiped at it. Sally stood up and glared at the father, who suddenly seemed to notice her. He straightened and turned to the children, saying something Sally couldn't hear. Jessie grabbed the scarf from the boy and the two little girls shrieked and started to run away from him. The father turned away and went over to a bench on the other side of the playground and sat down. Sally saw him sway a little and her blood boiled. "Drunk again" she thought to herself. She'd let Jessie play for a little while longer and then head home.

### Questions

Answer each question and be prepared to say why you came to your answer.

1. What can you tell us about the family who Sally observed at the park?
2. What do you know about the father of the family at the park? How old do you think he is? What is he like as a father? What were his actions at the park?
3. What ethnicity do you think the family is? What religion? What country are they from?

4. What else can you tell us about the family?
5. What does Sally think about the family? What does she base her views on?

## A Day at the Park - 4

Camie had been working really hard on her algebra. She really wanted to get a good grade. If she had a high enough grade point average, she might be able to get into college with a scholarship. Her mom wasn't rich enough to send her, even with help from student aid. So she worked really hard at school.

Today was Saturday and unlike her friends who were at the lake, she had stayed home to study again. But now she was tired, and it seemed like a good time to take a walk. The boys were down at the park and her mother, who had to work, had told Camie to be sure to check on them. She put her algebra away, discouraged with a particularly hard problem, left the apartment, and crossed the street to the park.

She saw Mr. R. right away. He often came down with his two kids and played with them on Saturday afternoons before he went into work. Her mother liked it when Mr. R. was there because he treated the boys well and made sure they didn't get into trouble. Since their dad had left for good six years ago, her mom said the boys needed a male role model. Her mom said Mr. R. was a good, God-fearing man. Camie wished her dad had been more like Mr. R.

Sometimes Camie would baby-sit Mr. R's kids Mary and Harry, that was the names everyone used but their real names were Mariana and Geraldo, in exchange for help with her homework. Although Mr. R. did not have a high school degree he was really good at math. He'd taught himself algebra and he would tutor Camie when she was really stuck. He also helped her a lot with her Spanish class.

As Camie got closer she could see that Mr. R was playing a game of some sort with Mary and Harry. He gave a loud shout and waved his arms at the kids, pretending to scare them. Mr. R was very funny and told good stories; he was always very dramatic in his stories. Today there was another little girl playing with them. Camie had seen her sometimes. Her mother always looked crabby and wasn't very nice. She never let the little girl stay for long. Right now she was standing up and glaring at the children. Or was glaring at Mr. R? Sometimes people didn't like Mr. R because he was Hispanic.

Just then Camie's brother ran up to her and she stopped to talk with him.

### Questions

Answer each question and be prepared to say why you came to your answer.

1. What can you tell us about the family who Camie observed at the park?
2. What do you know about the father, Mr. R.? How old do you think he is? What is he like as a father? What were his actions at the park?
3. What ethnicity do you think the family is? What religion? What country are they from? Etc?

4. What else can you tell us about the family?
5. What does Camie think about the family? What does she base her views on?

## A Day at the Park - 5

Officer Harris had just come on duty at 2 pm, and it already looked like it was going to be a long day. There'd been a complaint about a homeless man harassing some of the people down near Southside Park. So he was being sent down to cruise the area and look for the suspect.

It was a nice sunny day, so a lot of people were out and about. He watched as two young boys, maybe ten or eleven, ran across in front of his cruiser without looking. He was annoyed that there didn't seem to be any parents watching them. One of the boys broke away and ran up to a girl of about 15. Officer Harris figured it was not going to be long before that girl was pregnant.

It was as he was watching the boy and the girl that he saw the man. Right away he knew he was his suspect. He fit the general description Harris had been given, and he looked like a homeless person. He wore shabby clothes that looked dirty, including torn jeans and a long sleeved shirt. He was possibly a drug addict, hiding his tracks under the shirt that was too warm for this hot day. His hair was longish and uncombed, and it looked like he hadn't shaved in a while. Not to mention that the man looked out of place. He sat slumped on a bench, his elbows on his knees, his hands hanging loose. He looked weary or drunk.

Even more disturbing was that the man sat on a park bench near the playground. Officer Harris noted with approval a young mother watching the man closely. She had blond hair the same color as one of the girls playing by the swings, no doubt her mother. The man Harris was watching sat on a bench across the playground from her. As Harris watched the man glanced her way, then he looked back at the park. He seemed fixated on the two girls playing on the swings. He also kept glancing at a young boy who was climbing the ladder to the slide.

Harris felt a twang of nervousness at this scene. It was as though the man was casing the mother and her daughter. He pulled the cruiser over and radioed in that he'd spotted their suspect. He reported him to be a Hispanic male, early thirties, about 185 pounds. He announced that he was going over to talk to the man.

### Questions

Answer each question and be prepared to say why you came to your answer.

1. What can you tell us about the man Officer Harris observed at the park?
2. What are the man's actions at the park?
3. What ethnicity is he? What religion? What country is he from?
4. What else can you tell us about the scene?
5. What does Officer Harris think about the man? What does he base his views on?



## A Day at the Park - 6

Anna Maria hurried down to the park. Jose was down there already with the children and she wanted to get there before they headed home. She'd stayed behind when they left so that she could finish cleaning up the dishes, and so she could make a surprise for Jose's birthday, which they would celebrate tomorrow. He would be twenty-six. While she was at it, she had made his dinner, packing it with extra care, including two sweet treats because she knew how tired he was after working that morning. He would need the extra energy at his work that evening.

She worried about the amount of work he did. She always told him to slow down, but he wouldn't listen to her. He wanted so much to give the children a better start to life than he had. Since they had moved here from their home to start a better life for themselves, he had worked many long hours. She had to admit that the work was paying off. They had an apartment with two bedrooms and working plumbing. It was so much better than the shack they use to live in. It had been a good decision to come north.

Jose was such a good man and so smart. She had been very fortunate to meet him when she was fifteen. She had grown up in a very traditional family with a strong religious belief. She had practiced them faithfully, the church was very important to her. Jose agreed with her that these values were ones they must continue. They would raise their children in the traditional ways even if they could not go home.

At the park Anna Maria observed Jose sitting at a bench, looking very tired. Mariana and Geraldo were playing with a girl from Mariana's school. Her mother was sitting at a bench not far away. Anna Maria would have liked to meet this mother. She knew so few people here in the city. But she was too shy to go over to her. Part of the problem was that she didn't speak very good English and she felt embarrassed about this. She usually stayed very quiet around other people, so she didn't have to show them how bad her English is. Her one friend, Terceira, had been made to go back to Mexico recently. It had been very sad.

A flash from a car caught her attention and she looked on nervously as a police officer got out of his cruiser and started walking towards the playground and her family. She knew how much trouble a police officer could make for her family. She started to pray silently to herself that he would go away and not bother them.

### Questions

Answer each question and be prepared to say why you came to your answer.

1. What can you tell us about Anna Maria's family? What ethnicity are they? What religion?
2. What country do you think Anna Maria's family is from? What caused them to move? What problems do they face?
3. What do you know about Jose? How old is he? What is he like as a husband or a father?

4. What else can you tell us about the scene? What do you base your views on?

## A Day at the Park - 7

Jackson had been playing with Mr. R. and his kids, Harry and Mary – who was wearing that funny scarf again, when he saw his best friend Colton come into the park. He immediately ditched the child play and went over to hang out with Colton. He thought Mr. R. was cool enough, but he didn't want people to think he was a baby like Mr. R.'s kids.

“Hey, Jacko! Meet you at the store!” Colton yelled and ran across the street to the little grocery store. The owner, old Mr. Price, glared at the two boys as they entered. “He always thinks we're going to steal.” Colton said. The boys picked out a couple of candies and went back outside dodging cars to run back across the street to the park. That's when he saw his sister.

“Be back in a minute.” He said. He knew his mom expected Camie to look out for him and she'd probably come to make him go home. He had to convince her that it was okay for him to stay, at least a little while longer. He wanted to play with Colton.

He saw that she was walking over towards Mr. R who was sitting on a bench now by himself. Poor Mr. R. had been so tired all day. He was a funny guy though. He had this strange accent and told these wild stories, all about villains. Mr. R. liked to play the villain. He'd chase the kids pretending to get them. He looked like a villain also. He had wild curly dark hair, and a mustache and his face was dark. Sometimes Jackson would pretend Mr. R. really was a mad man or a terrorist come to get him.

When he got to Camie she pointed over my shoulder at the police man who just parked his car. The police man had got out of his cruiser and he was staring at Mr. R. It almost seemed if the police man thought Mr. R. really was a terrorist.

“I hope Mr. R isn't in trouble.” Camie said as she watched the policeman walk towards Mr. R.

### Questions

Answer each question and be prepared to say why you came to your answer.

1. What can you tell us about Mr. R's family?
2. What do you know about Mr. R.? How old do you think he is? What is he like as a father? What were his actions at the park?
3. What ethnicity do you think the family is? What religion? What country are they from? Etc?
4. What else can you tell us about the family?
5. What does Jackson think about the family? What does he base his views on?

## A Day at the Park 8

Mr. Price was enjoying the day. It was sunny and very nice outside. He sat down on the stool he kept near the door. He'd been sitting there a while when he saw the Mexican family from the apartments down the street come over to the park. He glared at them as they went past. He hoped they wouldn't come in the store. The man was dressed in his usual dirty clothes, and he smelled of sweat. The little girl was wearing that strange little skirt she liked to wear and had that funny lace handkerchief over her head. The boy was only three, but Mr. Price already expected him to cause problems. He'd join a gang and next thing you knew, he'd be robbing him blind.

It's not that he was racist or anything. It was just that he knew how it went. You treated people like them nice and the next thing you knew, they were stealing you blind. In fact, the other day the wife had come in and was in the back aisle for a long time just staring at the different groceries on the shelf. When his assistant had gone back there to help her, she'd waved him off. The assistant said she didn't even know English. They had both agreed that if these people were going to come to the US they should learn to speak English. When she left she hadn't bought anything. Mr. Price was certain she had been stealing from him. He was angry that he hadn't called the police right then.

Across the street the Mexican was yelling at his two kids, and they were screaming. As Mr. Price watched, the nice young mother who lived in one of the houses two or three blocks over came into the park and sat down. Her daughter ran over to play with the Mexicans. Mr. Price didn't understand why this mother let her daughter play with them. Of course, it was a shame there wasn't a park over in that nice neighborhood. Mr. Price had often wondered if he couldn't move his store closer to those homes. He knew there would be less trouble for him.

Two young boys ran into his store just then and he watched them the whole time they were in there. He knew they would steal from him. This time, though, they seemed to have money, and left after buying their candy. He was glad to see the police officer pull up as they ran across the road. That was what this city needed, more police men.

As he watched the police man got out of the cruiser and started walking across the park heading to the playground. He seemed to be looking at the Mexican man, who was sitting on the park bench, looking suspicious. Maybe he was here to finally deport him.

1. What can you tell about the family Mr. Price is watching?
2. What do you know about the father? How old do you think he is? What is he like as a father? What were his actions at the park?
3. What ethnicity do you think the family is? What religion? What country are they from? Etc?
4. What else can you tell us about the family?
5. What does Mr. Price think about the family? What does he base his views on?

