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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute  
2007 Volume IV: The Science of Natural Disasters

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## Natural Disasters and the Five Themes of Geography

Guide for Curriculum Unit 07.04.11

by Matthew A. Dooley

This curriculum unit was developed with inner-city middle school students in mind. It is intended to be implemented in either a survey of world cultures or world geography course. The five themes of geography (location, place, region, movement and human-environment interaction) are applied to different natural disasters including volcanoes, earthquakes, hurricanes and tsunamis. In this way students are exposed to different cultures from around the world utilizing natural disasters as a vehicle of learning. While this curriculum unit can stand alone to be used by a social studies teacher, it can also be used in tandem with lessons taught by the science teacher. This curriculum unit contains a list of teacher and student resources that both a science or social studies teacher would find useful. It also contains several lessons that involve teacher-directed research and the possible use of technology for student slide presentations. This curriculum unit can be modified according to the age and ability of the student population. Listed are several useful Web sites, including one that will allow students to manipulate variables to create different natural disasters.

(Developed for World Cultures, grade 7; recommended for World Geography and World Cultures, Middle grades)

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