

ePals Project: **Disaster Trackers**

Instructional Plan

Instructional Plan (step-by-step directions):

Match students one-to-one to prepare for the email exchange!

Week 1 – Tracking Natural Disasters

1. As a whole class, complete a KWL about natural disasters.
What disaster types do students already know about?
What questions do they have about Natural Disasters?
2. Use informational texts to begin finding answers to students questions on the KWL chart.
3. Do a disaster check 2-3 times this week– visiting websites with live natural disaster information, and keep a list of all the disaster types occurring around the world. (See the resources tab for live disaster maps.) Add to your class list throughout the week as new disasters occur. If there is a major disaster occurring, follow the process of the destruction, aftermath and aid using a reliable news websites.

Email #1 Student Directions: Introduce yourself and share what you've learned about natural disasters that are currently happening around the world. What were you surprised to find out? If you have experienced a natural disaster in your life, share your story!

Week 2 - Disaster Experts

1. Invite kids to become an expert on one the major disaster types (such as volcanoes, earthquakes, tsunamis, hurricanes, wildfires, tornadoes). Group kids in small groups according to their choice. Give each group the disaster research handout. This week, small groups work together to answer the questions on their handout, using informational texts and online resources. Encourage students to find and share additional resources on their disaster type (newspaper, internet or magazine articles).

Common Core Connections

See how these key elements purposefully link to the standards.

W8: As students view informational websites, they are addressing W8 which requires the collection of information from digital sources.

R7: Using live disaster maps requires that students collect information from illustrations and words to understand the text, meeting R7

W6: Participating in an email exchange is using technology to produce writing and communicate with others. meeting W6.

W7: Requiring students to research a particular topic meets W7, conducting short research projects.

R1: To complete their digital research handout, students have to read closely and refer to their references. meeting R1.

2. Continue to daily disaster checks (as a whole class) using the internet live disaster maps.

Email #2 Student Directions: Respond to email #1. Share information about the disaster type you have chosen to research. Share what you've learned so far. Tell your opinion on the best resource you've used to find out about your disaster type.

W2: Writing to share information about disasters meets W2, Informational Writing.

Week 3 - Protect and Prepare

1. At this point, students know that natural disasters can have disastrous consequences. So, how do people protect themselves and prepare? Have students read informational texts about the natural disaster preparation, from the ePals Science Center articles or other resources (listed on the resources tab).
2. For homework, ask kids to write a disaster plan with their families.

W8: Gathering information from print and digital sources about protection and preparation meets W8.

Email #3 Student Directions: Respond to email #2. Share what you've learned about how people protect and prepare for natural disasters. Tell things your community, school or family have done to be prepared for an emergency disaster.

Week 4 – Culminating Project

Each student writes an informational item (such as a magazine article, pamphlet,) to teach other kids about the disaster type they researched. Use the ePals culminating project rubric to set expectations for the project.

W2 and W10: Writing an informational item meets W2 (informational writing) and W10 (writing for different purposes, tasks and audiences).

Email #4 Student Directions: Respond to email #3. Thank your ePal for writing. Share your culminating project.