

# Sample student essays: Final assessment, Fall 2010, English 1001

## Context:

The essays below were randomly selected based on their scores, which range from 2 to 12. Scores are the combination of two readers' evaluations on a 6-point rubric. An essay with a score of 4, in other words, received a 2 on the rubric from both of its readers. An odd number indicates that the readers' scores differed by one point; for example, a score of 7 is the combination of a 4 from one reader and a 3 from the other.

## Important note:

Because of changes to the assessment model, the essays contained here differ in important ways from the essays students will turn in for their final assessments this semester. The essays below were written without any kind of teacher or writing center feedback; most if not all of them represent first or early drafts. The new assessment model allows for students to write drafts and revise them based on feedback; for that reason, the essays you read here are likely to be less polished than what you will expect under the new model.

Additionally, students all received the same writing task and the same sources for this assignment; they were not required to conduct research to find sources; only to synthesize from those provided. The writing task and works cited list, as well as the scoring matrix against which the essays were evaluated, are on the following pages.

The assignment represented here, "explaining an issue," is slightly different from the issue analysis that students are now asked to write. You can discern the primary differences by comparing task descriptions and scoring matrices for the two tasks (all of which are available on the LSUWP website). A close reading of the current version of both documents could be a useful exercise in rhetorical strategy for students.

## Teaching note:

Asking students (individually, in small groups, or as a class) to read and evaluate sample essays against the scoring matrix can be an effective way to help them internalize the expectations of the task and gain a useful vocabulary for peer review and revision.

You will find eleven sample essays here, one representing each possible score. It should go without saying that it would be neither particularly compelling nor helpful to review all eleven essays with your students; instead we have included the range for you to choose from based on your students' needs and your instructional strategies.

**Writing Task**  
**1001 Assessment Fall 2010**

The University Writing Program (UWP), as part of its English 1001 assessment, is giving you this series of articles on the 2010 Gulf Oil Spill. Your assignment is to write an essay in which you explain the issue and highlight the controversies initiated by spill itself.

Assume that the readers of your essay are people similar to you and of course they have heard about or even had some experience with the 2010 Gulf Oil Spill. However, they may not have paid the close attention to the issue that you will have paid, because you are reading a number of assigned articles. They will rely on your essay for information that will help them better understand the various aspects of this issue. In your essay, consider the following questions: What background information is useful for understanding the 2010 Gulf Oil Spill? What are the controversies they have come to light as a result of the spill itself? What stakeholders or groups of people have been affected by the spill? Analyze for us the various subsets of issues that emerge in readings?

The information you provide to your readers should be drawn primarily from the set of articles. Although we have included eleven articles (mostly short) that we require you to read, you must use at least seven of these in your essay. You are also allowed to include in your essay any personal experience you or people you know have had with the oil spill. Be careful to keep this anecdotal evidence in perspective. This essay is explaining an issue and **not** taking a stand or position on it.

When you summarize, paraphrase or quote information, you must accurately identify the source and include appropriate parenthetical documentation (this means in-text citation). Also, any work you cite will be on your Works Cited page of at least seven sources. Remember to place word-for-word language in quotation marks. You must use MLA documentation style.

The essay should be 1200-1500 words or 5-6 pages long. You should also include a Works Cited page with your essay that you turn in.\* Unless you use all eleven works, your Works Cited page will be subset of the one below.

*\*individual works cited lists are not included in this set of essays.*

## Works Cited

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## Scoring Matrix

	<b>Information</b>	<b>Exposition</b>	<b>Synthesis</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Style</b>	<b>Conventions</b>	<b>Documentation</b>
<b>1</b>	Little to no information. Mostly summary and generalizations. Some information is inaccurate or misinterpreted.	Inability to identify the central issue. Bias is clearly evident. Explanations are confusing, misleading, or irrelevant.	Complete lack of basic integration. Presentation of information seems random. No significant connections are made.	Almost no organization. Seems disconnected from the content. No transitions.	Generalizations, diction, and sentence-structure make the essay difficult to understand. Syntax is extremely awkward.	Weak control of conventions. Frequent errors which are serious enough to interfere with the reader's comprehension.	Minimal grasp of citation methods. Few if any references. No in-text citation.
<b>2</b>	Superficial knowledge of the issue. Mostly generalizations, though sparse details are provided. Comprehension seems lacking.	Positions oversimplified. Explanations are confusing, misleading, or superficial. Bias is evident.	Though connections are suggested, the logic seems faulty, or the information is inaccurate. Excessive summarizing. Quotes are not clearly integrated. Reads more like an annotated bibliography.	Organization is either simplistic or muddled. Doesn't convincingly follow a clear overall plan. Poor transitions.	Syntax is awkward. Weak cohesion between sentences. Parts of the essay are difficult to understand.	Limited control of conventions. There are numerous errors; sometimes these errors may interfere with the reader's comprehension.	References are provided, but they are riddled with errors. Many are missing.
<b>3</b>	Occasional broad generalizations or inaccuracies. Insufficient number of sources.	Basic positions identified, but explanations are simplistic. Tendency to lapse into argument.	Connections are generally superficial. Excessive summarizing. Overuse of a few sources.	Some organization is apparent. Paragraphing is choppy & disjointed; the overall structure is generally simplistic. Transitions are clumsy.	Syntax is fairly understandable. Misused passive voice, lack of parallelism and variety but essay is able to be understood.	Frequent errors that do not seriously interfere with comprehension.	References are provided, but they are not accurate in MLA style. Some documentation is missing.
<b>4</b>	Ample, accurate information provided. Sufficient number of sources.	Basic positions are identified. Explanations are fairly balanced. Language is generally free of bias.	Connections are clear, and sources are evenly distributed throughout the essay. Quotes are clearly integrated.	Overall structure is coherent. Transitions are generally efficient.	Easy to understand. Diction may not be perfect but does not block comprehension. Sometimes wordy.	Sporadic, minor errors.	References are generally correct; most errors are minor. Clearly documenting almost all sources when necessary.
<b>5</b>	Balanced amount of specific and general information. Sufficient number of sources.	Multiple perspectives are represented. Explanations are even-handed and thoughtful. Complete lack of bias on the issue.	Connections are clear and analytical. Sources are evenly distributed throughout the essay. Quotes are clearly integrated, but not overused.	Organization is clearly present. Paragraphs develop logically. Transitions are generally efficient and graceful.	Good diction, stylistically varied sentences, and clear transitional words, phrases, and sentences. Parts of the essay are engaging.	Clear, consistent control over writing mechanics and conventions with only two-three errors.	References are correct and consistent. MLA style is present. Almost all documentations are present.
<b>6</b>	Ample, accurate information supplemented by rhetorical analysis. Sufficient number of sources.	Multiple perspectives are represented and contextualized. Explanations are even-handed and insightful. Complete lack of bias on the issue.	Connections are explicit and rhetorically savvy. Sources are evenly distributed throughout the essay. Quotes are clearly integrated, but not overused.	Organization is coherent and efficient. Paragraphs develop logically. Follows through with a clear overall plan. Transitions are uniformly efficient and graceful.	Consistently precise diction; stylistically varied, effective sentence structures; and effective transitional words, phrases, and sentences. Very engaging.	Sustained control over writing conventions. Precise use of mechanics.	References are universally correct and precise. MLA style is correctly used. All necessary documentations are present.

**Score: 2****The Greater Effects?**

There is no adjective large enough to describe the girth of the oil spill that occurred the evening of April 20, 2010 in the Gulf (BP Spill Timeline). The effects BP faced were dreadful; including the lost of eleven employees, approximately over \$20 billion in compensation funds, CEO Tony Hawyard's resignation, and criticism from many citizens (BP Executive Summary). Along with the company's loss, many lives were affected due to results of the catastrophic event. The threat of low ability to find work, crucial life changes, and lack of funds to pay bills, suffocated the minds of many who were affected. The issue that puzzles many and illuminates many controversies is if the spill's effects were greater on BP or the people of the Gulf?

In a cataclysmic disaster situation like this, someone must take responsibility for the loss of various assets, consent punishment for multiple safety failures, and adhere to governmental bureaucracies. Most importantly, they must obtain responsibility for the compensation of workers and families affected by the disaster. In his public remarks, the president asserts that "companies...responsible for oil spills are the ones that pay for the harm caused by these oil spills—not the tax payers (Obama)". The president also believes that "there is enough responsibility to go around and all parties should be willing to accept it (Obama)." Suspension of pre-judgments and opinions would allow someone to realize that BP actually did take responsibility. "The crew of the Deepwater Horizon was ready to hit pay dirt (Walsh)" until April 20, 2010 when the escape of hydrocarbons into the Macondo well onto Transocean's Deepwater Horizon, resulted in explosions and a breakout fire on the oil rig" The fire was fueled by the oil and burned for 36 grueling hours until the oil rig sank. The oil continued to flow from the rig while underwater for a total of 87 days. According to BP "the accident...involved a well integrity failure, followed by a loss of hydrostatic control of the well." Unfortunately, the emergency functions on the well failed to perform the task to "seal the reservoir after the initial explosions". As a result, a total of eleven people lost their lives, seventeen were injured, and countless others were affected (BP Executive Summary).

The effects of the oil spill on the residents of the Gulf should not be ignored. "Sixty percent of the respondents surveyed related to BP's response as not so good or poor (Goidel)." The people feel as though BP did not do their job. BP responded to the legal and financial issues involved and constructed a full investigation of the spill. They reported all of the results, but their response to the spill and efforts were not sufficient enough in the eyes of the critics. As the oil from BP spill washes ashore, people on Gulf Coast are suffering huge damages they have never met before. Barrels of oil a day are spewing out from the damaged BP drilling rig to Gulf of Mexico. It has ruined the shoreline, killed animal and sea life, threaded the ecosystem, and harmed the tourism and fishing in Louisiana. The threat will not end now, "seventy-eight percent of respondents say the spill will have a major long term effect on the environment (Goidel)." This shows that the effects of the oil spill will be a continuous problem.

The aftermath of the oil spill has influenced many to believe that the marine life collected from the Gulf is unsafe to consume. The thought of oil remains and bacteria contaminating a meal is an unpleasant thought that will stray many from consuming seafood. "On a scale of one to ten, (10 indicating the highest level of concern) 41.4 percent of respondents indicated that they were very worried about the safety of local seafood. In addition to this, 63.1 percent rated their concern as 6 or higher. Over half of the respondents said they were less likely to buy local seafood as a result of the spill (Goidel)." These alarming statics show the significance of how the oil spill affects the views of many toward the marine life from the Gulf. Although, contrary to the popular belief, according to research discovered by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) "...the Gulf scientists have tested 1,735 tissue samples collected from the Gulf...only a few showed amounts of dispersants residue (13 of the 1,735) and they were way below the safety threshold...reinforcing our findings to date that seafood from the Gulf remains safe." Therefore, NOAA and FDA's findings may possibly restore trust in the consumption of seafood from the gulf. By reassuring consumers through this research; NOAA and the FDA may effectively assuage the fears that the dreadful oil spill caused towards the safety of consuming the marine life from the Gulf. Darla and Todd Rooks, shrimp boat owners in Louisiana's Grand Bayou, despite official assurances do not believe that the water is totally clean and safe after the BP spill. The only reason they cautiously shrimp, is to ensure survival for their business and themselves. The couple feels this way because of the recent strange behavior of the shrimp. "If you get in shallow water five miles out and you kick up some dirt, oil comes to the top. It doesn't stay there for long because it sinks back down because it's been dispersed, but it does come to the top. And shrimp normally bury up in the mud in the middle of the day and come up at night when it's nice and cool. [Now] they're swimming on top of the water in 100-degree temperature during the day. I'm 47 years old

and never seen that before in my life ( Yeoman )". The puzzling question is who are we to listen too? The couple's experience in the marine life collection and researcher's evidence are both convincing.

Yet, not all the effects of the oil spill have been negative. Some scientists have been able to use this event to demonstrate their expertise knowledge and introduce solutions. President Barack Obama states that "what really matters is this: there's oil leaking and we need to stop it—and we need to stop it as soon as possible...this has been extremely difficult...scientists and engineers are currently using the best, most advanced technology that exists to try to stop the flow of oil as quickly as possible," (Obama) in his remarks on the oil spill. Indeed there are scientists, such as Ralph Portier, looking for solutions to the crisis. Portier, an environmental biologist at Louisiana State University, specializes in the use of degradation bacteria. Portier has accomplished creating oil-eating bacteria that speed up the natural degradation process. If Portier is granted the permits needed to test the "bugs", his techniques and research will benefit the effort to clean the oil spill.

Environmental oil spills are one of the most hazardous and preventable accidents that occur. In truth the effects of the oil spilled affected those of the Gulf and BP—as a whole. The affects did not have a greater impact on one more than the other. It is possible that all can agree that this catastrophic event did not have to happen. As a result, they learned the importance of the establishment of stringent and necessary protocols.

**Score: 3****2010 Gulf Oil Spill**

“On the evening of April 20, 2010, a well control event allowed hydrocarbons to escape from the Macondo well onto Transocean’s *Deepwater Horizon*, resulting in explosions and fire on the rig. Eleven people lost their lives, and 17 others were injured. The fire, which was fed by hydrocarbons from the well, continued for 36 hours until the rig sank. Hydrocarbons continued to flow from the reservoir through the wellbore and the blowout preventer (BOP) for 87 days, causing a spill of national significance” (Deepwater 3).

Most of the country did not realize how this spill would affect our lives during the following months. My life, at that time, centered on high school graduation, with all the parties and activities that come with that very important event. It never entered my mind that the spill could ruin lives in more than one way. Looking back, I now realize that I should have taken more interest in this massive event. It affected so many people in my home state of Louisiana. How could this oil spill have happened? Could it have been prevented? Who was responsible? Was there negligence involved? Who was going to pay for the clean-up? Were there really those who were insensitive to the loss of human life, as well as wildlife? These are just a few of the questions that I will attempt to answer throughout this essay.

A drilling company by the name of Transocean owned the *Deepwater Horizon*. They leased the rig to BP. BP was preparing to drill an oil well, approximately 50 miles south of the Louisiana coast. Something went wrong and an explosion occurred, followed by a tremendous fire. Even though eleven lives were lost in the fire, as well as the sinking of the rig, the tragedy continued. Thousands of barrels of petroleum spilled into the Gulf, due to the rupture of the pipes that carried the oil to the surface. This was not supposed to happen. There were devices in place to prevent a rupture in the pipes. These devices failed. BP, despite all efforts, was unable to stop the flow of oil from the injured well. “An oil slick formed on the surface and grew by the day, drifting inexorably toward the coast of Louisiana, home to vulnerable marshes and wetlands, and the most productive fishery in the lower 48 states” (Walsh 1).

On April, 29, after several unsuccessful attempts to seal the well, President Obama issued his first public comments regarding the oil spill. He pledged “every single available resource” to contain the spill. He also determined that the cleanup be the responsibility of BP. As the spill began to approach the coast of Louisiana and threatened its natural resources, a state of emergency was declared (BP 2).

New drilling in the Gulf of Mexico was banned by the United States on April 30, and on May 1, Obama flew to Louisiana to observe the cleanup activities. The oil spill was spreading (BP 3).

Two weeks after the spill, the well continued to gush massive amounts of oil, with no end in sight. As of May 3, the oil slick had grown to a mass of 2000 square miles. Around 1300 miles of coastline, wildlife, and fishing industry were threatened. There was concern that the oil could travel south around Florida and expand as far as the East Coast (Walsh 1).

After months of activity and controversy, the oil flow was finally stopped for the first time in 87 days, on July 15 (BP 10).

Tony Hayward was the BP chairman at the time of the spill, and he took full responsibility. He also said that he would pay claims and also for the cost of the cleanup. He later blamed the spill on the blowout preventer that was owned by Transocean (BP 3-4). Tony Hayward later caused more controversy after making the statement, “There’s no one who wants this over more than I do. I want my life back” (BP 6).

On September 19, five months after the oil rig disaster, BP was finally able to seal off the ruptured well. It was now “effectively dead.” A few days later it was reported that an estimated total of 4.4 million barrels of oil had leaked into the Gulf of Mexico, and later in November it was estimated that the BP cost of the spill would rise to \$40 billion (BP 14-16).

There were devastating results of this oil spill, in which thousands of people were affected. Human lives were lost, wildlife was lost, and jobs were lost. The list could go on and on. ProPublica, an investigative news service, reported that as BP grew to be one of the world’s largest, private oil companies, it often cut corners, causing concern related to

safety and environmental issues. BP, one of the major oil companies in Alaska, produced almost two times as much oil as the other major oil companies in operation there, but since the year 2000 there have been four times as many large spills. Regarding their operation in the Gulf of Mexico, BP had more spills than any other major competitor in the Gulf, and that competitor produced more oil (Lustgarten 1-2).

A 2010 Gulf Oil Survey was performed May 21–June 12, to obtain opinions of local residents most affected by the disaster. These residents expressed concern regarding the safety of local seafood, as well as the effects the spill would have on tourism and the oil and gas industry (Goidel 2).

On October 29, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) announced that a chemical test had been developed to determine the presence of dispersants used in the oil spill in commonly eaten seafood. According to the commissioner of the FDA, Margaret A. Hamburg, Ph.D., “The overwhelming majority of the seafood tested shows no detectable residue, and not one of the samples show a residue level that would be harmful for humans. There is no question Gulf seafood coming to market is safe from oil or dispersant residue” (NOAA 1).

Darla and Todd Rocks may feel differently about the safety of seafood. They grew up in Louisiana and have been in the shrimping business full-time for 12 years. Their business was shut down for five months due to the oil spill. Darla remains unconvinced that her shrimp are safe to eat, but she has to survive, so she continues to shrimp. Even after all the testing that had been done, as well as the assurances she and Todd received from the FDA and NOAA, she still has doubts and wonders if their livelihood can continue (Yeoman 1-2).

Tourism is another industry suffering from the oil spill. Tourism supports the Gulf economics more than it does to other parts of the country. More than \$34 billion was spent, in 2000, by visitors to the Gulf Coast, and 400,000 job salaries were paid by this spending. Research tells us that “travel intentions are down significantly for the Gulf” and also that “misperceptions abound regarding which areas are affected”, as well as “travelers believe the impacts of the disaster will be felt for a long time” (Oxford 6).

Wildlife endangerment is also a real threat brought on by the oil spill. Our state of Louisiana contains approximately 40% of the coastal wetlands. This includes our bayous and beaches. It was not uncommon during the days of the spill to see numerous pictures of wildlife covered in crude. Many were smothered to death by the toxic oil (Walsh 4).

It was on October 12 that the moratorium on new deepwater drilling was finally lifted. It was a time that many could return to work, after six months, but many Environmental groups opposed the decision (BP 15).

All should agree that our next plan of action should be the prevention of another oil spill of this size. Energy efficiency and development of alternative – energy projects, as well as increased regulations and climate legislation are a few of the alternatives that have been suggested. According to Carol Brown, White House czar for climate and energy, “Oil is going to be a part of it, but it doesn’t change the fact we need a comprehensive energy plan that can lessen our dependence on oil and help invest in clean energy.” What did we learn from the massive disaster our country suffered this year? “Energy policy, like so much else in the country, has been set to drift for too long. But the moment is there for the taking, a chance for something worthwhile to rise out the muck still bubbling up from the floor of the Gulf of Mexico” (Walsh 6-7).

**Score: 4****"BP Oil Spill 2010"**

On April 20, 2010, a well control event caused hydrocarbons to leak from the Macondo Well onto the Transocean's Deep water Horizon; as a result, caused oil to spill into the Gulf of Mexico (BP Internal Investigation Team). Because of its leak, the oilrig exploded killing 11 men and injuring 17 others (Goidel and Kirzinger). The fire continued to burn for almost two days until the well sank into the Gulf of Mexico (BP Internal Investigation Team). On April 24, 2010, research experts discovered that a damaged wellhead from the explosion was leaking oil into the Gulf. Immediately, experts noted the severity of the disaster. It was estimated that 53,000 barrels of oil escaped into the Gulf that totaled over 185 million gallons in three months ("BP Oil Spill Timeline"). Although the actual cause of disaster is not fully known, investigators continue to piece together the clues in which they have found. So far, investigators believe that a series of failures caused the disaster (Walsh). The spill continues to cause damage to marine and wildlife habitats as well as the Gulf's fishing and tourism industries. It has also resulted in many controversial topics such as blaming BP or the national government, the cause of the disaster itself, and the economic impact. The disaster even posed a problem for the residents of the Gulf Coast, the seafood and fishing industries, and its tourism. With the tremendous amounts of worry caused by the disaster, President Obama declared the oil spill a "massive and potentially unprecedented environmental disaster" (Walsh).

Weeks later, Americans were overwhelmed with images from the disaster including a live camera shot of the oil gushing from the oilrig's pipe. With numerous amounts of oil being poured into the Gulf of Mexico, BP was still unable to stop the leak (Goidel and Kirzinger). BP Exploration and Production Company was the lease operator of the Mississippi Canyon Block 252, which contained the Macondo Well. BP, which operates in over 80 countries, is the third largest energy company in the world specializing in oil and gas and also produces about 3.8 million barrels of oil daily. Throughout its history, BP has been involved in a number of environmental, safety and political controversies, including the 1965 Sea Gem incident and the 2010 Deep Water Horizon Oil Spill ("BP Oil Spill Timeline").

As a result of the oilrig disaster, BP formed an investigation team of 50 internal and external specialists who gathered facts surrounding the incident, analyzed information to identify probable causes, and made recommendations to prevent a similar event in the future. During the investigation, fault tree analysis was used to determine probable causes of the event. In fault tree analysis an undesired state of a system is analyzed using Boolean logic to combine a series of lower-level events. This analysis method is used to determine the probability of a safety hazard (BP Internal Investigation Team).

As a result of the catastrophe, many controversial topics arose. A major controversial topic focused on what was the actual cause of the explosion. The BP team discovered eight possible factors contributing the failure of the well; consequently resulting in the explosion. Some researchers believed that casing of cement was single-layered instead of multi-layered, which protects the hydrocarbons from seeping out (BP Internal Investigation Team). On the other hand, most investigators believe that the explosion resulted from a series of failures throughout the well itself. Determining the cause of the explosion was a big deal for BP and its researchers; however, during the first few months of the spill an even bigger problem was being faced: sealing the well. The major part of the ordeal was that the hole had to be sealed many feet underwater and done by robots and remotes. "It's like performing open-heart surgery at 5,000 feet in the dark with robot-controlled submarines," stated BP America head Lamar McKay (Walsh). Finally, on September 19, 2010, BP seals the ruptured well and leaves it "effectively dead" ("BP Oil Spill Timeline").

During the catastrophic event, Americans wondered whom to blame for the incident as well as the slow response. Some Americans believe the BP Company should be at fault for the events caused by the exploding well. Researches say that BP skipped necessary safety procedures. For example, it was shown those days before the blast, the casing selected only provided a single-layer of protection to prevent gas from leaking in the well (BP Internal Investigation Team). Jeanne Pascal, a career Environmental Protection Agency attorney, agreed with BP being blamed for the events caused. She stated in BP's 15-year journey to contest with the world's largest oil companies, its administration has avoided the risk and has gambled with the safety of hundreds of facilities and thousands of its employee's lives. Carol Browner, a White House environmental adviser, also sought blame against the BP Company. "Just weeks before the explosion, President Obama... might be important," said Carol (Lustgarten). President Obama was also a target in the blame of the 2010 BP Oil Spill. "I take responsibility. It is my job to make sure that everything is done to shut this down," mentioned President Obama (Obama). Not many continue to blame President Obama for the spill itself; however, many do seek blame for the

response of the disaster. President Obama later declared that he and his administration could have responded better to the situation. He thought BP would handle the situation better on itself; however, that wasn't the case (King).

Another controversy dealt with how BP handled the oil spill. It was shown that BP had spent an enormous amount of money on public relations and televised broadcast to attempt to protect its brand. BP also reported that their company had hired many workers to assist with the cleanup, which was proved untrue. It was also known that the company spent about three weeks in the beginning phase of the disaster attempting to capture the oil coming out of the well instead of shutting the well down completely (King).

The BP Oil Spill affected many residents of the gulf coast. Following a telephone survey conducted by LSU Mass Communications Department revealed that Americans along the gulf coast were deeply concerned about the current environmental and economic conditions. Almost 90% of surveyors believed that the seafood and fishing industry would have the heaviest impact because of the disaster (Goidel and Kirzinger). Gulf coast residents were deeply concerned about the affects the spill would have on one of the main costal industries: seafood and fishing (Oxford Economics). This industry along the gulf coast generates over 2.1 million dollars annually and created over 16,000 jobs; however, many fear that the capacity of the oil spill will cause the seafood and fishing industry to see major effects (Goidel and Kirzinger).

Tourism is one of the top economic facets in the Gulf region; however, it is declining because of the oil spill disaster. Gulf Coast residents now fear what is at stake as tourism declines. Tourism brings in many jobs to the Gulf region. In June, a survey conducted by TNS, a leading provider of market research, showed that 10% of travelers changed their plans to travel to the Gulf region because of the oil spill. This survey proved that Americans were not traveling to the Gulf region as much as in previous years; consequently, would cause less employment opportunities and money to the Gulf region (Oxford Economics).

Now, Americans are trying to figure out what is next in the struggle against the oil spill. Since the leak is now sealed and no more oil is pouring into the Gulf, recovery tactics are now being put into play. Bioremediation is being used to "eat away" at the oil in the Gulf (Nijhuis). Another recovery tactic is the use of a chemical to detect dispersants used in the Deep-water Horizon-BP oil spill for seafood. From these tests, federal waters were re-opened. "The new test should help strengthen consumer confidence in Gulf seafood," said Margaret A. Hamburg, Ph. D., commissioner of the Food and Drug Administration ("NOAA and FDA Announce Chemical Test for Dispersant in Gulf Seafood; All Samples Test Within Safety Threshold"). The U.S. Coast Guard estimates the cleanup will take many years. Studies show that tar balls and patties could be washed upon shore for many more years. The effect on traveling is not yet known, but researchers agree that until the mess is fully resolved the Gulf Coast will see far less tourist.

In conclusion, the BP Oil Spill 2010 affected more than BP itself. It affected the marine and wildlife, Gulf Coast residents, and even future travelers to the Gulf region. In the attempt to salvage these the Gulf Coast community, BP and the federal government are taking the necessary steps in the cleanup of the catastrophic oil spill. Little is known on how long it will take to clean up the mess; however, until it is done, BP and the federal government will work diligently completing each task. Many believe Obama should place comprehensive energy and climate legislation laws. Some also think the U.S. needs an increase the development of alternative-energy projects. Altogether, Americans want to not see this type of disaster happen again, and to take the necessary steps to prevent it in the future.

**Score: 5****Gulf Coast in Crisis**

American citizens require a lot of energy to fuel our homes, cars, and more and much of this energy comes from oil. That is why in April 2010 the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico caused so much discussion and emotion. British Petroleum (BP) was found financially responsible for this oil spill, as the rig was licensed to them ("BP oil spill timeline", 2010). Although previous oil spills have occurred, this one was different. Another well-known oil spill -The Exxon-Valdez oil spill in 1989-dumped oil on the surface of the water, and this most recent oil spill had oil coming up from the floor of the ocean. The oil spill affected our nation's economy in many ways. There are many controversies that people consider when talking about the BP oil spill.

The first concern that BP, other oil companies, and our government worried about was putting a stop to the oil coming out of the drill site (Garden, 2010). In the president's remarks he acknowledged to the public that the drill was 5,000 feet underneath the surface of the ocean and it would be difficult to stop the oil leaking, but also assured them that the best scientists and engineers are working on a solution to the problem with the best equipment possible. President Obama also mentioned that he was no longer going to not question oil companies, because in his opinion the relationship between the government and the great oil companies was getting too comfortable. Eleven workers were killed in the fire of the explosion and 17 more were injured. The oil leak was caused by hydrocarbons escaping from the well; however this might have been prevented had the second line of defense on the well functioned correctly. There was a time that officials believed the oil in the Gulf of Mexico could have made its way around the tip of Florida and up into the beaches of the east coast, destroying the beaches and coast along the way (Walsh, 2010). The second concern that was addressed was "to contain the spill and protect the Gulf Coast and the people who live there." According to the BP Executive Summary released on September 8th, 2010 a series of events led to this catastrophic event and not a single one.

Many citizens in Louisiana rely on the Gulf Coast for their livelihood. Some citizens live along the coast, while some people collect goods (such as shrimp) from the coast and sell them for money. Also, our well-known coastal wetlands and seafood attract tourists every year. After the oil spill, however, there was less food and wetlands for tourists to some see. This is affecting the economy of Louisiana in a negative way. Even 57 percent of the Gulf Coast residents said they are less likely to buy local seafood because of the oil spill (Goidel, Kirzinger 2010). This is because many people were concerned about the safety of the food. There was a concern that oil and/or the dispersants used to break up the oil would remain in the seafood. In response to this concern, the government issued a two step examination process. The first examination is conducted by trained expert and is called a sensory analysis. The second part of the examination involves collecting tissue and testing it for levels of contaminants. This double assured that consumers would be safe from the contaminants (NOAA, FDA 2010). Because the oil spill has damaged a lot of the seafood in our Gulf, then the workers who collect the seafood are being affected. One example is a couple named Darla and Todd, "The Rooksies", that has a shrimping business for a living in Plaquemines parish. Their business was shut down for five months after the oil spill, yet they only received four weeks worth of compensation. All this happened after they had lost their rental house and the boat they had bought because of Hurricane Katrina (Yeoman, 2010).

Along with these losses of jobs, the oil spill is also very personal for some citizens. Many other citizens were still trying to recover from the 2005 Hurricane Katrina and another disaster came along and halted their progress. Oil is starting to encroach on the waterways that people grew up on. Along with the recovery from the hurricane, the coast of Louisiana has been in trouble for quite some time. The coastal wetlands of Louisiana are disappearing for various reasons. One reason is there are dams holding the Mississippi River in place, which is causing less sediment to be deposited at the mouth of the river and land is being lost (Nijhuis,2010). With our coast already in danger, their frustration with BP and the oil spill could be backed by sound evidence. According to the White House environmental advisor Carol Browner, BP has a "long history of safety violations and environmental accidents". Also, a former Environmental Protection Agency attorney noted that she witnessed BP get charged with four crimes, the most out of any oil company she's dealt with and still receive much money to drill more wells. One example of a safety violation of BP is since 1990, they have had 52 worker safety violations as compared to seven for ConocoPhillips (Lustgarten, 2010). BP was also cutting costs in essential places to the survival company such as: employee training, plant maintenance, and investment in newer and safer equipment. This was found to be a problem by Jordan Barab, OSHA's deputy assistant secretary of labor. OSHA's records indicate that "BP has been levied 300 times more in fines for refinery violations than any other oil company" (Lustgarten, 2010).

Because of the devastation of this event, many people affected had to file for compensation of lost business and items. Even though this was a big part of the aftermath of the oil spill, there is a little skepticism as well as to how the claims were awarded to people. Mr. Feinburg, the official independent administrator of the Gulf Coast Claims Facility was considered to be awarding funds from the BP compensation fund. "Top state officials from Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida have all raised alarms that Mr. Feinburg is laying down the rules for the claims fund with little input from the states most affected." (King, 2010) It was ordered by the Justice . Department that the Center for Disaster Fraud would focus it's time and effort on the oil spill instead of the ongoing investigations from Hurricane Katrina. Another method of Feinburg's that was criticized by the Federal government was how he planned on allocating funds based on how close the person is to the shoreline.

The 2010 BP Oil Spill had many effects on the people and economy in Louisiana. Much of the nation relies on the Gulf Coast for seafood exports; therefore it is very important to monitor anything that could affect production. There are many aspects to this oil spill that can be looked at in further detail such as: scientific, legal, economical, ethical, and moral. One of the arguments made during this oil spill crisis was some citizens want to stop offshore drilling altogether while other people still feel that it's a necessary form of getting our energy in the United States. There is evidence to support both sides of this argument.

**Score: 6****The 2010 Gulf Oil Spill: An Environmental Tragedy**

On April 20, 2010, an oil spill caused by the oil company, British Petroleum, impacted the world and has had a tremendous affect on the lives of many animals, plants, and ecosystems. What went wrong that day was that “a well control event allowed hydrocarbons to escape from the Macondo well onto Transocean’s Deepwater Horizon,” resulting in the downward spiral that led to the worst oil spill of all time (BP Internal Investigation Team 3). During this time, many controversies sprang up that were political and environmental due to all of the unsuccessful attempts at fixing the problem. The fishing industry crippled in the 87-day span of the spill and some people’s standard of living dramatically changed because of it. Tourism, one of the nations most prosperous values of income, has also been hit hard due to the oil spill. “Current indicators show double-digit declines in plans to travel to the region” (Oxford Economics 2). All of these aspects concerning the spill resulted simply because of the massive affect it has had on the United States.

The 2010 Gulf Oil Spill happened not just all at once, but with a chain of reactions resulting in the major tragedy that shook the world. On that fateful evening of April 20, 2010, “eleven people lost their lives and seventeen others were injured” (BP Internal Investigation Team 3). The hydrocarbons, which shortly caused the rig itself to explode, caught fire and continued for thirty-six hours until the rig itself crumbled and sank to the bottom of the ocean floor (BP Internal Investigation Team 3). There were fail-safe devices put in place to stop something of this magnitude from happening, but they failed (Walsh 1). This in turn led to the eighty-seven day continuation of oil spilling into the Gulf of Mexico. After more than two weeks of overflowing oil and no easy method of closing off the well had been found, economic, political, and environmental issues started to rise quickly (Walsh1). Meanwhile, to slow the process of oil, “officials conducted burns to remove oil from the open water” (BP Oil Spill Timeline). Constant video footage of the leak was put up to show just how much oil had been leaking from the spill. The well had been estimated to be leaking seventy thousand barrels per day (BP Oil Spill Timeline). BP then pumped thousands of barrels of mud into the well in an attempt to plug the leak, but that failed as well (BP Oil Spill Timeline). After many countless attempts to seal off the well, it was finally capped on July 15th officially ending the oil spill (BP Oil Spill Timeline). This devastating event, covered over the span of 87-days, has gone down in history as the all time worst oil spill in U.S. history and the controversies that sprang up will also be looked at for generations to come.

Following the 2010 Gulf Oil Spill, controversies started to spring up in all corners of the world mainly directed at BP itself. One controversy that sprang up was that Kenneth Feinberg, the official independent administrator of the Gulf Coast Claims Facility, was “laying down the rules for the claims fund with little input from the states most affected” (King Jr.). State officials were also raising alarms as to how Mr. Feinberg planned to base payment decisions (King Jr.). Mr. Feinberg warned that in the future, the process would generate more angst and anger along the Gulf Coast (King Jr.). Other controversies derived from environmentalists who continued to argue that the U.S. needed to get off oil fast (Walsh 4). Environmentalists further protested due to the claims made by The International Energy Agency that expected “global oil demand to grow 24% between now and 2030, which means that the race to drink up petroleum will only accelerate” (Walsh 4). Jeanne Pascal, a well-known Environmental Protection Agency attorney, for 12 years had battled it out with BP and their continued pattern of misconduct (Lustgarten 1). The 2010 Gulf Oil Spill caused many controversies, but though the solution to those might be reached, the lives of many who were closest to the spill might never be the same.

The people and groups that were affected by the 2010 Gulf Oil Spill suffered great economic tragedies and some ultimately lost their jobs. A prime example would be of Darla and Todd Rooks who are shrimpers that live off the ecosystem in Louisiana’s Grand Bayou (Yeoman). “Darla pointed out that manmade canals cut by the oil companies, which, along with the river levees, have hastened the loss of the delta’s wetlands. Less marshland means less habitat for young shrimp” (Yeoman). “One of the riskiest things that Darla said is that she remains unsure that shrimp from oil-affected waters is healthy to eat” (Yeoman). The continued act of wiping out marshes by the oil companies will soon cause environmental disasters that will overall affect the world. The affects are noticed by the highest chain of command in our country. President Obama states, “There’s already been a loss of life, damage to our coastline, to fish and wildlife, and to the livelihoods of everyone from fishermen to restaurant and hotel owners. I saw firsthand the anger and frustration felt by our neighbors in the Gulf” (Obama). This acknowledgement from the highest authority shows that the traumatic effects of the 2010 Gulf Oil Spill has caused the loss of financial stability for hundreds. Although the oil spill clearly affected many people’s lives, it also had a great affect on tourism.

Tourism recently has taken a massive hit economically by the 2010 Gulf Oil Spill and has really hit some of the

southern states the hardest. "Tourism is one of the top economic drivers of the Gulf region. The potential impact of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill could

cost the U.S. coastal economies \$22.7 billion over a period of three years" (Oxford Economics 2). Tourism spending contributes to "nearly 400,000 jobs within the Gulf Coast" (Oxford Economics 4). "As a generator of employment, tourism is more important to the Gulf economies than to the rest of the country" (Oxford Economics 4). Although the losses pertain to where the oil has been, tourists have moved away from the United States, in general, in large numbers (Oxford Economics 6). Evidently, the 2010 Gulf Oil Spill will likely impact tourism for up to 36 months (Oxford Economics 21). "The losses fall heavily on Florida due to the larger area at risk on both the Gulf and Atlantic coasts, but coastal Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama are more directly exposed to disaster" (Oxford Economics 21). Overall, tourism, in our country, has taken a turn for the worst and will take time to regenerate from the loss due to the oil spill. Coastal states alone have a long road ahead of them to tourism recovery and the continuation of a balanced economy still relies majorly on the oil companies that surround them.

On April 20, 2010 the world experienced a catastrophe that will never be forgotten. The 2010 Gulf Oil Spill caused by the oil company British Petroleum, has had a crippling affect on the United States. People have lost their lives and their jobs simply because of the safety failures that took place on the oilrig. "Estimates of the total spill range from 100 million to 184 million gallons of oil" (Oxford Economics 3). The oil leaked continually into the gulf for 87 days with many failed attempts to stop the flow along the way and was finally capped off on July 15th 2010. Shrimpers and other fishermen took the hardest hit financially from the spill and were compensated by BP. Kenneth Feinberg, who was responsible for handing out money to the oil spill victims, was criticized for spill compensation terms (King Jr.). Environmentalists were outraged and protested to the continued production of oil (Walsh). Tourism was hit especially hard and not only affected the southern coastal states, but the entire nation as well. The 2010 Gulf Oil Spill is an event in history that will be talked about for ages to come. The casualties that derived from the spill are of epic proportions and have really taken a toll on the coast's ecosystems with Louisiana's marshes being highly contaminated. People are still cleaning up some of the remainder contaminants of the spill to this day. "It's also our job to make sure this kind of mess doesn't happen again. It's a job we've been doing. It's a job we will keep doing until the well is capped and the spill is cleaned up, and all claims are paid" (Obama).

**Score: 7****Trouble on the Horizon**

On the morning of April 20, 2010 my mother and I were staring at the television hoping that the rig we were watching go up in flames from a pipe blowout was not the rig my father was currently working on. It was not until the next day when we received a phone call from him did we find out that it was not his rig. Unfortunately some families did have loved ones who were part of the Deepwater Horizon crew where 11 people were killed from the explosion and fire with another 17 injured (Guardian.co.uk). Many people are affected by this oil spill disaster, but the people of the Gulf Coast states Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida will suffer the most. Not only the blowout its self but the controversies the after math has brought about.

Many people make their lively hood off the Gulf. Many towns in the Gulf Coast states are know for their contributions to the seafood industry. Take for example the town of Plaquemine and the entire Plaquemine parish in Louisiana. Last year "...shrimpers pulled 19 million pounds from the parish's 1,600 square miles of water"(Yeoman). This was over "...one-sixth of the state's total harvest"(Yeoman). The shrimping industry is not the only hit Louisiana will take from this disaster. Louisiana has many beautiful marshes and wetlands that will be polluted from the spill. Louisiana is also the biggest supplier of fish in the continental United States (Walsh). With your biggest supplier hitting such a drastic speed bump it will affect the rest of the U.S. People in the Gulf Coast also rely on tourism for jobs. There are about 400,000 tourism jobs that are provided by Gulf Coast states. Florida is the largest tourism state of the Gulf Coast states. In 2008 people visiting Florida spent \$20 billion dollars on their trips (Oxford). Even shores in Florida that are oil free are being affected. According to Neil King Jr. "...tourism has taken a hit because of anxiety over the spill, even in places far from where any oil came ashore" (King Jr.).

Since the spill there has been a great deal of surveys that have been done. Many of the numbers are alarming while others are encouraging. 57% of people say they are less likely to buy seafood now because of the spill. Along with 41% of people saying they are very worried about seafood safety. 60% of people said that BP's response to the spill was poor. The two most alarming stats are that 65% of people believe that "...the spill will have a major long term effect on business conditions", and 78% of people think, "...the spill will have a major long term effect on the environment"(Goidel, Kirzinger). Some of the encouraging stats are that now 67% of people now believe in protecting the wetlands. Also that 71.8% of people have paid a great deal of attention to the spill and its on going saga (Goidel, Kirzinger). This shows that a person's awareness of danger and the problems that the Gulf Coast faces is growing. Hopefully their support will follow.

Now since the spill is over and the clean up is under control the biggest question for many people is who is going to pay for their losses? On April 30 BP chairman Tony Hayward said, "...the company will take full responsibility for the spill, paying for all legitimate claims and the cost for the cleanup" (Guardian.co.uk). Kenneth Feinberg was the man that was put in charge of handing out money to the victims. The problem is that since Mr. Feinberg has been put in charge there has been nothing but negative things being said by the victims and those that represent them. Alabama attorney general, Troy King, stated that Feinberg is, "...completely tone-deaf to the concerns of people along the Gulf Coast"(Guardian.co.uk). Mr. Feinberg gave everyone up until November 23 to file for temporary payments. These payments can cover up to 6 months of losses because of the spill. After this people will have three years to properly assess settlement of all damages, which some people say is too little time to asses correctly. Mr. Feinberg respectfully disagrees with all the criticism that he has been receiving (Guardian.co.uk). When something like this happens there are very few winners but many losers. People need to come together as a community and try to keep the losses to a minimum and start to rebuild the area where they experienced losses.

As a nation we should be able to look to our government for help in situations like these, but only one Gulf Coast Governor had over a 50% approval rating during the time of the spill. That was Governor Bobby Jindal of Louisiana. (Oxford) On May 14, 2010 our nation did get reinsurance form its leader President Barack Obama. President Obama had a press release and shared his views on the spill, he stated that he shared the same "...anger and frustration"(Obama) as President that the people in the Gulf Coast were experiencing. He continued by saying that the first order of business was to stop the leak and that he will hold BP to their word by them paying for all the clean up and clams. He says that drilling is a major part of our energy source and that the United States will have to continue to drill, but with much more caution and safety awareness. President Obama also urges the nation to support the Gulf Coast states in their strive to recover from the spill. He says, "...they deserve nothing less than for us to stand up and do whatever is necessary to stop this

spill”(Obama). He ends his address telling the people that the job is also to prevent this from happening again and to finish the clean up and all claims are paid back (Obama). With the leader of the free world urging people for their support hopefully they listen and help those people in the Gulf Coast states who are truly in need.

On April 20, 2010 the Gulf Coast states of the United States of America took a giant step in the wrong direction with the blowing up of the oilrig Deepwater Horizon that was owned by major oil company BP. Since then many people have put in great time and effort into fixing the problems the explosion left behind. People’s lives are slowly starting to come back to normal. This is evident by Darla and Todd Rooks, professional shrimpers, who as of November 8th were on their third night back shrimping since April. According to Yeoman, “ After six months, it marks a return to the familiar”(Yeoman), where people are starting to work again. The seafood economy will not fix itself it will take a group effort from the buyers along with the sellers alike. The tourism industry will in time return to its former glory. The many problems and roadblocks that the people of the Gulf Coast have encountered will be fixed. With the help of the Government, BP, and neighbors the people who have been so greatly affected by this terrible disaster will in time get their life and lively hood back on track.

**Score: 8****Catastrophe in the Gulf**

On April 20, 2010, the United States experienced one of the worst oil spills anyone has ever witnessed. How did we get to that point? Weeks prior to the devastation that occurred on that day, President Obama had announced a deep-water drilling expansion in the Gulf which gave majority of the drilling lease to British Petroleum, BP. According to Carol Browner, the White House environmental adviser, they did not look deep enough into BP's previous safety violations and environmental accidents (Lustgarten). Regardless, BP got the job and started drilling deep beneath the Gulf of Mexico about fifty miles from Louisiana's coast (Walsh). On April 20, 2010, the Deepwater Horizon oil rig, which was owned by Transocean but leased to BP, exploded because a blowout preventer failed to activate causing a massive fire, leaving eleven dead and seventeen injured (Walsh). At first, many people tried to downplay the significance of the spill, but the truth about the severity of the situation would soon come out. A few days after the rig exploded, it was clear that the Gulf of Mexico would be severely affected by this disaster. This angered many people along the coast, for they knew that their everyday lifestyles would be affected as well.

Shrimpers and fisherman all along the coast of the Gulf of Mexico are getting fed up with the slow progress being made to clean up our waters. Because of the spill, they are not catching as much as they used to and as a result, are losing money. This creates a problem because seafood alone brings in an estimated 2.4 billion dollars to Louisiana's economy yearly (Goidel and Kirzinger). As a result of these tough times, Gulf fisherman and shrimpers are starting to get annoyed and are speaking their minds. Darla Rooks, a shrimp boat captain, stated this after a struggling day of shrimping, "At one point, I put a hangman's noose on the back rigging of the boat. I was ready to stick my head in it" (Yeoman). The growing frustration is inevitable for those people who have been drastically affected by the spill. It is uncertain when the oil spill will be completely cleaned up, but it is certain that if it does not happen soon, people like Darla will have to find an alternate source of income which would not only hurt her financial stability, but Louisiana's economy as well.

Recent estimates show that the seafood industry occupies over 16,000 jobs in Louisiana (Goidel and Kirzinger). Because of the struggles many fisherman and shrimpers are facing, seafood businesses are starting to feel the consequences. In order to ensure people that the seafood is not contaminated in anyway, the NOAA and FDA announced that they have a new chemical test which tests for dispersants in Gulf seafood (NOAA and FDA). However, a recent survey was conducted which asked 924 coastal residents if they would still purchase seafood after the oil spill and 57.2 percent of those people said it was less likely (Goidel and Kirzinger). With the government stating that the incoming seafood is clean and with residents still refusing to purchase it, how can we expect to compensate for that?

One major industry affected by the spill is tourism. Before the spill, it was one of the leading sources of income in the Gulf region, bringing in billions of dollars yearly. In 2008 alone, tourism along the Gulf Coast brought in an excess of thirty-four billion dollars (Oxford Economics). That number is expected to decrease dramatically. In a recent survey that was conducted a month after the oil spill, twenty-six percent of those people who planned to visit Louisiana had either postponed or canceled their trip. In another survey conducted two months after the spill, seventeen percent of those people who had planned on visiting Florida, Mississippi, or Texas had canceled or postponed their trip (Oxford Economics). With all the talk about the slow progress being made to getting all the oil out of the Gulf, we can expect our tourist revenue to be nowhere near what it was in the past.

Everyone has a different opinion about who deserves most of the blame for the disaster. Some strongly resent BP and feel that they are the sole people responsible. Others blame the government for not stepping in sooner. On a recent survey of the 924 coastal residents, 75.5 percent of those Louisiana residents believe that the oil spill was not a natural disaster and that the government could have done more to prevent it (Goidel and Kirzinger). However, Obama and the rest of the government strongly disagree. On May 8, 2010, BP blamed the explosion on a methane bubble. However, three days later, the representatives of the three oil companies had to face a hearing before the Senate committee on energy and natural resources. When confronted, they did not stick to their story that the explosion was due to a methane bubble but instead, blamed each other for not doing their jobs properly, resulting in an explosion ("BP Oil Spill Timeline"). A few days later, President Obama addressed the public about the oil spill. When he spoke about the hearing, he stated, "I have to say, though, I did not appreciate what I considered to be a ridiculous spectacle during the congressional hearings into this matter. You had executives of BP and Transocean and Halliburton falling over each other to point the finger of blame at somebody else. The American people could not have been impressed with that display, and I certainly wasn't" (Obama). It is uncertain when our waters will be clean again, but what is certain is that nobody wants to take the blame for

Of all the financial struggles initiated by the oil spill, no industry or company has experienced a greater financial loss than BP itself. In Obama's speech, he made it clear that the taxpayers would not be penalized for someone else's wrongdoing and that all the companies responsible for the spill would be the ones who would pay for the clean-up process (Obama). In late July, BP set aside 32.2 billion dollars for what they believed would be the cost of the clean-up process. However, on November 2, they estimated that the total cost of cleaning up our waters would be around 39.9 billion dollars, a 7.7 billion dollar increase ("BP Oil Spill Timeline"). Not only are they losing money, but they are losing jobs as well. Following the spill, BP caught a lot of criticism, which forced the company to pull out of a bid to drill in the Arctic ("BP Oil Spill Timeline"). It is nearly impossible to predict whether or not BP will ever have as much credibility as it once did, but resolving the issue of the oil spill would be a good place to start.

With all the negativity going on since the spill, people are still staying optimistic. It is never a question of if the Gulf will ever be the same, but rather when. Everyone is pulling together in a group effort in order to help. People all over the United States are coming down to the Gulf region to volunteer. When a disaster occurs, there is a lot of bad that comes out of it, but the one positive outcome is how the people, affected or not, come together as one in order to help those who need it the most.

**Score: 9**

**The Fate of the Gulf Coast Lies in the Hands of BP**

What comes to mind when people mention offshore oil corporations? Some may think of the Gulf of Mexico, money, oil rigs, even disastrous oil spills, and much more. In this case, all of these concepts are involved. In the spring of 2010, a devastating explosion occurred on British Petroleum's (BP) oil rig, Deepwater Horizon, located off the coast of Louisiana in the Gulf of Mexico. This resulted in thousands of gallons of oil to disperse through the Gulf, affecting millions of people, industries, the nation, and the environment overall. Despite the fact that the evident short term effects of the spill have been dealt with, what will be done to help with the long-term effects that have been placed on so many people because of the spill?

BP is an oil company that initially developed into one of the top ranks in oil companies in 1995, when John Browne became the CEO. In Abraham Lustgarten's article, he reported that, "In 1998 he put together what was at the time the largest merger in corporate history; the \$61 billion buyout of Amoco Corporation." (Furious Growth and Cost Cuts Led to BP Accidents Past and Present) Also in Browne's quest for supremacy above all the other competing oil companies; he bought out at least four more businesses. He was determined to get as many advantages over the competitors as he could.

A few weeks prior to the oil rig explosion, President Obama spoke of a remarkable expansion of deep-water drilling in the Gulf; which is also where BP held most of the drilling leases (Furious Growth and Cost Cuts Led to BP Accidents Past and Present). John Browne and The Deepwater Horizon rig were anticipating a large profit because of this new expansion of drilling. Less than a year earlier, the rig had drilled the deepest oil and gas well ever that extended to about 35,000 feet (The Far-Ranging Costs of the Mess in the Gulf). Although this new assignment was familiar to the Deepwater Horizon, it was equally as dangerous and had the opportunity for catastrophe.

Nevertheless, catastrophe struck in the Gulf of Mexico. In the afternoon of April 20th, a massive explosion rattled the rig and a fire was ignited. Eleven workers were killed and seventeen others were seriously injured. Within two days after the explosion, during a search-and-rescue for any missing workers, the devastated Deepwater Horizon rig sank 5,000 feet below to the ocean floor along with all of its equipment (BP Oil Spill Timeline). As if this tragedy was not disappointing enough, they soon realized there was a leak spewing thousands of barrels of oil per day out of the pipes under the sea. BP reassured everybody that it was not possible because they had fail-safe equipment that had placed a seal on the well before the leaks could occur. However, that equipment failed and left everyone wondering how such a disaster could happen.

There have been many investigations and simulations performed to find the reason for this devastating incident. Not one researcher or investigator were able to point out that it was just one single action, though they claimed it was a series of events. The BP Internal Investigation Team claimed it was simply, "a well integrity failure, followed by a loss of hydrostatic control of the well which was followed by a failure to control the flow from the well with the BOP equipment, which allowed the release and subsequent ignition of hydrocarbons. Ultimately, the BOP emergency functions failed to seal the well after the initial explosions." (Deepwater Horizon Accident Investigation Report) Essentially, there were many breakout preventers equipped on the rig; they all just failed to operate. After such a disaster, people began to realize how much this incident will affect them.

The BP oil spill temporarily diminished the market of seafood from the Gulf and also tourism. The spill took an immediate effect on seafood production, but no one can really estimate the long term effects on the seafood accurately. Ralph Portier, an environmental biologist at LSU, says we should be more worried about the 3-D nature of the spill rather than the oil that is currently on the surface; as the millions of gallons of oil from the broken well slowly rise to the surface in coming months, the spill will present various challenges for years to come (A Crude Awakening in the Gulf of Mexico). This could highly affect the number of tourists Louisiana receives. In a poll taken by the Louisiana Office of Tourism, almost 80% of voters believed that the Deepwater Horizon spill would impact the state for up to two years and 40% of them believe it could potentially impact the state two-five years (Potential Impact of the Gulf Oil Spill on Tourism). BP began to seek to prove to the people that there will be a quick and safe recovery.

BP has taken almost every action possible to assist people in recovering from this disaster. One of BP's first steps

was when they finally stopped the leak from the busted pipe. This was most important because it relieved any further oil from dispersing in the ocean. BP created a \$20 billion fund for compensation to workers who lost business, marketers who suffered losses, any environmental damage, and loss of tourism (Feinberg Criticized for Spill-Compensation Terms). One reason BP is hesitant about reimbursing the funds is because the threat of fraud among the people who were affected. BP is doing the best at what they can do as quickly as they can do it. A big concern for BP now is how to prevent a disaster like this happening again in the future.

After going through many records and findings, BP has decided to change some of their unhealthy habits to prevent such a horrible national environmental disaster like this from happening in the future. After investigating initial causes of this destruction of the oil well, investigators did not find one exact thing to fix, but they did realize how much of BP's emergency equipment failed (Deepwater Horizon Accident Investigation Report: Executive Summary). Some of which could have stopped the leakage if it had performed properly. BP now plans to complete more emergency preparing and testing to make sure their equipment is functional. In result, if an unexpected catastrophe tries to strike again, then it will be stopped this time.

Despite the fact that the evident short term effects of the spill have been dealt with, what will be done to help with the long-term effects that have been placed on so many people because of the spill? BP is slowly but surely restoring the Gulf Coast and cleaning up every bit of its mess. They also plan to never put the national environment through a tragedy like this one ever again. While the oil was dispersing through the water, the boats were docked and away and the clean-up crews were busy; but that doesn't mean the coast should suffer absence of tourists and visitors because of an event like this. It is hard to tell when the road to recovery comes to an end for the Gulf Coast, but even once it does finally come; the Gulf Coast could possibly never be the same because of what occurred with British Petroleum's Deepwater Horizon oil rig.

**Score: 10****A Mop Can Not Clean This Spill**

It has been disheartening throughout modern history for humanity's hard work to be destroyed by monstrous events, such as natural disasters. In 2005, Hurricane Katrina nearly gave an entire city and an entire way of life no reason to ever exist again. Southeast Louisiana was faced with much trouble and much adversity to overcome during the following years, but the region responded to the challenge and will forever use that experience as the backbone for motivation in the future. On the other hand, it is truly demoralizing throughout history for man-made invention to be the ember that starts the flame of disaster. In the spring of 2010, Southeast Louisiana would have to respond to another distress call along with the rest of the gulf coast, an oil spill that engorged the entire gulf and will have repercussions for years to come.

On the evening on April 20, 2010, the unimaginable happened, eleven people's lives quickly ended and an entire coast was changed forever. Fifty miles from the coast of Louisiana, an oilrig caught fire due to the catalyst of hydrocarbons which escaped from the well (Executive 1). During this epic event eleven loyal workers lost their lives, and seventeen people were injured due to the harsh flames of the oilrig. BP (British Petroleum) owned the oilrig, and ironically, President Obama had just given BP clearance for the expansion of deep sea drilling for oil. The White House administration did not consider the prior safety violations BP had committed (Lustgarten 1). The spill occurred for the next eighty-seven days, and created a national frenzy (Executive 1). It put several thousand people out of jobs, and ruined many places where people called "home."

British Petroleum started an investigation to analyze how this explosion could have happened. They were once a well-respected company but now was the most hated enterprise in the world. They found some of the pieces of the puzzle that resulted in how the oilrig caught fire. Some of their findings included: The cement barrier was not properly isolating the hydrocarbons, the mud diverter was not being properly used and resulted in gas being directed to the rig, the fire and gas system did not prevent the ignition of the hydrocarbons, and the emergency hatch did not seal correctly (Executive 1). All of these occurrences happened within the time period prior and during the explosion. BP appeared as though they that did not take every safety precaution that day.

BP had done a lot of harm and destruction to the gulf coast in the eighty-seven days that oil spilled out, but the harm is what everyone should focus on. No one initially realized how much this would impact the entire gulf coast. "Everything is affected, directly and indirectly, and the indirect effects may be the more troubling ones, because they're so much harder to understand" (Nijhuis 1). Florida and Alabama are known for their white sandy beaches that families visit every spring and summer, and Louisiana is known for the vast amount of seafood that is caught and cooked to perfection with Cajun cuisine. All of that was severely harmed or lost due to the effects of the spill. The white sandy beaches of Alabama and Florida were covered with balls of tars the size of basketballs. No one would ever want to vacation to those locations under those conditions. Louisiana's seafood was not suitable to be caught and served because the oil saturated the seafood and wildlife around the gulf coast area. This seriously affects the tourism around the gulf coast because the gulf coast generates about thirty-four billion dollars in tourism (Oxford Economics 4).

When tourism is affected, it affects an entire group of people. For example, the family that travels to New Orleans stays in a hotel, goes sight seeing, and has great Cajun cuisine from one of the local restaurants in the crescent city area. If that family did not travel to New Orleans because of the oil spill many people's jobs would be affected. The hotel workers who served them during their stay, the various people they encountered while site seeing, the chef and workers of the restaurant, and the fisherman who caught the food that was prepared for them could lose their jobs if visitors did not come.

These past few months have been very traumatic for my family and I because we are from New Orleans. We have been affected by so many dreadful experiences over the past few years resulting from Hurricane Katrina. We had to deal with the damages from the storm and the instability of my parents jobs so the last thing that we thought could happen was the oil spill. We are very fortunate to not be in the seafood business, but at the same time we do not want to see our culture changed. Louisiana is a special place and the oil spill could forever damage our culture and our way of life.

My uncle Brian is a shrimper in South Louisiana, and he was one of the wealthiest shrimper in the South. He was a vendor to many seafood outlets in Louisiana. Being a shrimper is all he knows, and he is the best at it, but when the oil

spill happened it wiped out his entire business. He didn't know what to do because he was out of work and British Petroleum was not giving him the compensation he needed to live and support a family. The sad truth was that he was not the only one being penalized and neglected. There were many families that were not getting the compensation they deserved and lost their property because of foreclosure. My uncle's worst fear became true and many people's lives will never be the same.

Over the past six months there has been a lot of effort to clean the Gulf of Mexico from the oil spill. They have gone step by step starting with President Obama's first speech after the spill where he promised, "Our second task has been to contain the spill and protect the Gulf Coast and the people who live there. We are using every available resource to stop the oil from coming ashore." Second, they stopped the spill after eighty-seven days. Next, it was a long road of depression as the oil destroyed a lot of wildlife, seafood, beaches, and family lives, but as the days go on the scientists are generating many answers. Scientists have been testing all the waters and much of the seafood is now ready to be consumed (NOAA 1). It is very nice to hear because there are many people who are ready to start their normal lives again. On the other hand Darla and Rod Tooks went out to find their shrimp in the newly reopened area, and all they found were oil remains on the shrimp. Darla Tooks said, "do not eat it. I don't care if the president of the United States, or the Queen of England, or BP, or the Coast Guard says it's safe. If you get in shallow water five miles out and you kick up some dirt, oil comes to the top" (Yeoman 4).

Even though top government officials and scientists are claiming the worst is over, we may not know the full impact of the oil disaster for years to come. We do know that the people of south Louisiana and the gulf coast region are a resilient group. Many areas have come back even stronger since the effects of Hurricane Katrina and I am confident that these same people will respond with the same tenacity from the greatest oil disaster our nation has ever experienced.

**Score: 11****The Oil Spill: An Avoidable Catastrophe**

On April 20, 2010, the people of the Gulf Coast experienced a life changing disaster. A British Petroleum (BP) oilrig, located in the Gulf of Mexico, malfunctioned, which caused it to catch on fire, and release hundreds of thousands of gallons of crude oil into the gulf. Lives were lost, beaches were destroyed, and animals were put in danger. It took weeks to put a stop to the spill, after plenty of damage had already been done.

When the BP oil spill occurred, hydrocarbons escaped from the Macondo well onto Transocean's Deepwater Horizon. In seconds, the rig caught fire and an explosion occurred (BP Internal 3). Workers from the rig were thrown into the ocean during the explosion. Eleven people died because of this tragedy and 17 others were injured. For 36 hours the rig continued to burn until it finally reach the bottom of the Gulf (BP Internal 3). Two weeks after the oil spill, no simple way to stop the spill could be found. What started as an oil spill became an uncontrolled gusher with many consequences to come (Walsh 1). "Hydrocarbons continued to flow from the reservoir through the wellbore and the blowout preventer (BOP) for 87 days, causing a spill of national significance" (BP Internal 3). It is the largest accidental marine oil spill in the history of the petroleum industry.

Four days after the disaster, an announcement was finally made that the rig was leaking into the Gulf of Mexico (Timeline 1). Before the official announcement, rumors were already spreading about a leak in the ocean. It was reported through the Coast Guard underwater camera that over 1,000 barrels of crude oil were leaking per day. Later, it was reported that it was actually 5,000 barrels per day (Timeline 1). "BP Exploration & Production Inc. was the lease operator of Mississippi Canyon Block 252, which contains the Macondo well " (BP Internal 3). BP formed an investigation team, which was made in order to gather facts surrounding the spill. BP hoped that this team would analyze possible causes and make recommendations in order to prevent this from ever happening again (BP Internal 3).

Immediately, the BP investigation team began its work. "The ability to gather information was limited by a scarcity of physical evidence and restricted access to potentially relevant witnesses" (BP Internal). Access to partial real-time data from the rig along with documents from various aspects of the Macondo well's development was viewable for the team. Also, construction, witness interviews and testimony from public hearings were available. Information, which was made available by other companies, was available for the team as well. The other companies included; Transocean, Halliburton and Cameron. "Over the course of the investigation, the team involved over 50 internal and external specialists from a variety of fields: safety, operations, subsea, drilling, well control, cementing, well flow dynamic modeling, BOP systems and process hazard analysis" (BP Internal). The team was given recommendations, which were intended to stop similar accidents in the future. "In some cases, they address issues beyond the causal findings for this accident. These recommendations cover contractor oversight and assurance, risk assessment, well monitoring and well control practices, integrity testing practices and BOP system maintenance, among other issues" (BP Internal).

The residents of Louisiana did not become concerned until weeks had passed. Reports on the spill caused many residents to go into a state of fear and concern for Louisiana. They began to realize how the spill was affecting our environment. After the spill occurred, many Louisiana residents were surveyed about their feelings on the environmental and economic effects along with offshore drilling. Of the people surveyed, 67 percent favored further wetland protection compared to the 18 percent favoring the continuation of offshore drilling (Goidel 1). The surveyed citizens also stated that 65 percent of them think the spill will have a major long-term effect on businesses along with 78 percent believing that it will also have a long-term effect on the environment (Goidel 1). These numbers show how the residents from Louisiana were and will be affected in the future.

The tourism industry was also greatly affected by the oil spill. Tourist who heard the news and reports began to choose new destinations for their travels, wanting to avoid the devastated area. The tourism industry was a 3.6 billion dollar industry for the state of Louisiana in 2008 (Oxford 4). Not all of that 3.6 billion dollar industry was affected, but a large amount was. Not only was the state loosing money, it was also loosing employees. Close to 40 percent of Louisiana's tourism employment is associated along the Gulf Coast (Oxford 4). The spill affected close to half of the tourism industries employees. The total outcome of the spill could result in a 22.7 billion dollar loss for the coastal economies over a three-year span (Oxford 2).

One of Louisiana's main attractions is it's dining. Each year, seafood brings in a substantial amount of revenue

for the state. "The oil is coming into the food web at every point," says Cowan (Nijhuis 3). Due to the loss of seafood, Louisiana's tourist economy was extremely hurt. Popular restaurants, which brought in tourists, lost many customers. Sadly, many restaurants had to close down because they could not survive without the fresh seafood from the gulf. Without having healthy marine life, fisherman lost work. These men rely on fishing and selling what they catch to the restaurants. All fishermen were out of work for months, causing them to search for new jobs. Not only was Louisiana losing tourist and businesses, Florida was as well. Many people visit Florida for the beautiful beaches and hotels. Without a clean ocean no one wanted to vacation here anymore. Hotels were desperately discounting their rates in hope of customers. Although not all of the beaches were ruined, no one wanted to take a chance.

The shrimping industry was also greatly affected by the oil spill. In the year 2009, shrimpers along Plaquemines Parish caught more than 19 million pounds of shrimp. This was more than one-sixth of the total for the state (Yeoman par. 2). Plaquemines parish is a breeding ground for shrimp. Plaquemines Parish was extremely affected by the spill. Killing shrimp meant no work for the shrimpers. The BP put a hold on shrimping for over five months forcing shrimpers to work for BP in the cleanup efforts (Yeoman par. 15). The spill put many of people in tough economic situations and it also affected the economy around them (Yeoman par. 16). A local couple caught over 1,260 pounds of shrimp in their first time back out, which they said was "not great, not horrible" (Yeoman par. 25).

After being interviewed by Barry Yeoman a local couple stated that, "There were dead sea gulls all over the road. They weren't hit by a car. They didn't have oil on them. There was nothing wrong with them that you could see. I actually saw a couple of them flying and drop out of the sky" (Yeoman par. 16). The spill was not only affecting the marine life, but it also affected the animals surrounding the area of the spill. Pelicans and seagulls are two animals that were greatly affected by the spill. Birds, which must land in the gulf to retrieve their food, would get oil in their wings, which would impair their ability to fly. Rescue teams spent countless hours trying to clean the oil from their wings. Sadly, many birds lost their lives due to lack of food or not being able to relocate because of damaged wings.

Overall, the oil spill had many immediate and long-term affects including loss of human and marine life, devastating the economy, and causing extreme damage to the gulf coast region. The BP Deep Water Transocean Spill will be remembered forever. It will not only be remembered by Louisiana residents, but by the entire country. America witnessed the worst environmental disaster in U.S. history. The poor mishaps of BP affected millions of lives. Many people were unemployed for months, forcing them to help clean up the oil spill for pay. Everyday they were reminded of this terrible disaster. Today, the oil spill still has an affect on many people and will continue to in the future.

**Score: 12****A Perilous Business**

On April 20, 2010, the explosion of a deepwater oil-drilling rig changed the lives of millions for years. The Gulf of Mexico as we knew it would be changed for decades to come after the mistakes by the Deepwater Horizon's crew that day. British Petroleum, the oil giant responsible for this disaster, left the American citizens of the Gulf Coastal region terrified and helpless. There were seventeen men injured in the explosion and eleven not found and presumed dead, while hundreds of thousands of gallons of oil leaked into the Gulf of Mexico (BP Oil). The oil spill caused by the explosion may be recorded as one of the most catastrophic oil spills in history. This disaster served as a wake up call for the United States to seriously consider producing a definite solution to oil drilling in open waters.

British Petroleum, although being originally founded in 1909, did not become one of the major competing oil companies until 1995 when John Browne became CEO of the company. Since this time BP has been a company that would violate laws involving regulation and cut corners in order to create a greater profit. When compared to Chevron and other oil companies, British Petroleum has been accused of 518 or more than two times as many safety violations than any other company. Also between the years 2000 and 2009 the amount of oil BP spilled into the Gulf of Mexico equated to more than the amount Shell spilled, while Shell's production from this region was twice BP's (Lustgarten). Although most Americans may not have known, British Petroleum has a terrible track record with the law as retired Environmental Protection Agency attorney, Jeanne Pascal, knows very well. After following BP for 12 years for the EPA, Pascal experienced first hand the crimes this company has committed and the thousands of lives it has risked. The explosion and spill of 2010 very well could have been avoided because in 2009 she advised the government and BP itself of the many wrong doings on BP's oilrigs (Lustgarten).

In November of 2009, BP's Vice President of exploration in the Gulf of Mexico explained to the Senate, "I think we need to remember that [offshore drilling] has been going on for the last 50 years, and it has been going on in a way that is both safe and protective of the environment"(qtd. in Walsh). Ironically, this most definitely was not case seeing what happened with the Deepwater Horizon's rig this past April. There are many different issues involving what went wrong and led to the blowout. The engineering of the rig, decision making of the workers on the rig, limited supervision, and mechanical deficiency were all major factors in the failure of the rig. Hydrocarbons, or the gas particles, were allowed to diffuse into the production casing because the shoe track barrier was not cemented properly to the bottom of the well. This caused there to be negative pressure in the well, which was not detected by the crew. As the hydrocarbons rose, they were not separated and expelled overboard but rather sent straight to the rig. The rigs blowout preventer was also not working in sync and when enough gas reached the engine an explosion resulted. Following the explosion, the blowout preventers at the bottom of the well should have capped the leak created but failed to (BP Internal). All of these factors are very frustrating, but the one that seems unacceptable is the under training of the Deepwater Horizon crew.

Many Americans worry that the Gulf of Mexico will never be restored to the way it was before the BP oil spill. The amount of oil leaked into the gulf and the amount of pollution caused by this leakage is unbearable. Five days after the explosion, the US coast guard published that there were 1,000 barrels of oil per day escaping from the busted well site. By June 12, officials posted a final estimation that there had been 40,000 barrels per day leaking into the gulf (BP Oil). The oil was coming from the ocean floor, which makes it much harder to contain and allows it to disperse easier. Eighty percent of the oil released from the well remained under the surface harming and killing the plants and animals within all depths of the water, unlike the Exxon Valdez spill where the oil was dumped onto the surface (Nijhuis). Also, with the spill occurring off the coast of Louisiana, many species were put in danger when oil slick and tar balls washed into the marsh. Clean up efforts are very difficult in this type of terrain because the oil will collect in the thick grasses. The marshes of Louisiana along with Mississippi Delta are spawning grounds and the habitat for several types of fish and animals and that was impaired by the invasion of oil. A local shrimper remembered how numerous dolphins and seagulls would follow his boat waiting for the unwanted catch, but now he barely sees that happen (Yeoman).

Tourism, the main driver of the Gulf Coastal region's economy, was devastated as a result of the British Petroleum spill. Businesses were severely hurt in industries such as hospitality, fishing, restaurant and others. Over a three-year span, the recovery of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill could potentially cost the coastal economy \$22.7 billion. In the counties along the Gulf Coast 15 percent of private employment is employed through a leisure or hospitality business, and in the state of Louisiana alone, 40 percent of its total tourist economy is derived from the Gulf Coast (Oxford). The employment and economic rates of these businesses will suffer for years to come as a result of British

By May 18, 2010, nearly a month after the oil spill, the government ordered for there to be a no fishing zone that covered 19 percent of the Gulf of Mexico (BP Oil). This was devastating to the people that fished these waters and to the restaurants that depended the catch of those boats. These men and women whose income is based on the gulf were then forced to obtain jobs with British Petroleum, the company who destroyed their work place and way of life, working as a clean up crew. A couple out of Port Sulphur, Louisiana, Darla and Todd Rooks own a shrimping boat and are examples of the Americans who are feeling the worst effects of the oil spill. The Rooks were forced to move onto their boat because they couldn't afford to pay for rent without an income. Their business along with the rest of the Louisiana coastal regions' fishing companies were shut down for five months as a result of the spill (Yeoman). Along with the fact that the fishing was forcefully shut down, the marsh and areas where these animals spawn are ruined from the oil. This will directly effect the production of fish from this region and the lives of the fisherman in future years. In a state of depression, Darla Rooks stated, "At one point, I put a hangman's noose on the back rigging of the boat. I was ready to stick my head in it (qtd. in Yeoman)." Although BP and US government claim the majority of the spill has been cleaned up, that doesn't mean the fishermen's' and many restaurant owners' lives can go back to a normal routine. Hopefully the government and British Petroleum will continue to work to renew their way of life.

Even though America views this event as a reason to lessen open water drilling, the demand for oil is in fact going to increase in the future. Scientists and researchers are developing new cleaner and safer ways of producing energy, but they simply will not suffice for the amount of energy our society needs. Currently 37.1 percent of the United States' energy sources are supplied by oil and gas and the amount of that percentage is steadily rising with our population expanding (Walsh). The main issue concerning this topic is that the Untied States is too heavily dependent on oil. America along with the rest of the world needs to grasp the fact that we need efficient alternative energy sources. For the time being it's clear that offshore drilling needs to continue, but expanding that section of the industry may need to be considered.

The Deepwater Horizon oil spill of 2010 brings about many controversial issues that do not only involve the cleanup of the spill but also many other topics ranging from tourism on the Gulf Coast to the engineering deepwater oilrigs. This catastrophic disaster has definitely changed the lives of millions for the worse, but has served as an eye opener for Americans. Most people take for granted the abundant amount oil provided at gas stations and other amenities and don't understand the risks taken when the oil is drilled. There is no doubt drilling for petroleum is mandatory for our society to function, but slowly more intelligent sources of energy should be formulated and more stringent regulations must be used on current rigs. Otherwise people just like Todd and Darla Rooks might have their lives crushed by another calamity like the BP oil spill of 2010.