

AN UNNATURAL DISASTER:



A CRITICAL RESOURCE GUIDE FOR ADDRESSING THE AFTERMATH OF HURRICANE KATRINA IN THE CLASSROOM



THE NEW YORK COLLECTIVE OF RADICAL EDUCATORS



[HTTP://WWW.NYCORE.ORG](http://www.nycore.org)

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New York Collective of Radical Educators (NYCoRE) is a group of public school educators committed to fighting for social justice in our school system and society at large, by organizing and mobilizing teachers, developing curriculum, and working with community, parent, and student organizations. We are educators who believe that education is an integral part of social change and that we must work both inside and outside the classroom because the struggle for justice does not end when the school bell rings.

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An Unnatural Disaster: A Critical Resource Guide for Educators

NYCoRE is pleased to present an updated edition of *Unnatural Disaster: A Critical Resource Guide for Addressing the Aftermath of Hurricane Katrina in the Classroom* including new sections such as **The Rebuilding Process**, **Personal Narratives**, and **Grassroots Organizations Working on Rebuilding**.

When NYCoRE first released *Unnatural Disaster*, days after Hurricane Katrina hit the Gulf Coast, we asked educators how they would help their students to make sense of the storm's aftermath. The feedback was powerful. While we received reports of the guide's usefulness and words of encouragement from across the continent, we disproportionately observed silent classrooms. Three months later, stories of displaced families, re-building efforts and a congressional investigation trickle into mainstream news reports. Hurricane Katrina continues to be both a horrible reality for hundreds of thousands of Americans, and a critical chapter in U.S. history to be examined in every educational setting. We hope to encourage and support educators to use this revised edition of the resource guide and build an on-line community through dialogue at <http://nycore-katrina.blogspot.com>. As teachers are increasingly forced to teach to standardized tests, we hope that they will also find creative ways to incorporate these resources into lessons that will both strengthen students' academic skills and encourage a critical understanding of the power imbalance that made itself evident through this tragedy. Classrooms that avoid discussions about the Katrina disaster may feel that they are neutral, or protected from the harsh reality of this event, but we applaud the brave and memorable educators who invite their students to question the world around them.

-NYCoRE (New York Collective of Radical Educators)

December 6, 2005

When the American public is told that the residents of New Orleans and the gulf region are finally accounted for and the media re-focuses on the next event, the disaster will continue for the hundreds of thousands who have lost their homes, families and the lives they once knew. Young people have seen the images, heard the rhetoric, and felt the same sympathetic sense of helplessness that educators have experienced in the days leading up to this school year. How will teachers support their students to reflect on the enormity of this crisis in their classrooms? Will they ask students to draw pictures? Donate money? Will they make room for in-depth discussions? Along with the world, teachers and students have witnessed how political mismanagement, right-wing policy, and centuries of oppression have set the stage for the on-going horror that is the US Gulf Coast crisis. We implore educators to create space in their classrooms for critical inquiry into the questions this disaster has raised for those watching throughout the world.

The attached resources are intended for educators moved to guide their students through a deep exploration of the historical, political and economic roots of the Hurricane Katrina disaster and aftermath. Among other things, this crisis has revealed:

the legacy of African slavery	militarism
the criminalization of poor people of color	global relationships and the many costs of war
media bias	consumerism and related environmental
problems with the privatization of services	degradation
the capitalist interests that govern public policy	the racism and classism inherent in our current political system and more...

Teachers and students must feel empowered to take action and demand social change, rather than rely solely on contributing to a temporary relief of conscience. Moving from a service/ charity framework to one of social justice can make room for even the youngest of students to make sense of the basic issues of fairness inherent in this catastrophe. As education catches up with modernity, classrooms can use this event to strengthen the next generation's media literacy as students struggle to make sense of the ceaseless bombardment of mixed messages and half-truths produced to communicate the situation in the Gulf region.

ENFRENTANDO CRITICAMENTE LA CRISIS DEL GOLFO

Una Guía de Recursos para Educadores

Es un placer para NYCoRE presentarles con una edición actualizada de *Enfrentando Críticamente la Crisis del Golfo: Una Guía de Recursos para Educadores (La Guía)*, lo cual incluye unas secciones nuevas como “**El Proceso de Reconstruir,**” “**Narrativas Personales,**” y “**Organizaciones de Raíces Populares que Trabajan para Cambios Sociales.**”

Cuando NYCoRE distribuyó *La Guía* la primera vez, unos días después del huracán, preguntamos a los maestros a quienes mandamos *La Guía* como iban a ayudarles a sus estudiantes para que entiendan los asuntos que sucedieron en la region del golfo después de la tormenta. Lo que dijieron fue poderoso. Muchísimos maestras habían usado *La Guía* y nos mandaron apoyo y agradecimiento por crearla. Sin embargo, y aunque recibimos reportajes de todo el continente, desproporcionadamente observamos silencio en la gran mayoría de los salones de clase con respeto a la crisis en el golfo. Ahora, tres meses después del desastre, raramente vemos por las noticias las historias de familias desplazadas, explicaciones de los esfuerzos para reconstruir la region, y algo sobre la investigación del crisis de parte del congreso. El Huracán Katrina se continua de ser una realidad horrible para cientos miles de Americanos, y un capítulo crítico de la historia estadounidense que debería ser examinado en cada configuración educativa. Esperamos apoyarles a los educadores quienes usen esta edición revisada de *La Guía* y también crear una comunidad virtual por medio de conversaciones en el sitio <http://nycore-katrina.blogspot.com>. Además, aunque los maestros están forzados más y más a enseñar hacia los exámenes del estado, esperamos que todavía puedan encontrar maneras creativas para incluir estos recursos en sus lecciones, lo cuales ayudaran a mejorar las destrezas académicas y también darles a los estudiantes un conocimiento crítico del imbalance del poder que existe en este país, lo cual se reveló por esta tragedia. Los salones de clase silenciosos tal vez se sienten neutrales o tal vez se sienten protegidos de la realidad tan dura de este evento, pero educadores valientes y memorables invitan a sus alumnos a hacer preguntas sobre el mundo alrededor de sí mismos.

-NYCoRE (New York Collective of Radical Educators)

6 de Diciembre 2005

Cuando los residentes de Nueva Orleans y de la región del golfo sean finalmente ubicados, y la prensa se centre en el próximo evento, el desastre continuará para los cientos de miles que han perdido sus casas, familias y la vida que una vez conocieron. Niños y jóvenes han visto las imágenes, escuchado la retórica y sentido el mismo simpático sentimiento de falta de ayuda que educadores han experimentado durante los días que llevan al inicio de este año escolar. Cómo apoyarán los maestros a sus estudiantes para reflejar la enormidad de esta crisis en sus salones de clases? Pedirán a sus estudiantes que dibujen? Donen dinero? Harán ellos lugar para discusiones de fondo? Maestros y estudiantes han sido testigos de cómo el mal manejo político, políticas de derecha y centurias de opresión, han montado el escenario para el horror en curso que el mundo está presenciando, y nosotros imploramos a los educadores hacer espacio en sus aulas para el cuestionamiento crítico de las interrogantes que este desastre ha generado para aquellos que observan alrededor del mundo.

Los recursos o fuentes anexos están destinados a educadores movidos a guiar a sus estudiantes a través de una exploración más profunda de las raíces históricas, políticas y económicas del desastre que el huracán Katrina reveló –el legado de la esclavitud africana, la criminalización de gente de color pobre, prejuicios de los medios de comunicación, privatización de servicios, los intereses capitalistas que gobiernan la política pública, militarismo, relaciones globales y los muchos costos de guerra, consumismo y la relacionada degradación ambiental, el racismo y clasismo inherente en nuestro actual sistema político, y más y más. Maestros y estudiantes deben sentir el poder de actuar y demandar un cambio social, en vez de depender solamente de contribuir a un alivio temporal de conciencia. En la medida en que la educación se pone a la par de la modernidad, el salón de clases puede usar este evento para fortalecer la alfabetización en materia de prensa de la próxima generación, cuando estudiantes tratan de encontrar sentido al bombardeo de incesantes mensajes y medias verdades producidas para comunicar la situación en la región del golfo.

How To Use This Guide

This guide is most useful when used online, as opposed to a paper copy. Most of the resources in this guide are web- based links, so when viewed online, all you need to do is click on the links. **It is best viewed with Adobe Reader** (<http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html>). If you need a PDF or Word version of this resource, please visit <http://www.nycore.org> where you can download a free copy. Whether you plan on using this guide immediately or sometime in the future, it is recommended that you visit the links **NOW** and **print out** any relevant articles immediately because these links may expire at any point. For example, the links to The New York Times articles are usually only good for a week, at which point you need a subscription to access them. All links in this version were functional as of April 2, 2006.

Teaching Tolerance reviewed NYCoRE's resource guide as well as several others. Reviews are available at <http://www.tolerance.org/teach/current/event.jsp?cid=626>

A. Government Response

Bush Knew: On September 1, 2005, a few days after Katrina left New Orleans in disarray, on national television President Bush claimed, "I don't think anyone anticipated the breach of the levees." Reports six months later have revealed that Bush was informed before Katrina hit the US coast of the extreme nature of the impending danger. These reports make the Bush administration's lack of response even more reprehensible.

<http://political.moveon.org/katrina/bushknew.html>

http://newsblogs.chicagotribune.com/news_theswamp/2006/03/bushs_katrina_p.html

<http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2006/03/01/katrina/main1361404.shtml>

<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/11626997/site/newsweek/>

<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/article/0,,3-2067125,00.html>

Politics: Republicans and others value a small, limited, and unregulated government. Examine how the ideas of limited government and market solutions to issues were inadequate in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

<http://www.wsws.org/articles/2005/sep2005/blam-s09.shtml>

<http://www.wsws.org/articles/2005/sep2005/stat-s06.shtml>

Government's Role: Who is responsible for helping citizens? Evaluate why the government was not able to perform this role and what other institutions like community based organizations and corporations picked up the responsibility.

<http://www.alternet.org/columnists/story/24923/>

Two Disasters: There was a natural disaster and an unnatural response. The natural disaster was the hurricane and the unnatural disaster was the inadequate response by the government. Evaluate reasons why the government did not respond quickly and effectively by looking at news stories about all of the failures of FEMA and the Bush Administration.

<http://femafailures.blogspot.com/>

Political Patronage: Nominating Government Officials: The aftermath of Hurricane Katrina brought the Bush administration's FEMA director appointment of Michael Brown into question. President Bush has also recently nominated two Supreme Court justices. Critically examine how President Bush chooses the people he nominates for government appointments by looking at his choice of Michael Brown as the head of FEMA.

<http://csmonitor.com/2005/0906/p01s01-uspo.html>,

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/servlet/ArticleNews/TPStory/LAC/20050907/STORMFEMA07/TPInternational/Americas> (registration required to view article)

Federalism: Looking at Three Levels of Government: Compare the response to the Hurricane at the local, state, and federal level. Why are some levels of government more responsive to citizens' needs than others? New Orleans Mayor Nagin condemned the efforts of the federal government and demanded quicker actions in the immediate aftermath of the hurricane disaster.

<http://www.atypical.net/mm/nagin.mp3>

<http://www.idyllopuspress.com/meanwhile/?p=503>

Politicians: It is important to understand where key players in the government were in the immediate aftermath of the Katrina. Examine various timelines to illustrate where individuals were during the crisis and their reactions during the aftermath (i.e. Condoleeza Rice was shoe shopping in NYC).

<http://www.thinkprogress.org/katrina-timeline>

<http://aliberaldose.blogspot.com/2005/09/response-team-bush-homeland-security.html>



Politicians: Lack of Leadership: Politicians are elected, among other things, to lead their constituencies through crisis. Analyze the ways in which the Bush Administration displayed a lack of action and failure during the crisis.

<http://msnbc.msn.com/id/9174806/site/newsweek/>

<http://www.nytimes.com/2005/09/05/opinion/05herbert.html?ex=1126152000&en=8d1036697564a892&ei=5070> (payment required)

Politicians: Attitude Toward Poor People: Barbara Bush claimed that the Astrodome housing solution was good enough, because people there were underprivileged anyway. What is “good enough” help for the poor and underprivileged, and should it be at a different level if victims are rich and privileged?

<http://www.thenation.com/blogs/thebeat?pid=20080>

How Does Violence Beget Violence? How did the government's response to Katrina contribute to the resulting violence in New Orleans and the way it was framed? It is important to understand that violence is a result of conditions. Explore how the communities affected have experienced violence by the government and evaluate how this could alter their response to the aftermath of the hurricane.

<http://www.alternet.org/columnists/story/24926/>

What Went Wrong?

Some reasons why the U.S. didn't adequately protect and rescue its citizens from a natural disaster.

- The absorption of the Federal Emergency Management Agency into the gargantuan — and terrorism-focused — Department of Homeland Security.
- A military stretched by wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, which made commanders reluctant to commit some active-duty units nearby.
- A total breakdown of communications systems.
- Missteps at the local level, including a rudimentary plan to deal with hurricanes.
- A failure to plan for the possibility that New Orleans's levee system would fail.

From the Wall Street Journal 9/6/05

Holding Our Leaders Accountable: How can we hold our leaders accountable for their inaction? Are we failing in our democracy at holding our leaders accountable? Make connections to upcoming elections and other ways of holding elected officials accountable for their inaction. Think about leading social civic actions such as letter writing, petitioning, marching, and protesting.

<http://www.workingforchange.com/activism/action.cfm?itemid=19560>

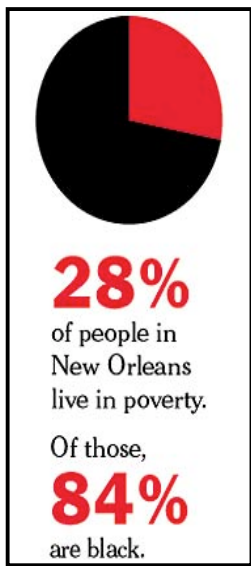
Government Spending: While the government is now spending money on relief, the amount must be put into perspective. Compare graphs that show how much the government spends on the military, education, and more, in comparison to the amount it will spend on relief. In addition, compare how other countries distribute their spending.

http://www.faireconomy.org/econ/workshops/war_and_economy.html

War on Terror vs. War on Poverty Response: The government’s reaction to September 11th was swift and expensive, resulting in the War on Terror. Will the effects of poverty exposed by Hurricane Katrina reinvigorate the War on Poverty started by Lyndon B. Johnson over 40 years ago? Why or why not? With 48% of the national budget going to fund the military and an additional \$85 billion as yet unbudgeted for the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq (<http://www.warresisters.org/piechart.htm>), how will this affect the rebuilding of the Gulf Coast? Is the War on Poverty at a stalemate?

<http://www.csmonitor.com/2004/0109/p01s02-ussc.html>

B. Inequality



Race and Class: How did issues of race and class create the context in which this happened—before, during and after the hurricane? There were more issues at work than a “random” natural disaster. From geographic privilege to unrepaired levees, race and class created a context in which poor, Black people were disproportionately at risk to be affected by hurricanes.

<http://www.alternet.org/story/25058/>
http://www.tolerance.org/news/article_tol.jsp?id=1282
<http://www.inthesetimes.com/site/main/article/2314/>

Deteriorating Conditions: Explore articles from 2001 and 2002 that show that scientists and the government already knew that New Orleans was a disaster waiting to happen. The Bush administration was aware of these problems, but cut funding from repairs anyway.

<http://mediamatters.org/items/200509030001>
<http://www.factcheck.org/article344.html>
<http://www.democracynow.org/print.pl?sid=05/09/01/146259>

Poverty and Classism: Some, like FEMA director Michael Brown, blamed the people who did not evacuate for being victims of the hurricane. It is important to understand why people may not have been able to leave. Did the state, local and national government agencies do enough before during and after to get the people out? Is it enough to say, "get out" when people may not have the means to do so?

<http://edition.cnn.com/2005/WEATHER/09/01/katrina.fema.brown/>
<http://www.alternet.org/story/25068/>
<http://www.nytimes.com/2005/09/04/weekinreview/04depa.html> (payment required)

Rendered Invisible: Many groups’ voices and stories are often marginalized. Particularly during this crisis, it is important to hear and listen to these groups:

- Incarcerated people
http://newstandardnews.net/content/?action=show_item&itemid=2607
- Undocumented people
<http://www.nytimes.com/2005/09/06/national/nationalspecial/06immig.html>
- Domestic Violence survivors
<http://endabuse.org/press/releases.php3?Search=Article&ID=155>
- People with Disabilities
<http://www.katrinadisability.info/>
http://www.tolerance.org/news/article_tol.jsp?id=1283
- Native Americans
<http://www.indianz.com/News/2005/010151.asp>



Social Capital: Explore how Katrina affected people differently based on their social status. Perspectives and experiences often differ depending on people's access to various forms of social capital and wealth.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2005/09/05/national/nationalspecial/05moving.html?ex=1126152000&en=dfb7e705e7128f26&ei=5070> (payment required)

Hate: Hate groups have proposed racist explanations and deadly solutions in the wake of Katrina. Look at how in some cases comments made by public officials appear to be eerily similar.

http://www.tolerance.org/news/article_tol.jsp?id=1284

C. Two Gulf Wars

Resources Being Used in Iraq: Was the government unable to respond quickly to the crisis on the Gulf Coast because the money and personnel were all being used in Iraq? Michael Moore's open letter to President Bush makes the argument that the war in Iraq left the government unable to respond effectively to Katrina. United for Peace and Justice's statement on the Gulf Wars makes even further connections about how the poor in both areas suffer the most, and about energy production in both areas.

<http://www.michaelmoore.com/words/message/index.php?id=183>

<http://www.unitedforpeace.org/article.php?id=3094>

National Guard: While the main purpose of the National Guard is to deal with domestic disasters such as this, more than one-third of the Mississippi and Louisiana National Guard forces are currently deployed in Iraq. The government consistently denied that the number of National Guard members deployed in Iraq affected the response to hurricane Katrina, but this must be questioned by examining the validity of the claim, especially in terms of the delay in rescue efforts.

<http://www.csmonitor.com/2005/0902/p02s01-usmi.html>

<http://www.bringthemhomenowtour.org/article.php?id=129>

Aftermath: What connections can be made between the government's response to the crisis in Iraq and the response to the crisis on the Gulf Coast? Just as Halliburton (whose former CEO is Dick Cheney) was given no-bid contracts to rebuild Iraq, the company has been given no-bid contracts to rebuild the Gulf Coast.

<http://www.alternet.org/story/25041/>

<http://www.halliburtonwatch.org/>



Militaristic Response: Analyze the ways in which the military viewed the residents of New Orleans during the aftermath. "This place is going to look like Little Somalia," said Brig. Gen. Gary Jones, commander of the Louisiana National Guard's Joint Task Force as hundreds of armed troops under his charge prepared to launch a massive citywide security mission from a staging area outside the Louisiana Superdome. "We're going to go out and take this city back. This will be a combat operation to get this city under control."

<http://www.armytimes.com/story.php?f=1-292925-1077495.php>

D. Media Literacy and Racism

Media Literacy Resource: The AMLA (Alliance for a Medial Literate America) offers a set of media literacy activities and suggestions for educators to help students analyze, understand, and cope with Hurricane Katrina and its aftermath. A 14-page document containing all the contents below is also downloadable as a PDF.

<http://www.amlainfo.org/home/resources/hurricane-media-literacy>

The Media Awareness Network: “Teachable Moments” provides educators with a list of suggestions and resources for teaching media literacy while looking at the hurricane disaster.

http://www.media-awareness.ca/english/resources/educational/teachable_moments/katrina_news_media.cfm

Biased Reporting: Build media literacy skills by analyzing the much emailed news photos that depicts both Black and White people with food. The caption with the photo of White people claims they “found” food, while the caption with the Black teenager alleges that he “looted.” (Refer to the image on the next page.)

http://tradermike.net/movethecrowd/archives/2005/09/white_people_find_black_people_loot.php

<http://www.nytimes.com/2005/09/05/business/05caption.html>

African American Images: The media gave attention to the predominantly African American poor people being most effected by this disaster, but most reporting lacks a deeper look at the historical conditions that have created poverty in southern Black communities. Question how racism played a role in the depiction of African American hurricane victims.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2005/09/04/weekinreview/04depa.html> (payment required)

<http://www.alternet.org/story/25116/>

Refugees? Refugee is defined as somebody who is seeking or taking refuge, especially from war or persecution, **by going to a foreign country.** Review the struggle over the use of the word “refugee” in describing the evacuees and hurricane victims. Many reporters were using this word in the beginning of the crisis, while many fought that label and demanded to be recognized as Americans. Is the word appropriate? What connotations does it have?

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=4833613>

<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/9232071/>

Criminal Language: Why were the hurricane victims, desperate to survive, labeled as criminals? Examine how news reporting emphasizing “looting” and “lawlessness” in the aftermath of the hurricane further blames the poor in the public’s eye.

http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2005-09-02-new-orleans-escape_x.htm

Media Literacy Resources: Extensive media literacy resources on Katrina for classroom teachers can be found online.

<http://www.amlainfo.org/home/resources/hurricane-media-literacy>

http://medialit.med.sc.edu/hurricane_katrina_news_photos.htm

<http://www.crooksandliars.com/>

<http://www.talkleft.com/>




AP Associated Press AP - Tue Aug 30, 11:31 AM ET

A young man walks through chest deep flood water after looting a grocery store in New Orleans on Tuesday, Aug. 30, 2005. Flood waters continue to rise in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina did extensive damage when it

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 Recommend It: Average (138 votes)
 ☆☆☆☆☆ ★★★★★



AFP 3:47 AM ET

Two residents wade through chest-deep water after finding bread and soda from a local grocery store after Hurricane Katrina came through the area in New Orleans, Louisiana. (AFP/Getty Images/Chris Graythen)

Email Photo Print Photo

RECOMMEND THIS PHOTO » Recommended Photos
 Recommend It: Average (211 votes)
 ☆☆☆☆☆ ★★★★★

RELATED

- Katrina's Effects, at a Glance AP - Tue Aug 30, 1:26 PM ET

Hurricanes & Tropical Storms

E. Criticism from the Hip Hop Community

Kanye West Rips Bush at Hurricane Aid Show: Kanye West shocked the country with his candid statement, “George Bush doesn’t care about Black people,” on live national television. Why did Kanye make this critique of the president? What about Bush's response caused Kanye to say these things? What things could Bush have done differently to avoid the catastrophe in Katrina's aftermath? Why didn't NBC air Kanye's comments on the West Coast? What is the consequence of NBC’s decision not to air Kanye's comments on the West Coast?
<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wpdyn/content/article/2005/09/03/AR200509300165.html>

Legendary K.O.: Kanye West’s break from script during the televised fundraiser for the American Red Cross inspired a protest song by Houston rap group Legendary K.O. Review the lyrics to this song titled, “George Bush Doesn’t Care About Black People.” (Some explicit lyrics)
<http://www.nathanielturner.com/lyricstogeorgebushdoesntcare.htm>

Chuck D: Analyze the lyrics of Chuck D’s song about the Katrina disaster. (Some explicit lyrics)
<http://www.eurweb.com/story.cfm?id=22177>

Suheir Hammad: Poet Suheir Hammad, wrote “A Prayer Band” in response to the hurricane disaster.
<http://electronicintifada.net/v2/article4173.shtml>

F. Local/Global Connections

Local Context: Make connections to your local context. How do race, class and poverty affect local communities? According to U.S. Census Bureau statistics, NYC's poverty rate rose to 20.3 percent in 2004, from 19 percent in 2003. Across the city, the rate ranged widely, from 9.6 percent in Staten Island to 30.6 percent in the Bronx. These rates are compared with a national poverty rate of 12.7 percent.

<http://www.nydailynews.com/news/local/story/342016p-292045c.html>

Could This Happen Here? Question if this could this happen where you live. What should people do to prepare? New York is definitely vulnerable to hurricanes. The city's hurricane readiness brochure states, "Recent research indicates that due to regional geography, hurricanes in New York City – though infrequent – can cause far more damage than hurricanes of similar strength in the southern United States."

http://www.nyc.gov/html/oem/html/readynewyork/hazard_hurricane.html

Does Your City Have an Evacuation Plan? New York also has an evacuation plan in case of emergencies. Mayor Bloomberg claimed that because of its public transportation infrastructure, New York would not face difficulties in making sure that all citizens had means of evacuation. Should New Yorkers take this for granted with such a huge population living basically at sea level? How do plans account for the entire population of Long Island that may need to evacuate through the Metro area? Similar to New Orleans, New York has sections of the city that have been historically neglected and kept in poverty. Can residents in neglected areas trust the city to have an adequate plan for all residents? Should people just wait for an emergency to find out?

<http://www.nyc.gov/html/oem/>



How Might You React? Think about your likely reaction to a crisis situation to gain perspective on how people reacted to Katrina. Inspiring stories of unlikely heroes will help students gain perspective.

<http://www.chron.com/disp/story.mpl/front/3340752.html>

<http://www.chron.com/cs/CDA/ssistory.mpl/topstory2/3334317>

Foreign Response to America: Learn about how other countries view America by examining the foreign press to see the way they report the event.

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/in_depth/americas/2005/hurricane_katrina/default.stm (BBC, United Kingdom)

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/katrina/0,16441,1560620,00.html> (The Guardian, United Kingdom)

http://www.aljazeera.com/cgi-bin/review/article_full_story.asp?service_ID=9721 (Aljazeera, Middle East)

<http://www.nettizen.com/newspaper/>, <http://watchingamerica.com/> (International press outlets)

Global Response: Examine how the U.S. has reacted to other emergency situations, such as the tsunami crisis in South/Southeast Asia, 9-11, and the L.A. riots. Does who the victims are affect the response? How does the rest of the world respond to similar events? For example, the U.S. ranked 20th when looking at the percentage of GDP that was donated by countries toward tsunami relief efforts.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Humanitarian_response_to_the_2004_Indian_Ocean_earthquake#Pledged_amounts_as_percentages_of_GDP

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/national/20041228-122330-7268r.htm>

www.ncl.org/publications/ncr/92-1/ncr92104.pdf

Comparing World Economies and What People Donate: How much the U.S. actually value humanitarian relief? Examining U.S. international relief efforts in a global context paints an interesting picture.

http://www.michaelbuffington.com/archives/2004/12/relief_funds_co.html

G. Environmental Justice Issues

Race, Class, and the Environment: Hurricane Katrina's natural and unnatural impact has exposed the environmental degradation that led up to the crisis, and sparked concern over the environmental disaster that it will leave behind. Challenge students to examine instances of environmental racism and the links between environmental policy (or lack thereof) and poverty. When combining issues of race, class, and the environment, one is able to gain new perspective on what is now happening and what will happen in the future of the Gulf Region.

Explain the connections between race, poverty, and lack of environmental protection:

http://seattlepi.nwsource.com/opinion/239168_enviroed.asp

<http://www.thenation.com/doc/20050815/mangano>

Discuss the impact that past environmental policy had on the devastating effect of Hurricane Katrina:

http://www.truthout.org/docs_2005/090105L.shtml

http://news.mongabay.com/2005/0831-new_orleans_wetlands.html

Discuss the ensuing impact that the Katrina crisis will have on the affected region:

<http://www.voanews.com/english/2005-09-04-voa16.cfm>

<http://www.safecosmetics.org/newsroom/katrina.cfm>

<http://www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/hurricanes/environmental.asp>



What Does Global Warming Have to do with This? Hurricane Katrina reignited the debate over global warming. The Bush Administration has repeatedly downplayed the potential affects that scientists have been warning of for years, but there are significant links between theories of global warming and storms like Katrina.

<http://www.time.com/time/nation/article/0,8599,1099102,00.html>

http://www.boston.com/news/globe/editorial_opinion/oped/articles/2005/08/30/katrinass_real_name/

http://www.usatoday.com/tech/science/2005-09-06-katrina-cause_x.htm

<http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,168247,00.html>

US Oil Dependency: Katrina's impact was also felt in the pockets of Americans all over the country due to rising transportation costs resulting from rising oil prices. Americans must begin to seriously question the country's reliance on oil as an energy source and increase efforts for developing and researching alternatives to oil.

http://www.livescience.com/technology/ap_050826_wave_energy.html

<http://english.chosun.com/w21data/html/news/200509/200509060008.html>

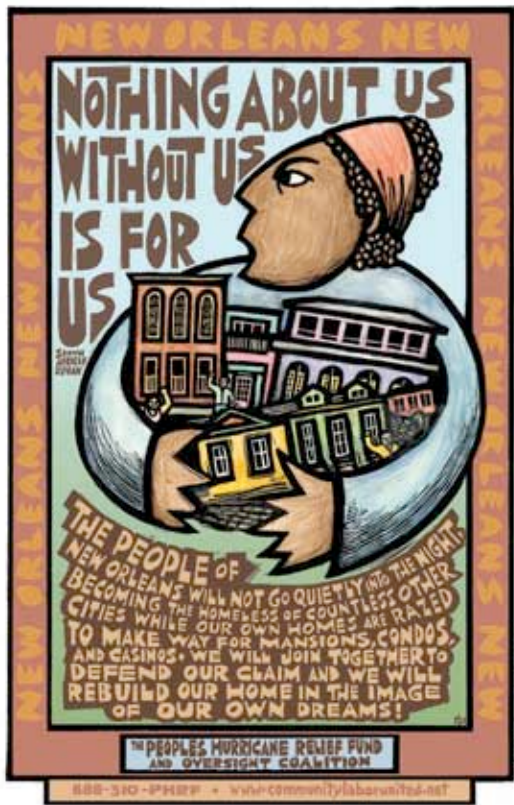
http://www.ezilon.com/information/article_8642.shtml

Rebuilding the Environment: Americans are familiar with the physical and social devastation wrought by Hurricane Katrina. They may be less familiar with the possible long-lasting environment damage left in its wake. Katrina triggered 575 petroleum and hazardous chemical spills. According to the U.S. Coast Guard the ten biggest Katrina-related oil spills amounted to about 8 million gallons. In addition, toxicologists and public health experts worry that the result of some clean-up efforts will spill toxic wastes into the Gulf of Mexico — possibly causing grave damage to marine and animal life and the coastal wetlands.

<http://www.pbs.org/now/science/katrinaenviro.html>

H. Recovery and Rebuilding

Poster at <http://www.northlandposter.com>



Local and Regional Overviews: The intersections of power and oppression are becoming more readily apparent when we bring our attention to the rebuilding of the Gulf Coast areas that were affected by Hurricane Katrina. There are different websites providing important information that gives a broad description of the situation that can serve as a base for deeper analyses.

For general coverage and information on the rebuilding process in New Orleans you can look at CNN.com. The website provides a current map describing the restoration of utilities to different areas, according to zip code. It can be useful to look closely at the racial and economic demographics that are presented when looking at a specific area.

<http://www.cnn.com/SPECIALS/2005/katrina/rebuilding/>.

Louisiana Public Television's website also provides a broad overview with lesson plans for teachers and students.

<http://www.pbs.org/newshour/local/gulfcoast/index.html>

“Official” Government Responses: Become familiar with the different proposals, bills, and policies being generated by local, state and national government bodies. Before exploring some of the critiques of these proposals, look closely at these policies and develop your own critiques. Whose voices are silenced by these

proposals? Whose voices are amplified? Is the federal government providing the levels of structural and fiscal support that George Bush said it would? Will a “New” New Orleans look like the New Orleans of old? If not, what does the government think it should look like?

New Orleans: <http://www.nola.com/news/t-p/frontpage/index.ssf?/base/news-4/113238540235800.xml>

Louisiana: <http://southernstudies.org/facingsouth/2005/11/louisiana-rebuilding-plan-unveiled.asp>

Mississippi: <http://www.mississippirenewal.com/>

Federal information: <http://www.dhs.gov/interweb/assetlibrary/katrina.htm>.

Finally, it is important to question the George Bush's appointment of Don Powell, former FDIC chairman, to lead the federal government Rebuilding Effort.

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2005/11/20051101-6.html>

Questions about “Official” Rebuilding? Just as there were questions and concerns about all levels of government in the immediate aftermath of the hurricane, so too are there questions during the current rebuilding phase. It has already been shown that billions of dollars will be required to rebuild the area. Are the funds being provided in a way that will infuse a just and inclusive rebuilding process? How well is the government doing in this case? Are we listening to the right people? Are private corporations defining the fate of the Gulf Coast? What can the future of schools tell us about the future directions of the rebuilding process?

In *Gentrifying Disaster*, Mike Davis contemplates the dangers of renewal that is led by the government and private corporations. What do terms like “urban renewal” or “gentrification” mean in this situation?

<http://www.zmag.org/content/showarticle.cfm?SectionID=72&ItemID=8992>

Griff Witte of the Washington Post wonders where the necessary funds will be coming from in his article called: *Costliest Part of Gulf Rebuilding Yet to Come Who Will Foot the Bill Is Still Unclear*
http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/11/20/AR2005112001225.html?nav=rss_technology/techpolicy.

What lobbyists are shaping this discussion on Capitol Hill? *Lobbyists Advise Katrina Relief:*
http://cluonline.live.radicaldesigns.org/?page_id=44

Nina J. Easton of the Boston Globes indicates that government action has not been making the grade: *Katrina aid falls short of promises: Antipoverty Funding Loses Momentum*
http://www.boston.com/news/nation/washington/articles/2005/11/27/katrina_aid_falls_short_of_promises/.

Racial Discrimination: Housing discrimination is not a new obstacle facing Black communities, but post-Katrina America is an especially discriminatory environment for many Black families seeking homes away from home.
<http://newreconstruction.civilrights.org/details.cfm?id=41609>

Selective Redevelopment: The current multi-billion dollar plan to rebuild New Orleans calls for a much smaller city and the poorest neighborhoods are the ones that are losing out. Some neighborhoods are not cleared for redevelopment and many New Orleans residents are being discouraged from returning. Is this an attempt at sound city planning, or classist and racist maneuvering by politicians and real estate developers?
<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/10841718/site/newsweek/>



Immigrant Labor: Private companies already working in a variety of ways in the rebuilding and clean up processes see low-wage immigrant communities as immediate sources of labor. With the help of *Washington Post* writer Darryl Fears, consider how companies rely on immigrants, and particularly Latinos, for cheap labor.
<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/11/03/AR2005110302066.html>

For a more “on the ground look” see *Immigrants Rebuilding Gulf Coast Suffer ‘Third World’ Conditions* by Kari Lydersen: <http://newstandardnews.net/content/index.cfm/items/2559>

For Us By Us: There are communities and organizations working to challenge how the government and private corporations wish to re-imagine the Gulf Coast. Look for articles that highlight grassroots action and perspectives that support a rebuilding for and by the people. An extensive list is provided at the end of this resource guide. The People's Hurricane Relief Fund & Oversight Coalition provides a number of articles on the ongoing struggle to protect the voice of the people in rebuilding.

<http://cluonline.live.radicaldesigns.org/>

Dreaming A New New Orleans, Version I, an article by Alan Atkinson provides one potential vision for New Orleans. Not all individuals will agree with this vision, but it can encourage us to develop our own visions. It provides elements that counter the dominant discourse around what rebuilding and renewal of a city should look like.

<http://www.worldchanging.com/archives/003425.html>

Jordan Flaherty reminisces and points out the way changes may take place in *Changing New Orleans*:

<http://neworleans.indymedia.org/news/2005/11/6211.php>

Examine *Battered by Katrina, Gulf Coast Workers Stand Up* or *Katrina's Displaced Move to Defend New Orleans from Elite Visionaries* to highlight some of the ways grassroots movements seek to create their own vision for the city.

<http://www.pww.org/article/articleview/8119/1/295>

<http://newstandardnews.net/content/index.cfm/items/2450>

Higher Education: What role should universities have in rebuilding the area? Check out how the government and universities are working together. Does this type of work provide what is needed for local communities? What is the role of academics in the rebuilding process?

<http://www.hud.gov/content/releases/pr05-153.cfm>

The Chronicle of Higher Education has links to all of *The Chronicle's* coverage of Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, and Wilma and their effects on college and university campuses in Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas.

<http://chronicle.com/indepth/katrina/>

Public Education in New Orleans: Many of New Orleans public school students relocated with their families to cities across the United States. As the city is rebuilt, community members must consider how to reestablish public school institutions that will serve returning residents.

Examine Senate Bill 1683 designed to provide relief to the children of New Orleans.

<http://www.govtrack.us/congress/bill.xpd?bill=s109-1683>

Check out *Empty Schools Reflect Slow Pace of New Orleans Recovery* by Manuel Roig-Franzia.

http://www.boston.com/news/nation/articles/2005/11/27/empty_schools_reflect_slow_pace_of_new_orleans_recovery/

Rethinking schools addresses the situation and what teachers should be thinking about:

http://www.rethinkingschools.org/archive/20_01/katr201.shtml

http://www.rethinkingschools.org/archive/20_01/disa201.shtml

I. Personal Narratives

Primary Sources: Hurricane Katrina uprooted hundreds of thousands of people. The first-responders were the media. Then the government jumped in to put their spin on how the response was handled. Now we hear from the victims themselves in their own words. Examine the use of primary documents (i.e., oral accounts, personal narratives, and memoirs) to piece together a historical account that comes directly from the voices of various victims versus those of less personal documents from reporters, FEMA, or other government agencies.

“Honoring Loved Ones Lost to Katrina,” *NPR*: <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=4861300>

“Teen Life Left Adrift after Katrina,” *NPR*: <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=5024994>

Survivor Stories: First hand accounts of people trapped in the city.

<http://citypages.com/databank/26/1294/article13694.asp>



by **slight clutter** Miltralyn Issac (21) tells a Fox reporter about her harrowing Hurricane Katrina experience. Miltralyn does not know if her mother, Carolyn Harris (43), and her daughter, Rancee Cumlin (3), are okay.

Displacing our Teens—A Cultural Exchange Program: This NPR story gives credence to the voices of some of the younger victims, teenagers, but fails to acknowledge the cultural impact the displacement has had on the New Orleans students and their “host” counterparts in their new surroundings. From a racial, socio-economic, and regional stance, it is important to question the effects of the forced “cultural exchange” program in the aftermath of Katrina.

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=5024994>

How is History Made? Being There: Use personal narratives, particularly in written form (or blogs), to conjure keen images of the aftermath of Katrina. These observations can be used to evaluate the importance of first-hand accounts in history and in reporting, including the power of sensory details as a writing tool. These first-hand accounts can be compared to reports and other third-person accounts in an effort to assess the validity of various types of reporting in history.

http://katrina05.blogspot.com/2005_11_20_katrina05_archive.html

Reporting Back: Some people may feel that this happened far away, and there is nothing that they can do to help the people affected. However, many people have traveled to New Orleans to help and organize with people in the area. John Kim, a New York activist, shares his experiences of working with grassroots organizations over Thanksgiving.

<http://www.hiphopliveshere.com/blog/?p=68>

The Neighborhood Story Project: is a community documentary program in New Orleans, Louisiana. Based out of John McDonogh Senior High, it teaches high school students how to write books about their neighborhoods. Through creative non-fiction, photography, and in-depth interviews, they then create detailed portraits of their communities. In June of 2005, they published five books that looked at the city from different vantage points. These books were celebrated with block parties in the neighborhoods and were the second best selling books at independent bookstores in New Orleans before Hurricane Katrina. In the aftermath of the destruction, they are in the process of re-envisioning their work and their city.

<http://www.neighborhoodstoryproject.org/index.html>

Grassroots, Progressive Organizations Working on Rebuilding

The following list of grassroots organizations are all working to provide justice to the victims of Katrina. Students working on social action projects can contact the following organizations to link their projects with ongoing, on-the-ground work. Unlike groups such as the Red Cross, these are not “charitable” groups, rather they are working for social justice in affected communities.



by *ioerror*

Common Ground Collective formed in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, to provide immediate aid and long-term solidarity along the Gulf Coast. It is a local, community-run organization offering mutual aid and support to New Orleans communities that have been historically neglected and underserved. Common Ground's teams of volunteers include: medical and health providers, aid workers, community organizers, legal representatives and people from all over with broad skills from all walks of life.

<http://www.commongroundrelief.org/>

Critical Resistance seeks to build an international movement to end the Prison Industrial Complex by challenging the belief that caging and controlling people makes us safe. A national organization, they have worked actively in the New Orleans area for many years. They are currently working on a campaign calling for amnesty for all survivors of Hurricane Katrina.

<http://www.criticalresistance.org/>

Four Directions Relief Project was started in early October in recognition that the Native American communities of storm ravaged southern Louisiana remained under-served and in urgent need of relief efforts. Despite the immense pride and independence of these communities, Katrina and Rita created an intense burden on the people, and storm assistance was requested.

<http://www.intuitivepath.org/relief.html>

INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence in New Orleans have been centrally involved in establishing and supporting the Women's Health Center project of the People's Hurricane Relief Fund (www.communitylaborunited.net). They are also building toward the creation of a Women of Color Organizing and Resource Center, which will serve as a hub for organizing among low-income women of color for meaningful participation in the reconstruction of New Orleans, the rights of workers - both immigrant and non-immigrant - who are the backbone of reconstruction efforts, health, safety & housing rights for women of color returning to New Orleans, and community-based responses to violence and approaches to safety.

<http://www.incite-national.org/issues/katrinaaction.html>

Justice for New Orleans is a website and service of the [Loyola Law Clinic](#). Their contributors are citizens of New Orleans interested in ensuring justice for all New Orleans in this re-building period. This is a great resource for articles and video links.

http://www.justiceforneworleans.org/index.php?&MMN_position=1:1

Louisiana Environmental Action Network (LEAN) was founded to help Louisiana citizens change the balance of power and challenge the insanity of continued economic and ecological suicide as practiced Louisiana-style. By empowering more than one hundred grassroots, community organizations, and countless individuals, LEAN has already helped in gaining a tremendous foothold in the war to make Louisiana's communities safer, healthier places to live. LEAN's expanded efforts will allow the progress already made to continue.

<http://www.leanweb.org/index.html>

New Orleans Indymedia is the online component and main focus of the New Orleans Independent Media Center, or NOLA IMC. The NOLA IMC is an entirely volunteer-run collective of individuals interested in helping present unfiltered news and information by and for Louisianans, particularly the greater New Orleans community and those who are typically under-represented in media production and content.

<http://nola.indymedia.org/>

New Opportunity for Action and Hope Coalition was formed by Louisiana-based labor, community and civil rights organizations seeking to ensure that the reconstruction of the Gulf Coast region is completed in a way that maximizes its benefits and opportunities to working families displaced.

<http://www.noahcoalition.org/>

New Orleans Housing Emergency Action Team New Orleans Housing Emergency Action Team is a newly formed alliance of Pre-Katrina groups, new groups and individuals dedicated to resisting the mass evictions of poor and working class people in New Orleans and fighting the illegal dismantling of public housing. It will mobilize to aid fellow residents whose housing is being threatened.

<http://www.no-heat.org/>

New Orleans Legal Action Workers New Orleans Legal Action Workers (N.O. L.A.W.) is a grassroots legal collective formed immediately after the hurricanes to combat police violence and oppression and address the legal needs of New Orleans citizens. The public beating of Robert Davis brought to light a deeper and more widespread problem of police brutality and crooked courts in New Orleans. N.O. L.A.W. is committed to the belief that everyone is entitled to legal justice. It is resisting the unjust actions of law enforcement and the courts through education, direct action, and outreach.

<http://www.no-law.org/>

People's Hurricane Relief Fund (PHRF) is a New Orleans-based coalition working to build a People's movement – a movement of grassroots persons disproportionately impacted by Hurricane Katrina and the dehumanizing treatment they received from local, state, and federal officials.

http://cluonline.live.radicaldesigns.org/?page_id=2, www.peopleshurricane.org (under construction)

The Praxis Project is a national, nonprofit organization that builds partnerships with local groups to influence policymaking to address the underlying, systemic causes of community problems. Committed to closing the health gap facing communities of color, it forges alliances for building healthy communities.

<http://www.thepraxisproject.org/about/who.html>

Rainbow Emergency Management Assembly (REMA) is a self-sufficient camp with food, medical, and security. They have a medical clinic and free food kitchen and is up and running in Washington Square Playground, the only one set up in the heart of the city.

<http://www.welcomehome.org/rema/>

Rebuilding Louisiana Coalition (RLC) is a coalition devoted to development in accordance with the values of urban and environmental sustainability, social equity, and cultural respect and preservation. The Rebuilding Louisiana Coalition came together first as a forum for exchanging ideas and is now striving to influence decision-making and public policy according to broad values outlined below. It seeks to bring like-minded groups together under one roof to exchange ideas, network, coordinate efforts and gain access to the decision-making process.

<http://rebuildinglouisianacoalition.org/>

Up From Democracy is coalition of progressive grassroots organization working to coordinate an engaged response to the horrific aftermath of Hurricane Katrina! Gulf Coast residents withstood that brutal storm only to suffer the wrath of indifference and ineptitude by the Bush administration. For more information about other grassroots groups led by people of color and dedicated to reconstructing the region to restore the well-being of low-income communities of color, not pander to profit-driven designs of the corporate elite.

<http://www.upfordemocracy.org/>

Grassroots, Progressive Organizations Accepting Donations

Links to comprehensive lists of progressive organizations

Exhaustive list online based on the following principles- **THIS LIST IS HARD TO BEAT**

- ❑ Organizing at the grassroots level in New Orleans, Biloxi, Houston and other affected areas
- ❑ Providing immediate disaster relief to poor people and people of color
- ❑ Directed by, or accountable to, poor people and people of color
- ❑ Fostering democratic inclusion of poor people and people of color in the rebuilding process

<http://katrina.mayfirst.org/>

List of organizations based in the Black community compiled by Kevin Powell, hip hop journalist

<http://www.wbai.org/index.php?option=content&task=view&id=6735&Itemid=0>

List of organizations compiled by AlterNet, an alternative media site <http://alternet.org/story/24938/>

Organizations Accepting Donations

American Friends Service Committee:

<https://www.donatefast.com/donate/index.cfm?id=afcrisis>

The People's Institute For Survival and Beyond:

<http://www.pisab.org/>

NAACP: <http://store.yahoo.com/naacp-donate1/>

NOW: <http://www.now.org/issues/violence/090205katrina.html>



Islamic Circle: <https://icnany.org/hosting/hostingform.php>

Displaced New Orleanians Initiate People's Hurricane Fund and Calls for Action:
<http://www.wbai.org/index.php?option=content&task=view&id=6746&Itemid=0>

ACORN Hurricane Recovery and Rebuilding Fund:
http://acorn.org/index.php?id=4174&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=18289&tx_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=2716&cHash=36915a63fc

Rainbow World Fund: <http://www.wbai.org/index.php?option=content&task=view&id=6733&Itemid=0>

National Youth Advocacy Coalition: http://www.nyacyouth.org/nyac/katrina_info.html

Disaster Relief information about People with Disabilities <http://www.katrinadisability.info/>

The New Orleans Network: <http://www.neworleansnetwork.org/>

Other Katrina Related Resources for Teachers

List of links: <http://www.paservicelearning.org/Resources/katrina.htm>
<http://www3.essdack.org/socialstudies/katrina.htm>

Media Literacy: <http://www.amlainfo.org/home/resources/hurricane-media-literacy>

Reviews: <http://www.tolerance.org/teach/current/event.jsp?cid=626>

Social Science Perspective: <http://understandingkatrina.ssrc.org/>

Student friendly sites <http://www.kidsclick.org/katrina.html>

Psychological Responses: <http://www.nasponline.org/NEAT/katrina.html>

Service Learning: http://servicelearning.org/nslc/hurricane_katrina/index.php

Teacher Guide for PBS Film: <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/teach/storm/>

Natural Disasters Lesson Plans: <http://web.extension.uiuc.edu/disaster/teacher/csndactx.html>



NYCoRE would like to thank our allies and supporters for assisting in the creation of this resource guide. To learn more about NYCoRE, visit our website at <http://www.nycore.org>. To comment on the guide or connect with other educators using the resources, participate in our Katrina blog at <http://nycore-katrina.blogspot.com/>