



Earthquake 1

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Teacher Orientation



Activity Guides

Expedition 7: Earthquake!

 *Students research the 1906 earthquake in San Francisco and the 1923 earthquake in Tokyo and prepare a "You Are There" news report.*

Rationale

Both San Francisco and Tokyo share a history of earthquakes. Two of the most devastating—the 1906 in San Francisco and the 1923 in Tokyo—provide a dramatic backdrop for historical discovery. In this activity, students access a rich collection of online materials (photographs, texts, eyewitness accounts, scientific analysis) to prepare a mock television news broadcast. The activity challenges students to work in collaborative groups and synthesize archival resources into a coherent narrative.

Materials

- [Earthquake! team guidelines](#)

Procedure

1. Introduce the activity and divide the class into small teams of 4 to 5 students. Assign the 1906 San Francisco earthquake to half the teams and the 1923 Tokyo (Great Kanto) earthquake to the remainder of the teams.
2. Provide adequate time for the teams to access Virtual Expeditions and conduct online and offline research. At the beginning of a groupwork project, it is common for students to ask questions about procedures. Encourage students to review the guidelines for the activity and see if they can discover answers to their questions.
3. After the groups have completed their research, provide time for the teams to prepare their presentations. Encourage students to script their broadcast and prepare supporting visuals (news logo, maps, charts). Set high expectations for the presentations. If necessary, ask key questions of groups to support their process.

4. Provide 15-30 minutes for each team to present its news broadcast. Ask the students in the audience to take notes and provide peer evaluation.

5. After all the presentations have been made, facilitate a class debriefing.

- What did you learn about the historical event you researched and reported on?
- What did you learn about the process of preparing a news story?
- What recent earthquakes compare to the destruction caused by the 1906 and 1923 quakes?
- How can we compare and contrast the 1906 and 1923 earthquakes? What are the primary similarities? The primary differences?

Assessment Guidelines

In assessing student presentations, use the following guidelines. Are students able to:

- answer the fundamental questions informing a journalist's story: Who, What, When, Why, and How?
- construct a coherent narrative that tells the story of the earthquake and illuminates the human drama of the event?
- bring history alive by drawing on source documents and photographs to re-enact the event?
- provide scientific perspective on the cause and dynamics of the earthquake?
- demonstrate the ability of their groups to work together as an effective team?

You may also want to have each student complete a [Brag Sheet](#) (self-assessment) in which they list their own contributions to the group and comment on their group members' performances.

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