



Are You Preparing to be Self-Sufficient?

Grade Level 9-12

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Background on the Mississippi Self-Sufficiency Standard provided by: the Mississippi Economic Policy Center (MEPC)

Introduction: Are You Preparing to be Self Sufficient?

Learning how to be self-sufficient is a skill that is not taught in many households. In many cases, there is a disconnection between parents and children when it comes to budgeting money for household expenses. Adolescents have an unrealistic expectation of the cost of living, and if anything, fail to realize that prices increase every year which may mean changes in households' expenses and budgets. The Self Sufficiency Standard of Mississippi calculates how much a family in their county needs to earn to cover all their basic expenses- without public or private assistance. The Self Sufficiency Calculator allows individuals to input information about their specific family situation.

Objectives:

- Students will research living expenses in a specific county.
- Students will select a career of interest and adapt the wage/salary to average expenses for the selected county.
- Students will compare and contrast how living expenses change with marriage and children.
- Students will compare and contrast the living expenses across Mississippi.

Lesson Description:

In this lesson, the students will participant in hands-on research. The activity engages students in collecting living expenses data in various counties across Mississippi and across various professions.

Time Required:

- Two 55-minute class periods (may vary)
- This assignment could be given for homework instead of an in-class assignment

Materials:

- Computer with internet access
- Student worksheet

- Pre-Test

Procedure:

- 1) Give each student the pre-test. Discuss results as a class.
- 2) Tell students that sometimes they have unrealistic ideas about the cost of living. Tell them that they will research the cost of living in various counties in Mississippi and relate those expenses to a career of their choice. (*note: you may want to review some of the basic terms that they will see on the worksheet for example, What is a tax credit? What is included in transportation? Car payments, insurance, maintenance, gasoline.*)
- 3) Give each student a student worksheet. Complete worksheet.
- 4) Conduct a classroom discussion on the findings. Ask students thought-provoking questions about the realism of “wants” in life and the ability to pay for them. Remind students that if they move out of state, cost of living may actually be higher so it is important that you weigh the costs of career decisions.