

Lesson Plan

Drought Details

Book: *East African Drought of 2011*

Series: 21st Century Disasters

Level: Beacon

Objective

To help students identify and summarize the main ideas in a short chapter about droughts.

Supplies

- Several copies of the *East African Drought of 2011* book
- Paper and pencils

Before the Activity

Divide students into four groups. Give each group a pencil, a piece of paper, and a copy of the *East African Drought of 2011* book.

Activity

East African Drought of 2011 describes a major event that affected the Horn of Africa. The book is made up of four chapters and a special feature. Assign each group one of the four chapters:

- Chapter 1: Months Without Rain
- Chapter 2: Understanding Droughts
- Chapter 3: Survivor Stories
- Chapter 4: After the Drought

The students in a group should read the assigned chapter together. They should look for the main ideas this chapter explains about droughts. Students can discuss these ideas in their groups, identifying the five ideas that seem most important. They should write a paragraph that lists these ideas on their group's paper.

Evaluation

Collect each group's paper at the end of class. Use the attached answer key to give each group up to 5 points.

Standards

This lesson may be used to address the Common Core State Standards' reading standards for informational texts, grade 4 (RI 4.2).

Answer Key

Answers for each chapter will vary. Use the following sample paragraphs to give readers 1 point for each main idea their paragraph addresses, for a total of 5 points.

Chapter 1: Months Without Rain

A drought is a long time with little or no rain. A major drought hit the Horn of Africa, an area on Africa's eastern coast, in 2011. Many people in this area farm or raise animals. When the region got much less rain than usual in 2010, their crops and animals died. Millions of people ran out of food and water.

Chapter 2: Understanding Droughts

A drought is when an area gets less rain than usual. East Africa usually gets two rainy seasons, known as the long rains and the short rains, each year. But in 2010, much less rain fell than usual. The ground dried up, causing animals and crops to die. Weather patterns, such as La Niña, can also cause droughts.

Chapter 3: Survivor Stories

A drought makes the ground very dry. Plants cannot grow, and people run out of food and water. Sometimes farmers dig a well to bring water to their crops. Other farmers use a system known as drip irrigation, which helps them use less water. Even so, many people in East Africa had to leave their homes.

Chapter 4: After the Drought

During the drought, millions of people ran out of food and water. They had to leave their homes. Huge numbers of people traveled to refugee camps, where they hoped to find food, water, and medicine. Scientists try to predict droughts so they can warn people. They study rainfall and weather patterns.