

Unit 1.3 • Disaster Strikes!

Unit Overview

In this unit, readings on different kinds of natural disasters introduce a focus on the devastating effects of Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans.

Unit texts

Students build background knowledge by reading *Hurricane Katrina*, an illustrated nonfiction account of Hurricane Katrina's path of destruction across the Gulf Coast. They then read the accessible but sophisticated novel *Ninth Ward*, by Jewell Parker Rhodes. This book, which includes magical realist elements, describes a New Orleans family surviving the Hurricane Katrina disaster.



Literature Used in Unit 1.3:

- *Ninth Ward* by Jewell Parker Rhodes
- *Hurricane Katrina* by Peter Benoit

Unit skills and topics

Literary analysis	• Interrelation of character, plot, setting • Narrative arc in fiction • Symbolism
Reading comprehension	• Questioning as a component of Reciprocal Teaching • Question-answer relationships (QAR): contrasts between “right there,” “think and search,” “author and me,” and “on my own” questions • Note-taking from informational texts
Decoding	• Using syllable division patterns, such as V CV and VC V, and word parts (prefix, base, and suffix) to chunk and decode multi-syllable words
Debate	• Who was responsible for the Katrina disaster: the mayor, the federal government, or the citizens of New Orleans? • Choose a debate on the novel <i>Ninth Ward</i>: Which symbol best represents Lanesha? OR What gives Lanesha strength?
Fluency topics	• Hurricane Maria, preparedness for natural disasters, New Orleans ghosts, voodoo, food traditions of New Orleans, New Orleans architecture, musical heritage of New Orleans
English language development	• Generating questions about different perspectives • Interpreting figurative language in context to make inferences about character