

Key Concepts

Civic engagement, civic responsibility, the common good, and a “can-do” attitude

Skills Orientation

- Understanding what it means to be a citizen
- Developing empathy and shared sense of civic responsibility

Relevant Sections of the Film

Act I, Chapter 1, “Miss New Orleans”
 Act I, Chapter 4, “Day One”
 Act I, Chapter 5, “The Cajun Navy”
 Act II, Chapter 5, “General Honoré”
 Act II, Chapter 6, “An Ancient Memory”

Related Curriculum Standard

National Standards for Civics and Government (NSCG) Standard V, C2: Civic Responsibilities—“Students should be able to evaluate, take, and defend positions on issues regarding civic responsibilities of citizens in American constitutional democracy.”

Materials Used in the Lesson

Handout with “What Type of Citizen?” chart adapted from Westheimer and Kahne, to accompany Part F of the lesson.

Unfolding of the Lesson

- A. Group activity:** What does it mean to be a citizen? Write this question in the center of a piece of chart paper. Tell students to conduct their conversation in writing. That is, they will read and respond to one another’s comments without speaking for 5–10 minutes.
- B. Pair activity:** Consider various forms of disasters (e.g., heat wave, ice age, earthquake, tsunami, forest fires, etc.). Together, generate a list of actions you might do in the event of such a disaster.

- C.** Explain the classical meaning in American history and culture of a “can-do” attitude about challenges. Link this notion to the concept of “participatory citizenship.”
- D.** Categorize the types of actions that responsible, participatory, and justice-oriented citizens might take. Make a list (e.g., helping people evacuate, providing food, etc.).
- E.** Discuss students’ differing perspectives about what is or is not required of citizens. Allow for competing viewpoints. Do not attempt to create resolution of differences.
- F.** View the film clips and complete the chart in the handout for this lesson.
- Stop after each chapter and discuss the individuals and their action(s).
 - Where does each type of action fall on the Westheimer and Kahne matrix?
- G. Debrief:** Consider your findings. Which types of actions were most common during the disaster? Why do you think this is the case?
- H. Individual student response:** Respond to the following questions in a well-organized written response (approximately one page).
- ◆ According to the three types of citizenship, where would you fall on the chart?
 - ◆ What actions would you be likely to take (or not)? Why?
 - ◆ How civically responsible would you rate yourself? Explain.
 - ◆ How civically responsible would you like your neighbors to be?

Closure

Consider the three types of citizenship used to examine citizen responses during and after Hurricane Katrina. Can Participatory and/or Justice-Oriented forms of citizenship be learned? Should they be taught? In the United States, are we our brother’s and sister’s keepers?



HANDOUT Lesson 1 of Civics and Government Curriculum

What Type of Citizen?

Directions to students: Read the descriptions of each citizen “type.” As you watch the film, write down brief notes about each individual and his or her actions in the column you feel best captures the actions.

<i>Personally Responsible Citizen</i>	<i>Participatory Citizen</i>	<i>Justice-Oriented Citizen</i>
Acts responsibly in his/her community; pays taxes; obeys laws; recycles; gives blood; volunteers in times of crisis	Active in community organizations; organizes community efforts for those in need; understands how government works; knows strategies for accomplishing collective tasks	Critically assesses social, political, and economic structures to see beyond surface causes; seeks out and addresses areas of injustice; knows about democratic processes to create change

Source: Westheimer, J., & Kahne, J. (2004). What kind of citizen? The politics of educating for democracy. *American Educational Research Journal*, 41(2), 237–269.

- B. Individual activity:** Using Handout 1 and Articles II and IV of the Constitution, explore the roles of local, state, and federal governments as expressed in the Constitution.
- Federalism refers to the apportioning of power between the federal government and the states. By the time the American Revolution had been waged and won, state governments were fully entrenched. It was unlikely, therefore, that the states would agree to the creation of a powerful central government at the total expense of their self-governing authority. Granting the states specific self-governing powers and rights was not only politically expedient but also served the framers' intent to limit the central government's authority. The sharing of power between the states and the national government was one more structural check in an elaborate governmental scheme of checks and balances.
- C.** Explain the growth in federal power over the 20th century, especially in taking responsibility for citizens' social welfare.
- One perspective can be found at <http://www.house.gov/paul/tst/tst2006/tst011606.htm>
 - *American federalism, 1776 to 1997: Significant events*, www.usinfo.state.gov/usa/infousa/politics/states/federal.htm
 - "Federal power: Its growth and necessity" by Henry Litchfield West [review by Lindsay Rogers]. *The American Political Science Review*, 14(2), 344–345 (May 1920)
 - Inaugural address of Herbert Hoover, www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/president/inaug/hoover.htm
- D. Debrief:** Students watch film clips and analyze the actions taken by federal and state authorities. Fill in Handout 2.
- ◆ What are the responsibilities of each level of government? What do they share? Is anything missing and/or unclear?
 - ◆ How is federalism defined?
 - ◆ What is the relationship of agencies such as FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) to state and local governments?
- E.** Hypothesize about what areas of conflict or clear delineation of duties may occur in a time of crisis.
- F. Group activity:** Role-play conversations between victims and government officials. Choose an individual from the selected film clips (possibilities include Governor Kathleen Blanco, Charles Mackie, Phyllis Montana LeBlanc, Herbert Freeman, Garland Robinette, and Tanya Harris) and create a conversation between the selected individual

and an elected official from any level of government. Use Handout 3 to structure the dialogue.

- G.** Students can also go beyond what is presented in the film and do research on how the storm and its aftermath were handled in Mississippi, comparing and contrasting the story there with what occurred in Louisiana. Similarly, students can investigate other hurricanes, such as Hurricane Andrew in 1992, or other disasters, such as September 11, 2001, in New York City, and determine how well federalism worked in dealing with those disasters.
- H. Performance:** Have several students present their dialogues (as recorded in Handout 3). Perhaps have a partner read the accompanying voice for greater dramatic effect.

Closure

Debate whether the federal system of government served as a help or hindrance to taking necessary action in the wake of Katrina. Was this situation a result of individual or systemic failure in dealing with crises?

Taking Action

- Read through parts of Rousseau's *Social Contract/Principles of Political Right* as a basis for formulating a social contract for their local community grounded in common needs (education, public safety, transportation, health, etc.). Share these contracts with others in the school or town, if possible.
- Students interview at least one public official to understand the public official's viewpoint on the responsibilities of their agency/organization to the public. Students should ask the official how these responsibilities would change during a disaster and what aid they could expect to receive and from which agency.

LESSON 3

"There Would Be No New Orleans Without Black People" *The Many Legacies of Jim Crow*

Some commentators feel that the events associated with Katrina revealed once again the long-standing rifts in this country associated with race. The legacy of enforced legal segregation, known as "Jim Crow," lives on in the racial composition of many areas of the South.



HANDOUT 1 Lesson 2 of Civics and Government Curriculum

What the Constitution Says

	<i>Federal</i>	<i>State</i>	<i>Local</i>	<i>Shared</i>
<i>Article II</i>				
<i>Article IV</i>				

HANDOUT 2
Lesson 2 Civics and Government Curriculum

Examining Actions Taken by Government Officials

	<i>Before Katrina</i>	<i>During Katrina/ When Levees Break</i>	<i>After Storm and Breach of Levees</i>
<i>Local Government</i>			
<i>State Government</i>			
<i>Federal Government</i>			

HANDOUT 3
Lesson 2 of Civics and Government Curriculum

Creating Dialogue

This is a box students can use to create dialogue among local, state, and federal government officials. **Instructions to students:** You will base your characters' statements on what you observed from the film clips. However, you will have to use your imagination and attempt to see, think, and feel as this person did during the late summer and early fall of 2005. Please consider the following questions: What is this person's perspective? How do they feel and why? What is your evidence for this? What do they want and why?

<i>Character From The Levees</i> _____	<i>Government Official</i> _____
<i>Name</i> _____	<i>Name</i> _____
<i>Statement:</i>	<i>Response:</i>
_____	_____
_____	_____

In northern cities, de facto forms of segregation have shaped residential patterns for decades. Still, other commentators believe that what happened in New Orleans in late August 2005 has more to do with the incompetence of elected officials at all levels of government than with racial attitudes.

In this lesson, investigate the historic legacy of Jim Crow in New Orleans, considering what the evidence shows about its impact, especially on Black people, the majority of citizens of this city before Katrina struck.

Essential Question

- Did the legacies of slavery and the Jim Crow system of segregation have an impact on who was most at risk in the aftermath of Katrina?

Key Concepts

“De jure” and “de facto” segregation, “Jim Crow,” legacy

Skills Orientation

- Locating evidence within a text to support argument

- Reading and manipulating demographic data from the U.S. Census

Relevant Sections of the Film

- Act I, Chapter 1, “Miss New Orleans”
- Act I, Chapter 3, “Explosions”
- Act I, Chapter 4, “Day One”
- Act I, Chapter 5, “The Cajun Navy”
- Act I, Chapter 6, “The City That Care Forgot”
- Act II, Chapter 2, “We Shoot Looters”
- Act III, Chapter 1, “By Way of Katrina”
- Act III, Chapter 2, “Polarized”
- Act III, Chapter 3, “American Citizens”
- Act III, Chapter 4, “The Roots Run Deep”

Related Curriculum Standards

- NSCG Standard II, Section B: “What Are the Distinctive Characteristics of American Society?” (with specific standards 1–5).



HANDOUT 1
Lesson 3 of Civics and Government Curriculum

“Does George W. Bush Care About Black People?”

—Michael Eric Dyson (2006), *Come Hell or High Water: Hurricane Katrina and the Color of Disaster*, Chapter 2, pp. 21–27

When it comes to the federal government’s response to the victims of Hurricane Katrina, the specific elements at play must be examined. There were poor blacks, mostly from Louisiana, drowning in twenty-five-foot floods, stranded in their homes, or crammed into makeshift shelters, awaiting help from a Texas-bred president and an Oklahoma-born head of FEMA. At its core, this was a Southern racial narrative being performed before a national and global audience. If Southern whites have been relatively demonized within the realms of whiteness—when compared to their Northern peers, they are viewed as slower, less liberal, more bigoted, and thoroughly “country”—then Southern blacks are even more the victims of social stigma from every quarter of the culture, including Northern and Southern whites, and even among other blacks outside the region. . . .

It is safe to say that race played a major role in the failure of the federal government—especially for Bush and FEMA head Michael Brown—to respond in a timely manner to the poor black folk of Louisiana because of black grief and pain have been ignored thought the nation’s history. Bush and Brown simply updated the practice. Southern black suffering in particular has been overlooked by Southern whites—those in power and ordinary citizens as well. . . .

The black poor of the Delta lacked social standing, racial status, and the apparent and unconscious identifiers that might evoke a dramatic empathy in Bush and Brown. Had these factors been present, it might have spurred Bush and Brown to identify with the black poor, indeed, see themselves as the black poor. Since their agency and angst had been minimized in the Southern historical memory, the black poor simply didn’t register as large, or count as much, as they might have had they been white. If they had been white, a history of identification—supported by structures of care, sentiment of empathy, and an elevated racial standing—

would have immediately kicked in. That might have boosted considerably their chances of survival because the federal government, including Bush and Brown, would have seen their kind, perhaps their kin, and hence themselves, floating in a flood of death in the Delta.

* * *

“I hate the way they portray us in the media,” [Kanye] West intoned. “If you see a black family, it says, ‘They’re looting.’ You see a white family, it says, ‘They’re looking for food.’ And, you know, it’s been five days [waiting for the government to arrive] because most of the people are black. And even for me to complain about it, I would be a hypocrite because I’ve tried to turn away from the TV because it’s too hard to watch. I’ve been shopping before even giving a donation. So now I’m calling my business manager right now to see what is the biggest amount I can give. And just to imagine if I was down there, and those are my people down there. So anybody out there that wants to do anything that we can help—with the way America is set up to help the poor, the black people, the less well-off, as slow as possible. I mean, the Red Cross is doing everything they can. We already realize a lot of people that could help are at war right now, fighting another way. And they’ve given them permission to go down and shoot us!”

West’s nervy chiding of the federal government froze [Mike] Myers’s face in disbelief and small panic. . . . Once again, Myers turned to West, this time with a bit of trepidation creasing his brow. West let out his final off-script pronouncement with as sure a statement as he had made during his brief and amiable diatribe. “George Bush doesn’t care about black people.” With that, just as Myers mouthed the beginning of his plea for viewers to phone in—“Please call . . .”—someone in the NBC control room, working with a seven-second delay aimed at blocking profanity, finally understood West’s tack and ordered the camera to turn unceremoniously away from the duo and cut to comedian Chris Tucker, who picked up his cue and tried to roll past West’s punches. . . .



HANDOUT 2
Lesson 3 of Civics and Government Curriculum

Double-Entry Journal

	<i>Argument</i>	<i>Evidence</i>
1		
2		



HANDOUT 3

Lesson 3 of Civics and Government Curriculum

“The Geography of Social Vulnerability: Race, Class, and Catastrophe”

—By Susan L. Cutter, excerpt from an article from *Understanding Katrina: Perspectives from the Social Sciences*, a series presented by the Social Science Research Council, June 11, 2006, <http://understanding.katrina.ssrc.org/Cutter/>

The South’s segregated past was best seen in the spatial and social evolution of southern cities, including New Orleans. Migration from the rural impoverished areas to the city was followed by White flight from urban areas to more suburban communities. Public housing was constructed to cope with Black population influxes during the 1950s and 1960s and in a pattern repeated throughout America, the housing was invariably located in the most undesirable areas—along major transportation corridors, on reclaimed land, or next to industrial facilities. Employment opportunities were limited for inner city residents as jobs moved outward from the central city to suburban locations, or overseas as the process of globalization reduced even further the number of low skilled jobs. The most impoverished lived in squalor-like conditions concentrated in certain neighborhoods within cities, with little or no employment, poor education, and little hope for the future for their children or grandchildren. It is against this backdrop of the social geography of cities and the differential access to resources that we can best understand the Hurricane Katrina disaster.

Race and class are certainly factors that help explain the social vulnerability in the South, while ethnicity plays an additional role in many cities. When the middle classes (both White and Black) abandon a city, the disparities between the very rich and the very poor expand. Add to this an increasing elderly population, the homeless, transients (including tourists), and other special needs populations, and the prospects for evacuating a city during times of emergencies becomes a daunting challenge for most American cities. What is a major challenge for other cities became a virtual impossibility for New Orleans. Those that could muster the personal resources evacuated the city. With no welfare check (the hurricane struck near the end of the month), little food, and no help

from the city, state, or federal officials, the poor were forced to ride out the storm in their homes or move to the shelters of last resort. This is the enduring face of Hurricane Katrina—poor, Black, single mothers, young, and old—struggling just to survive; options limited by the ineffectiveness of preparedness and the inadequacy of response. . . .

“Statistics Suggest Race Not a Factor in Katrina Deaths”

—By Nathan Burchfiel, CNSNews.com correspondent, December 14, 2005

(CNSNews.com)—Statistics released by the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals suggest that fewer than half of the victims of Hurricane Katrina were Black, and that Whites died at the highest rate of all races in New Orleans.

Liberals in the aftermath of the storm were quick to allege that the Bush administration delayed its response to the catastrophe because most of the victims were Black. . . .

Rapper Kanye West used his time on NBC’s telethon for the hurricane victims to charge that, “George Bush doesn’t care about Black people.”

But the state’s demographic information suggests that Whites in New Orleans died at a higher rate than minorities. According to the 2000 census, Whites make up 28 percent of the city’s population, but the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals indicates that Whites constitute 36.6 percent of the storm’s fatalities in the city.

African-Americans make up 67.25 percent of the population and 59.1 percent of the deceased. Other minorities constitute approximately 5 percent of the population and represented 4.3 percent of the storm’s fatalities.

Overall for the state, 658 bodies have been identified. Forty-seven percent were African-American and 42 percent were Caucasian. The remaining bodies were either non-Black minorities or undetermined.

Katrina Death and Missing Persons Toll

Statistics from the Earth Institute, Columbia University, are given in the handout for Program 2 of Chapter 3 of this manual (p. 46). The data may also be found at <http://www.katrina.list.columbia.edu/stats.php>.

Closure

Census data from 2000 suggest a decline in segregation of African Americans in the United States from 1980 to 2000. Nevertheless, despite these findings poor African Americans often live in highly segregated communities. Based on the materials discussed, do you believe that the tragedy associated with Katrina and the breaching of the levees was fundamentally shaped by race and class? If not, what alternative hypotheses explain the events described in the film and the evidence presented here? Discuss this question with students, requiring them to back up their assertions with evidence from these materials or others you or they introduce into this lesson.

Taking Action

Have students use the U.S. Census Web site (www.census.gov) to research population patterns in their communities. How does their own community compare with national trends (decline in segregation) and with New Orleans? Are there any recent increases in the number of immigrants to the community? What does census information from the U.S. Census archives suggest about this community? What patterns, trends, and so on do they find? Are there any causes for concern? Why?

Have students write letters in favor of or against the notion of diversity within their community. Is diversity a positive social good? Send these letters to their elected local representatives.