

Earth Science Hurricanes

Hurricanes are **tropical**¹ storms that start in the ocean waters near the **equator**.² The storm moves its way north where the air is cooler. The wind gets stronger and the rain gets heavier. The “**eye of the storm**” is located in the center of the storm. It is the storm’s calmest part. There is no rain in the eye and it can spread across 20 miles. The winds around the eye can blow as much as 200 miles per hour. They have the ability to uproot trees from of the ground. They can also blow glass out of windows.

In the United States, summer and early fall are hurricane season. Every new season, tropical storms are labeled. The names follow alphabetical order, and alternate between male and female names. For example, the first hurricane may be Hurricane Andrew, then Barbara, Christopher, Deborah, Ephraim, etc.

Hurricanes can last up to 14 days long. They travel for thousands of miles across the ocean. Most of the time they never reach the coast of the US, but when they do hit the coast, conditions become very dangerous. When water levels rise, there can be floods and **mudslides**.³ Houses close to the shore can be wiped out, and the people who live there can be in grave danger.

¹ **tropical** – coming from the warm parts of the earth near the equator

² **equator** – the imaginary line that runs horizontally around the center of the earth

³ **mudslide** – a natural event when wet, soft earth flows down a hill, somewhat like an avalanche

Name: _____

Date: _____

1. Tropical storms start at

- a. the eye.
- b. the equator.
- c. the poles.
- d. on the coast.

2. Which statement best describes this passage?

- a. The passage explains how hurricanes differ from other storms.
- b. The passage describes the dangers of hurricanes and explains how to prepare for them.
- c. The passage gives an overview of hurricanes and their effects.
- d. The passage compares and contrasts how hurricanes differ in various parts of the world.

3. What can the reader conclude about the effects of hurricanes?

- a. They only cause damage near the equator.
- b. They cause most of their damage when they reach land.
- c. The damage is only bad if you are inside the eye of the storm.
- d. People are safe from hurricanes if they stay inside of their homes.

4. Read the following sentences: "When water levels rise, there can be floods and mudslides. Houses close to the shore can be wiped out, and the people who live there can be in grave danger."

As used in the passage, the word **grave** most nearly means

- a. a burial site.
- b. life-threatening.
- c. little.
- d. vague.

5. What is the main idea of this passage?

- a. Hurricanes are intense storms that can cause major damage.
- b. Hurricanes are only a concern in some parts of the U.S.
- c. Hurricanes are named and categorized for scientific purposes.
- d. Hurricanes and tornadoes are two very different kinds of storms.

6. What are two dangerous effects of hurricanes?

7. Why might it be beneficial to give names to tropical storms and hurricanes?

8. The question below is an incomplete sentence. Choose the answer that best completes the sentence.

Hurricanes can be very dangerous for people on the coast, _____ when water levels rise.

- a. except
- b. especially
- c. unless
- d. before

9. Answer the following questions based on the sentence below.

Hurricane season lasts from summer to the early fall in the United States.

What? _____

Does what? lasts from summer to the early fall

When? _____

10. **Vocabulary Word:** equator (*noun*): the imaginary line that runs horizontally around the center of the earth.

Use the vocabulary word in a sentence: _____

Teacher Guide and Answers

Passage Reading Level: Lexile 830

Featured Text Structure: Descriptive – the writer explains, defines or illustrates a concept or topic

Passage Summary: The passage describes hurricanes and the potential damage they can cause.

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6. What are two dangerous effects of hurricanes?

Suggested answer: Hurricanes can rip trees out of the ground and can cause flooding that destroys houses.

7. Why might it be beneficial to give names to tropical storms and hurricanes?

Suggested answer: It may be easier for scientists and authorities to communicate information to the public about a particular storm if it is named, especially when people are in the process of tracking and preparing for a particular storm. It may also be helpful for keeping records and storing information about different hurricane storms as this information is analyzed.

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Does what? lasts from summer to the early fall

When? **in the United States**

10. **Vocabulary Word:** equator (*noun*): the imaginary line that runs horizontally around the center of the earth.

Use the vocabulary word in a sentence: answers may vary.