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## Lesson Plan for High School

# The Newark Renaissance



**Central Question:** Is the city of Newark experiencing a renaissance?

### Materials

- Newark Renaissance PowerPoint
- Documents A-F
- Guiding Questions
- Thesis Tracker
- Final Essay Question

### Plan of Instruction

- 1) Use the PowerPoint slides to introduce the topic of the Newark Renaissance and the central question of the lesson.

- a. **Slide One:** Although the Renaissance was a historical time period in Europe spanning the 14<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, the word can also be used to describe something that is going through a “renewal of life, a rebirth, or a revival.”
- b. **Slide Two:** When a city experiences a **renaissance**, it may see an increase in population, a drop in crime, new economic development, and a renewed interest in the arts. Cities that were once neglected become the thriving center of cultural and economic life when they go through a **renaissance**.
- c. **Slide Three:** Newark hit a peak population of about 450,000 people in 1948. At Newark’s height, there were many thriving immigrant neighborhoods composed of people from around the world, but during the 1950’s, the population began to decline. Many middle class residents left the city after the 1967 riots. Immigrants in Jewish, Chinese, and German neighborhoods left Newark for the suburbs. Today the population is around 280,000 people. Although Newark lost a large amount of its peak population, the population has slowly been growing since 2000 and new immigrant groups have taken the place of the ones that left.
- d. **Slide Four:** After the 1967 riots, Newark faced many years of **urban decline**. Urban decline occurs when cities lose a large amount of their population, especially among the middle class. In cities experiencing **urban decline**, businesses often leave and buildings become abandoned. Industries which once employed many residents leave the city. The residents who remain often face issues related to poverty, unemployment, and crime. During the 1970’s and 1980’s, many other cities in the U.S. such as Buffalo, Detroit, and Cleveland also experienced significant **urban decline**.
- e. **Slide Five:** In 1997, the New Jersey Performing Arts Center was built in downtown Newark, attracting a large number of outside visitors to the city. Many people saw this as the beginning of the Newark Renaissance and over the past 20 years, new businesses and developments have moved back into the city. Neighborhoods such as the Ironbound and the Downtown have seen significant construction and investment in the hopes of improving the quality of life for people living in and around Newark.
- f. **Slide Six:** Development has been so strong in parts of Newark that many people now believe the city is experiencing **gentrification**. Gentrification occurs when middle and upper class residents move back into urban areas that they once avoided. When **gentrification** happens, long term residents often find that they can no longer afford to live in their own communities. Minority and immigrant communities may become displaced as white residents move into gentrifying neighborhoods.
- g. **Slide Seven:** Is Newark experiencing a renaissance? Some people argue that new residents and construction are signs of the city’s renaissance. Others argue that many neighborhoods still face problems related to crime and poverty and gentrification will only make it more difficult for native Newarkers to afford living in their city.

- h. **Slide Eight:** In this lesson, we will examine several documents, which you will use as evidence to argue whether Newark is undergoing a renaissance.

**Round One:**

- 1) Pass out Documents A and B and the Guiding Questions.
  - a. In pairs, students read the documents and answer the guiding questions.
  - b. Share out responses.
- 2) Pass out Thesis Tracker.
  - a. Students individually complete Round One of the thesis tracker.
  - b. Share out responses

**Round Two:**

- 3) Pass out Documents C and D and the Guiding Questions.
  - c. In pairs, students read the documents and answer the guiding questions.
  - d. Share out responses.
- 4) Pass out Thesis Tracker.
  - c. Students individually complete Round Two of the thesis tracker.
  - d. Share out responses. Has anyone's thesis changed? If so, how?

**Round Three:**

- 5) Pass out Documents E and F and the Guiding Questions.
  - e. In pairs, students read the documents and answer the guiding questions.
  - f. Share out responses.
- 6) Pass out Thesis Tracker.
  - e. Students individually complete Round Three of the thesis tracker.
  - f. Share out responses. Has anyone's thesis changed? If so, how?

**Final Discussion and Essay:**

- 1) Ask the following questions in a full class discussion.
  - a) Based on these documents, do you think Newark is experiencing a renaissance?
  - b) Which of these documents do you think provides the best evidence for explaining whether Newark is experiencing a renaissance? Why?
  - c) What other types of documents or pieces of evidence might you explore to determine if Newark is experiencing a Renaissance? Where might you find them?
- 2) Students should be given a full class period to individually compose an essay to the following question: *Is Newark experiencing a renaissance? Write an essay supporting your claim using evidence from at least 3 of the documents.*

## Document A: *Believe in Newark Police* Report (excerpt)

*In 2014, Mayor Ras J. Baraka released a report called “Believe in Newark Police” highlighting the new crime reduction methods that the Newark Police Department was engaging in. The following document is a page from that report.*

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

## Neighborhood Walks

This summer Mayor Ras J. Baraka and the top ranking police officials and department heads began Neighborhood Walks, where they walked through the streets of Newark to witness firsthand the quality of life issues that are affecting residents. These included abandoned buildings that have become eyesores, health hazards, and home to squatters and drug dealers, for example. The Mayor and the police spoke to residents directly about their concerns and called in code enforcement or sanitation as needed.

The Neighborhood Walks gained the attention of non-Newark residents, like New York Giants punter Steve Weatherford who, while on a walk, donated 750 smoke detectors to residents.

During another Neighborhood Walk, State Acting Attorney General John J. Hoffman joined alongside city officials, clergy members, and other dignitaries to address crime and quality-of-life issues. The most important aspect of these Neighborhood Walks is that they bring together the residents of Newark and the law enforcement officers who are committed to serving with the highest quality of service.

To get involved, call Community Affairs 973-694-6301.



NY Giants Steve Weatherford greets residents with smoke detectors.



Police Director Venable listens to resident's concerns.



Police Chief Campos meets with residents.

## Document B: Redevelopment Plan for Newark's Northern Fairmount Neighborhood (Excerpt)

*The following document from 2009 is an excerpt from one of Newark's many redevelopment plans for neighborhoods throughout the city. Redevelopment plans focus on how the quality of life can be improved for residents in these neighborhoods.*

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

It is with pleasure that we submit this Redevelopment Plan for Newark's Northern Fairmount neighborhood. Over the past four months or so, we have spent a lot of time in Northern Fairmount, and have come to admire and appreciate all that it has to offer. We are optimistic about its future, and we hope that with this redevelopment plan, we can contribute to its revitalization.

More specifically, our mission here is to build on the Northern Fairmount neighborhood's assets to attract more residents, and to improve the overall quality of life for existing residents. Between 1990 and 2000, the Northern Fairmount neighborhood's population went from 4,724 to 3,886. The result of this population loss has been vacant buildings, vacant lots, empty storefronts, and all of the social problems--from litter to drug dealing--that these conditions have done little to discourage. This population loss surprised us: after all, Northern Fairmount had a diverse mix of quality housing units, a retail corridor that had the bones of a classic, mixed-use shopping street, and quiet, leafy, streets. The transportation was great, the location was excellent, and, to top things off, there

was a community of people--led by Reverend Mamie Lee and BAND--who cared deeply about the neighborhood and who made it the friendly, close-knit place it was.

What follows are seven "Guiding Principles" that we have used in this project: all are aimed at attracting more residents and improving the overall quality of life for existing residents.

- Increase the population of the neighborhood
- Achieve higher levels of homeownership
- Activate ground-floor retail spaces on Central Avenue, and increase the number of residential units above
- Increase recreational opportunities in the neighborhood
- Improve streetscaping in the neighborhood
- Help make United Campus an important hub of community life
- Maintain mixed-use character of the neighborhood.

Our plan deploys three strategies: Westmarketing, Educating, and Catalyzing. "Westmarketing" is an

advertising campaign that lets Newarkers know that neighborhood is a great place to live. "Educating" seeks to help existing residents and potential residents become homeowners by helping them make informed and responsible decisions regarding home purchases. "Catalyzing" uses design proposals, zoning recommendations and investments to increase the amenities and improve the physical environment of the neighborhood.

Together these three strategies employ a collection of interventions that range in scale, cost, and longevity. Our intention here was to respond to the North Fairmount neighborhood's specific needs: while the proposals put forth in this Redevelopment Plan amount to something comprehensive, they all are very local, very sensible responses to very specific issues.

It has been our unique pleasure to work on this document. We sincerely hope that it will play an important role in the Northern Fairmount neighborhood's future.



### **Document C: Riverfront Development Images**

*The following images are from a 2013 city report showing the development of park land along the Passaic River waterfront.*



**STATE LAND DEDICATED FOR FUTURE RIVERFRONT WALKWAY**



**BULKHEAD CONSTRUCTION**



**ESSEX COUNTY RIVERFRONT PARK, OPENED JUNE 2012**

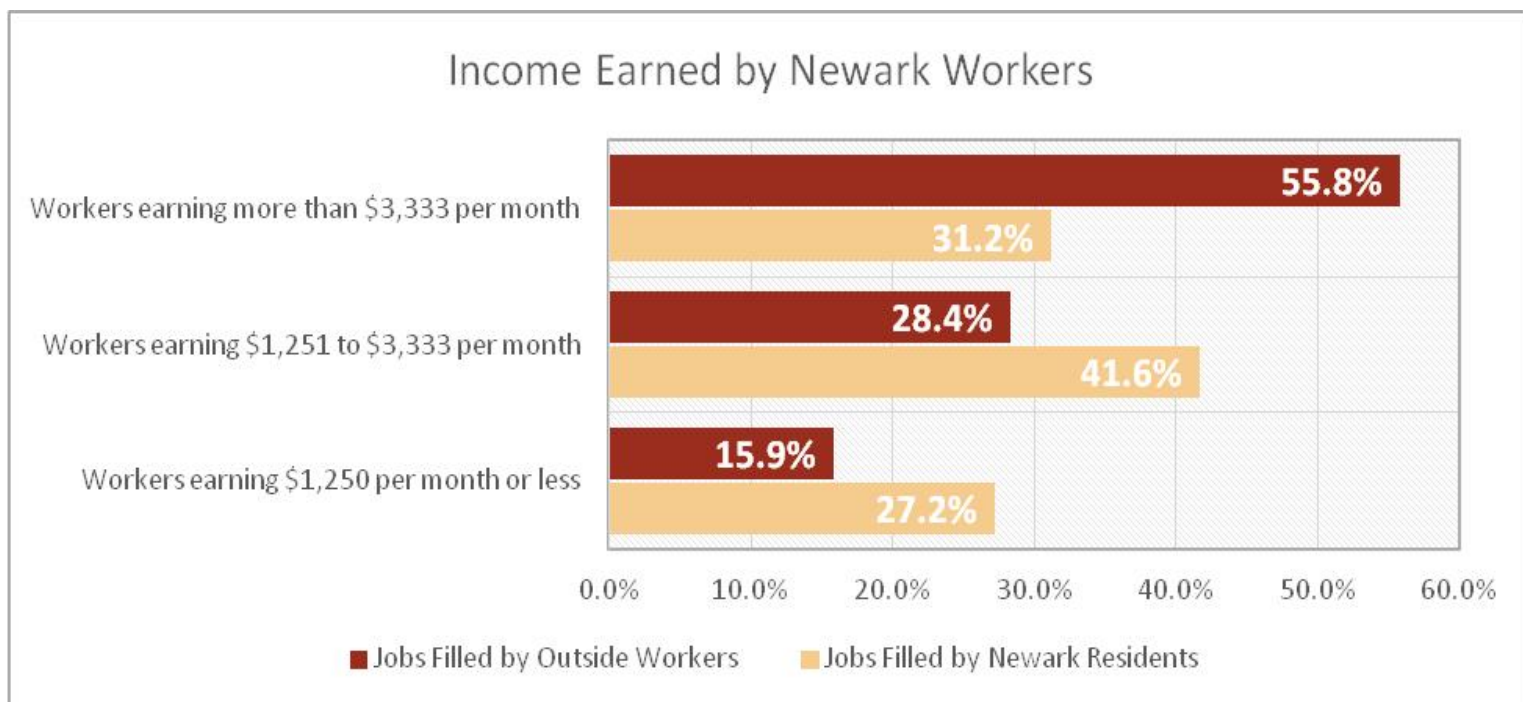


**NEWARK RIVERFRONT PARK UNDER CONSTRUCTION**



### Document D: Newark City Workers Income Graph

The following graph from 2011 is provided by the Newark City of Learning Collaborative.



### **Document E: Summary of 2016 Newark Kids Count report (excerpt)**

*The following document is an excerpt written by an NJ Advance Media writer summarizing the 2016 Newark Kids Count report that documents the well-being of Newark's children.*

## **Newark kids are healthier but still living in poverty, new study finds**

By Alex Napoliello, August 1, 2016

[NEWARK](#) -- While most families in the state's largest city continue to live in poverty, progress is being made when it comes to the well-being of the city's children, according to a new report released Monday.

That's the takeaway from the [2016 Newark Kids Count report](#). The annual report tracks trends in the well-being of children in Newark, from child poverty and education to juvenile arrests and childcare in the city.

Sixty-nine percent of children in Newark live in low-income households, said Cecilia Zalkind, president and CEO of advocates for Children of New Jersey, the report's author. But the report shows improvements are being made in certain health areas, she said.

"For the more than 72,000 children that call Newark home, we are moving in the right direction when it comes to their health and well-being," Zalkind said. "But our work is far from done."

Nearly 13,000 of Newark children, or 18 percent, lived in extreme poverty in 2014. That's compared to 7 percent of children who live in extreme poverty statewide. The study classified extreme poverty as a household with a family of four that has a combined annual income of \$11,925 or less.

Still, that number is down 13 percent from 2010, the report said.

Here are other areas the report highlighted where progress is being made:

- \* Births among teenagers, ages 15 to 19, have declined from 11 percent of all births in 2011 to 10 percent in 2012, the most recent year the data is available. Newark's teen birth rate remains twice as high as the statewide average, the report said.

- \* The number of babies born with low-birthweight has steadily declined, the report shows, from 531 in 2008 to 428 in 2012.

- \* When it comes to education, the city's graduation rate continues to improve. Crime and substance abuse cases in schools declined and enrollment in city's charter schools has more than doubled from the 2010-11 school year.

- \* Juvenile arrests are down from 773 in 2010 to 489 in 2014, according to the report.



## **Document F: Gentrification Debate (excerpt)**

*The following excerpt is from a 2015 article examining a debate about gentrification in Newark.*

### **Pros and cons: Is Newark's 'tidal wave' of redevelopment a renaissance or gentrification?**

By [Dan Ivers](#) | [NJ Advance Media for NJ.com](#), June 16, 2015

NEWARK — A panel that included representatives from local government, real estate and media convened Monday night to discuss the mounting economic momentum in Newark's downtown.

And while they may not be quite sure what to call it, they all agreed on one thing: it's happening, and happening fast.

The panel gathered at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center for a Town Hall meeting hosted by Montclair State University entitled "Renaissance or Gentrification?: How do we discuss redevelopment in Newark?" devoted to discussion on the changes afoot in Brick City, and how they are covered in the media.

Moderator Merrill Brown, the director of Montclair's School of Communication and Media, asked the group whether they believed recent signs of revitalization, such as the opening of luxury loft apartments and plans for a Whole Foods supermarket, constituted a renaissance of Newark's pre-riots glory days, or a Brooklyn-style "gentrification."

All agreed that more dollars were already flowing through downtown than anytime in recent history, though answers were mixed on what that might mean for the city's future as a whole.

"From a Newarker, a lot of things haven't changed. From a businessman...we're seeing a renaissance. There's a true commercial renaissance in Newark," said Francis J. Giantomasi, a local real estate attorney and planning expert.

Deputy Mayor and Director of Housing and Economic Development Baye Adofo-Wilson echoed the sentiment, but said that Newark's glut of vacant properties, brownfields and space for new development made it uniquely suited to avoid the kind of displacement of longtime residents associated with gentrification in cities like Brooklyn or Jersey City.

"To me it seems sort of like a tidal wave that's coming...the difference is that Newark is a deeper bowl," he said. "When it hits here it's going to, sort of, it has to fill up."

# Guiding Questions

## Round 1

### **Document A: *Believe in Newark Police Report***

1. What is the purpose of Mayor Baraka's Neighborhood Walks program?
2. Do you think the Neighborhood Walks program has helped the city of Newark? Why or why not?
3. Can you think of any other ways that the city of Newark could help to improve the safety of the city?

### **Document B: Redevelopment Plan for Newark's Northern Fairmount Neighborhood**

1. What are the positive aspects that the document notes about the Northern Fairmount Neighborhood?
2. What are some of the problems the Northern Fairmount Neighborhood faces and how does the Redevelopment Plan suggest fixing them?

## **Round 2**

### **Document C: Riverfront Development Images**

1. What are some of the ways that the city made the Newark Waterfront more accessible to the public?
2. How can a park help to revitalize a community?
3. If you could improve one thing about any park in Newark, what would you do?

### **Document D: Newark City Workers Income Graph**

1. What does the graph show about the difference between jobs filled by outside workers and jobs filled by Newark residents?
2. What could the city do to ensure that more high paying jobs go to Newark residents?

### **Round 3**

#### **Document E: Summary of 2016 Newark Kids Count Report**

- 1) What positive gains have the kids in Newark made in the last several years?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 2) How can the city continue improving the lives of kids in Newark?

#### **Document F: Local Debate**

- 1) Why do the people in the article believe that Newark is experiencing a renaissance?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 2) How does the city think it can avoid displacing residents? Do you agree?



## Thesis Tracker

### Round 1: Documents A & B

**Is Newark experiencing a Renaissance?**

**What evidence from Documents A or B supports this claim?**

### Round 2: Documents C & D

**Is Newark experiencing a Renaissance?**

**What evidence from Documents C or D supports this claim?**

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**Round 3: Documents E & F**

<b>Is Newark experiencing a Renaissance?</b>
<b>What evidence from Documents E or F supports this claim?</b>

**Final Essay:** Is Newark experiencing a renaissance? Write an essay supporting your claim using evidence from at least 3 of the documents.