



# The Impact of Hurricane Katrina

In “An American Tragedy” on pages 10 and 11, Nancy Gibbs presents evidence from a variety of sources to help readers understand Hurricane Katrina’s impact on New Orleans. Take a closer look at the piece and use the questions below to see how Gibbs uses statistics, quotes and anecdotes to tell the story.

### Statistics: The Power of Numbers

1. As you read “An American Tragedy,” underline each sentence in which writer Nancy Gibbs includes statistics. Then look back at the sentences you have underlined. In your opinion, which sentence presents the most powerful and dramatic numbers? Write it here:

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### Quotations: The Power of Voices

2. Now circle all the sentences in the article in which Gibbs incorporates quotations. If you were trying to tell a friend about Katrina’s impact and had to choose one quotation to convey the storm’s devastating force, which quote would you select? Write it here:

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3. Why did you select this quotation? Consider the role of the person being quoted, as well as the content of his or her statement. Is this person an expert? An eyewitness? An ordinary citizen? A government official?

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### Anecdotes: The Power of Personal Stories

4. What is an anecdote? Using a dictionary, look up *anecdote* and write the definition here:

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5. Now put a box around all the anecdotes that appear in “An American Tragedy.” Select one anecdote that particularly stands out to you and describe it here:

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6. Why do you think Gibbs chose to include this anecdote in her article?

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7. Share your work. Exchange worksheets with a classmate and read your partner’s choice of statistics, quotations and anecdotes. Then discuss: What does each of these elements add to “An American Tragedy”? Working together, select the one sentence from the article that you think best encapsulates the impact of Katrina. Write it here and be prepared to defend your choice:

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