Grade 5: Module 4: Unit 2: Overview
Unit 2: Analyzing Literature about Natural Disasters: Inferring about Impact on Survivors

In this unit, students will read several pieces of short fiction that are set in a time and place where a natural disaster is occurring. Throughout the unit they will discuss the guiding question: “What can literature about natural disasters teach us about their impact on the people who experience them?” Students will first read the picture book *Eight Days: A Story of Haiti*, and discuss text-dependent questions to infer about the impact of this disaster on the characters in the story. They will then collaborate to write a shared literary analysis essay that focuses on the narrator’s point of view to infer about how this influences how events are described in the text. Students will then analyze imagery and figurative language in the text to determine how these elements contribute to the meaning of the story. Next, students will read a short story titled “Save Bella!” about the experience of a boy and his pet dog during Hurricane Katrina. With this text, too, they will continue to build their understanding of the impact of natural disasters on the lives of the people who survive them.

Students will then more independently analyze the text and write a short essay on how a narrator’s point of view influences the description of events before, during, and after the hurricane. For the mid-unit assessment, students will read a new piece of short fiction, “In the Middle of the Storm,” about Hurricane Sandy, and demonstrate their ability to read, analyze, and write about a narrator’s point of view and its influence on the description of events. Afterward, students will read about the perspectives of the authors who wrote the texts they have read and infer about how the background of an author affects his or her perspective on a natural disaster. They will also synthesize their thinking about the guiding question through written reflection and discussion. Finally, for the end of unit assessment, students will read about the perspective of another author and, as an optional arts integration, consider their own perspective on the impact of natural disasters on survivors through a piece of artwork.

Guiding Questions and Big Ideas

- What can literature about natural disasters teach us about their impact on the people who experience them?
- A narrator’s point of view affects how events in a story are described.
- Visual elements in literature contribute to the meaning of the text.
### Mid-Unit 2 Assessment

**Analyzing a New Narrative about a Natural Disaster (Parts I and II)**

Part I of this two-part assessment centers on standards NYSP12 ELA CCLS RL.5.1, RL.5.7, and L.5.5. Students will read a short story, “In the Middle of the Storm,” about Hurricane Sandy to answer multiple-choice and short-response text-dependent questions related to inferring about events, determining the meaning of language in context, and analyzing how imagery is used to contribute meaning to the narrator’s description of events. Part II of this assessment centers on standards NYSP12 ELA CCLS RL.5.6, W.5.2, and W.5.9a. In this second part of the assessment, students will write a literary analysis based on the text they read in Part I, focusing on how the narrator’s point of view influences the description of events.

### End of Unit 2 Assessment

**Perspectives on Natural Disasters**

This assessment centers on standards NYSP12 ELA CCLS RL.5.1 and RL.5.6a, with an optional assessment of W.5.11. In this assessment, students read about the author of “In the Middle of the Storm,” from the mid-unit assessment. They then answer a series of questions focusing on how the author’s background affects her perspective on the storm she writes about. Then, in an optional arts integration and assessment of W.5.11, students consider their own perspective by reflecting in writing on the guiding question: “What can literature about natural disasters teach us about their impact on the people who experience them?” and then create a piece of original artwork to accompany this reflection. (Teachers may choose not to include this portion of the assessment if time or resources do not permit this arts integration.)
Content Connections

This module is designed to address English Language Arts standards. However, the module intentionally incorporates Social Studies and Science content that many teachers may be teaching during other parts of the day. These intentional connections are described below.

**NYS Social Studies Core Curriculum:**

- **5.10** Increasingly, the nations of the Western Hemisphere participate in and benefit from international organizations that promote peace, cooperation, economic development, global health, and cultural understanding.
- **5.10.a** Multinational organizations and non-governmental organizations in the Western Hemisphere seek to actively promote democracy, protect human rights, support economic development, and encourage cooperation between nations.
- **5.10.b** The United Nations helps maintain peace between nations and uses international pressure to protect human rights and promote cultural understanding.
- **5.10.c** When nations or regions in the Western Hemisphere face challenges due to natural disasters, health epidemics, or political upheavals, multinational organizations provide global support and assistance.

**Science:**

- **2.1b** Weather can be described and measured by:
  - Temperature
  - Wind, speed, and direction
  - Form and amount of precipitation
  - General sky conditions (cloudy, sunny, partly cloudy)
- **2.1e** Extreme natural events (floods, fires, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, hurricanes, tornadoes, and other severe storms) may have positive or negative impacts on living things.
- **5.2g** The health, growth, and development of organisms are affected by environmental conditions such as the availability of food, air, water, space, shelter, heat, and sunlight.
## Central Texts


3. Reyna Eisenstark, “In the Middle of the Storm” (2014). (Lexile 940)

4. Expeditionary Learning, “Who Wrote ‘In the Middle of the Storm’?” (2014). (Lexile 1000)
This unit is approximately 2 weeks or 9 sessions of instruction.

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| Lesson 1 | Reading Literature about Natural Disasters: Inferring about Human Impact through an Analysis of Eight Days: A Story of Haiti | • I can effectively engage in discussions with diverse partners about fifth-grade topics and texts. (SL.5.1)  
• I can make inferences using quotes from the text. (RL.5.1) | • I can effectively engage in discussions to infer the meaning of a text.  
• I can take notes and quotes from *Eight Days* to analyze the narrator’s experience as a survivor of a natural disaster. | • Student responses to text-dependent questions  
• Analysis notes for *Eight Days* | • Group Norms anchor chart  
(from Module 3A, Unit 3)  
• Analysis Notes for *Eight Days* anchor chart (blank example)  
• Glass, Bugs, Mud protocol |
| Lesson 2 | Analyzing Point of View: Inferring about the Natural Disaster in *Eight Days* | • I can effectively engage in discussions with diverse partners about fifth-grade topics and texts. (SL.5.1)  
• I can describe how a narrator’s point of view influences the description of events. (RL.5.6)  
• I can write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly. (W.5.2)  
• I can draw evidence from literary texts to support analysis. (W.5.9a) | • I can effectively engage in discussions to infer the meaning of a text.  
• I can describe how Junior’s point of view influences his description of events in Eight Days. | • Independent reading  
• Group discussion  
• Groups’ literary analysis essays | • Fist to Five protocol  
• What Do We Know about Natural Disasters? anchor chart  
• Analysis Notes for *Eight Days* anchor charts  
• Literary Analysis Criteria anchor chart |
| Lesson 3 | Analyzing Images and Language: Inferring about the Natural Disaster in Eight Days | • I can analyze how visual and multimedia elements add to the meaning, tone, or beauty of literary text. (RL.5.7)  
• I can analyze figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings. (L.5.5) | • I can analyze how images in *Eight Days* are used to add to the meaning of the text and convey the narrator’s experience of a natural disaster.  
• I can analyze the meaning of figurative language in *Eight Days* to better understand the narrator’s experience of a natural disaster. | • Independent reading  
• Image Analysis sheet  
• Language Analysis T-chart (in journal) | • Fist to Five protocol  
• What Do We Know about Natural Disasters? anchor chart  
• Analysis Notes for *Eight Days* anchor charts |
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| Lesson 4 | Reading Literature about Natural Disasters: **Inferring about the Impact of Hurricane Katrina on People Living in New Orleans** | • I can make inferences using quotes from the text. (RL.5.1)  
• I can analyze how visual and multimedia elements add to the meaning, tone, or beauty of literary text. (RL.5.7)  
• I can analyze figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings. (L.5.5) | • I can infer about the narrator’s experience in “Save Bella!” as a survivor of a natural disaster.  
• I can analyze how images in “Save Bella!” are used to add to the meaning of the text and convey the narrator’s experience of a natural disaster.  
• I can analyze the meaning of figurative language in “Save Bella!” to better understand the narrator’s experience of a natural disaster. | • Independent reading  
• Student responses to text-dependent questions  
• Analysis notes for “Save Bella!” | • Glass, Bugs, Mud protocol  
• What Do We Know about Natural Disasters? anchor chart  
• Analysis Notes for “Save Bella!” anchor chart |
| Lesson 5 | Analyzing Point of View: Inferring about the Impact of Hurricane Katrina on People Living in New Orleans | • I can describe how a narrator’s point of view influences the description of events. (RL.5.6)  
• I can write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly. (W.5.2)  
• I can draw evidence from literary texts to support analysis. (W.5.9a) | • I can describe how Darren’s point of view influences his description of events in “Save Bella!” | • Group discussion  
• Literary analysis essays about “Save Bella!” | • Fist to Five protocol  
• What Do We Know about Natural Disasters? anchor chart  
• Literary Analysis Criteria anchor chart  
• Analysis Notes for “Save Bella!” anchor chart |
| Lesson 6 | Mid-Unit 2 Assessment: Analyzing a New Narrative about a Natural Disaster, Part I | • I can make inferences using quotes from the text. (RL.5.1)  
• I can analyze how visual and multimedia elements add to the meaning, tone, or beauty of literary text. (RL.5.7)  
• I can analyze figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings. (L.5.5) | • I can infer about the narrator’s experience in “Save Bella!” as a survivor of a natural disaster, using quotes from the text.  
• I can analyze the meaning of figurative language in a new narrative about natural disasters.  
• I can analyze how an image from the text adds meaning to the narrator’s description of events. | • Mid-Unit 2 Assessment: Analyzing a New Narrative about a Natural Disaster, Part I | • |
### Lesson 7
**Mid-Unit Assessment: Analyzing a New Narrative about a Natural Disaster, Part II**
- I can describe how a narrator’s point of view influences the description of events. (RL.5.6)
- I can write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly. (W.5.2)
- I can draw evidence from literary texts to support analysis. (W.5.9a)
- I can describe how the narrator’s point of view in a new text about natural disasters influences his or her description of events.
- Mid-Unit 2 Assessment: Analyzing a New Narrative about a Natural Disaster, Part II
- Literary Analysis Criteria anchor chart

### Lesson 8
**Reading about the Author’s Perspective: Why Do Authors Write about Natural Disasters?**
- I can recognize and describe how an author’s background affects his or her perspective. (RL.5.6a)
- I can effectively engage in discussions with diverse partners about fifth-grade topics and texts. (SL.5.1)
- I can describe how an author’s background affects his or her perspective.
- Students’ notes for discussion
- Students’ discussion participation
- Face-to-Face, Back-to-Back protocol
- Fishbowl protocol
- Group Norms anchor chart

### Lesson 9
**End of Unit Assessment: Perspectives on Natural Disasters**
- I can quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text. (RI.5.1)
- I can recognize and describe how an author’s background affects his or her perspective. (RL.5.6a)
- I can create and present an original piece of artwork in response to a particular author or theme studied in class. (W.5.11)
- I can describe how an author’s background affects his or her perspective, using quotes and evidence from the text.
- I can create and present an original piece of artwork in response to the Unit 2 guiding question.
- Independent reading
- End of Unit 2 Assessment: Perspectives on Natural Disasters
- Concentric Circles protocol

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1 This standard is specific to New York State.
Optional: Experts, Fieldwork, and Service

Experts:
• Arrange for climatology experts, meteorologists, or other weather experts to speak to the class and answer questions about the accuracy of the details conveyed in each story.

Fieldwork:
• If appropriate based on your community’s experiences and sensitivities, ask students to interview individuals from the community who have experienced a natural disaster.

Service:
• Identify a current natural disaster (local, national, or international) and develop a class service project to educate others or to assist.

Optional: Extensions

• With an art instructor, explore and examine additional elements of imagery and/or complete a more thorough analysis of how color and composition add meaning to a story.

• To extend the arts integration that occurs in the end of unit assessment, consider allowing students to use high-grade drawing paper and choose their art medium (colored pencils, pastels, watercolor, or other multimedia forms). See Lesson 9 for additional examples of artwork related to natural disasters to show students. Another option is to collaborate with your art resource teacher for a more thorough integration of the arts.

• During Social Studies or Science instruction, have students investigate how to locate factual information about the 2010 earthquake in Haiti and the 1900 hurricane in Galveston, Texas. Ask students to write about the connections they are able to make between their research and the details described by the narrators of each story.

Preparation and Materials

• Journals: In this module, students will keep notes in a journal, as they have done in previous modules. However, if you prefer, there is a “one for display” example of each of the note-catchers that you can prepare as student handouts. Decide if students have enough room in their current journals to complete the routine reading and writing for this module. If not, ensure that all students have a spiral-bound or composition notebook.

• Determine groups of four that students will work in during this unit (Lesson 1).

• Gather texts from the Recommended Texts list for independent reading.

• The end of this unit features an integration of the arts with NYSP12 CCLS W.5.11. You will need colored pencils, but drawing paper is optional.