

Catastrophe



Recommended year group: Year 3

Theme focus: Geography

Suggested term: Summer

Theme introduction

Catastrophe is a theme that studies natural disasters and the impact of these on places and people. Pupils begin the theme learning about the layers of the Earth, before moving on to discovering their role in causing volcanic eruptions, earthquakes and tsunamis. The learning in this theme is focused on Geography, but also includes Design Technology, History and PSHE. In Catastrophe, pupils will learn about several natural disasters, how and where they occurred, the damage they caused and their impact on humans. They will begin by focusing on volcanic eruptions with a case study on Pompeii; they will then move on to earthquakes and look at the destruction caused by the Great Kantō earthquake. The focus will then move on to tsunamis. Pupils will learn that these are caused by earthquakes and that these giant waves can cause incredible damage. A focus on hurricanes will then allow pupils to explore how these are formed and then move towards the land causing destruction. Through historical study, pupils will discover natural disasters that have occurred throughout history, including asteroids and climate change. Pupils will debate the impact of these on humanity. The theme ends with pupils investigating how people can help during a crisis and provide support for those directly affected by a natural disaster.

Driving Question

Does the Earth get angry?

Switch on Science Unit

The nappy challenge

Switch on Computing Unit

We are who we are

Linked Reading Texts

Everything: Volcanoes And Earthquakes by Kathy

Furgang

Hurricane by David Wiesner

Earthquake Terror by Peg Kehert

Writing Outcomes

Newspaper report:

A newspaper report about a well-known natural disaster

Disaster short story:

A short story about a natural disaster

Curriculum Coverage

History – Historical enquiry and sources

Geography: Physical geography, location and maps

Design Technology – Make: materials; technical knowledge: joining and structures

PSHE – Living in the wider world

Excite

Pupils arrive at school to find that their classroom has been struck by a mini earthquake. The desks are tipped over, chairs are everywhere and it's a real catastrophe. We need to find out why this could have happened. Does the Earth get angry?

Use the Excite to draw out prior knowledge of natural disasters before setting off on an investigation to discover what causes some of the natural disasters discussed.

Explore

There are fourteen Explore sessions:

Explore 1: The Earth's layers

Explore 2: Eruption!

Explore 3: Volcanoes around the world

Explore 4: Making a volcano

Explore 5: Pompeii

Explore 6: Earthquake!

Explore 7: The Great Kantō earthquake

Explore 8: Tsunami!

Explore 9: Hurricane!

Explore 10: The Great Galveston hurricane

Explore 11: Hurricane-proof structures

Explore 12: Disaster?

Explore 13: Organisations that help

Explore 14 Wellbeing: Dealing with death and loss

Theme essential vocabulary:

Earth, earthquake, eruption, hurricane, layers, natural disaster, Pompeii, seismic waves, surface, tectonic plates, tsunami, volcano

Essential knowledge/concepts

1. There are four layers of the Earth's structure: inner core, outer core, mantle and crust.
2. The crust is broken into different sections called tectonic plates.
3. A volcano is formed when the Earth's crust allows magma to leak onto the surface.
4. Active volcanoes are always 'alive' and can erupt at any moment.
5. Dormant volcanoes are 'sleeping' and can erupt unexpectedly.
6. Extinct volcanoes are volcanoes that cannot erupt anymore.
7. Mount Vesuvius erupted in AD 79 and destroyed Pompeii.
8. An earthquake is what happens when two plates of the Earth's crust suddenly slip past one another.
9. Seismic waves are waves of energy that travel through the Earth's layers.
10. A tsunami is a huge wave that is caused by underground earthquakes.
11. A hurricane is a huge, aggressive storm that can cause severe destruction.
12. There are charities and organisations that work to help the victims of natural disasters.

Excel

The key assessment outcomes of this unit are:

Explore 1: The Earth's layers: A labelled diagram of the Earth's layers

Explore 3: Volcanoes around the world: Locating volcanoes on a world map

Explore 6: Earthquake!: Writing about the impact of earthquakes

Explore 8: Tsunami!: Film and edit a news report about a tsunami

Explore 9: Hurricane!: Locating hurricane sites on a map and tracking their movement

Exhibit

Natural disasters: Cause and consequence workshop

Pupils to share their work from the theme to discuss the causes and consequences of different natural disasters studied in the theme. They will use their geographical models and other outcomes from the theme to showcase their learning.

The audience could be parents, or alternatively this could be recorded and used as part of the learning resources for future year groups.

Possible wider experiences:

Go and visit a museum that will give the pupils a feel for Victorian life, e.g. Black Country Museum, Blist Hill Museum, Birmingham Back-to-back houses, Ironbridge Gorge

Flipped learning opportunities

1. Research a volcano and present facts including where it is located and when it has erupted.
2. Research charities and organisations providing support after a natural disaster. Present information on these.

Family learning suggestion

Create a first-hand account of your escape from Pompeii.

Create sketches and annotated diagrams of volcanoes.

Cultural awareness

Key piece of music

Dance Of The Earth from *Rite Of Spring* – Igor Stravinsky

We Are The World 25 For Haiti – Artists for Haiti

Key piece of art

Great Day Of His Wrath – John Martin

Key poem

Earthquake – Bharati Nayak