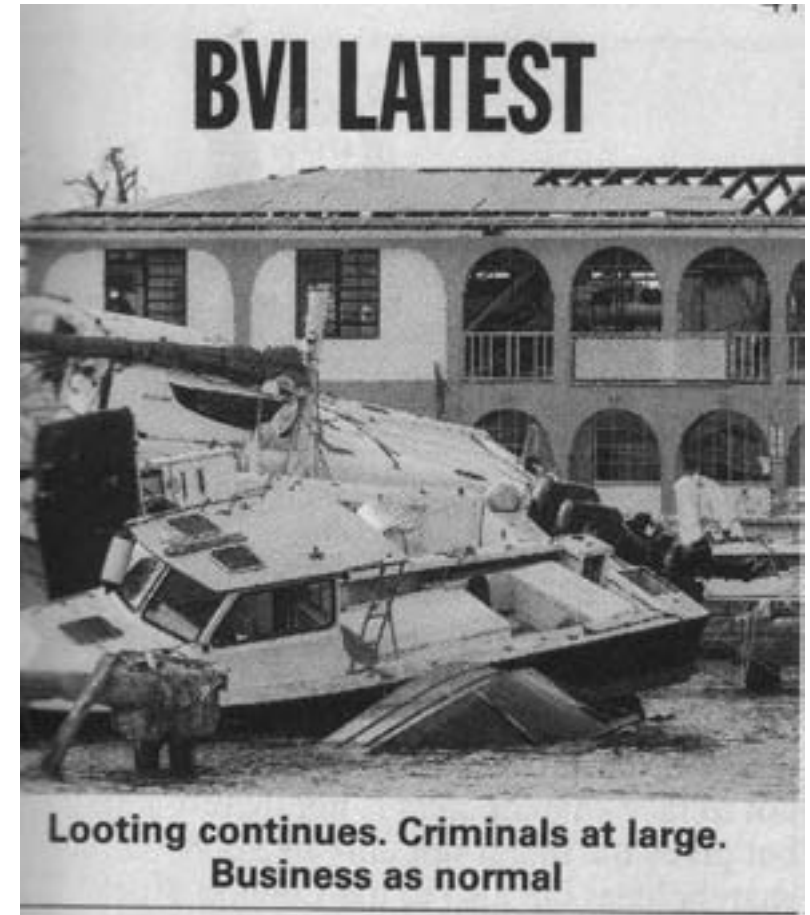


Hurricane Irma

Three different texts on effects of the hurricane in the British Virgin Islands



<http://www.collaborativelearning.org/hurricaneirma.pdf>



Island Paradise?
Disaster Magnet?
UK Embarrassment?

Hurricane Irma

Here is a new information gap activity which is currently sitting in Work in Progress.

Last updated 7th December 2017

This activity is unfinished. We hope you can try it out. We'd welcome comments and additions. We are still deciding on the questions to ask. You could of course try it out with your students and ask them to devise questions which need to range from the factual to the inferential and thence the the provocative and the unanswerable.

Webaddress: www.collaborativelearning.org/hurricaneirma.pdf

COLLABORATIVE LEARNING PROJECT

Project Director: Stuart Scott

Supporting a cooperative network of teaching professionals throughout the European Union to develop and disseminate accessible teaching materials in all subject areas and for all ages.

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BRIEF SUMMARY OF BASIC PRINCIPLES BEHIND OUR TEACHING ACTIVITIES:

The project is a teacher network, and a non-profit making educational trust. Our main aim is to develop and disseminate classroom tested examples of effective group strategies across all phases and subjects. We hope they will inspire you to use similar strategies in other topics and curriculum areas. We run teacher workshops, swapshops and conferences throughout the European Union. The project publishes a catalogue of activities plus lists in selected subject areas, and a newsletter available by post or internet: "PAPERCLIP".

*These activities were influenced by current thinking about the role of language in learning. They are designed to help children learn through talk and active learning in small groups. They work best in mixed classes where children in need of language or learning support are integrated. They are well suited for the development of speaking and listening. They provide teachers opportunities for assessment of speaking and listening and other formative assessment.

*They support differentiation by placing a high value on what children can offer to each other on a particular topic, and also give children the chance to respect each other's views and formulate shared opinions which they can disseminate to peers. By helping them to take ideas and abstract concepts, discuss, paraphrase and move them about physically, they help to develop thinking skills.

*They give children the opportunity to participate in their own words and language in their own time without pressure. Many activities can be tried out in mother tongue and afterwards in English. A growing number of activities are available in more than one language, not translated, but mixed, so that you may need more than one language to complete the activity.

*They encourage study skills in context, and should therefore be used with a range of appropriate information books which are preferably within reach in the classroom.

*They are generally adaptable over a wide age range because children can bring their own knowledge to an activity and refer to books at an appropriate level. The activities work like catalysts.

*All project activities were planned and developed by teachers working together, and the main reason they are disseminated is to encourage teachers to work effectively with each other inside and outside the classroom. They have made it possible for mainstream and language and learning support teachers to share an equal role in curriculum delivery. They should be adapted to local conditions. In order to help us keep pace with curriculum changes, please send any new or revised activities back to the project, so that we can add them to our lists of materials.

Collaborative Reading Materials with an information gap.

There are three different texts with a sample common question sheet with a small space for notes. The principle here is that readers will be unable to complete the questions by simply using the information in their version, but will have to collaborate with other readers, asking questions and eliciting information, possibly arguing and negotiating. There is also an opportunity to draw on their own previous knowledge or seek out other information.

We have outlined the following procedure, but you can reorganise things in a variety of ways to suit your class and teaching methods. You can possibly arrange to pair slower readers with faster ones etc. You could start with threes rather than pairs etc.

The class might work first in pairs. Partners have copies of the same text and everyone has their own question sheet. Five pairs have Sheet A, five Sheet B etc. I hand out coloured cards to organise pair work, and if you want or select pairs you can always deal the cards from the bottom of the pack. My aim is to ensure that everyone works with everyone else at some point. Pairs can read the text silently first, and then to each other, and then work together to answer as many questions as they can. They need to know that they may not have answers to all the questions at this stage. For this topic many of the answers will require some research on the net.

The pairs then split up and move into different colour groups of six where two participants have Sheet A, two Sheet B etc. They can then go on to complete the questions by interrogating each other. At this stage you might prefer to organise pupils in threes rather than sixes.

When pupils have completed the task they are in a good position to select new different questions for a new question grid (we have provided a template for this) or prepare a presentation for another class.

You might well want to produce your own version of the question sheet. If you are thinking about producing your own information gaps this is how we do it. We find a suitable whole single text containing the information we wish to teach. We formulate a series of questions for the text. Produce three or four texts where the factual and inferential information is shared between them. Some overlapping of information is fine. If they work well, please send them to us for inclusion on the network.

Hurricane Irma Text A



On the left is a view of Branson's island which is called Necker Island.

On the right is a picture of Branson sitting in his cellar during Hurricane Irma.

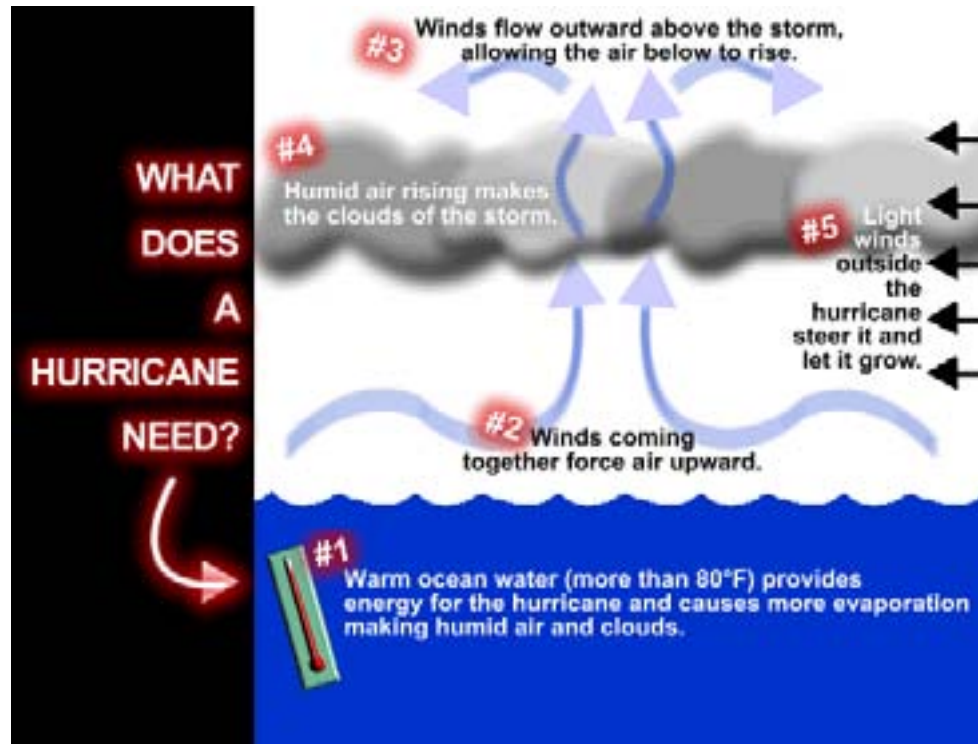


Richard Branson is an entrepreneur: someone who has ideas that earn him money. He started off making money from records. He went on to make money from airlines, trains, condoms and lots of other things. He has tried to break records for travelling in a hot air balloons. He wants to be the first to provide public space travel. He does not like formal dress and carries scissors to cut off people's ties. He lives on a small island in the Caribbean. People say he does this to avoid paying tax, but he says he lives there for health reasons.

During the recent hurricane in the British Virgin Islands, Branson sheltered in a concrete cellar in his house. The buildings on the his island and the other islands were badly damaged by high winds. These islands have links with the United Kingdom. The UK provides defence and help during natural disasters.

Hurricane Irma Text B

Tropical rainstorms are called hurricanes, typhoons or cyclones. The name depends on where they start. Atlantic storms are called hurricanes. Their name comes from the Taino word 'huracan'. The Taino were living on the Caribbean islands when the Spanish arrived there in the fifteenth century. They thought that the three gods of thunder, wind and flood came together to push down their houses.



Hurricanes form above the sea just off the west coast of Africa. They are like giant engines that use warm, moist air as fuel. The warm, moist air over the ocean rises upward from near the surface. Because this air moves up, there is less air left near the surface. Another way to say the same thing is that the warm air rises, causing an area of lower air pressure below. Air from surrounding areas with higher air pressure pushes in to the low pressure area. Then that "new" air becomes warm and moist and rises, too. As the warm air continues to rise, the surrounding air swirls in to take its place. As the warmed, moist air rises and cools off, the water in the air forms clouds. The whole system of clouds and wind spins faster and grows, fed by the ocean's heat and water evaporating from the surface.

Satellites are used to keep an eye on hurricanes so that they can be tracked and countries can find out in advance when they are coming. Cuba is ready for hurricanes and has safe places to go. Each hurricane is given a name. The hurricane season is between June and November. Hurricanes are becoming more frequent, probably because the sea is getting warmer.

Hurricane Irma Text C



The British Virgin Islands are an overseas territory of the United Kingdom. The British captured them from the Dutch in 1678. Britain imported slaves from west Africa and the islands produced fruit and sugar until the abolition of slavery. Nowadays the main industries are tourism and finance. In the 1970s the islands began to be a financial centre. Half their income now comes from helping people set up businesses. Last year 32,000 businesses were formed. Most businesses are designed to avoid tax in other countries. They are sometimes called shell companies because they hide what is inside. The islands keep the details of the businesses secret, but recently journalists have been revealing these secrets. They showed that criminals and dictators were hiding their money inside these shell companies.



The islands need help after the hurricane but they (like other British territories nearby) are too rich to qualify for aid. However, not everyone on the islands is rich: there is income inequality. The people who earn most money are not native islanders but bankers, lawyers and accountants with work permits who work in finance.

Richard Branson has asked the UK to provide help to rebuild the islands. Should the UK taxpayers provide aid? If they do, should the current arrangements remain the same? Should the islands be encouraged to develop income that is not likely to attract illegal activity? The British Virgin Islands are not alone. The Isle of Man and the Channel Islands are also attractive to people who want to avoid tax or hide their wealth.



Hurricane Irma - Question sheet with space for answers.

1.	2.	3.	4.
5.	6.	7.	8.
9.	10.	11.	12.

Hurricane Irma - Blank Question sheet with space for answers in note form.

1.	2.	3.	4.
5.	6.	7.	8.
9.	10.	11.	12.