

News Literacy: Understanding solutions journalism
Day One Assessment and key

Instructions: Read "[SF homeless problem looks the same as it did 20 years ago](#)," June 26, 2016 from the San Francisco Chronicle. Then answer the questions below.

Evaluate the story:

1. How did the headline catch your interest? Why might an explanatory journalist use a headline like this?
2. Read/analyze the first three paragraphs of the story. What are the three types of homelessness explained here? In what decade (e.g., 1980s) did they take place?
3. According to the story, has homelessness changed in the last 20 years? Y/N
4. Which of the following answer why the simple "bed-and-a-sandwich approach" doesn't work:
 - a. Mental illness
 - b. Substance abuse
 - c. Physical disability
 - d. Joblessness
 - e. Cost of providing temporary beds/food
 - f. All of the above
5. According to the city's latest homeless count, how many adult people are homeless in San Francisco? Can this number be considered accurate? Why or why not?
6. Match key terms in column 1 with definitions from the story in column 2:

Terms	Definitions
1) Supportive housing	a) A failed push to "clear the streets of homeless camps and aggressive panhandlers and steer them into housing and counseling programs"
2) Navigation Center	b) One night of shelter, e.g., "bed-and-a-sandwich"
3) Overnight shelter	c) "one-stop ...for homeless housing services"
4) The Matrix program	d) "not just beds, but also mental health and substance-abuse counselors on site"

7. Using citations in the story, list at least three people the reporter interviewed.

Bonus Question: According to the statistics presented in "Homeless Demographics in San Francisco," describe who a homeless person in San Francisco is likely to be in terms of 1) race, 2) gender, 3) where he or she sleeps and 4) length of homelessness.

KEY

Evaluate the story:

1. How did the headline catch your interest? “SF homeless problem looks the same as it did 20 years ago” is a statement of fact, not a suggestion. While headlines should be fact-based, this one is blunt, to the point and powerful. It pushes the reader to look past “does homelessness exist?” to “what does it look like” and ultimately “now, what can we do about it?” The first photo in the story backs up this approach.

2. Read/analyze the first three paragraphs of the story. What are the three types of homelessness explained here? In what decade (e.g., 1980s) did they take place?

- 1) 1960s, “winos and hobos (living) on Skid Row
- 2) end of Vietnam War/1970s, veterans
- 3) 1980s, “a cascade of the poor and mentally ill”

3. Has homelessness changed in the past 20 years? Y/N

If yes: The story states that “homelessness in San Francisco doesn’t look much different than it did 10 years ago. Or 20.”

If no, probe/ask why: Accept all reasonable responses that point to recent changes in federal policy, e.g., debate over immigration, lower jobless rate, increased uncertainty over health care

4. Which of the following answer why the simple “bed-and-a-sandwich approach” doesn’t work:

Correct answer is f) All of the above

5. According to the city’s latest homeless count, how many adult people are homeless in San Francisco? Can this number be considered accurate? Why or why not?

Correct answer is 6,686 “though many officials and advocates for homeless people say the number is much higher.”

6. Match key terms in column 1 with definitions from the story in column 2:

Correct answers are: 1) d, 2) c, 3) b, 4) a

7. Using citations in the story, list at least three people the reporter interviewed.

Answers will vary but can include:

- (former) San Francisco Mayor Ed Lee (note: Lee died December 2017)
- Khalid Abdul-Rahim, who works as a security guard along the Embarcadero
- Daniel Pledger, former bass player for punk band Seizure in the 1970s and ’80s
- Former mayor Art Agnos
- Former mayor Gavin Newsom
- Tatiana and Oksana, a Ukrainian mother and daughter (who refused to give their last names)
- Two social workers barred from being identified by state privacy rules
- Former supervisor Angela Alioto
- Peter Edelman, a Georgetown University law professor specializing in poverty
- Jeff Kositsky, head of the new Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing
- Jennifer Friedenbach of the Coalition on Homelessness advocacy group

Bonus Question: According to the statistics presented in “Homeless Demographics in San Francisco,” describe who a homeless person in San Francisco is likely to be. Answers are 1) white, 2) male, 3) outside, 4) one year or more.