

TEACHER NOTE: to use this resource in your classroom - click 'file' and then click 'make a copy' to create your own Google Doc version to edit as needed and share with your students.

The Great Boston Molasses Flood of 1919

Warm-Up: *At the beginning of class, individually brainstorm and record your response to the following questions.*

Brainstorm Activity	
Which is more important: national security, public safety, or the economy? Explain your thinking.	
How do disasters shape public policy? Provide an example.	

Introduction: *After discussing the brainstorming questions with a partner and listening to your classmates' responses, consider the following questions from the first clip your teacher plays. Be prepared to share your answers with the class.*

Clip #1: Historical Context of Saga (3:20)	Notes:
How long is the molasses flood "story?" Explain why.	
What is the "second level" of the flood story? Detail the events that occurred.	
Based on the clip, how were people impacted by the flood?	

Vocabulary: *Review the following list of terms before beginning the lesson. Provide a definition for each term. Make sure to reference this list when you encounter an unfamiliar word in the video clips.*

Term	Definition
Anarchist	
Big Business	
Factor of Safety	
Flood	
Harbor	
Immigration	
Lawsuit	
Liability	
Molasses	
Munition	
Prohibition	
Rivet	
Testimony	
World War I (1914-18)	

Background: View the following two video clips that provide background information about Boston, the company, and the political climate of the time, recording your notes and answers to the questions below. Prepare to share your responses with your classmates.

Clip #2: Setting the Scene (4:59)	Notes:
Who “owned” the molasses tank and where was it located?	

Describe Boston's "North End" neighborhood during the early 1900s.	
What other "activity" took place near the tank?	
Based on the clip, what was the molasses used for and why was it an important good?	
According to Stephen Puleo, why was the tank constructed? How large was the tank?	
Clip #3: Early Issues (7:15)	Notes:
Who was "in charge" of the tank project and why was this a problem?	
Based on the clip, when did the tank begin leaking? Why?	
Why was there little "official protest" to the tank? Explain.	
What other "activity" was occurring during this time? Detail the connection to the molasses flood.	
According to Stephen Puleo, who was Isaac Gonzales? Summarize his related roles, experiences, and actions.	
What "cursory steps" were taken to improve the molasses tank?	

Flood and Aftermath: View the following three video clips that detail the events of the flood and the court case that followed, recording your notes and answers to the questions below. Prepare to share your responses with your classmates.

Clip #4: Day of the Flood (7:44)	Notes:
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Based on the clip, when did the molasses flood occur? Describe the day.	
Summarize the “stunning report” called in to the local police station.	
Detail the scope and immediate impact of the “molasses wave” and tank collapse.	
How many people died and how many were injured from the “flood?”	
Describe the “property damage” resulting from the molasses.	
What was the “scene” at the Haymarket Relief Station?	
According to Stephen Puleo, what were the other impacts of the molasses flood?	
What action was taken during the “first day of cleanup?”	
Clip #5: Lawsuit (7:12)	Notes:
Detail the scope of the “huge lawsuit” that followed the molasses flood.	
What was the “argument” of the plaintiffs?	
What was the argument of the “other side,” and why might this argument have been plausible?	
Who “represented” each side in the case? Summarize their tactics.	

According to Stephen Puleo, who was Hugh W. Ogden and what was his role during the trial?	
Based on the clip, how long did the case take to conclude?	
Clip #6: Case Ruling (2:25)	Notes:
Who was held “liable” for the molasses flood?	
What “damages” were awarded to the plaintiffs?	
How was Hugh W. Ogden’s work “masterful?” Explain.	
What was Damon Hall “not happy” with? Describe what ultimately happened.	

Reflection: View the following one or two final video clips that provide concluding thoughts for the lesson, recording your notes and answers to the questions below. Prepare to share your responses with your classmates.

Clip #7: Long Term Ramifications (3:47)	Notes:
How did the “immigrant situation” in Boston change as a result of the molasses flood?	
In what ways did “safety standards and construction standards” change as a result of the flood?	
When Hugh W. Ogden released his final report in 1925, what was the state of “industry” in the United States?	

What “balance” was America then faced with?	
OPTIONAL Clip #8: Q&A (15:26)	Notes:
What is the “truth” about the cause of the molasses flood?	
Which “three primary sources” did Stephen Puleo use in researching the flood?	
How often had the tank been “filled to capacity” before the flood?	
Were there any “environmental factors” that contributed to the tank collapse? Explain.	
According to Puleo, why did Isaac Gonzales take the actions he did?	
Based on the clip, why was the tank built near the harbor?	
What would have been the “toll” if the tank collapsed in the summertime? Explain.	
Why was the “explosion theory” used during the lawsuit?	
How long did the “destructive process” take?	
Why was the company not “more responsible?”	
What “munitions” were made with molasses? Explain.	
Summarize the “history of molasses” in	

Boston and the impact of the flood.	
Did the tank need to be as “large” as it was?	
What were the “financial impacts” after the flood?	

Closure: *Using what you learned in the lesson, complete the following prompt.*

Having now learned about the Great Boston Molasses Flood of 1919, detail its short- and long-term effects. Be sure to include evidence from the video clips in the lesson to support your argument.