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Lesson Plan: **Winds of Change: The Galveston Hurricane of 1900** (Social Studies, Grades 4-8)

Objective:

Through the use of primary sources, students will analyze the impact of hurricanes on the lives and livelihoods of the people and regions affected by them. Students will further compare the impacts of the Galveston 1900 Hurricane, Hurricane Katrina, and Hurricane Ike on the Texas coast, judging both immediate impact and long-term effect.

Description:

In 1900, Galveston was a booming center of trade and the largest city in the state of Texas. On September 8, 1900, the Galveston Hurricane destroyed the city claiming the lives of approximately 8,000 people. A new technology, moving images on film, captured the damage caused by the storm. Using the films taken of the wreckage, including *Panorama of East Galveston*, this lesson plan explores geography, Texas History and culture, and technological innovations. The lesson targets TEKS in Social Studies for grades 4 through 8.

Films:

- Panorama of East Galveston:
http://www.texasarchive.org/library/index.php/Panorama_of_East_Galveston
- Launching a Stranded Schooner from the Docks:
http://www.texasarchive.org/library/index.php/Galveston_Hurricane_of_1900_-_Launching_a_Stranded_Schooner_from_the_Docks
- Panorama of Galveston Power House (Galveston, Texas Hurricane and Tidal Wave):
http://www.texasarchive.org/library/index.php/Galveston_Hurricane_of_1900_-_Panorama_of_Galveston_Power_House_%28Galveston%2C_Texas_Hurricane_and_Tidal_Wave%29
- Panorama of Orphans Home, Galveston:
http://www.texasarchive.org/library/index.php/Galveston_Hurricane_of_1900_-_Panorama_of_Orphans_Home%2C_Galveston_%28Galveston%2C_Texas%2C_Hurricane_and_Tidal_Wave%29
- Panorama of Wreckage of Water Front:
http://www.texasarchive.org/library/index.php/Galveston_Hurricane_of_1900_-_Panorama_of_Wreckage_of_Water_Front



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- Panoramic View of Tremont Hotel:
[http://www.texasarchive.org/library/index.php/Galveston Hurricane of 1900 - Panoramic View of Tremont Hotel](http://www.texasarchive.org/library/index.php/Galveston_Hurricane_of_1900_-_Panoramic_View_of_Tremont_Hotel)
- Searching Ruins on Broadway, Galveston, for Dead Bodies:
[http://www.texasarchive.org/library/index.php/Galveston Hurricane of 1900 - Searching Ruins on Broadway%2C Galveston%2C for Dead Bodies](http://www.texasarchive.org/library/index.php/Galveston_Hurricane_of_1900_-_Searching_Ruins_on_Broadway%2C_Galveston%2C_for_Dead_Bodies)
- Birdseye View of Dock Front, Galveston
[http://www.texasarchive.org/library/index.php/Galveston Hurricane of 1900 - Birdseye View of Dock Front%2C Galveston](http://www.texasarchive.org/library/index.php/Galveston_Hurricane_of_1900_-_Birdseye_View_of_Dock_Front%2C_Galveston)

Resources:

- Larson, Erik. *Isaac's Storm: A Man, A Time, and the Deadliest Hurricane in History*. Random House: New York. 1999.
- Green, Nathan C. *Story of the Galveston Flood: Complete, Graphic, Authentic*. Cosimo Classics: New York. 2005.
- <http://www.1900storm.com/>: a presentation of the Galveston County Daily News
- <http://www.hurricanedisasterslive.com/GALVESTON-HURRICANE-1900.html>: website describing the Galveston Hurricane with statistics
- <http://www.gthcenter.org/exhibits/zenith/index.html>: exhibit on Galveston from 1890-1900 by the Galveston and Texas History Center at the Rosenberg Library

Process:

Prior Knowledge

1. Students should have a working knowledge of Texas geography, including the Gulf Coast region.
2. Students should be aware of the devastating impact of natural disasters on communities, the economy.

Hook

1. Display a map of the Texas Gulf Coast that includes Cuba; identify the cities of Galveston and Havana on the map.
2. Ask the class to make a list of how information was communicated between two separate locations around 1900. Write the students' responses on the board.
3. Ask how someone in Havana might be able to warn someone in Galveston that a storm was coming around 1900. The answer is that there was no easy way to



communicate this information effectively, and as a result, the Galveston Hurricane devastated Galveston Island in 1900.

4. Extension: Have students brainstorm one of the following.
 - a. The benefits of modern technology, such as storm radar, which inform meteorologists that a major storm is coming several days before it arrives
 - b. The problems associated with not having the technology to give people and advance warning that a storm is coming

Lesson

1. Watch the film, *Panorama of East Galveston*, or one of the other suggested films. Rather than react verbally, have students write down what images they see.
2. After viewing the film, ask students:
 - a. How does this film look different from the images you see on your TV at home?
 - i. Black and white, blurry images, jumpy images
 - b. Why does this look different from the images we watch?
 - i. This was filmed when moving images were first invented and had not been perfected.
 - c. What similarities do you see between this footage and scenes that have resulted after Hurricane Katrina or Hurricane Ike?
 - i. Have students refer to their paper to see what they wrote down.
 - d. Thinker Question: Why are some buildings left standing during a hurricane while others are not?
 - e. Why do people continue to resettle and rebuild Galveston Island though hurricanes continue to ravage the area?
 - i. Possible answers: ports, trade, transportation, culture, tourism.
 - f. Though technology has changed, and more than 100 years have passed, what has not changed about the effect of natural disasters and hurricanes?
 - g. Show students pictures from Hurricane Katrina (<http://www.katrinadestruction.com/>) so they have an additional frame of reference to those provided in the videos. Then ask them, how long do they think it takes to rebuild an area after a hurricane has struck land? What do you think the long term effects are on an area after a hurricane strikes?

Independent Practice (to be completed over the course of several class periods):

1. Divide students into groups, and assign each group one of the following topics:
 - a. Understanding the science of hurricanes: how do they happen?



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- b. The shipping industry: 1900 and present day
 - c. The evolution of communication: the telegraph, telephone, internet
 - d. The history of meteorology
 - e. Emergency response to hurricanes: 1900 and present day
 - f. Recording Hurricanes: footage of destruction then and now. (Focus on Edison's process and how the news media covers hurricanes today.)
2. Have each group research their topic in regards to
 - a. Basic background information about their topics (who, what, when, where, how)
 - b. How the topic affected Galveston Island in 1900,
 - c. How their topic affects Galveston Island today,
 - d. Have each group answer the question: Based on your research, why do you think people continue to settle in Galveston, despite the risk of hurricanes? (or how does your topic affect the distribution of populations along the Gulf Coast)
 3. Each group will present their findings (either through a 5-10 minute presentation or a poster), and will be evaluated on the following:
 - a. Accuracy of information about topic;
 - b. Explanation of how their topic has shaped contemporary society;
 - c. Displaying differences between 1900 and present day;
 - d. Aesthetic value/engaging participation;
 - e. Explanation of why people continue to rebuild and settle on Galveston Island.

Closing

Explain to students that though living in a hurricane zone is dangerous, much advancement in technology and the desirability of Galveston's geographic placement has made it possible to weather natural disasters.

TEKS:

Social Studies Grade 4

8C: Describe the location of cities in Texas and explain their distribution, past and present.

9A: Describe ways people have adapted to and modified their environment in Texas, past and present.



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9B: Analyze the consequences of human modification of the environment in Texas, past and present.

21B: Describe how scientific discoveries and technological innovations have benefited individuals, businesses, and society in Texas.

Social Studies Grade 5

8C: Analyze the location of cities in the US, and explain their distribution, past and present.

9B: Describe ways people have adapted to and modified their environment in Texas, past and present.

9C: Analyze the consequences of human modification of the environment in Texas, past and present.

24A: Describe the contributions of famous inventors and scientists, such as Thomas Edison.

Social Studies Grade 6

3C: Compare selected world regions and countries using data from maps, graphs, charts, databases, and models.

4B: Identify and explain the geographic factors responsible for patterns of population in places and regions.

6C: Analyze the effects of physical processes and the physical environment on humans.

20A: Give examples of scientific discoveries and technological innovations that have transcended the boundaries of societies and shaped the world.

Social Studies Grade 7

8B: Pose and answer questions about geographic distributions and patterns in Texas during the 19th and 20th century.

9C: Analyze the effects of physical and human factors such as climate, weather, landforms, and communication on major events in Texas.



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20E: Analyze how scientific discoveries and technological innovations have resulted in an interdependence among Texas, the United States, and the world.

Social Studies Grade 8

10B: Pose and answer questions about geographic distributions and patterns in Texas during the 19th and 20th century.

11C: Analyze the effects of physical and human geographic factors on major historical and contemporary events in the United States.

29A: Compare the effects of scientific discoveries and technological innovations that have influenced daily life in different periods in US History.