

## Using NewsHour Extra Feature Stories

### STORY

### **Island Nation of Haiti Reels After Earthquake Causes 'Enormous' Damage**

01/13/2010

[http://www.pbs.org/newshour/extra/features/world/jan-june10/haiti\\_01-13.html](http://www.pbs.org/newshour/extra/features/world/jan-june10/haiti_01-13.html)

Estimated Time: One 45-minute class period with possible extension

**Student Worksheet** (reading comprehension and discussion questions without answers)

### PROCEDURE

#### **1. WARM UP**

Use initiating questions to introduce the topic and find out how much your students know.

#### **2. MAIN ACTIVITY**

Have students read NewsHour Extra's feature story and answer the reading comprehension and discussion questions on the student handout.

#### **3. DISCUSSION**

Use discussion questions to encourage students to think about how the issues outlined in the story affect their lives and express and debate different opinions.]

### INITIATING QUESTIONS

- 1. Locate Haiti on the map. What does it's location tell you about its politics, economy, culture?**
- 2. What happens during an earthquake?**
- 3. What are some of the poorest nations in the world? Why are some countries more poor than others?**

### READING COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS – **Student Worksheet**

#### **1. What happened in Haiti January 12, 2010?**

##### **ANSWER**

Rescue workers and aid groups are headed to Haiti, an impoverished island nation off the coast of Florida, after a major earthquake toppled homes, schools and buildings, killing thousands and forcing survivors to scramble for basic needs such as electricity, food and water.

#### **2. Why did so many buildings collapse?**

##### **ANSWER**

Because Haiti has struggled for decades with political instability and natural disasters, 60 percent of buildings were shoddily built and unsafe in normal circumstances, according to the mayor of Port-au-Prince, the capital.

#### **3. What is the relationship between Haiti and the United States?**

##### **ANSWER**

The U.S. has for decades tried to help Haiti rebuild. There is a large population of Haitian-Americans and violence on the island often sends refugees on a dangerous 750-mile journey across shark-infested water trying to get to Florida.

#### 4. How can Americans help the situation in Haiti?

##### ANSWER

Haiti native and musician Wyclef Jean released a statement saying: "I cannot stress enough what a human disaster this is, and idle hands will only make this tragedy worse. The over 2 million people in Port-au-Prince tonight face catastrophe alone. We must act now."

He urged people to use their cell phones to text "Yele" to 501501, which will automatically donate \$5 to the Yele Haiti Earthquake Fund (it will be charged to your cell phone bill), or visit [www.Yele.org](http://www.Yele.org) to donate.

#### 5. What happened in Haiti in 1804?

##### ANSWER

The nation of Haiti was created in 1804, after the world's first successful slave rebellion led by Jean-Jacques Dessalines against France.

#### 6. Who was "Papa Doc"?

##### ANSWER

In 1957, Francois "Papa Doc" Duvalier took power by force and ruled by brutally killing all opposition. Tens of thousands were tortured and killed under Duvalier and his son, Jean-Claude "Baby Doc" Duvalier.

#### 7. Who was Jean-Bertrand Aristide?

##### ANSWER

In 1990, Haitians elected Jean-Bertrand Aristide, a slum priest who inspired the overwhelmingly poor majority. But a military dictatorship overthrew Aristide 1991, sending thousands of Haitians to the seas in unsafe boats, desperate to get to Florida.

President Bill Clinton sent troops to Haiti in 1994 to restore Aristide, who was re-elected in 2000.

#### 8. What is the Gonave microplate?

##### ANSWER

Although the islands in the Caribbean are not considered one of the planet's most active earthquake zones, there is a history of large, devastating earthquakes.

Most of Haiti lies on the Gonave microplate, a sliver of the earth's crust between the much larger North American plate to the north and the Caribbean plate to the south.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (more research might be needed)

##### 1. Why was Haiti ill-prepared for this earthquake?

##### 2. What can the United States and other countries do to help Haiti?

##### 3. What can individual Americans do? Research some other aid organizations beyond the one mentioned in the story.

##### 4. Why does such dire poverty exist in Haiti?

##### 5. Prime Minister Jean-Max Bellerive told the NewsHour that "We want to get out of misery to get into poverty." [http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/social\\_issues/jan-june10/haiti\\_01-11.html](http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/social_issues/jan-june10/haiti_01-11.html) What does that say about the situation in the country?

**Extension Activity**-Have students write a 300-500 word essay on this topic providing clear examples. Send your completed editorial to NewsHour Extra ([extra@newshour.org](mailto:extra@newshour.org)). Exceptional essays might be published on our Web site.