



Be Disaster Safe 6–8

Disaster Cycle



Visit the American Red Cross Web site
at www.redcross.org/disaster/masters

LESSON PLAN 1

The Cycle

We are less confused and frightened about disasters when we learn that disasters are cyclical and that families can have a positive effect on the impact of the disaster.

Key Terms and Concepts

cycle	plan	respond
danger	prepare	responsible
disaster	ready	
mitigate	recover	

Purpose

To introduce the disaster cycle and define its cyclical stages

Objectives

The students will—

- Identify the cyclical stages of preparedness for a disaster through the use of an analogy.
- Compile a list of disasters in which they have been involved.
- Use the disaster cycle to improve the outcome of a disaster in which they were involved.
- Create a storyboard to illustrate the disaster cycle based on disasters found in the news. (Linking Across the Curriculum)
- Create storyboards to illustrate the disaster cycle for one of Aesop's fables; do the same for the second cycle in which mitigation improves the outcome.
- List ecological cycles and create and share illustrative examples. (Linking Across the Curriculum)
- Organize news stories of disasters using *The Disaster Cycle*; illustrate the next cycle for this disaster by writing a follow-up fictional news article. (Linking Across the Curriculum)
- Take home *The Disaster Cycle* to help their families begin to talk about disasters they have faced and ways to improve their reactions. (Home Connection)
- Name the terms in the language of disaster and undertake a media scavenger hunt to find and organize more vocabulary relating to real disasters.
- Use disaster vocabulary to create public service posters to help the community prepare for possible disasters.
- Create a Disaster Cycle Thesaurus. (Linking Across the Curriculum)



Be Disaster Safe 6-8

LESSON PLAN 1 The Cycle

Activities

“Cycles”

“Getting the Word Out”



Visit the American Red Cross Web site
at www.redcross.org/disaster/masters



Be Disaster Safe 6–8

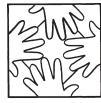
LESSON PLAN 1 The Cycle

Materials

- Chalkboard and chalk or chart paper and markers
- *The Disaster Cycle*, 1 copy per student for use in class, another for Home Connection
- Art supplies




Visit the American Red Cross Web site
at www.redcross.org/disaster/masters



"Cycles"

SET UP 10 minutes CONDUCT two 45-minute sessions

Language Arts: Vocabulary; Science: Health

1.  Write the word DISASTER on the chalkboard or poster paper. Ask the class: What different kinds of event or act come to mind when you hear the word "disaster"? Write students' responses on the board or paper. Next, invite students to share everyday disasters they have faced. Examples might include—a pop quiz or a lost ballgame for the state championship.
2. Now, write the following words on the chalkboard or large chart paper:
PREPARE
RESPOND
RECOVER
MITIGATE

Have students offer definitions for each of the words as they relate to a disaster. Then, work together to refine and illustrate the meanings of the terms by using them to analyze several of the disaster scenarios they described in Step 1.

The baseball game is used as an example. Possible answers follow.

First Cycle

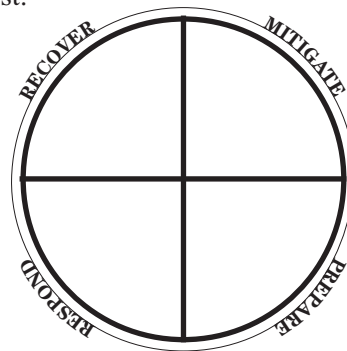
- **Prepare:** *to get ready or to equip in advance for a particular event or for some use.*
I practiced hitting but forgot to practice fielding the baseball!
 - **Respond:** *to react, to show a response or a reaction to something.*
During the game, I batted .350, but I made several fielding errors.
 - **Recover:** *to regain or to make up for.*
I know I can avoid those errors again. My coach thinks I'm a good, all-around player.
 - **Mitigate:** *to take action to lessen or to try to lessen the seriousness or extent of an event.*
I have a plan: Every chance I had, I worked with my coach and my best friend all week on both hitting and on fielding the ball.
3. Write "Disaster Cycle" on the chalkboard. Discuss the meaning of the word "cycle" by having students consider cycles they experience or participate in regularly, for example, the cycle of preparing, eating and cleaning up after dinner each evening. Discuss how change and repetition are part of every cycle.



Be Disaster Safe 6-8

LESSON PLAN 1 The Cycle

4. Now, share *The Disaster Cycle* with students. Have them organize within the cycle any one of the disasters listed earlier on the chalkboard. In class discussion, ask them to suggest the next cycle of events that might follow the first.



Following are the possible stages of the next cycle to “the lost baseball game.”

Next Cycle

- **Prepare:** My plan gave me confidence for the next game.
 - **Respond:** It was a tough game, but I never lost my cool. I batted .300 and made no errors.
 - **Recover:** I was better prepared for the baseball games, but I wanted my fielding and batting average to improve.
 - **Mitigate:** I modified my plan. I carved out practice time with my dad and a friend every day. I also watched some ball players at the local college. I know I’ll be even better prepared for the games to come.
5. In class, share some of the disaster cycles and discuss—How have mitigation and preparation made a difference in the effects of the “disastrous” baseball game?



Wrap-Up

Read the adapted Aesop’s fable “The Ant and the Grasshopper” to students.

The Ant and the Grasshopper

During the bright, sunlit days of summer, a grasshopper could be seen hopping about. He went about his days chirping and singing, filling the air with the music of his happiness. An ant toiled nearby carrying grain and corn and beans to his nest in preparation for the winter to come.

The grasshopper chided the ant on his working ways. The grasshopper invited the ant to quit his labor and come play and sing with him. After all, he pointed out, “All work and no play makes Jack the ant a dull bug indeed.”

The ant replied that winter was on its way and he and his nest mates needed to be ready for the dark, cold days when no food could be had in the fields. He would while away the hours of winter singing about the goodly stores of food he had gathered in the summer. He recommended the grasshopper to



Visit the American Red Cross Web site
at www.redcross.org/disaster/masters



Be Disaster Safe

6-8

LESSON PLAN 1

The Cycle

look to his own preparations for winter.

"I'm not worried about winter," the grasshopper stated. "There's plenty of food today and that's all that's really important. I'll let the winter take care of itself." The ant shrugged his shoulders and continued to gather food.

Soon winter arrived and the hungry, cold grasshopper visited the ant's warm nest searching for a handout. "Help me, please," he begged. "I'm starving now and you have so much food."

One ant took pity on the poor grasshopper and offered him a place by the fire and at the table if he would sing and play for them to entertain the long winter evenings. One day, that same ant confronted the grasshopper with a disaster cycle printout. He wanted to help the poor bug avoid problems in future winters.

What do you suppose they wrote for each step of the disaster cycle?

(Adapted from Aesop's Fables, An Online Collection of Selected Fables at <http://www.pacificnet.net/~johnr/aesop/aesopsel.html>)

Have students complete a disaster cycle for the grasshopper to help him survive future, potentially disastrous, winters. How did the grasshopper prepare for the coming winter? What was the response? Was there any recovery? What could be done to mitigate the disaster? Then, using markers or colored pencils, ask them to illustrate a second cycle as a storyboard, showing the mitigating effects of the first cycle on the grasshopper's way of life. Will he change his ways or fail to prepare?



In each storyboard, the actions for each step of the disaster cycle must answer these questions:

1. What can be done to prepare for the coming winter?
2. Who responds to the disaster and how do they respond?
3. What recovery is necessary and who is responsible for that recovery?
4. What mitigation is possible?
5. How will this preparation affect the next cycle of disaster?



Extension: Challenge students to create disaster cycle storyboards for other fables. A good place to find these online is "Aesop's Fables, An Online Collection of Selected Fables" at <http://www.pacificnet.net/~johnr/aesop/aesopsel.html>.

Extension: Have students look at one of the disaster cycles created in this activity. Discuss the responsibilities of the people involved at each point in the cycle. Who is responsible for preparation, response, recovery and mitigation?



Visit the American Red Cross Web site
at www.redcross.org/disaster/masters

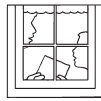


Be Disaster Safe 6-8

LESSON PLAN 1 The Cycle

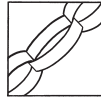


Visit the American Red Cross Web site
at www.redcross.org/disaster/masters



Home Connection

Send home a copy of *The Disaster Cycle*. Have students explain the cycles they illustrated on the activity sheets. Challenge families to think of other disasters they have encountered as a family and complete a disaster cycle for one of those disasters. At each point in the cycle, make sure they determine who is responsible for the actions or decisions they describe. As a class, discuss whether talking about safety and focusing on the disaster cycle can make a difference in being safe. Why or why not?



Linking Across the Curriculum

Science: Ecology; Language Arts: Media Literacy

For younger students: Students can find many cycles in the world of science. Have them discover and show cycles in nature, such as the transpiration cycle of trees: take in carbon dioxide, complete photosynthesis, expel oxygen.

For this activity you will need Internet resources or enough newspapers or news magazines for everyone in the class.

For older students: Have students research newspapers and news magazines to find stories of disasters. Briefly discuss the disaster stories they found. Using *The Disaster Cycle*, ask them to organize any one of the disasters in the news within the cycle. Then have them write an article to follow up on the one they read in which the next steps of the cycle are reported. Share these in a class reading or on a class bulletin board, along with the graphic of the Disaster Cycle.

Have teams work together to create the storyboard for a video game that illustrates and defines the steps in the disaster cycle. Their game must show all the possibilities the game will follow as well as the consequences of those possibilities.

For example: *If* the game player doesn't prepare well for the game's disaster, *then* the player might lose points and be shuttled back to the beginning of the game.



Be Disaster Safe 6–8

LESSON PLAN 1 The Cycle

Materials

- Chalkboard and chalk or chart paper and markers
- Internet resources or newspapers and magazines that cover recent or past disasters
- Large poster paper
- Large variety of art materials





Visit the American Red Cross Web site at www.redcross.org/disaster/masters

"Getting the Word Out"

SET UP 10 minutes CONDUCT two 45-minute sessions

Language Arts: Vocabulary, Media Literacy and Writing; Science: Health

-  Working together, have the class compile a list of terms related to disaster. (Answers will vary, but may include words that relate to preparedness and mitigation, disaster, response and recovery.) As a class, organize these words based on the disaster cycle on the chalkboard or chart paper.
-  Have students work in small groups, undertaking a media scavenger hunt to discover more words used in reporting a disaster and its aftermath. Have them organize these terms according to the disaster cycle.
- Have student teams compile a list of all the words the class found and list them on chart paper or the chalkboard under the four phases of the disaster cycle.



Wrap-Up

Working in small groups, have students design posters that will help the community at large learn about the disaster cycle and its importance to safety, using as many of the words and concepts found in the class scavenger hunt as possible.



Posters must clearly illustrate the disaster cycle, and utilize the vocabulary discovered on the class scavenger hunt. Look for attractiveness, clarity and creativity.



Linking Across the Curriculum

Language Arts: Vocabulary; Science: Health

Have students create a Disaster Cycle Thesaurus. If needed, describe and discuss what a thesaurus is and have students define the terms “synonyms” and “antonyms.” Have student teams categorize words according to the disaster cycle stages: prepare, respond, recover and mitigate. Have them continue to add new synonyms and antonyms as they find them. Have teams share their words and discuss how they are related.



The Disaster Cycle

Page 1 of 1

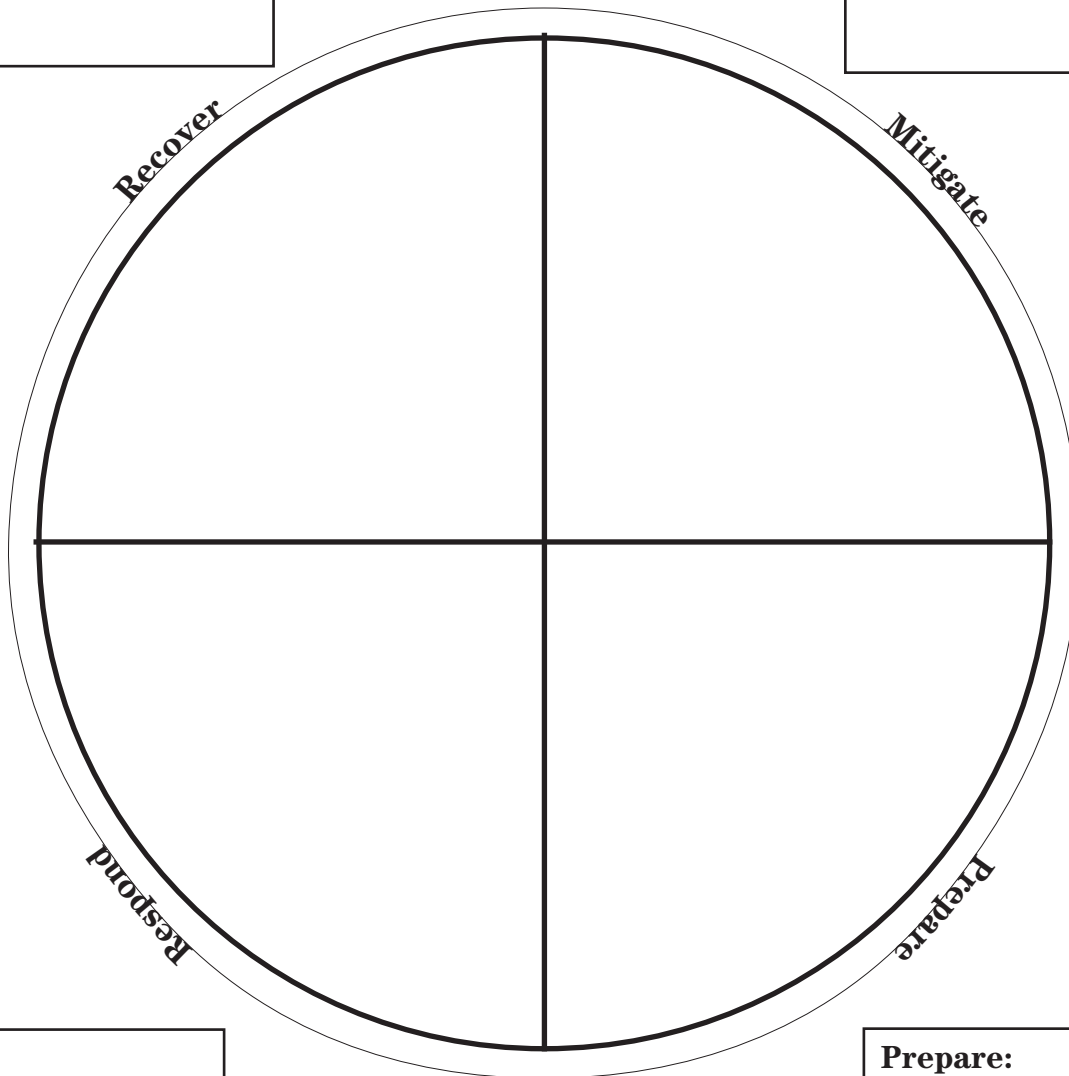
Name _____

Directions: Illustrate a disaster cycle using the graphic below. Describe the actions for each step of the cycle in the box and illustrate the step inside the circle.

The Disaster Cycle

Recover:

Mitigate:



Respond:

Prepare:

