

ePals Project: **Nature's Fury**

Instructional Plan with Common Core Connections

Instructional Plan (step-by-step directions):

Step 1 – **Read and Discuss: Natural Hazard Forums** Check out the ePals Natural Hazard articles! Choose several articles to read. (Make sure to read about more than one disaster type.) Then, review a natural hazard internet site (from our list of web resources, or one you find yourself). Use your readings to help you meet the following forum posting requirements:

- a. Post a **comparison of two articles** in the Natural Hazard Article Forum. Begin by telling which two articles you read. Then, discuss similarities and differences in how the two articles present key information about natural disasters. (Do they emphasize different evidence? Do they have different interpretations of facts? Is there any conflicting information? Are they organized in a similar way?) Mention which article you preferred and at least one new thing you learned from reading the articles. (And respond to at least one other post with a thoughtful question or comment).
- b. Post an **opinion review** of one Natural Hazard website in the Natural Hazard Website Forum. Check your opinion writing by using the [ePals opinion checklist for grades 6-8](#). (And respond to at least one other post with a thoughtful question or comment).
- c. Post a **personal experience** in the Natural Hazard Story forum. Tell about a natural disaster that you (or someone you know) experienced. (And respond to at least one other post with a thoughtful question or comment).

Step 2 – **Research and Share:** Now, focus your research on natural hazards of the past that occurred in your own country, and the

Common Core Connections

See how these key elements purposefully link to the standards.

R10: Independent reading of informational science weather articles promotes RI 10, reading and comprehending grade level texts.

R9: Comparing 2 resources on the same topic meets R9 and teaches students that authors may approach the same topic in different ways.

W9: Students are gathering evidence from multiple informational texts to support their research of natural disasters, meeting W9.

W1: Opinion Writing (W1) teaches students to express their opinion in writing using supporting reasons, evidence and linking words. Here, students are expressing their opinions about a Natural Hazard website.

W3: Personal disaster stories are “real” narrative Writing (W3), and should be organized by sequence of events and include sensory details.

R1: Reading print and online sources closely for the purpose of discussing with others and answering questions, meets R1. For additional R1 practice, have students take notes on their reading and refer explicitly to the text in their wiki posts.

countries of your ePals. Read print and online sources to research natural hazards. Then, using a wiki for each country, create collaborative timelines by adding in disaster events for each country represented. Be sure to add your events in chronological order so your ePals can add entries and one collaborative time line can be created for each country. As you add in an event to any timeline, be sure to list:

- a) the date of the disaster,
- b) the type of natural hazard that occurred,
- c) facts and figures about the event and the aftermath,
- d) what progress (if any) came about as a result of this event in terms of hazard prevention and preparedness
- e) list your name and cite resources that you used to gather your information (use the ePals citing format.)

W6: Communicating and collaborating with others using wikis is a way of integrating technology to support W6.

W1: Writing to communicate information about disasters is informational writing.

Step 3 – Complete the Culminating Activity

Culminating Activity Description

In small groups, students review the wiki timelines to find patterns and trends in the disasters. Then, they work together to design a Hazard Rating System to rate safety of the ePals geographical locations based on their historical disaster-likelihood (as evidenced in the wiki timelines). Students use small-group forums to discuss their rating system, and vote on ratings for each country. Each small group makes a final presentation of their rating system and the ratings for each country, justifying each rating with evidence from the timelines or other sources.

SL1: Small group discussions requiring students to come prepared, share opinions and communicate meets SL1.

R7: Interpreting visual information from a timeline meets R7 .

Culminating Activity

1. Divide students into small groups and assign each small group a forum for collaboration.
2. Clearly state the task, “Design a Hazard Rating System to rate the safety of the ePals geographical locations based on their historical disaster-likelihood.”
3. Every student should first review the wikis and think about the questions: What do the timelines tell you about natural hazards that are typical for this location? What conditions make the location prime for that type of hazard(s)?
4. Each student should then post an idea for a rating system in the small group forum, and then group consensus will

determine which rating system gets used (a combination of rating systems may be used).

5. Once a rating-system is established, students suggest ratings for each country and determine their outcomes.
6. Each student is then responsible for contributing to a small group multimedia presentation that shares the rating system, the ratings for each of the ePals countries and a justification of each rating (based on the wiki timelines or outside resources.)
7. Final presentations should be posted in the Project Gallery to share!

W2, W4, W6, W7. W8, W10: Like any ePals culminating activity, students are expected to integrate multiple common core standards to meaningfully express learning in an authentic writing task.

W2: Students will write to inform others about their rating system, this meets informational writing W2.

W4: Students writing will be for a presentation for other students, that's writing for a specific audience, purpose and task, meeting W4.

W6: Students are producing and publishing a multimedia presentation using technology, and sharing it with others online, meeting W6.

W7: Students have participated in the research about natural hazards and are now expressing their learning in designing and justifying a hazard rating system.

W8: Students have gathered information from multiple sources (meeting W8) and are now using their knowledge to write a collaborative presentation.

W10: Students are each writing a part of the multimedia presentation on their hazard rating system, a discipline-specific task, to create a collaborative writing project, meeting W10, writing for different audiences, purposes and tasks.

SL5: Students are integrating visual displays in their small group multimedia presentation to clarify information, strengthen claims and evidence, and add interest, meeting SL5.