



# Social Justice Curriculum Guide



**High School (9-12)**

Copyright © 2009 All Rights Reserved

## Overview

This guide is designed to help create a meaningful framework for your literacy-based classroom. There are essential questions aligned to “habits of mind” that will guide discussions with your group and there is a culminating project for each Real World theme! You should focus on one question each week so your thematic units will last you approximately 5-6 weeks (the 5-6th week being the bridge week where students are completing their projects.) There are 6 themes that will provide your group with enough material for a school year. There is plenty of flexibility around time but you should review the **‘Pacing Calendar’** on the following page in order to give yourself enough time to engage in each theme.

This guide was originally created to unite a whole school community around a social justice mission therefore all of the essential questions are the same for each grade but the tasks and projects are grade specific. If a whole school adopts this framework, students & teachers will be walking the same beat throughout the year and hallways and classroom walls will speak to the mission through display. The student-teacher contract, task sheets, assessment rubric and worksheets are meant to be reproduced. It is important that the teacher and *each* student sign the contract as a commitment to the process. Many of the units can be enhanced if you plan with other teachers for interdisciplinary project designs.

Remember, this is not a curriculum; it is a guide – a framework. That means its purpose is not to provide a prescriptive series of lesson plans but to **frame** the education experience around meaningful, exploratory inquiries. Effective framing is at the heart of connecting learning experiences to the being - it is the *lens* through which we present material, it provides the spirit and the purpose. In theater, this would be called “setting the stage” so to speak. Framing learning around questions and activities that speak to social justice, critical literacy and collaboration is a deliberate intervention to the way we typically teach and learn in school. Recognizing that the power of teaching is less about focusing on the content, but honoring the **process** is the first step in understanding critical literacy and education for enlightenment.

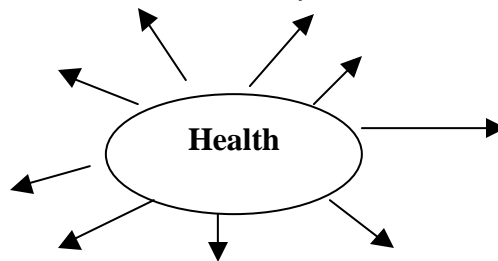
At the rear of the guide, there is a social justice booklist organized by theme. This is just a start. It is important that you plan ahead and prepare resources (articles, poetry, music, book excerpts) related to the themes that will make your class a unique place of bonding and discovery. While read-alouds are effective, refrain from asking students to read print materials before the theme is properly launched with the group where students and teacher have the opportunity to explore the essential question and make personal connections orally.

Please review the **Goals and Assessments Summary** and use the **Critical Literacy Rubric** to help guide your work.

***Enjoy and engage!***

<b>Health &amp; Ecology</b>		<u>Key Words</u>
<i>Habits</i>		<b>Health</b>
<i>Perspective</i>	What can we do to protect our <b>health</b> ?	<b>Green</b>
<i>Connections</i>	What is the “ <b>green</b> movement”?	<b>Danger</b>
<i>Evidence</i>	Why is our environment in <b>danger</b> ?	<b>Environment</b>
<i>Relevance</i>	How does our <b>environment</b> impact our health?	<b>Life</b>
<i>Supposition</i>	What would we gain if we could increase <b>life</b> expectancy?	

**Launch:** Each week focus on a different question. Use the key word list to brainstorm with your group using a bubble map format. Write as many words from the students on the bubble map that space will allow. Save and post in classroom throughout the unit.



**Community Circle:** The essential question “Launch” should always take place in a circle. Use this time to share stories with each other about the essential question. Teacher models and students share with each other.

**Journal Writing:** Students should keep a journal. Each essential question is a separate entry. Journals are collected bi-weekly for review and feedback. Journals act as the starting point for more formal writing and for prompting classroom dialogue.

**Book & Video Resources:** Choose one excerpt from a book (an article, poem, or video clip!) to read aloud or share with class each week. Frame the discussion around several open-ended questions. Provide a photocopy of the excerpt for the students to take home for reflection.

**11<sup>th</sup> Grade Final Project:** Urban Planning Project

# Urban Planning

**Theme:** HEALTH AND ECOLOGY

**Question:** How does urban planning affect our lives?

**Objective:** To work with a partner or group on creating a mock urban plan that reflects our ideals

## Collaborative Group Roles

**Writer** Writes out the information on the paper  
Gets information from sources to inform project  
Checks for spelling and grammatical errors

**Drawer** Draws the images on the paper, decides on shapes and layout  
Creates a unique presentation design w/ color

**Leader** Presents information to class  
Acts as liaison with the teacher  
Guides group on decision-making  
Manages the group and holds all documents  
Reads information to group to inform project

## Task Details:

Work with your group to **design** a small **TOWN** that will be the home of approximately 5,000 people and create a blueprint including (but not limited to) the following:

- School
- Park
- Library
- City Hall
- Shops
- Restaurants
- Streets
- Parking
- Public Transportation
- Entrances & Exits to Major Highways
- Garbage Dump/ Recycling Plant
- Bank

Use the worksheet to help organize your decision making process.

# Conscientious Urban Planning Designs



1. What are the housing options that are going to be made available to the future residents?

---

---

---

---

---

---

2. How many housing units in total will be created, how many private homes and how many buildings? What will be the average cost of these homes?

---

---

---

---

---

---

3. Will the buildings have size and height restrictions? Why should this be a concern?

---

---

---

---

4. How much commercial space? Will there be one large mall or several shops along a main street? Why might a mall create challenges for small business owners?

---

---

---

---

---

---

5. Will the park be centrally located? How large will it be? What transportation will be near the park, if any?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

6. Will the streets be double or single lanes? Will there be an island of trees in the center of traffic or will the trees line the sidewalks? How should the group decide on the size and location of the streets? Make sure local residents can get to all the important places in town!

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

7. Will you create a parking lot for homes and businesses or will you have only street parking? How many cars do you estimate for this town? Will there be other modes of transportation?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

8. How close will you build the homes and businesses to one another? Will there be plenty of open space and light for security reasons?

---

---

---

---

---

9. Where will the restaurants and pubs be located? Close to residential areas or in a downtown area near the shops? Consider noise, traffic, parking congestion as well as accessibility.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

10. Where will you put the town dump and recycling facilities? Remember to consider the issues related to waste.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

11. How many schools will you need and how do you choose the best locations for the local residents? Will there be public and private school options?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

