



# Tenement Reform

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110 - 140 minutes

## OVERVIEW

In this lesson, students will use a variety of skills in order to understand what life was like for people living in tenements, and how Jacob Riis exposed the horrific conditions to the world. Due to Riis' photojournalism, new laws were enacted in order to place restrictions and regulations on tenement housing throughout New York City, influencing housing laws throughout the country. Students will read excerpts of passages from *How the Other Half Lives* written by Riis in order to visualize tenement life. Students will also read an excerpt from the 1901 Tenement Housing Act, which enforced new laws for tenements. The lesson will incorporate several different activities in order to target multiple intelligences and entry points including virtual reality, videos, images, primary texts and student to student discussions. By the end of this lesson, students will be able to explain how Jacob Riis helped improve urban life at the turn of the century.

## AIM

*How did Jacob Riis impact urban life at the turn of the century?*

## OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to...

- Analyze primary documents
- Formulate a claim
- Determine the meaning of words and phrases
- Visualize life in a tenement
- Examine various locations throughout the Tenement Museum
- Justify their reasoning with evidence
- Analyze evidence
- Compare tenement living before and after the House Act of 1901

## COMMON CORE STANDARDS

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.1  
 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.2  
 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.4  
 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.7  
 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.2  
 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.2

## MATERIALS

VR Headsets (class set)

Student devices (class set)

Teacher device

Powerpoint

Student Worksheets

Computer

Projector



## ACTIVITIES

### DO NOW (5 minutes)

Students will answer one or both of the questions:

- Describe where you live
- Imagine ten more people moved into your home, where would they go? Where would everyone sleep?

### LIFE IN A TENEMENT- PICTURES (5-10 minutes)

- Teacher will show the students 5 pictures of tenement living taken by Jacob Riis during the late 1800s.
- Students will choose three images to describe

### 1ST EXCERPT FROM *HOW THE OTHER HALF LIVES*

(5 minutes)

- Students will read a short excerpt from Riis' *How the Other Half Lives*
- Students will answer one question based off the reading

### JACOB RIIS- VIDEO (5-10 minutes)

- Students will watch a short video on Riis and his photojournalism
- Students will answer two questions in response to the video

### 2nd EXCERPT FROM *HOW THE OTHER HALF LIVES*

(10-15 minutes)

- Students will read an excerpt from Riis' *How the Other Half Lives*
- Students will answer two questions related to the reading

### TENEMENT HOUSE ACT 1901 (10-15 minutes)

- Students will read an excerpt from the Tenement House Act of 1901
- Students will answer two questions related to the reading

## VOCABULARY

Tenement

Photojournalism



### TENEMENT MUSEUM - VR EXPEDITION (55-65 minutes)

- Teacher will lead the students using the **Tenement Museum Expedition**
  - *The expedition should be downloaded prior to class.*
  - **Students should remain in their seats while wearing the headsets for safety.**
- In addition to the questions on Google Expeditions, there are several other questions on the slide for the teacher to ask the students.
- Students will have to answer at least 5 questions during the tour and complete the chart on their worksheet.
- It might take 10-30 seconds for all student devices to switch between scenes. During this transition you can have students answer the question.

### EXIT TICKET - WRITING ACTIVITY (15 minutes)

- Students will write a paragraph with a claim, three pieces of evidence and analysis of the evidence in order to answer the aim.
  - *How did Jacob Riis impact urban life at the turn of the century?*

### DIFFERENTIATION

This lesson targets several learning styles since it incorporates visuals, audio, writing and kinesthetic opportunities. There are also various entry points throughout the lesson since the the questions during the expedition are leveled and target different skills, allowing students to choose the questions that best suit their learning. The excerpts from the primary documents are also shortened and only focus on the main points of the documents, allowing the students to focus their attention specifically to certain sections of the text. Students should be encouraged to use highlighters or underline text in order to help identify main points of the passages, or the text can be read aloud to individuals or the entire class. Students who do not want to use the headsets are able to still participate in the

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activity by changing the view mode from VR to regular and using their finger to look around the scene.



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