

Two years after Hurricane Katrina, life's hard in the Big Easy

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NEW ORLEANS - Wednesday marked the second anniversary of the devastating Hurricane Katrina. On his 15th visit to the area since the hurricane, US President George W. Bush tried to dispel lingering anger at his administration's handling of the disaster. Much of the city famed for its jazz and cooking still lies abandoned after surging seas whipped up by the hurricane breached its levees on August 29, 2005. Mr Bush, who was slammed for acting too slowly after the hurricane, visited a school that had been under 3m of water. He declared: "New Orleans, better days are ahead. When Hurricane Katrina broke through the levees, it broke a lot of hearts, it destroyed buildings, but it didn't affect the spirit of a lot of citizens in this community," he said.



In another ceremony, Mayor Roy Nagin said: "It's been two years since the greatest natural disaster and man-made disaster our country has ever faced. "Give us what we need to move forward or we'll figure it out ourselves," said Mr Nagin, who dined with Mr Bush on Wednesday at a popular Creole restaurant set to reopen after being rebuilt.

At 9.38am, the moment the first levees were breached by the storm, Mr Nagin and mourners rang silver bells in remembrance of the 1836 believed to have died in the disaster. A trumpeter played a soulful rendition of a funeral dirge, A Closer Walk With Thee. As of May 19, 2006 casualties reported by state were as follows: Alabama – 2 Georgia - 2, Florida - 14, Kentucky – 1 , Louisiana - 1577, Mississippi - 238, Ohio – 2, and 705 remain missing.



While higher parts of the city, such as the famous French Quarter, have come back to life, much hasn't. About 80 percent of the city was left uninhabitable by Katrina and more than 42,000 families in Louisiana are still living in government-supplied trailers. The storm is estimated to have been responsible for \$81.2 billion (2005 U.S. dollars) in damage, making it the costliest natural disaster in U.S. history while billions of additional dollars in federal aid is wrapped up in bureaucratic red tape and blame is flying in all directions.

Life is hard in the Big Easy. The musicians, artists and residents who made it the jazz mecca are battling exorbitant rents, rising costs of utilities, high insurance, soaring property taxes and crime. A recent government study found that mental illness has doubled among Gulf Coast residents and there is a surge in people considering suicide. The city is also on pace to become the nation's homicide capital with 140 murders so far this year in a depopulated city of only 275,000 people, a substantial decrease from the 2000 Census Bureau figure of 484,674. New Orleans has an area of 350.2 sq mi (907 km²); 80% of which remained flooded throughout Katrina's warpath. Federal disaster declarations covered 90,000 square miles (233,000 km²) of the United States, an area almost as large as the United Kingdom. The hurricane left an estimated three million people without electricity. On September 3, 2005, Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff described the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina as "probably the worst catastrophe, or set of catastrophes," in the country's history, referring to the hurricane itself plus the flooding of New Orleans.

1. In paragraph form, explain precisely what occurred upon Hurricane Katrina making landfall in New Orleans.
2. Identify which specific measure of central tendency would provide the most relevant and informative data regarding the accurate reporting of casualty totals by state? Least effective? Explain.
3. Murder per capita may be defined as total recorded intentional homicides committed with a firearm. Per capita figures are expressed per 1,000 population. Source: U.N. Office on Drugs and Crime. The U.S. is 0.0279271 per 1,000 people and South Africa is 0.719782. New Orleans is three times greater than the U.S. figures and has the highest per capita murder rate in the nation for the second year in a row with 140 killings (19 in August) thus far. Explain the significance of this information as well as the overall message being conveyed.
4. Approximately how many fewer square miles than kilometers squared were flooded during Katrina?
5. What percent decrease occurred in New Orleans' population between 2000 and 2007? Explain.
6. Compare and contrast the political perspectives and agenda between Nagin and Bush.
7. In the passage above, in paragraph form, explain at least five ways using the "Four-Step Reading" poster simplifies understanding of the material. Be specific.
8. In complete sentences, using contextual clues only, explain the meaning of the words: *bureaucratic*, *exorbitant*, *levees*, *breached* and *dirge*. Additionally, use each in a sentence to demonstrate further comprehension.
9. In paragraph form, explain at least five legitimate and educational purposes behind The Daughtry Times.