

# Housing

---

## Objectives:

1. Students will be able to identify the factors involved in making housing decisions.
2. Students will be able to compare and contrast the advantages and disadvantages of buying a home versus renting one.
3. Students will analyze what makes homes worth more or less in different locations.
4. Students will analyze what physical features affect the cost of a home and how.
5. Students will be able to recall the steps in the home buying process.
6. Students will be able to effectively search for homes to rent and buy in and outside of the Bloomington/Normal area.
7. Students will be able to understand and use an amortization chart to calculate monthly mortgage payments.

## Learning Activities:

1. Lecture/Discussion – The first day of the unit will be in a traditional lecture format. Students will be presented with key concepts and will be asked to participate and contribute information to these concepts. Many of the concepts discussed will correlate with the previous unit on renting. Students will be asked to compare and contrast similarities and differences within concepts learned from that unit, and the concepts being discussed during this lecture.
2. Guest Speaker – A real estate agent will come and talk to the class about the steps in the home-buying process as well as services offered by agents. Students are advised to ask questions and take notes.
3. Calculations – Students will be introduced to an amortization chart. A case study will be done together in class. After students complete the case study, calculating the monthly payments of a house based on certain criteria, they will be directed to a financial website, [www.bankrate.com](http://www.bankrate.com), where they will use a monthly mortgage payment calculator. They will be able to quickly compare the differences in payments when factors such as the length of the mortgage and the interest rate changes. They will also analyze the benefits of making extra payments each year. Ultimately, they should be able to identify the difference between the initial cost of a home and the total cost of the home after adding in the finance charges. Furthermore, they should understand methods to reduce finance charges.
4. House Hunting –
  - a. Students will spend the entire class period house hunting. They will be required to search for a house in the Bloomington/Normal area using online resources. Their search must be for houses that meet their budget, established using the starting salaries of the

careers they chose earlier in the semester in the “Careers” unit. They will conduct a second search looking for homes outside Bloomington/Normal (anywhere in the U.S.). This online research will lead into a discussion (next class period) on why housing costs different amounts. The objective is for students to realize that both physical factors and factors dealing with location affect price. The latter, location, will introduce students to the cost of living. Students will go online and use cost of living calculators to compare different cities in the U.S.

- b. We wrap up the unit by going to [www.hgtv.com](http://www.hgtv.com) and watching small segments from the television show, *House Hunters*.” Students observe and then discuss the different decision-making processes that different people on the show went through. This directly ties into what the students have already learned with regards to the key factors in housing.
5. Test – students will be tested over the units on renting and housing.

### **Laptop Implications:**

1. Note-taking – students use their computers to take notes during the lecture and the guest speaker class periods.
2. Research – Without the laptops, students would not be able to access the monthly mortgage payment and cost of living calculators. These calculators tie directly into the objectives of the unit. Furthermore, students would not be able to hunt for housing online during the class period.
3. Viewing – Vision software is used to project *House Hunters* on all of the students’ computers.

### **Role of the Teacher:**

1. Lecturer – During the first class period, much of the time is teacher-centered (lecture). As the teacher, in addition to lecturing, I will lead and facilitate the discussions and questions that arise from the material being taught.
2. Facilitator – Throughout the house hunting and calculations activities, I will guide the students by providing resources, search criteria and guidelines, as well as the variables needed to perform the proper calculations. I will also answer and/or redirect questions that arise during these class periods.

### **Student Reaction:**

1. Students have had a positive reaction. They seem to enjoy the use of the laptops in the learning environment. The house hunting activities give the students creative freedom to choose the

homes that they desire. The freedom of decision-making is what drives the activities and also what the students like the most. This leads to interesting, student-driven discussions.

2. Unit Exam – students performed above their test average on this exam. I believe the student-driven activities drove home the key ideas of the unit and enhanced their learning of the subject.