

LESSON M-UI-L3

Natural vs. Human-Made Disasters

Unit I: Human Behavior

Grade Levels: 5-8

Time: 90 Minutes



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Objective

Understand how natural and man-made disasters affect people and events.

Key Terms

- human-made
- natural

Lesson Materials

- Katrina Destruction: <http://www.katrinadestruction.com>
- Katrina then and now: http://www.usatoday.com/news/graphics/katrina_then_now/flash.htm
- Aftermath of Katrina on the Mississippi Gulf Coast: <http://www.photosfromkatrina.com/default.htm>
- Oklahoma City Bombing: <http://www.911research.wtc7.net/non911/oklahoma/index.html>

Lesson Plan

- Define the key terms *natural* and *human-made*. Then discuss the following:
 - Give examples of natural things or events in your life.
 - Now give some examples of human-made things or events.
 - Analyze the influence of both natural and human-made things in your life.
- Brainstorm examples of disasters and catastrophes.
 - Which were caused by nature?
 - Which were caused by humans?
- Have the students view the pictures of disasters on the websites and identify which were caused by nature and which were caused by humans. (Other disasters and catastrophes may be researched on the Internet.)
- Then have the students read the paragraphs about Hurricane Katrina and the Oklahoma City Bombing provided below. Ask:
 - How did nature affect these events?
 - How did humans affect these events?
- Ask the students: “How did your opinions about the pictures change after finishing the readings?”
- Ask students how people may complicate recovery efforts during a natural or human-made disaster.

Evidence of Understanding

Check the students' understanding by monitoring their participation in the class discussion.

Additional Activities and Resources

Have the students research additional information about Hurricane Katrina and the Oklahoma City Bombing. Ask them to write a journal entry that answers this question: “How does this additional information affect your point of view and insights into these events?”

Taking Action and Giving Service

Ask students to identify ways that people have helped during disasters in their own communities. Suggest that they research articles in their local newspapers about those who have made a contribution, in time, talent, or money. Have them write a letter of appreciation to those individuals.