



Hurricane Katrina's Impact on New Orleans, Louisiana

Essential Question: How does geography affect the development of a civilization?

Teachers: Mrs. Esposito 6th grade social studies and Mrs. Cavooris library teacher

Timeline: September- November

Goal for this unit: Students will collect information to support two sides to the argument, "Was Hurricane Katrina a natural disaster or a man-made disaster?" In other words, was the storm and resulting destruction unavoidable, or was it a man-made disaster caused by man's lack of response or because of man's inappropriate response to the storm?

This unit was prepared after careful review of the N.Y. State Core Curriculum Literacy Standards and the goals set forth to prepare students for college and career success.

Student action: Students have spent a great deal of time in the library learning research skills that will apply to this assignment. They have participated in the following lessons: pre-reading skills and during and after reading skills; note taking strategies; exploring and locating articles using GHMS database system and other research links; reading for point of view, bias versus objective information or fact versus opinion; choosing information appropriate for their purpose and on their level; and preparation of a work cited page (each student has a sample page with extra room to record the sources used).

Assignment: *Students will now begin gathering information for use in supporting each side of the argument. Mrs. Cavooris, the library teacher, has set aside websites and videos for student use. If students cannot access the information from home, they are allowed to use the library at lunch time, or they may choose to stay after school to complete their research. They will be provided note taking sheets to use for summarizing the notes they take to address both sides of the argument. They also need to keep a record of their resource materials so they can prepare a work cited page documenting their sources.*

*After researching the question, students will participate in a classroom debate in which they will have the opportunity to support both sides of the issue we are exploring. Next, each student will have the chance to add new information gathered from the discussion. We will review notes to support both sides and then we will summarize. Finally, students will write a four paragraph thematic paper. **This will count for a double grade for the second quarter. (All notes should be kept in their research folder which was made in class.)***

Introduction: Present the thesis statement explaining the focus of the writing assignment. Provide detailed information and background to demonstrate understanding of Hurricane Katrina. (Some examples might include: where it took place; why this area is so vulnerable to hurricanes; the type of destruction and loss that resulted; perhaps

include information about agencies that provided assistance; where did people go and did they return.) Please include a summary sentence at the end of this paragraph and draw a conclusion about Hurricane Katrina and the lesson we learned as a nation. (This paragraph should be at least 10-12 sentences).

Middle paragraphs: Two in-depth paragraphs rich with detail to support each side of the argument. “Yes it was a natural disaster and unavoidable”, and then “No it was a man-made disaster that could have been prevented if experts had taken the correct action.” (These two paragraphs should be at least 10 sentences per paragraph.)

Conclusion paragraph: *Students will end their paper with a conclusion. Here they will choose one side and support their stand on the issue using evidence presented in discussions and from their notes. This section should have clarity and focus and should reflect student’s ability to analyze and synthesize the information gathered. This should be presented in a similar manner to the way an attorney presents closing remarks in a trial (minimum of 8-10 sentences). Detail, factual information (text support) and a strong opinion statement or statements should be included at this time. **We anticipate completing this by Nov. 23rd. Independent research to be completed Nov. 3rd-15th. Group arguments scheduled for November 16th - 18th. The writing assessment is scheduled for three days, Nov. 21st-23rd.***

