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January 23–29, 2005

DUNAND/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

An Indian tsunami victim laments over the ruins of her house.

▶ This Week's Focus:

Earthquakes and Tsunamis

On Dec. 26, the world's most devastating tsunami in recent history killed at least 150,000 people and left millions homeless. This week, we look at the science behind the tsunami that destroyed coastal areas from Sumatra to Somalia. In another lesson plan, we consider the rising cost of college and offer suggestions on how to afford higher education. And finally, we critique author Norman Mailer's view that a world without commercial TV would improve your students' attention spans and, ultimately, America's standing in high-tech industries.

Everyday Newspaper Activity

Activity #21: Track a story. Ask students to pick a story from today's paper that will probably be a continuing one (e.g., the Iraq situation, a natural disaster, an unfolding scandal). For a month, have them cut out and save related articles as the story develops. How do the stories—and students' own views—change over this period? What can they learn about newspaper reporting from this process?

Coming Up Next Week

- **Should Physical Education Be Required?**
- **The Super Bowl**
- **Ask Marilyn's Clues in the News Contest!**

▶ In the News: **Earthquakes and Tsunamis; Is College Affordable? p.2**

▶ In PARADE: **Is TV Making You Dumber? p.3**

▶ Skills Sheets: **Reading a TV Schedule p.4; The Truth About Tsunamis p.5**

PARADE classroom® TEACHER'S GUIDE
In the News
Teach these topics with your daily newspaper
JANUARY 23-29, 2005 • PAGE 2

Tsunamis and Earthquakes

Curriculum links: Science, geography, social studies, current events

Briefing: On December 26, a huge earthquake occurred in the Indian Ocean, not far from the Indonesian island of Sumatra. At least 150,000 people died and millions were left homeless. The destruction did not come from the 9.0 magnitude earthquake itself, but from the resulting tsunamis—the most destructive in recent history. Tsunamis are long, huge killer waves. They may be only a foot tall in the open ocean but nearing shore they can bunch up to 100 feet in height. They can penetrate 1000 feet or more inland, sweeping away houses, cars and people. An underwater landslide, a meteor, or a volcano may start them. But they most often result from earthquakes. In this case, about 740 miles of faultline slipped about 50 feet, creating a shockwave that sent tsunamis rushing across the ocean at up to 500 miles per hour. They devastated areas along the coast in Sumatra, Sri Lanka, India and Thailand and as far away (2500 miles) as Somalia. While there is a tsunami warning system in place in the Pacific Ocean, the Indian Ocean does not have one. The last time an Indian Ocean tsunami struck land was when the volcano Krakatoa erupted in 1883.

Classroom Debates

• **The U.S. government's response to the disaster was scrutinized by the international community.** Is America doing enough to help the victims? What is the best way to help? What do the victims need most? To which organizations would you give? Why? Can anything be done to prevent future catastrophes?

Newspaper activity: **The tsunamis caused destruction that killed at least 150,000 people and left millions homeless.** They also created public health problems that could be even more dangerous. Countries around the world immediately started relief efforts. Look through the paper to see what is happening now in the countries struck by the tsunamis.

Resources: Books: Luke Thompson's *Tsunamis* (Children's Press, 2000) and Ellen Prager's *Furious Earth* (McGraw-Hill, 1999). Web sites: Learn more about tsunamis from the United States Geological Survey, National Geographic, Wikipedia. Find out how you can donate money to help the tsunami victims. *

The College Cost Crunch

Curriculum links: Family & consumer science, business and careers, social studies

Briefing: The cost of college continues to rise faster than inflation. Including room and board, the total annual price of a four-year public university now averages about $11,354. The average total cost of a private four-year school now tops $27,000 a year. Meanwhile, the Dept. of Education recently announced a new formula that will limit Pell grants, the primary financial aid program for low-income students. Next year, out of the 5 million who would normally get the grants, about 90,000 students will not. Another 1.3 million students will get smaller grants. Some members of Congress have vowed to push for more Pell grant funding this session.

Classroom Debates

• **The costs of administering Pell grants have been rising, and the program is in deficit.** Does this make it a good idea to limit program eligibility? Explain. In many nations, tuition is free or low-cost. Why do other countries provide free tuition? Why doesn't the U.S.? Would it be a good use of revenues? What other programs would you cut to provide the funds? How can you personally avoid taking out big loans? Imagine that you are a college graduate who has to repay $20,000 or more in loans. How would this affect what you do? For example, would you take a job teaching in the inner-city? How will college affect your life-time earnings?

Newspaper activity: **Ask students to scan the paper for a few weeks for articles about colleges.** What are the articles about? Can they find any clues to the cause of rising college costs?

Resources: Books: Ben Kaplan's *How to Go to College Almost For Free* (HarperCollins, 2001), *The College Board's College Cost and Financial Aid Handbook 2003* (College Board, 2002) and Ronald Ehrenberg's *Tuition Rising: Why College Costs So Much* (Harvard, 2002). Web sites: Read about rising costs and declining Pell grants. Get financial advice from ETS and Sallie Mae.*

***Visit www.paradeclassroom.com/links for links to all mentioned Web sites.**

PARADE Classroom® is written by Karen Glenn

Does TV Make You Dumber?

Curriculum links: Media literacy, psychology, science, family & consumer science

Briefing: U.S. students are falling behind those of other nations in the important STEM subjects (science, technology, engineering and math). Why? In this week's PARADE, author Norman Mailer argues that the problem is TV and its commercials. Since 1982, high school students have shown a reduced interest in books, reading 25% fewer annually. Mailer blames that on TV, which the average American spends at least four hours a day watching. What's more, Mailer says, the power to concentrate while reading is the "royal road to knowledge." Sixty years ago, children would read for hours and their powers of concentration grew. With the advent of TV, he says, that changed. In the early years, kids could still develop concentration by watching shows with uninterrupted narrative. Now, however, commercials constantly interrupt. On the major networks, the time given to commercials increased 36% from 1991 to 2003. Every seven, 10 or 12 minutes, a commercial destroys concentration. Kids sit on the couch in a stupor and gradually become less able to concentrate and learn. Despite the fact that TV ads stimulate our economy, he argues, we must get rid of commercial-supported television. The alternative is to fall behind other nations in key economic areas.

Newspaper activity: Do Mailer's complaints about TV—that it destroys young people's ability to concentrate while encouraging passivity—apply to newspapers as well? Why or why not? Do these complaints apply to video games or Internet use? Explain.

Classroom Debates

• **Do you agree with Normal Mailer?** Does watching TV—with its barrage of commercials—affect your concentration and, ultimately, the way your mind works? Does reading teach the focus needed to succeed in school and in life? Is TV responsible for the U.S. falling behind other nations in key subject areas? How much time do you spend watching TV? Could you stop watching for a week? What would you do with your extra time? How would your life—and your mind—be different if TV did not exist? Could TV exist without commercials? Would it be better that way? Norman Mailer wrote this piece when asked to come up with one idea that would change America for the better. Do you have an idea?

Resources: Books: Jane Healy's *Endangered Minds* (Simon & Schuster, 1999) and Marie Winn's *The Plug-In Drug* (Penguin, 2002). Web sites: Read articles linking TV to poor concentration and childhood obesity. Visit the TV-Turnoff Network or learn more about Norman Mailer. *

ASK MARILYN

Brainteaser

Question: What is unusual about this sentence? "I saw a maid wearing plaid in Port Said," he said.

Answer: Each instance of the letters aid is pronounced differently. Note: The second word in "Port Said" is pronounced sah-EED.

COMING UP IN NEXT WEEK'S TEACHER'S GUIDE:

"ASK MARILYN'S CLUES IN THE NEWS CONTEST" FOR STUDENTS!

FRESH VOICES

Getting Over Failure

For class discussion or writing assignment: Youbin, 17, had to audition two years in a row before she could become a reporter for her school's TV station. Nathan, 13, tried to swing on a rope over a shallow stream but fell in three times. But he thinks it's better to try and fail than never to take a chance. Have you tried and failed at something? What happened next? How did you feel about it? Did you learn anything?

Interact: Ask students, "How competitive are students in your school?" Send their comments to Fresh Voices, Box 5103, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163-5103, or send e-mail to *freshvoices@parade.com*. Students whose letters are published in PARADE will receive Fresh Voices T-shirts.

Answer Key:

Get with the Schedule

p. 4: 1. 8 p.m. on the WB; 2. *King of Queens* and *Center of the Universe*; 3. yes; 4. two; 5. yes; 6. no; 7. no; 8. *Seinfeld* or *Friends*; 9. *Center of the Universe*; 10. Answers will vary.

The Truth About Tsunamis

p. 5: 1. generated; 2. asteroid; 3. velocity; 4. noticeable; 5. compressed; 6. penetrate; 7. prone; 8. unfortunately; 9. Sumatra; 10. ravaged.

Get with the Schedule

It's Wednesday night, and you want to watch *The West Wing*. But what time is it on? You flip open your newspaper and read the TV schedule. Take a look at this sample schedule, and then answer the questions.

Network	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30	11:00
CBS	60 Minutes		King of Queens	Center of the Universe	CSI:NY		News
NBC	Law & Order: CI		The West Wing		Law & Order		News
ABC	Lost		Lost		Wife Swap		News
WB	Smallville		Big Man on Campus		News		Friends
FOX	That '70s Show	Quintuplets	Nanny 911		News		Seinfeld

1. What time is *Smallville* on? On what channel?

_____

2. What shows on CBS last less than an hour?

_____

3. If you want to watch *The West Wing* and then the news, will you have to change channels?

_____

4. How many times does ABC air *Lost* between 8 and 11 p.m.?

_____

5. Are *The West Wing* and *Law & Order* on the same channel?

_____

6. Can you watch both *The West Wing* and *Big Man on Campus*?

_____

7. Can you watch both *That '70s Show* and *Smallville*?

_____

8. You don't want to watch the news at 11:00. What can you watch instead?

_____

9. You come in at 9:29, and you don't want to watch something that has already started. What are your options?

_____

10. What's the best show on the schedule? Why?

_____

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Skills Sheet

JANUARY 23-29, 2005 • PAGE 5

The Truth about Tsunamis

Do you want to know more about tsunamis? To learn more, fill each blank in this story with one word from the 10 words in the list below. If you don't know some of the words, look them up in the dictionary.

asteroid
compressed
generated
noticeable
penetrate
prone
ravaged
Sumatra
unfortunately
velocity

A tsunami is a series of huge waves that are **1.)** _____ by underwater disturbances such as landslides, volcanoes or, most often, earthquakes. Very rarely, tsunamis can result from a giant meteor hitting the ocean. Scientists think that a huge tsunami might have reshaped the continents about 3.5 billion years ago after an **2.)** _____ hit the Earth.

Tsunamis can be up to 60 miles long. The waves in the "wave train" may be as much as an hour apart. They can also have a lot of **3.)** _____ , reaching speeds up to 500 miles per hour.

While in the open ocean, a tsunami may be barely **4.)** _____, as the waves may be less than a foot high. But as they reach shallow water, tsunamis slow down. The water becomes **5.)** _____ , and the waves can grow to be 100 feet tall. Their force is enormous as they hit shore, tossing around cars and houses and people. They can **6.)** _____ 1000 feet or more inland.

The Pacific Ocean is most **7.)** _____ to tsunamis. Because of this, the United States and other countries have started the Tsunami Warning System. **8.)** _____ , there is no similar system in the Indian Ocean.

An underwater earthquake that struck there near the Indonesian island of **9.)** _____ on December 26 **10.)** _____ coastal areas from Africa to Thailand, leaving more than 150,000 dead and millions homeless.

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