

Lesson Plan 1: Defining Disasters

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Grade Level(s)

This lesson is designed for grade 4-6 advanced/high-ability learners. This lesson will take one 45-to-60-minute session.

Lesson Overview

Students will brainstorm types of disasters and identify those that are natural, human-caused, or a combination of both. This lesson is designed to draw upon students' background knowledge to define disasters.

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to identify natural and human-caused disasters. In cooperative groups students will research natural disasters and present their findings.

Standards

USOE 4th Grade Science Core: Standard 3: Objective 2c: Model erosion of Earth materials and collection of these materials as part of the process that leads to soil (e.g., water moving sand in a playground area and depositing this sand in another area).

USOE 5th Grade Benchmark

The Earth's surface is constantly changing. Some changes happen very slowly over long periods of time, such as weathering, erosion, and uplift. Other changes happen abruptly, such as landslides, volcanic eruptions, and earthquakes. All around us, we see the visible effects of the building up and breaking down of the Earth's surface.

Preparation

- Review the Kagan strategies used in this lesson. The lesson is designed to surface students' background knowledge, so at this point don't preview or show disasters.
- Identify recent natural and human-caused disasters to study. Concentrate on those that are significant for your students and community.

Materials and Resources

The Kagan structures can be found in the book *Kagan Cooperative Learning* by Dr. Spencer Kagan and Miguel Kagan. ISBN 978-1-879097-10-0

Paper, pencils, timer

Activity 1: Disaster Brainstorming – Depth of Knowledge Level 1 (3-5 minutes)

Using All Write Round Robin (Kagan: 6.33) students will brainstorm types of disasters for 2 to 3 minutes. All Write Round Robin will be modified so that the group has a shared paper and will pass the paper and pencil as each adds to the brainstorming list.

Activity 2: Natural vs. Human-Caused Disasters – Depth of Knowledge Level 2 (15-20 minutes)

In their same groups, students will draw a T-chart on a sheet of paper and sort disasters into human-caused and natural. After doing this, each group will use “Team Stand N Share” (Kagan: 6.37) to share their responses.

Activity 3: Digging Deeper – Depth of Knowledge Level 2/3 (15-20 minutes)

In the same groups, students will answer the question, “In what ways are some natural disasters human caused? Students will then look at their T-chart and choose 1 or 2 disasters that could be placed on the line as a combination of human-caused and natural. After the discussion, students will have a timed journal writing period and answer the question in their journal.

Troubleshooting

The idea of this lesson is to activate background knowledge. If students are struggling, you may want to show images or video clips of disasters. Make sure that you preview all images or clips before using them. Specific images will be used in the next lesson.

Assessment

All assessment on this lesson will be formative. The brainstorming list, T-chart and reflective journal will be the assessment.