

Dealing with Disasters

Lesson plan 2: What is a disaster?

Age group: 11 - 14

Aims:

To explore pupils' current understanding of disasters.

To develop skills in reasoning and categorisation.

To show that 'a disaster' is not always easy to define, and can mean different things in different contexts.

What to do - part one:

Lead a brainstorm around the concept of a disaster. Remember, in a brainstorm there are no right or wrong answers. Don't get drawn into a discussion at this stage, simply record all the suggestions.

Write the word 'Disaster' on a large sheet of paper. Ask pupils to note down any words or phrases which this suggests to them. After a few minutes, divide the class into pairs, and ask pupils to discuss their ideas. Each pair should write some of their ideas on pieces of card or sticky labels.

In turn, each pair should place their cards (using Bluetak) around the central title 'Disaster'. Ask pupils to group together words and phrases with similar meanings, or which seem related. For example, 'feeling scared' might go with 'hungry', because they both express how people feel in a certain situation. Another pair might place 'no food' next to 'car crash', because they are both examples of types of disaster.

Work with the pupils to develop firmer categories, and write the categories on the display, as sub-titles. These might include: 'types of disaster'; 'causes of disasters'; 'feelings'; 'consequences', etc . . . Pupils may want to put some words and phrases in more than one section. Edit the display as necessary.

This activity is a useful assessment opportunity.

You will now have created an interactive display, which can be added to and changed as the pupils' understanding of the topic increases. Pupils could collect newspaper headlines, photographs, and quotations to illustrate the categories.

What to do - part two:

Print and photocopy the **statement sheet: What is a disaster?** (below). Divide pupils into pairs or small groups, and give each group a set of statements. Ask pupils to rank the ideas in the shape of a diamond as below:



The statement that is most like their idea of 'a disaster' should go at the top and the one which is least like their idea of 'a disaster' at the bottom.

Discussion points:

Did pupils agree on which statement best represented their idea of a disaster?

How did they make their decisions? As a class, or in smaller groups, ask pupils to write down some of the things which they think make a disaster. You may like to offer the following questions as a guide.

- Does a disaster always happen suddenly?
- Does it matter how many people are affected?
- Does a disaster always involve loss of life?
- Does it matter how often it happens?
- Does it matter who it happens to?
- Does it matter who knows about it?
- Does it matter what causes it?
- Does it matter who is talking about it?

What to do - part three:

Return to the brainstorming session you did earlier. Do pupils want to add anything new to their initial ideas? Do they want to remove or change anything? Keep the sheet of paper you have used in this brainstorm session. The ideas which students have generated can be referred back to if you carry out the causes web activity (lesson plan 5).

Further work:

Divide the class into small groups, and ask each group to choose six words or phrases from the 'Disaster' display which are meaningful to them. Ask them to put together one or two sentences that use these words and phrases. Each group can make short presentation to the class, and justify their choices.

For example:

A disaster is when something happens suddenly, which is out of control. People might die, and everyone is scared. In a disaster, you need help to survive.

Curriculum links:

England	Scotland	Wales
<p>Citizenship/PSHE: -Effects of stereotyping; empathy; consider social and moral dilemmas.</p> <p>Geography: - Appreciate how people's values and attitudes, including their own, affect ...issues, and to clarify and develop their own values and attitudes to issues.</p> <p>English: - Group discussion and interaction - contributions to groups; taking different views into account; sift, summarise and use the most important points.</p>	<p>Environmental Studies; Society: - Human-physical interaction. - Developing informed attitudes - interaction of people with their environment.</p> <p>English: - Listening in groups; talking in groups; talking about experiences, feelings and opinions; reading for information.</p> <p>PSD: - Social development.</p>	<p>Geography: - Appreciate how people's values and attitudes, including their own, affect ...issues, and to clarify and develop their own values and attitudes to issues.</p> <p>English: - Group discussion and interaction - contributions to groups; taking different views into account; sift, summarise and use the most important points</p> <p>PSE: - Critically evaluate others' viewpoints; empathise with others' experiences and feelings; make moral judgements and resolve moral issues and dilemmas.</p>

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Statement sheet: What is a disaster?

What is your idea of a disaster? Cut out these statements and arrange them in a diamond shape, the most like your idea of a disaster at the top, the least at the bottom, and the rest in order in between.



<p>You have a job interview, and you have missed the bus.</p>	
<p>You have forgotten to hand in your coursework, and will fail the exam.</p>	<p>Your house has been destroyed by fire, but you are fully insured.</p>
<p>You have broken your leg, but the nearest hospital is 200 miles away, and you have no transport.</p>	<p>You live with your partner and three children. The rent is due tomorrow, but your wages will not be paid for another three weeks.</p>
<p>You and your family haven't had enough to eat for three months. There is plenty of food in the shops, but you can't afford to buy it.</p>	<p>You have lost everything in a flood. Thousands of people in your area have been affected, and local roads and bridges have been washed away.</p>
<p>You have never been to school, because you are needed at home to look after your younger brother while your parents are at work.</p>	<p>You are trapped inside the car after a bad car crash. You are seriously injured. The ambulance is on its way.</p>