



WHEN THE BORDER VANISHES



A Modern Black Plague: Oil and the Environment

Standard:

- II. Time, Continuity, and Change
- III. People, Places, and Environment
- V. Individuals, Groups, and Institutions
- VI. Power, Authority, and Governance
- VII. Production, Distribution, and Consumption
- VIII. Science, Technology, and Society
- IX. Global Connections
- X. Civic Ideals and Practices

Grade Level: 7–12

Objectives:

The student will:

- Compare and contrast the *Exxon Valdez* and *Deepwater Horizon* spills
- Determine the economic impacts of the disasters
- Evaluate the BP Gulf spill from a Gulf inhabitant's perspective
- Assess the feasibility of deep sea oil drilling
- Examine personal views related to energy sources

Time:

1–2 class periods, depending on the level

Materials:

Graphic Organizer: Impact of Two Oil Spills
Letter from the Secretary of Commerce to Governor Jindal of Louisiana
Map: Oil Spills
Oil Claims Fact Sheet
How to File an Oil Spill Claim
Access to online articles

Procedures:

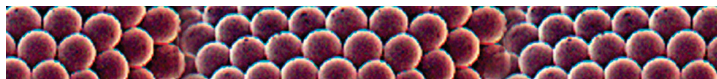
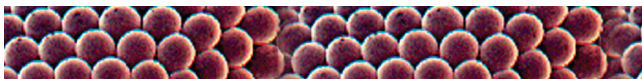
1. Discuss the use of the term “Black Plague” as it references oil and the devastating effects of oil spills instead of disease. Do the students think this is an appropriate use of the term?
2. Brainstorm with students to determine what they know about the *Exxon Valdez* and the *Deepwater Horizon*/BP Gulf oil spills.
3. Have students locate the Gulf of Alaska and the Gulf of Mexico on a map of the United States.
4. Compare the two maps of the spills on the included page.
 - a. Name the states affected by each spill.
 - b. Approximately how large is the area affected by each spill? Shoreline? Open water?
5. Have students read about the *Exxon Valdez* oil spill. Print and distribute one or more of the articles if students do not have online access in classroom or the availability of a computer lab.

Recommended articles:

http://www.eoearth.org/article/exxon_valdez_oil_spill (longer article)

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Exxon_Valdez_oil_spill

<http://www.answers.com/topic/exxon-valdez-oil-spill> (shortest article)



6. Complete the chart, *Impact of Two Oil Spills*. Refer students to this wide range of articles to collect the required information.

http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2010/04/oil_numbers.html

http://useconomy.about.com/od/suppl1/p/Exxon_Valdez_Oil_Spill_Economic_Impact.htm

<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/36850248/>

http://www.cnbc.com/id/25375919/Impact_of_Exxon_Valdez

<http://moneywatch.bnet.com/economic-news/article/5-ways-bps-oil-spill-will-cost-you-slide-1-of-5/436500/>

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2010/sep/20/bp-oil-spill-deepwater-horizon-costs-10bn>

http://money.cnn.com/galleries/2010/fortune/1005/gallery.expensive_oil_spills.fortune/index.html

<http://www.deepwaterhorizonresponse.com/external/content/document/2931/571107/1/DOC%20Letter%20to%20LA%20Gov.%20Bobby%20Jindal%20.pdf>

<http://www.cnn.com/NATURE/9903/22/valdez.fishermen/>

Extension Activities:

1. Read the letter from the U.S. Department of Commerce to Louisiana Governor Bobby Jindal.
 - a. What is the federal government's concern?
 - b. What actions by Governor Jindal might have prompted this letter?
 - c. Describe the determination made by the Department of Commerce and the reason(s) for its determination.
 - d. Name the organizations mentioned in the letter. Why isn't there one centralized organization to deal with an issue such as the *Deepwater Horizon* oil spill?
 - e. If you are Governor Bobby Jindal, what would your reaction be to this letter? How would you respond?
 - f. When dealing with a disaster, why might frustrations exist between the federal government and a state (in this case, Louisiana)?
2. Explore the website: <http://www.deepwaterhorizonresponse.com/go/site/2931/>
 - a. Open the section "Claims," then click on "Individuals/Businesses." Read the documents, "Claims Fact Sheet," and "How to File an Oil Spill Claim?"
 - b. For what reasons are individuals and businesses allowed to file claims?
 - c. Do the forms provide information in an understandable and clear format?
 - d. Is there any indication as to how long the reimbursement will take if a claim is approved?
 - e. Would you change the information and claim form in any way? Describe the changes. ■