**Open Your Class with This Tomorrow**

***Eviction: Poverty and Profit in the American City***

Author: Matthew Desmond

**Discussion Questions**

**Directions:** After reading the summary or the book *Evicted*, respond to the following questions addressing the challenges and potential ways of addressing the issue of eviction.

1. In your opinion, do you believe that the right to a decent home is part of basic American rights? Explain.
2. What is your response to the idea that eviction is a cause rather than a condition of poverty? Explain.
3. Single mothers with children are far more likely than others to face eviction at some point in their lives, how might you recommend the housing system be adjusted to help this particular population to increase stability in the lives of these children?
4. Explain some of the unseen benefits for significantly reducing the number of individuals evicted each year.
5. Often in court, those who are evicted do not have lawyers but the landlords do, do you believe that the landmark Supreme Court case of *Gideon* v. *Wainwright* covers the right of those evicted to be represented in court or should this be applied only in criminal cases? Explain.
6. What if any blame do you place on landlords like Sherrena when she increases rents in inner-city neighborhoods or does not make necessary repairs? Should she charge more because she is taking on high-risk tenants or is she taking advantage of people in a difficult situation for her own benefit? In your opinion, are the problems in the units typically the result of tenants who are not taking care of the property or is Sherrena a “slumlord”? Explain.
7. One proposal Desmond makes to reduce the rates of eviction is to enlarge a universal voucher program which would be paid for by reducing (or removing) the tax credit homeowners receive from the government on interest paid on their home mortgage, do you think this is a good plan? Explain.
8. Draft an example of a potential letter to your local Congressperson which contains at least two recommendations for how to address the eviction crisis in American cities.

Some questions adapted from the study guide to accompany ***Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City***