



## **Economic and Other Inequalities In America: The Shrinking Middle Class?**

Curriculum Unit 18.01.01  
by James P. Brochin

### **Introduction and Rationale**

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Designed for a large urban public high school's upperclassmen in a Journalism class, the unit's central thematic focus is the causes and effects of economic inequality on the middle class.

In this country, we believe that everyone has a chance for prosperity, or at least a comforting sense of security: being able to pay our bills, send our children to college, succeed if we try hard enough, being able to afford health care. Taken together, we call this being middle class. Put another way, we call this The American Dream. Some of us aspire to great wealth, a mansion in the Hamptons. For the vast majority of Americans, making it involves simpler aspirations: doing better than our parents, living longer than our parents, being more educated than our parents.

In some other countries, such as England, most of Latin America, and India, everyone knows that social classes exist. Aspirations are delimited by birth, neighborhood, educational opportunities, income level, and gender roles. In America, we tell ourselves that our future is what we make it, not what we're born into.

After decades of increasing income inequality, we should examine whether The American Dream seems less attainable for millions of Americans, whether the broad definition of being middle class has narrowed, whether America has stepped back. We play it safe, keep our heads down, and hope for the best.

There is broad agreement that income inequality is real and growing, and convincing evidence that some of the causes are 1) changes in tax policy, particularly income tax policy, that favor the wealthy, 2) the weakening power of labor unions, 3) the rapid increases in the costs of higher education, 4) resistance to reasonable increases in the minimum wage, and more.

My own view is that income inequality is only one part of the picture, that America has become more selfish, mean, and prefers to hype the relentless pursuit of money and power over the greater good. To quote Gordon Gecko, "Greed is Good."

My topic will be "The Shrinking Middle Class?" Within this topic would be various subtopics/questions: 1) What is an accurate definition of "Middle Class?" (Is it defined by an income range or by a state of mind?) 2) What

are the effects of periodic economic downturns on ordinary Americans? (confidence, conformity, fear of failure, mental health), 3) What effects do increases in the minimum wage have on the middle class? (decreased poverty, overall confidence in the future, the effect on the overall economy?) My own students are urban and many do not consider themselves, and are not, among the middle class. The topic should resonate.

Do Americans these days even believe that The American Dream, joining and staying among the middle class, is attainable? It is a depressing thought that the percentage of Americans who believe in this has taken a downturn. Research and survey results, especially from the Pew Foundation, suggest that aspirations have lowered for a statistically significant portion of Americans.

The primary focus of the unit will be economic: an examination of the causes for and the effects of income inequality in America, with a particular emphasis on answering the question, "The Shrinking Middle Class?"

## Background

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My urban public high school students already show an interest in related topics to that covered in the unit, including racial inequality, class inequality, the minimum wage debate, and educational inequality. I have developed an interest in related topics during and after a number of economic downturns (circa '76, '83, '87, '00, and '08) which have suggested various ways to analyze their effect on ordinary Americans: 1) Is the Middle Class shrinking? 2) Have Americans developed a fear of downward mobility? 3) Has that fear increased conformity and careerism among the "iGeneration"? and 4) What effects might an increase in the minimum wage cause? I am confident that topics for analysis and concentration will become clearer, as will the lesson plans.

New Haven School District's social studies curriculum is sorely lacking, with the exception of AP Economics courses, in wide ranging courses that may examine economic inequality's causes and effects. In most courses and textbooks the subject is limited to The Gilded Age, The Roaring Twenties, The Great Depression, and post-WWII prosperity.

Designed for a large urban high school's upperclassmen in a Journalism class, in Wilbur Cross High School in New Haven, Connecticut, the unit's central thematic focus is the causes and effects of economic inequality on the middle class. The unit would open new windows for a deeper understanding of what are some of the most serious, and growing, problems in American society, income inequality and its consequences.

My Journalism students will have had little if any knowledge of economics. All classes will be block classes of about 80-90 minutes each, two to three times a week. This should present greater opportunities for a rigorous, rewarding and deep treatment of the subject. On another level, students may find themselves inspired to escape from pessimism about the future, and might even be inspired to greater civic action and political involvement.

Assessments will include articles to be published in *The Proclamation*, Wilbur Cross' student newspaper, podcasts (in depth discussions and interviews), and surveys about student attitudes on the subjects covered. The process of surveying and interviewing the community is a valuable introduction to the skills required of a journalist: listening, interpreting data, careful question planning. Through the activities in this unit, students in journalism have opportunities to gain confidence in themselves.

## Teaching Strategies Overview

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Is the middle class shrinking? What are the consequences if it is? Is there any way to reverse, slow, or stop it? I will use economics to understand a social problem, by trying to make sense of the facts. I will discuss and define the middle class, by tracking median income over time, using Amartya Sen's work on capabilities, the cost of college, healthcare, and looking at income and happiness, prospects for success, optimism, and life expectancies. I will use the resources of The Pew Research Center on the subject of income inequality and related topics, along with a number of other sources which will have students address some or most of the following questions: 1) How is being middle class defined? 2) How does the definition go beyond a minimum dollar figure? 3) Is being middle class a state of mind as much as a dollar-figure? 4) By state of mind, does it mean that the middle class had measurably fewer money problems that create daily and destructive stresses for the adults and the children? 5) Is a college degree necessary in order to enter or remain in the middle class? 6) How has the mass media, social media and smart phones led to lowered expectations and lowered prospects for Americans and contributed to growing skepticism about the American Dream?

These and other questions may at the same time be overlapping and too much to take on in a two-week unit. One way to narrow the focus might be for students in the journalism class to create surveys and interview fellow students about these matters. I would like have them do guided reading/research to discover the "fundamentals" of the data on the subject, brainstorm a simple but powerful survey, and gather survey data along with more a more general treatment using a "feature story" approach with interviews (beyond the scope of the survey) and photographs. The final product could be a series of articles, to be published in our school newspaper, *The Proclamation*, for which I am the faculty advisor.

Some facts about basic data about middle class Americans may impress students.

According to a December 2015 Pew Research Center article entitled "Five Takeaways About the American Middle Class": 1) "Middle Income Americans are no longer the nation's economic majority." 2) "The *share* of U.S. aggregate household income earned by middle-income households has plunged, from 62% in 1970 to 43% in 2014. Meanwhile, the share earned by upper-income households increased from 29% to 49%. This shift is driven both by the growing size of the upper-income tier and more rapid gains in income at the top." Neither of these findings addresses the related issue of the effect on Americans' confidence in the future, daily exhaustion from the constant struggle to keep their heads above water, and the acute stresses of navigating the "getting into college and affording to go" carousel for the adults and "soon to be high school graduate."

According to an article in CNN Money, titled "Who is Middle Class Anyway?" the question can be answered using five categories of data: income, wealth, consumption, aspiration, and demographics. The article is perfectly pitched to high school students, and helps provide data for surveys and articles. Graphics in that CNN article are large and very clear.

## Teaching Strategies Content and Research

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The teaching strategies/content objectives envision roughly 8 days of lesson plans, which a focus on roughly four areas of content/research, one for each two-day segment. (see classroom activities below for more detail) I have organized the content and research below to correspond roughly to that plan. Teachers who may want to use this unit will get academic/content background below.

### 1) The middle class

What is the middle class, and who belongs? A working definition of the middle class includes, but is not limited to, adequate income to assure that individuals and families will be able to 1) pay bills as they come due, 2) afford higher education, 3) afford health care/health care insurance, 4) be better off and better education than their parents and grandparents, and 5) a belief that such things are attainable.

What does it take to be considered part of the middle class these days? The vast majority of American adults agree that a secure job and the ability to save money for the future are essential. The public is more evenly split when it comes to owning a home and having the time and money to travel for vacation. But one thing is now less likely to be seen as a requirement: a college education.

About a third of women (35%) say that a college education is needed to be in the middle class, but only 26% of men say the same. Millennial women outpace Millennial men in educational attainment, and indeed the gap in opinion is wider between women and men who are ages 18 to 49 than among those ages 50 and older.

What accounts for a drop in Americans' view of college education as a necessity for entering the middle class? Here are some possibilities: the prohibitive costs and the long term costs of paying back huge loans, a drop in the view that an education is a necessity for, but not a guarantee of, the first good paying job, and that a college education is not intrinsically valuable. In my view of middle class societal norms, a college graduate was a status symbol, not so much as for what it brought economically, but because it provided a well rounded intellectual and cultural enrichment. The idea of colleges being primarily an expensive form of trade school could be a phenomenon born of economic insecurity caused by events such as the Great Recession. Course distribution requirements still exist in many institutions, but for those schools that don't require a form of liberal arts focus, students are more tempted to follow a narrow and career-oriented plan.

In a Pew Research Center Article, "Despite recovery, fewer Americans identify as middle class" by Rakesh Kochhar and Rich Morin,  
<http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2014/01/27/despite-recovery-fewer-americans-identify-as-middle-class/>

Americans see themselves less optimistically than before. Note, the data was gathered for the article's publication in 2014, as American's still struggled with recovering from the Great Recession. An updated study might show more optimism and more identification with the middle class.

### 2) Income and wealth inequality

Income inequality in America is at historic levels. The poorest half of the US population owns 2.5% of America's wealth, while the top 1% owns 35%. Growing inequality and lack of upward mobility affect every aspect of our society.

Three aspects of inequality will be part of the unit: inequality of income, consumption, and wealth. In general, wealth is the most unequally distributed of the three, consumption the least. In America, for example, the Gini coefficient (a measure of inequality in which 1 represents maximum inequality and 0 a perfectly egalitarian society) is 0.78 for wealth and 0.63 for income, but only 0.40 for consumption. Common to all measures, however, is the upward trend over the past 30 years.

The growing gap in income (including non-wage income like returns on investment or capital gains) is even starker. Between 1979 and 2007, the real incomes of the richest 1 percent almost tripled, while the real incomes of the median household inched up only about 25 percent—Inequality in wealth (the sum total of household savings, home equity, investments, and debts) is starker still [click here for graphic]. The richest 1 percent claims about a third of the nation’s wealth; the top 5 percent claim over 60 percent. These shares have grown steadily over the last generation.

Inequality has grown more in the United States than other countries. Among the world’s wealthy countries (those with an average adult wealth of \$100,000 or more), the U.S. ranks dead last on the relevant inequality measures. Economic segregation—the likelihood that Americans live in enclaves of wealth or poverty—has hardened. Economic mobility, by any measure, remains weak.

How best to make some of the data clearly understood by students? A number of resources, from within and outside our seminar offer accessible graphics and charts which illustrate the data. One which is particularly useful is from Desilva, “The Many Ways to Measure Income Inequality”, *Pew Research Center* . In a recent report, for instance, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development noted that “in OECD countries, the richest 10% of the population earn 9.6 times the income of the poorest 10%.

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### **3) Inequality of Opportunity**

Equality of opportunity requires that jobs, education, and other opportunities be open to all, and, in addition,

each individual is to have a fair chance to attain these goals. Equality of opportunity can be viewed from a number of perspectives.

For example, richer parents can afford to send their children to better schools and colleges and can offer financial support for housing and other expenses. “For these and a host of other reasons, where and to whom you are born is a significant determinant of life outcomes, especially in America.” “Inequality of Opportunity: The Cost of the American Dream,” *The Economist*, 9/8/17, <<https://www.economist.com/democracy-in-america/2017/09/08/the-cost-of-the-american-dream>>

Students will write one or more articles about inequality of opportunity at Cross—e.g. do certain students have access to better teachers and opportunities than others? One of the possible articles may involve students’ view of the unequal opportunities at Cross: the A.P. courses, honors electives, college course participation, and others.

#### **4) Mobility/The Shrinking Middle Class?**

Social mobility is defined as follows: shifting from one social status to another, commonly to a status that is either higher or lower. For example, a child of day laborers who becomes a professor achieves upward social mobility.

In sociology, social mobility explains changes (or lack thereof) in social status.

Students will measure mobility between their grandparents and parents. An article could begin as surveys addressing students’ views of their social mobility, including their views of such mobility that may have been possible for their parents and grandparents.

The literature addresses the Middle Class in many different ways. One of the most readable and brief is Chetty, *et. al* , article “The fading American dream: Trends in absolute income mobility since 1940” Rates of “absolute income mobility” – the fraction of children who earn more than their parents – by combining historical data from Census and CPS cross-sections with panel data for recent birth cohorts from de-identified tax records. Research results imply that reviving the “American Dream” of high rates of absolute mobility would require economic growth that is spread more broadly across the income distribution.”

Certain charts and graphs make some of the economics of social mobility more accessible. These include: Baseline Estimates of Absolute Mobility by Birth Cohort, (Income Measured at Age 40, and Adjusting for Family Size), and Trends in Absolute Mobility by State, and Decline in Absolute Mobility from 1940 to 1980 Cohort by State

A key resource for addressing the middle class and social mobility is The Pew Memorial Trust. Pew offers accessible, understandable articles on various aspects of the middle class experience, some of which are summarized below, not necessarily in order of relevance.

Anna Brown’s article “What Americans say it takes to be middle class” for the Pew Research Center , <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/02/04/what-americans-say-it-takes-to-be-middle-class/> , directly addresses what American’s say about getting into and staying in the middle class. Brown notes the downward trend in Americans’ belief that a college education is a necessity for a middle class life.

Today, about as many Americans identify themselves as lower or lower-middle class (40%) as say they are in the middle class (44%), according to a recent Pew Research Center/USA TODAY survey. The nationally

representative survey of 1,504 adults conducted Jan. 15-19 found that the share of Americans who identify with the middle class has never been lower, dropping to 44% in the latest survey from 53% in 2008 during the first months of the Great Recession.

Pew's focus on "Social and Demographic Trends" produced "America's Shrinking Middle Class: A Close Look at Changes Within Metropolitan Areas"

<http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2016/05/11/americas-shrinking-middle-class-a-close-look-at-changes-within-metropolitan-areas/> The article is more narrowly focused on objective criteria, such as income, within metropolitan areas, and the article appeared in 2016. What if the article were updated to today? Might the conclusions change?

The shrinking of the middle class at the national level, to the point where it may no longer be the economic majority in the U.S., was documented in an earlier analysis by the Pew Research Center. The changes at the metropolitan level, the subject of this in-depth look at the American middle class, demonstrate that the national trend is the result of widespread declines in localities all around the country."

Pew produced a 2008 article by Rich Morin, "America's Four Middle Classes."

<http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2008/07/29/americas-four-middle-classes/>

This article has a unique perspective, that there are more than one middle class, each with his or her own characteristics and resultant data. There isn't one American middle class; there are four: 1) The Top of the Class. (well educated, mostly male, financially secure.) 2) The Struggling Middle, a group disproportionately composed of women and minorities. In fact, many members of the Struggling Middle have more in common with the lower class <sup>1</sup> than they do with those in the other three groups and actually have a lower median family income than Americans who put themselves on the lowest rungs of the social ladder. About one-in-six self-identified middle class Americans fall into the Struggling Middle. 3) The Satisfied Middle has everything but money; their comparatively modest incomes have not muted their sunny outlooks or overall satisfaction with their lives. This group is disproportionately old and disproportionately young; middle-aged adults are relatively scarce in the Satisfied Middle. They make up a quarter of the middle class. 4) The Anxious Middle; they make up slightly less than a quarter of all middle class Americans. and are the most dissatisfied and downbeat of the four groups. While they enjoy some of the economic advantages of the Top of the Class, they express many of the same bleak judgments about their lives as those in the Struggling Middle.

These four groups are all part of the 53% majority of Americans who identified themselves as "middle class" in a Pew Research telephone survey taken from Jan 24 through Feb. 19, 2008

Two of the groups that emerged from this analysis—The Satisfied Middle and Anxious Middle—straddle the statistical middle of the American life. But the Top of the Class and Struggling Middle seem, in some ways, anything but middle class. Why don't those in the Struggling Middle identify with the Lower Class; after all, their median family incomes fall well below the earnings of those Americans who say they're in the least advantaged social class? And why don't those seemingly privileged members of the Top of the Class identify with the Upper Class, with whom they seem to share so many advantages? Taken together, this statistical typology of the four middle classes paints a nuanced picture of the American middle class and those who claim membership in it. Rather than being demographically and culturally monotonic, America's middle class is an amalgam of distinct groups that share different outlooks on life and life experiences, a blend of young and old, black, white and Latino, optimists and pessimists, achievers and dreamers, those who are barely hanging on to the Middle Class Dream and those who are living it fully.

In Pew's "America's middle class is shrinking. So who's leaving it?" by Drew Deserver, <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/12/14/americas-middle-class-is-shrinking-so-whos-leaving-it/>, the author addresses the question about who is in the middle class and who is leaving it.

The "four middle classes" theory may be very useful as a way to organize survey questions and interviews about social mobility, because they allow more thorough and subtle distinctions among the four groups that are the middle class.

### Challenges and Hopes About How to Engage Students

- 1) How can the unit quickly get students into a dialog about the subject (s) so that they are learning from one another and so that the teacher lectures only when necessary? (This is what the learning will look like.)
- 2) How can students teach themselves and each other, in such a way that deepens, extends, and makes relevant the subject matter? (This is what the learning will be about.)
- 3) How can the unit expand the subject matter to include surveys and articles about the theme, in such a way that students see the relevance to themselves, their families, their school, and their community (making the connections).

### Resources:

Resources for teacher and students include those that are contained in the annotated bibliography, and will also include visual resources, first person accounts, memoirs, interviews, and relevant film clips. The following are three samples of classroom activities (each is two days) out of a total maximum of nine 80-minute classes).

## **Days One and Two Classroom Activities: Introduction to the Unit and the Unit Themes**

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A. Content Objectives-The students will be able to

- 1) define "middle class";
- 2) discuss the question, "Who is in the Middle Class?"
- 3) define "The American Dream"
- 4) discuss whether the Middle class is shrinking
- 5) Is Middle Class status dependant on an income level or it also a state of mind
- 6) develop a survey addressing the above objectives
- 7) Present the survey results within a school newspaper articles on the subjects, with a focus on students' views of their aspirations.



B. Initiation Strategy: In order to get them right into it, students are shown photos from America, including Margaret Bourke-White's photo of the Billboard and bread line.

Teacher will project, and hand out, about 4 graphics/charts on the subject of income inequality and the middle class.

C. To begin with, students will define and describe the middle class. The class will define and discuss social Social Reproduction, the theories that explain the continuation of social inequality and the acceptance of such distinctions as destiny, focusing on the structures and activities that transmit social inequality from one generation to the next.

D. Lesson Strategy:

1. Students are divided into five groups of 4
2. Students will define and discuss the terms and questions above, and share out, focusing on the irony of rich and poor being juxtaposed in the photograph by Margaret Bourke White.
3. The class as a whole will develop a survey, the subjects of which will be fellow students as one cohort and staff and administration as the second cohort, directed to the objectives above. These surveys will be simple and direct, and will address what the subjects think about America's growing income inequality and the effects on their view of what constitutes middle class.
4. Students will present the survey results within school newspaper articles on the subjects, with a focus on students' views of their aspirations.

D. Closure: Teacher poses and explains the activities for the next day: Building and taking, and interpreting the survey.

## **Days Three to Four Classroom Activities: Measuring Inequality**

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A. Learning Objectives-The students will be able to:

- 1) Take and interpret the survey results about the Day 1 and Day 2 objectives.
- 2) Define income inequality, interpret charts re. same.
- 2) Design and take a survey about inequality;
- 3) Interpret the survey as a part of articles for the school newspaper.

B. Initiation Strategy: TW show and discuss various charts on income inequality.

C. Measuring inequality: Students will define and describe income inequality, a description of which would include the concentration of increasing wealth in the hands of a smaller percentage of the population, and using the visuals available, particularly those created by writers working for the Pew Research center. Students might focus on the changes caused by recessions, tax policy and their connection to the growing dominance of the richest 1% of the population. In creating one or more articles for the school newspaper, students will create surveys and collect data on how students, teachers, and administrators view their status

and their view of the middle class.

D. Lesson Strategy:

1. In the groups already assigned from Day One, students research the topics described in the Learning Objectives above. Each student in the group will be responsible for a distinct part of the presentation to be made on Day Three.
2. Students brainstorm about how to take the surveys and how to present them in articles, and especially how to make the topic relevant to students, the school as a whole, and the community.

E. Closure: Teacher assigns homework related to survey/article development.

## **Days Five to Six Classroom Activities: Inequality of Opportunity**

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A. Learning Objectives-The students will be able to:

- 1) Define equality of opportunity;2) Define equality of outcome;
- 3) Brainstorm one or more surveys/articles about how students see the topic;
- 4) Students write an article about inequality of opportunity in Cross—e.g. do certain students have access to better teachers and opportunities than others.

B. Initiation Strategy: Teacher will ask students whether they think all students have the same opportunities as one another.

C. Inequality of Opportunity: Students will demonstrate an understanding of inequality of opportunity.

D. Lesson Strategy:

1. After the initiation, students will have a ten-minute discussion and/or debate on the two subjects.
2. In the groups set up on Day 1, students will use most of the class time to research those topics.
3. Students brainstorm about how to make the surveys and how to present them in articles, and especially how to make the topic relevant to students, the school as a whole, and the community.

E. Closing: Students report out on the progress on the topic research/survey structure.

## **Days Seven to Eight Classroom Activities: Social Mobility**

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A. Learning Objectives-The students will be able to:

- 1) Define economic mobility

2) Define social mobility;

3) Brainstorm one or more surveys/articles measure mobility between their grandparents and parents and themselves

4) Students write an article about mobility, using the survey data

B. Initiation Strategy: Teacher will ask students about the economic and social mobility of their grandparents, parents, and themselves.

C. Lesson Strategy:

1. After the initiation, students will have a ten-minute discussion and/or debate on the subject.
2. In the groups given Day 1, students will use most of the class time to research the topic.
3. Students brainstorm about how to make the surveys and how to present them in articles, and especially how to make the topic relevant to students, the school as a whole, and the community.

D. Closing: Students report out on the progress on the topic research/survey structure.

## Reading List/Annotated Bibliography

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1. Atkinson, Anthony B. *Inequality: What Can Be Done?* Boston: Harvard University Press, 2018 (a rich and essential source on the topic)
2. The Equality of Opportunity Project , <http://www.equality-of-opportunity.org> (web source, various online “courses,” data, and narrative)
3. Duncan, Greg J. and Mundane, Richard J., editors: *Whither Opportunity? Rising Inequality, Schools, and Children’s Life Chances*. Russell Sage and Spencer Foundations, 2011 (a wide variety of approaches and topics)
4. Piketty, Thomas. *Capital in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* . Harvard University Press, 2013 (focuses on wealth and income inequality in Europe and the United States since the 18th century)
5. *Educating Rita*, Lewis Gilbert, 1983 (a British film about rebellion against low expectations and anti-intellectualism)
6. Hofstadter, Richard. *Anti-intellectualism in American Life*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf (1963) (Hofstadter sets out to trace the social movements that altered the role of intellect in American society.)
7. Sen, Amartya (1997) [1976]. *On Economic Inequality (expanded ed.)*. Oxford University Press , 1997 . (a thorough and critical survey of the literature on the subject of economic inequality)
8. “America’s Shrinking Middle Class: A Close Look at Changes Within Metropolitan Areas.” Pew Research Center. May 11, 2016. <<http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2016/05/11/americas-shrinking-middle-class-a-close-look-at-changes-within-metropolitan-areas>>
9. Brown, Anna. “What Americans Say it Takes to be Middle Class.” Pew Research Center. February 4, 2016. <<http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/02/04/what-americans-say-it-takes-to-be-middle-class>>
10. Kochnar, Rakesh and Morin, Rich. “Despite Recovery, Fewer Americans Identify as Middle Class.” Pew Research Center. January 7, 2014 . < <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2014/01/27/despite-recovery-fewer-americans-identify-as-middle-class>> (a thoughtful and challenging approach to recent changes in Americans’ attitude about whether they belong in the middle class)
11. Kochnar, Rakesh and Morin, Rich. “Five Takeaways About the American Middle Class.” Pew Research Center. December 10, 2015. <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/12/10/5-takeaways-about-the-american-middle-class>

12. "Inequality of Opportunity: The Cost of the American Dream," *The Economist*, 9/8/17, <<https://www.economist.com/democracy-in-america/2017/09/08/the-cost-of-the-american-dream>>
13. Chetty, Raj. "The Fading American Dream: Trends in Absolute Income Mobility", Executive Summary, 2016.

## Appendix

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### Standards Addressed

- *CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.1* Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.
- *CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.2* Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.
- *CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.7* Conduct short research projects that use several sources to build knowledge through investigation of different aspects of a topic.
- *CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.8* Recall relevant information from experiences or gather relevant information from print and digital sources; summarize or paraphrase information in notes and finished work and provide a list of sources.
- *CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.9* Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

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