
The Housing Crisis Revisited

Link:

<https://stosselintheclassroom.org/both-sides-housing-crisis-revisited/>

Guide:

The questions below will help students achieve a better understanding of the arguments made on either side of a contentious topic. Because these questions often touch upon statements made briefly in the videos, we recommend reading the questions before watching each video.

Students are encouraged to take notes during the videos, and it may be helpful for students to break into groups, each taking responsibility for only a few questions, before coming together for discussion.

Analysis Questions:

1. What are the opposing ideas in these two videos?
2. In the Reason video, when asked why Austin's housing prices were declining, Jake Wegmann said one reason is that "in Texas, counties are prohibited from zoning outside of city limits." How does this impact housing prices?
3. In the Jacobin video, Natalie Woolams-Torres said that "most young Americans just accept [the housing crisis] as a cruel reality." Is this true? Have you accepted high housing prices as a cruel reality in America? Have your peers? Why/Why not?
4. In the Reason video, Nicole Nosek used the term "missing middle housing." What is "missing middle housing"?
5. Natalie Woolams-Torres said rent control is "one of the most immediate and proportionate responses to exponentially rising housing costs." What is rent control?
6. Nicole Nosek said it takes 627 days to get a single building permit in San Francisco. Is this reasonable? Why/Why not? How does it impact housing prices?
7. Natalie Woolams-Torres said: "Rent control not only cuts housing costs for existing renters but also lowers market rates across the board." How does it do that?
8. In the Reason video, Alim Virani said the landlord of his rent stabilized apartment in San Francisco "didn't really have an incentive" to renovate or offer amenities. Why was this?
9. Natalie Woolams-Torres said rent control can curb gentrification. What is gentrification? How does rent control curb it?
10. Rent control is illegal in Texas, but Alim Virani said rents stabilize "naturally through the influx of new units." What did he mean by this?
11. Natalie Woolams-Torres said that public housing "gets a bad rap in the United States." What is your impression of public housing? Does it get a bad rap? Why/Why not?

12. In the Reason video, Nick Gillespie said Austin and San Francisco represent the distinct paths of "markets versus government." What did he mean by this?
13. Both videos pointed to zoning laws as a contributing factor in rising housing prices. What are zoning laws? How do they impact housing prices?
14. The Reason video explained that some progressives in Austin have embraced a more market-oriented approach to housing, and both videos agreed that zoning regulations stifle development. Is this a topic that can bring together people of different political leanings? Why/Why not?
15. Aside from zoning, did these two videos share any common ground? Were there any other points on which they agreed? If so, what were they?
16. Should one of the arguments we heard carry more weight than the other? If so, which one? Why?
17. Did you have an opinion on this topic before watching these videos? If so, what was it? Has your opinion changed? If so, how? What did you learn from these videos that affects your views on this topic?
18. What else would you like to learn about this topic?
19. For more on this topic, see these installments of Both Sides of the Issue:
 - a. [Both Sides: How to Solve the Housing Crisis](#)
 - b. [Both Sides: Rent Control](#)