Katrina Archives: Whose Story?

NEW ORLEANS CULTURAL STUDIO | LESSON 73 | GRADES 9–12 | CULTURE & SOURCES

Context before technique

Hurricane Katrina and levee failures damaged neighborhoods and archives; survivors' accounts are essential to understanding recovery.

Whose story is being told?

Teach this lesson through identified New Orleans institutions and, where possible, community-authored testimony. Name the people, places, and historical context in your examples. Explain what remains unknown or contested.

Responsible artistic engagement

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Visual permissions

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Starter research sources

HNOC: New Orleans Life Story Project

https://hnoc.org/research-collections/research-tools/oral-history/new-orleans-life-story-project

HNOC: Oral History Collections

https://hnoc.org/research-collections/research-tools/oral-history

Louisiana Visual Arts Benchmarks

Louisiana Department of Education arts standards (official PDF)

Discussion prompts

- Who created or maintains this tradition, space, or object?
- What do outsiders often overlook?
- Which images would require permission, and whose voices are missing?

Teaching note

These starter sources support inquiry, not a complete ethnography. Prioritize up-to-date local perspectives and appropriately compensated cultural partnerships when possible.