



## **HOMELESSNESS: Critical Thinking Worksheet**

Homelessness has always been a part of society and there are many reasons for homelessness. This worksheet will help you better understand causes and think about solutions.

1. This list includes the most common causes of homelessness. Which is number 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5?  
 Low wages  
 Mental illness and lack of services  
 Lack of affordable housing  
 Poverty  
 Substance abuse and lack of services
2. Homelessness is a choice.  
 True  
 False  
 Sometimes
3. For which group have policies been able to lower homeless rates?  
 Children  
 Students  
 Elders  
 Veterans  
 People of color
4. Homelessness has always been a part of society, but what factors made the issue worse in the 80s?  
Choose all that apply.  
 Declining personal incomes  
 Loss of affordable housing  
 Increased risk factors with fewer resources  
 Deep cuts in welfare programs

### **Discussion Questions**

1. Homelessness advocates insist that what makes a person homeless is not having a home. You don't have to be sleeping on the street to be homeless. What are some other situations that could be considered homelessness?
2. The simple answer to solving homelessness is to make sure everyone has a home. What are some laws, policies, or strategies for achieving this?



## ANSWERS

1. (1) lack of affordable housing, (2) unemployment, (3) poverty, (4) mental illness and the lack of needed services, and (5) substance abuse and the lack of needed services. [https://nlchp.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Homeless\\_Stats\\_Fact\\_Sheet.pdf](https://nlchp.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Homeless_Stats_Fact_Sheet.pdf)
2. Sometimes: Although there are some people who might choose homelessness for a number of reasons, the idea that people who are homeless choose to live on the street perpetuates the false narrative that, unlike other people, they do not need or want stability. Experience indicates, homelessness is very much a solvable problem, and homelessness is usually not a choice. <https://thhi.org/about-homelessness/myths-about-homelessness/#myth1>
3. Veterans. “Subpopulations prioritized in policy and practice (including funding decisions) have made the most impressive gains over the last decade. Veterans experienced the greatest decreases in homelessness—50 percent.” <https://endhomelessness.org/homelessness-in-america/homelessness-statistics/state-of-homelessness-2020/>
4. All apply. A perfect storm of dismantling the social safety net. <https://www.kcet.org/shows/social-connected/the-rise-of-homelessness-in-the-980s#:~:text=Four%20interrelated%20dynamics%20were%20at,at%20high%20risk%20of%20homelessness>

## Discussion Answers

1. You might be defined as homeless if you are:
  - sleeping on the streets
  - staying with friends or family
  - staying in a hostel or bed and breakfast hotel
  - living in overcrowded conditions
  - at risk of violence in your home
  - living in poor conditions that affect your health.
  - living in a house that is not suitable for you because you are sick or disabled.[https://scotland.shelter.org.uk/get\\_advice/advice\\_topics/homelessness/what\\_is\\_homelessness](https://scotland.shelter.org.uk/get_advice/advice_topics/homelessness/what_is_homelessness)
2. Assist the most vulnerable, community approach to providing services, rapid re-housing, increasing employment and income, change zoning laws to allow for more affordable housing. <https://endhomelessness.org/ending-homelessness/solutions/> and <https://www.localhousingolutions.org/act/housing-policy-library/zoning-changes-to-allow-for-higher-residential-density-overview/zoning-changes-to-allow-for-higher-residential-density/>

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