



DISASTER LAB ACTIVITY GUIDE

TRACING TRANSNATIONAL STUDENT CONNECTIONS TO HISTORICAL DISASTERS

Grades: 7-12

Length: 90 mins

Subject: Geography/History

Topic: Disasters

This activity prepared by Carleton University's [Disaster Lab](#) situates students' own understandings of what qualifies as a disaster within the context of the [Canadian Disaster Database](#) definition. Students study past Ottawa university students' transnational connections to global disasters using historical inquiry methods, with the option to visualize their findings in an [ArcGIS StoryMaps](#).

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Laptops/tables or printed copies of the *Charlatan* articles (linked on p.2)
- Optional: access to ArcGIS

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students use historical thinking skills to engage with the experiences of past students and tease out their connections to disasters across geographic space and historical time.

SAMPLE STRUCTURE

- Ask for students' familiarity/own definitions of "disasters" (5 mins)
 - Create a collective definition, discuss similarities/differences
 - Compare their definition to the one offered by [Public Safety Canada](#)
- Ask whether students can think of any events in their lifetimes that they would describe as disasters? (5-10 mins)
 - Draw on students' potential connections to disasters (media, fundraising, advocacy, family, friends, forest fire smoke, irregular weather/climate change, etc.)
- Introduce activity: students should be thinking about the transnational connections that Ottawa students had to historical disasters (2 min)
 - Using articles published in [The Charlatan](#), Carleton University's student newspaper
- Instruct groups to read/analyze their assigned *Charlatan* articles (links below) about student connections to disasters (20 mins):
 - Answer the who/what/why/when of their articles
 - Reflect on why students and schools in particular would have wanted to help with disaster relief efforts
 - Conduct additional research on the disasters in question using the internet
 - Explore the digitized *Charlatan* volumes to establish any relevant context for their research (general student activism, political climate, cultural events, etc.)
 - Write a short ~150 word blurb about the disaster and its connection to Carleton students to be presented to the class
- Lead a group discussion reflecting on examples of transnational student activism around disasters, student connections to disasters both at home and abroad, the international scope/ramifications of disasters, and the value of studying historical disasters (15 mins)
 - Sample questions: Why do you think students in particular felt compelled to engage in disaster relief efforts? In what ways can disasters that happen locally have international consequences? What is the value of studying historical disasters?

OPTIONAL ARCGIS ONLINE & STORYMAPS COMPONENT:

- Develop a map using ArcGIS Online. Create a unidirectional flow map that generates unidirectional arrows from a common point of origin (however the map can be adapted to different data points).
 - Using ArcGIS Online, or by searching online, find the coordinates for each of the points of ending for the arrows (e.g. the epicentre of each disaster), and the coordinates of your starting point (e.g. Carleton University).
 - Input the coordinates into a .csv file (e.g. Excel or Google Sheets) and upload the file into ArcGIS Online, or, use [our .csv file](#).
 - Adapt the data to create arrows, colour-coordinate, or change the icon of your start of origin.
- Create a new ArcGIS StoryMaps and link the map created via ArcGIS Online.
 - Create the slide viewer and input any information or photos.
 - Another option is to duplicate our [StoryMap](#) and rework it for your class.
- Publish and share your work publicly or privately with your class/school!

SAMPLE CHARLATAN ARTICLES

- The Charlatan 1988-1989 (pages 126)
 - Article on Carleton's Caribbean Club helping to fundraise for Jamaican residents after Hurricane Gilbert (September 22, 1988, p. 4)
- The Charlatan 1994 (page 530)
 - Article about how the deadly earthquake that happened in Japan on Jan. 16, 1995 affected Japanese students studying at Carleton (January 19, 1995, p. 14)
- The Charlatan 1998/1999 (pages n332 and n352)
 - Short article on the Latin American Society at Carleton's attempts to fundraise for Hurricane Mitch relief efforts (November 12, 1998, p. 15)
 - Article on student groups across Canada helping with/being targeted to help with Hurricane Mitch relief work because students "have a lot of interest in these types of issues," among other reasons (November 19, 1998, p. 12)
- The Charlatan 2005-2006 (pages 73, 159, 195, 240)
 - Article describing how Canadian universities (including University of Ottawa, University of Guelph, Concordia, and McGill) offered to admit students affected by Hurricane Katrina with flexible conditions for transfer credits, tuition, etc. (September 8, 2005, p. 9)
 - Also features a longer article on the experiences of a British student who was meant to start a semester abroad at Loyola University in New Orleans but because of the hurricane ended up transferring to UOttawa instead since they were offering fast tracked admissions to students affected by the hurricane. (September 29, 2005, p. 11)
 - Article on Carleton students responding to the earthquake in Pakistan on October 8, 2005 by raising funds and ensuring any students affected by the earthquake receive counseling (October 13, 2005, p. 3)
 - Additional article on members of the Carleton community who have family from Pakistan or who were born there and are now studying at Carleton that details their experiences hearing about the effects of the earthquake from far away (October 27, 2005, p. 12)