

Caught in a hurricane

Name: _____

This is a story about ten year old Mandy who was learning about hurricanes at school. She didn't know that she would be caught up in a hurricane the next day.

Before you read:

Have you ever experienced a very bad storm? Tell a friend about it.

A HURRICANE is a huge storm! It can be up to 600 miles long and have strong winds spiralling inward and upwards at speeds of 75 to 200 mph. Each hurricane moves 10-20 miles per hour over the open ocean. Hurricanes gather heat and energy through contact with warm ocean waters. Evaporation from the seawater increases their power. Hurricanes rotate in a counter-clockwise direction



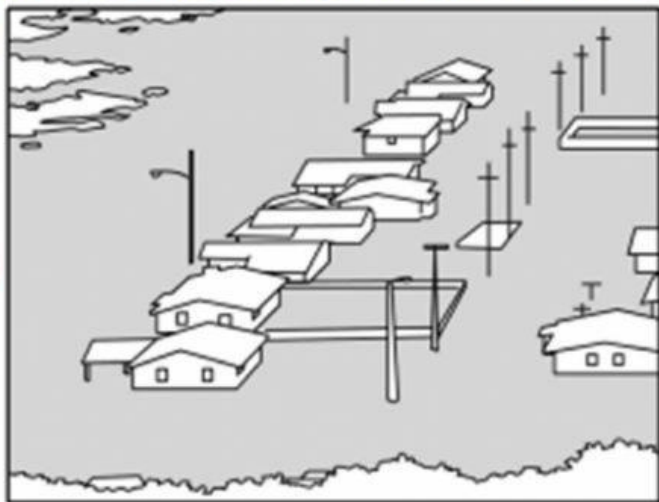
around an "eye" in the Northern Hemisphere and clockwise direction in the Southern Hemisphere. The centre of the storm or "eye" is the calmest part. It has only light winds and fair weather. When they come onto land, the heavy rain, strong winds and large waves can damage buildings, trees and cars.

"I was only ten years old when a storm began to form in the ocean near us. My parents said they had heard on the radio that it was a Category 5 hurricane which was forming. I felt scared because we had just learned about hurricanes at school that morning. In my town, we lived in small homes with ditches to collect storm water which ran down the side of the streets. We didn't evacuate our houses or flee the storms. We always just stayed there and hoped for the best.

My brothers and I carried on playing outside that Saturday afternoon. It was a beautiful summer morning but after a while I noticed the clouds getting very dark and swirly. Soon it felt like it was nearly night time although it was early in the afternoon. It was an eerie feeling. It began to rain and the wind began to howl. My brothers and I wandered about in the ditches not worrying about the rain. Then the lightning started to flash and the thunder clapped so we rushed home, drenched.

After changing into dry clothes, I sat at the window, watching the storm. The wind

was causing the trees and bushes to bend over in strange ways and the ditches soon filled up with water. Then the roads flooded and soon our yard was flooded. The water level got higher and higher and I got scared. So did my brothers. My mum tried not to show any fear, but I knew she was very worried. Were we going to drown? Would the water come into our house? Suddenly the rain stopped and the storm died down. The winds calmed down and the sun started shining again as the clouds parted. My mum said the eye of the hurricane had passed our part of the town but that the storm would still continue.



She was right. The storm soon started up again and continued with its fury with the rain beating down on our roof and the wind howling louder and louder. At some stage during the night, the storm suddenly ceased and we managed to get some sleep. When we awoke we couldn't believe what we saw! The town was under water. Trees were torn down. It looked as though we were in the middle of a giant lake.

We lost our car and our house was really battered. The only consolation was that we still had our house and we couldn't go to school for a week! I really hope I never experience another hurricane!

Answer the questions in the space provided:

1. Do you think Mandy and her family were terrified during the hurricane?

2. What is the story about?

3. Can you explain what a hurricane is in your own words?

4. Write down five words that you are not familiar with from the text and look up the meanings in your dictionary.

5. Compare the conditions of the hurricane to the normal weather conditions before the hurricane had arrived.

6. Write a short summary of the story in the correct sequence using words such as, first, then, next, after that, soon, and finally.

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