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Hurricane Katrina kills hundreds

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31 August, 2005

THE ARTICLE

Hurricane Katrina kills hundreds

BNE: Hurricane Katrina, which unleashed its ferocious force on the southern Gulf Coast states of the USA on Monday, has left perhaps hundreds dead and inflicted catastrophic damage. Huge swathes of New Orleans are flood-stricken as water from a nearby lake breached the dams that protected the city. The inundated area has been left without electricity and safe drinking water. President George W. Bush has declared a state of emergency and promised considerable federal funding to compensate victims and get the whole region back on its feet. The economic cost of the hurricane's rampage could be the highest in US history. Insurers estimate the storm could cost \$US26 billion. The effects will be felt worldwide, as oil prices are set for another spike.

The human cost is continuing to rise and many predict the death toll will surpass the 256 killed by Hurricane Camille in 1969. Rescue services continue their attempts to save lives. They have to negotiate perilously high water, toppled trees and hazardous debris. Live power cables are hampering efforts to reach frantic survivors stranded on the roofs of their homes. Tens of thousands of properties have been destroyed in Louisiana, Alabama and Mississippi. Louisiana Governor Kathleen Blanco told a news conference: "The devastation is greater than our worst fears. It's totally overwhelming." In the wake of the disaster, the New Orleans mayor has declared martial law to curtail an outbreak of looting, as thieves take advantage of the chaos.

WARM-UPS

1. HURRICANE: You have just experienced a very powerful hurricane. Talk to the other people in your class who also experienced the hurricane. What did you do the day before? What were your thoughts and feelings as the hurricane hit? Did the hurricane do any damage? What are you going to do from now?

2. MOTHER NATURE: In pairs / groups, talk about the power of natural phenomena in the world. Have you experienced any of the following? What would you do in each of these situations?

- Hurricanes / Typhoons
- Earthquakes
- Volcanoes
- Flooding and landslides
- Droughts
- Avalanches
- Plagues of locusts
- Other

3. CHAT: In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words are most interesting and which are most boring.

Hurricanes / catastrophic damage / New Orleans / dams / no electricity / drinking water / compensation / oil prices / survivors / toppled trees / martial law

Have a chat about the topics you liked. For more conversation, change topics and partners frequently.

4. EMERGENCY: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word "emergency". Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

5. HURRICANE TASKS: In pairs / groups, discuss the different tasks and duties the following people have when a devastating hurricane hits. What extra things do you think these people could do?

- a. The country's leader
- b. The city mayor
- c. The head of the national weather forecast center
- d. Neighbors
- e. Police officers
- f. Fire fighters
- g. Coastguards
- h. TV news reporters

6. QUICK DEBATE: Students A think governments do enough to help disaster victims. Students B think governments need to do more to help disaster victims. Change partners often.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

1. TRUE / FALSE: Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- | | |
|---|-------|
| a. Katrina unleashed its ferocious force on the US Gulf Coast states. | T / F |
| b. Huge swathes of New Orleans are flood-stricken. | T / F |
| c. Power and water supplies miraculously escaped being interrupted. | T / F |
| d. The storm will affect the pockets of people around the world. | T / F |
| e. Katrina may be the deadliest storm to strike in over four decades. | T / F |
| f. Live power cables are hampering efforts to reach frantic survivors. | T / F |
| g. Louisiana's Governor said the storm wasn't as bad as she had feared. | T / F |
| h. The New Orleans mayor has declared martial law to curtail looting. | T / F |

2. SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article:

- | | |
|---------------|-------------|
| a. unleashed | hindering |
| b. inflicted | broke |
| c. breached | dangerously |
| d. inundated | surge |
| e. spike | ransacking |
| f. surpass | let loose |
| g. perilously | aftermath |
| h. hampering | flooded |
| i. wake | eclipse |
| j. looting | wreaked |

3. PHRASE MATCH: Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| a. unleashed its | the dams that protected the city |
| b. Huge swathes | efforts to reach frantic survivors |
| c. water from a nearby lake breached | the 256 killed by Hurricane Camille |
| d. get the whole region | are set for another spike |
| e. oil prices | to curtail an outbreak of looting |
| f. the death toll will surpass | ferocious force |
| g. They have to negotiate | of the disaster |
| h. live power cables are hampering | back on its feet |
| i. In the wake | of New Orleans are flood-stricken |
| j. declared martial law | perilously high water |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

WHICH WORD? Strike through the incorrect word in the *italicized* pairs.

Hurricane Katrina kills hundreds

BNE: Hurricane Katrina, which *unleashed / leashed* its ferocious force on the southern Gulf Coast states of the USA on Monday, has left perhaps hundreds dead and *infected / inflicted* catastrophic damage. Huge swathes of New Orleans are flood-stricken as water from a nearby lake *bleached / breached* the dams that protected the city. The *inundated / insulated* area has been left without electricity and safe drinking water. President George W. Bush has declared a state of emergency and promised *considerate / considerable* federal funding to compensate victims and get the whole region back on its feet. The economic cost of the hurricane's rampage could be the highest in US history. Insurers estimate the storm could cost \$US26 billion. The effects will be felt worldwide, as oil prices are set for another *spike / spick and span*.

The human cost is continuing to rise and many predict the death toll will *surpass / bypass* the 256 killed by Hurricane Camille in 1969. Rescue services continue their attempts to save lives. They have to *negotiate / compromise* perilously high water, toppled trees and hazardous debris. Live power cables are *hampering / tampering* efforts to reach *frantic / fanatical* survivors stranded on the roofs of their homes. Tens of thousands of properties have been destroyed in Louisiana, Alabama and Mississippi. Louisiana Governor Kathleen Blanco told a news conference: "The devastation is greater than our worst fears. It's totally overwhelming." In the *slumber / wake* of the disaster, the New Orleans mayor has declared martial law to curtail an outbreak of *looting / looming*, as thieves take advantage of the chaos.

AFTER READING / LISTENING

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words **'gulf'** and **'coast'**.

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. WHICH WORD? In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the relationships between the correct and incorrect words. Were the words new, interesting, worth learning...?

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. STUDENT "HURRICANE" SURVEY: In pairs / groups, write down questions about hurricanes and natural disasters.

- Ask other classmates your questions and note down their answers.
- Go back to your original partner / group and compare your findings.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

6. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall exactly how these were used in the text:

- | | |
|----------------|----------------|
| • unleashed | • surpass |
| • swathes | • negotiate |
| • inundated | • frantic |
| • considerable | • properties |
| • feet | • overwhelming |
| • spike | • chaos |

DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a. What was your initial reaction to this headline?
- b. Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- c. What adjective would you use to describe this article?
- d. What do you know about hurricanes?
- e. What's the difference between a hurricane, typhoon and cyclone?
- f. Do you think global warming has changed the frequency, power and pattern of hurricanes, typhoons etc?
- g. What's the best thing to do when a hurricane is approaching?
- h. What are the strongest winds you have ever felt?
- i. Do you think a huge hurricane is the scariest natural phenomenon?
- j. Have you ever experienced a natural disaster?

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a. Did you like reading this article?
- b. What did you think about what you read?
- c. What would you do if a giant hurricane was on its way here?
- d. Why do you think people choose to live in areas frequently devastated by hurricanes?
- e. Do you live in a part of the world affected by natural disasters?
- f. What would you do if your house was blown down in a hurricane?
- g. Would/Do you pray to God to protect you during a natural disaster?
- h. If you evacuated your home, would you worry about looters?
- i. Is your community the type that would help each other in a natural disaster?
- j. Did you like this discussion?

AFTER DISCUSSION: Join another partner / group and tell them what you talked about.

- a. What question would you like to ask about this topic?
- b. What was the most interesting thing you heard?
- c. Was there a question you didn't like?
- d. Was there something you totally disagreed with?
- e. What did you like talking about?
- f. Do you want to know how anyone else answered the questions?
- g. Which was the most difficult question?

SPEAKING

HURRICANE PREPAREDNESS:

In pairs / groups, create a disaster preparedness plan. Agree on what to do in the event of a huge (the most powerful ever) hurricane approaching your village / town / city.

	MOST IMPORTANT THING	SECOND MOST IMPORTANT THING	THIRD MOST IMPORTANT THING
One week before			
Two days before			
The day before			
The day of the hurricane			
During the hurricane			
The day after the hurricane			

After you have finished, change partners and tell each other about your ideas. Give each other advice on how to make your plans / ideas better.

Return to your original partner and incorporate the advice you received into making your plans better.

LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

Hurricane Katrina kills hundreds

BNE: Hurricane Katrina, which _____ its ferocious force on the southern Gulf Coast states of the USA on Monday, has left perhaps hundreds dead and _____ catastrophic damage. Huge swathes of New Orleans are flood-stricken as water from a nearby lake _____ the dams that protected the city. The _____ area has been left without electricity and safe drinking water. President George W. Bush has declared a state of emergency and promised considerable _____ funding to compensate victims and get the whole region back on its _____. The economic cost of the hurricane's _____ could be the highest in US history. Insurers estimate the storm could cost \$US26 billion. The effects will be felt worldwide, as oil prices are set for another _____.

The human cost is continuing to rise and many predict the death toll will _____ the 256 killed by Hurricane Camille in 1969. Rescue services continue their _____ to save lives. They have to negotiate _____ high water, toppled trees and hazardous debris. Live power cables are _____ efforts to reach _____ survivors _____ on the roofs of their homes. Tens of thousands of properties have been destroyed in Louisiana, Alabama and Mississippi. Louisiana Governor Kathleen Blanco told a news conference: "The devastation is greater than our worst fears. It's totally _____." In the wake of the disaster, the New Orleans mayor has declared _____ law to curtail an outbreak of _____, as thieves take advantage of the chaos.

HOMEWORK

1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION: Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

2. INTERNET: Search the Internet and find more information on Hurricane Katrina. Share your findings with your class in the next lesson.

3. STORMS: Create a fact sheet about storms and the differences between hurricanes, typhoons and cyclones. Show and explain your fact sheets to your classmates in your next lesson.

4. DIARY / JOURNAL ENTRY: Imagine you experienced a giant hurricane. Write a diary / journal entry explaining your 5-hour ordeal as the eye of the storm passed over your house. Read what you wrote to your classmates in your next lesson. Did you all write about similar things?

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

- a. T b. T c. F d. T e. T f. T g. F h. T

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|---------------|-------------|
| a. unleashed | let loose |
| b. inflicted | wreaked |
| c. breached | broke |
| d. inundated | flooded |
| e. spike | surge |
| f. surpass | eclipse |
| g. perilously | dangerously |
| h. hampering | hindering |
| i. wake | aftermath |
| j. looting | ransacking |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| a. unleashed its | ferocious force |
| b. Huge swathes | of New Orleans are flood-stricken |
| c. water from a nearby lake breached | the dams that protected the city |
| d. get the whole region | back on its feet |
| e. oil prices | are set for another spike |
| f. the death toll will surpass | the 256 killed by Hurricane Camille |
| g. They have to negotiate | perilously high water |
| h. live power cables are hampering | efforts to reach frantic survivors |
| i. In the wake | of the disaster |
| j. declared martial law | to curtail an outbreak of looting |

WHICH WORD?

Hurricane Katrina kills hundreds

BNE: Hurricane Katrina, which *unleashed* / ~~leashed~~ its ferocious force on the southern Gulf Coast states of the USA on Monday, has left perhaps hundreds dead and ~~infected~~ / *inflicted* catastrophic damage. Huge swathes of New Orleans are flood-stricken as water from a nearby lake ~~bleached~~ / *breached* the dams that protected the city. The ~~inundated~~ / *insulated* area has been left without electricity and safe drinking water. President George W. Bush has declared a state of emergency and promised ~~considerate~~ / *considerable* federal funding to compensate victims and get the whole region back on its feet. The economic cost of the hurricane's rampage could be the highest in US history. Insurers estimate the storm could cost \$US26 billion. The effects will be felt worldwide, as oil prices are set for another *spike* / ~~spick and span~~.

The human cost is continuing to rise and many predict the death toll will *surpass* / ~~bypass~~ the 256 killed by Hurricane Camille in 1969. Rescue services continue their attempts to save lives. They have to *negotiate* / ~~compromise~~ perilously high water, toppled trees and hazardous debris. Live power cables are ~~hampering~~ / *hampering* efforts to reach *frantic* / ~~fanatical~~ survivors stranded on the roofs of their homes. Tens of thousands of properties have been destroyed in Louisiana, Alabama and Mississippi. Louisiana Governor Kathleen Blanco told a news conference: "The devastation is greater than our worst fears. It's totally overwhelming." In the ~~slumber~~ / *wake* of the disaster, the New Orleans mayor has declared martial law to curtail an outbreak of *looting* / ~~looming~~, as thieves take advantage of the chaos.