

DISASTER DETECTIVES



Natural disasters, such as earthquakes, floods, and hurricanes, can happen anytime and anywhere. Being prepared can save lives. It is important to have an emergency kit with food, water, and first aid supplies. Families should create a safety plan and practice evacuation routes. Schools and communities can also organize drills to help people react quickly in dangerous situations.

Education and awareness are keys to reducing the impact of disasters. By staying informed and taking precautions, we can protect ourselves and others. Preparedness today can make a big difference tomorrow.

Lesson

Language

Grade

5

Learning Objectives

Students will analyze literary texts to enhance comprehension and critical thinking skills while connect themes to personal experiences.

Duration

40 Minutes

Required Materials

Short stories about disasters (earthquake, flood, fire, etc.)
Cards (looking like a magnifier) or real magnifiers
Question cards
Pencils and crayons

Preparation and Implementation

As the activity requires some short stories to read, print them before the lesson,
Find or make magnifiers,
Prepare the questions cards.

PROCESS

1 INTRODUCTION (10 Minutes)

- Tell students that you are going to read a story about a disaster, and they are detectives in this lesson, and they have to find some clues and figure out the case.
- Make a short speech to students about feelings and normality. Make them feel free to express their true feelings.
- Ask them to be careful about some certain points while you are reading the story.
- Point out certain things to focus on.

Characters, reactions of people, actions of people.

- Read the story. (See in Annex.)

2 INVESTIGATION (20 Minutes)

- Hand the questions cards and magnifiers out to the students.
- Questions on the cards are;
 - “What is the biggest problem of the character?”
 - “What is the most important lesson that the character learned?”
 - “What should you do when you face a disaster like that in your real life?”
 - “What did the character feel?”
- Make them use the magnifiers and try to find out answers to these questions.
- After making their personal findings, tell them to argue and compare their findings in pairs.

3 IMPLEMENTATION (10 Minutes)

- Each pair shares their findings with the class and the teacher makes additions and gives information about disasters and awareness of disaster.
- Encourage them to share their personal experiences.
- Feelings Come and Go

Sometimes we feel happy, sometimes we feel sad, angry, nervous, or excited. All of these feelings are **normal**. Everyone feels them. And the good news is: **Feelings don't last forever**. They are like clouds in the sky — they come, and then they go. When a strong feeling comes, you don't have to fight it. Just notice it, and take a deep breath.

Breathing & Feelings Exercise

- Teacher Prompt:

“Talking about disasters can sometimes bring up different feelings. Let’s take a short breathing exercise to notice our emotions and relax.”

- Step 1 – Feel the Emotion:

Ask students: “Think of one feeling you have right now. It could be curiosity, a little worry, or even excitement. Name this feeling in one word in your mind.”

- Step 2 – Balloon Breathing:
 - Take a deep breath in, imagine a balloon growing in your belly.
 - Slowly breathe out, imagine the balloon getting smaller.
 - Repeat 3–4 times.
- Step 3 – Color Your Breath:

Ask students to imagine breathing in a calm color (e.g., blue/green) and breathing out stressful colors (e.g., gray/red).

- Closure:

“Noticing our feelings and calming down helps us cope with challenges. During disasters, recognizing and expressing our emotions is very important.”

EVALUATION

- You can make an evaluation by observing their speaking, pronunciation etc.,

RECOMMENDATIONS

1

You can use one of the reading texts given in the annex part.

2

Before you make this lesson, you can give targeted grammar topics and vocabulary in another lesson to make students be ready for this activity.

DISASTERS

Do you remember what happened in Thailand a few years ago? A **tsunami** (= a very big sea wave), caused by an **earthquake** (= sudden movement of the Earth), destroyed part of the country.



I am really happy that in Poland we don't have tsunamis or **tornadoes** (= strong winds which move in a circle), but **gales** (= very strong winds) happen quite often, and we have many other problems of our own.

In summer there are **floods** (= when there is too much water in rivers) or **droughts** (= no rain for a long time) - not as serious as in Africa, of course, where they cause **famine** (= no food). In winter, on the other hand, in the mountains we have **avalanches** (= a lot of snow falling down the mountain), which can be really dangerous for skiers. Still, this country is not the most dangerous in the world.

More contexts for the new words:

- A **hurricane** hit Florida yesterday. (= a strong storm which moves in a circle)
- The winter brought many **blizzards** (= snow storms).

EXERCISE 1



Write the words next to their definitions.

- 1 = a lot of snow falling down the mountain
- 2 = no food
- 3 = no rain for a long time
- 4 = too much water in rivers
- 5 = a very strong wind
- 6 = a very strong wind moving in a circle
- 7 = sudden movement of the Earth
- 8 = a very big sea wave

EXERCISE 2



Match the question halves, then answer the questions.

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------|
| 1. Which of the disasters | a. of natural disasters? |
| 2. Which of the disasters have you seen | b. with your own eyes? When? |
| 3. What can we do to help the victims | c. are the most serious? Why? |

ENGLISH IN USE



As you have surely noticed, we don't use 'the' in front of "Thailand" or "Africa." Although this is a rule for almost every name of a country, there are some exceptions here too.

We say: Poland, France, Germany
but: **the** USA, **the** UK, **the** Czech Republic.

IDIOM CLOSE-UP



A/ Is everything ready for the party?

B/ I guess so. Let's relax for a moment in **THE CALM BEFORE THE STORM**.

The calm before the storm is a quiet time just before problems start.

PHRASAL VERBS CLOSE-UP



1. When you **STORM OUT**, you go somewhere very quickly because you are angry or upset.

*John **stormed out** of the house and slammed the door. She **stormed out** of the classroom, mad at the teacher.*

2. If people are **FLOODED OUT**, their home becomes filled with water and they are forced to leave. This phrasal verb is usually used in the passive.

*Hundreds of Poles were **flooded out** last summer.*

EXERCISE 3



Match the conversation halves.

1. The children are so quiet. I think it's good.
2. Why was their house destroyed?
3. What did Judy do after her boyfriend broke up with her?
 - a. They were flooded out.
 - b. I don't agree. It's the calm before the storm.
 - c. She stormed out of the house and ran away.

NEWS



HURRICANE KATRINA

Hurricane Katrina crossed southern Florida last night, hitting the US for the first time since the 2005 Atlantic hurricane season. The hurricane, widely known as one of the five deadliest natural disasters ever befalling America, is **wreaking havoc** again. Its 2005 **toll** was estimated at over 80 billion dollars in property damage, and almost two thousand people killed in the hurricane itself and in the **subsequent** floods. What will it be this time?

Regardless of its disastrous consequences, Hurricane Katrina raises questions of political correctness: why are the most dangerous hurricanes given almost exclusively female names? Feminists and linguists have launched a campaign targeted at this **prejudice**, resulting now in more and more male names being ascribed to natural disasters.

GLOSSARY

- **to wreak havoc** – to do very serious damage
- **toll** – damage
- **subsequent** – later
- **prejudice** – unfair bias