

1. Read again and match the subheadings below to the paragraphs (1-6). There is one extra heading.

An awful situation

Help at last

Moving on

Collapsing buildings

The birth of the storm

Gathering strength

Surrounded by water

2. Fill in:

threat recovery beg declare
 shelters pump tropical level
 rise struggle lose eye

1. _____ their lives;
2. make a slow _____.
3. the _____ of the storm;
4. be under _____ from;
5. below sea _____;
6. in temporary _____;
7. waters _____;
8. _____ for help;
9. _____ to cope;
10. _____ water out;
11. _____ storm;
12. _____ a state of emergency;



HURRICANE KATRINA: THE TRAGEDY OF NEW ORLEANS

1

On Tuesday, 23rd August, 2005, a tropical storm formed over the Bahamas, about 560 km east of Miami, Florida. By August 25, the storm had strengthened and become Hurricane Katrina. Residents of the city of New Orleans had no idea that within days, 80% of their city would be underwater in one of the worst disasters in US history.

2

Hurricane Katrina was one of the most powerful storms that has ever hit the Atlantic coast with winds of over 270 km per hour. As it became stronger over the Gulf of Mexico, the mayor of New Orleans declared a state of emergency and started **evacuating** the city. When the eye of the storm missed the city by about 72 km, everyone thought the worst was over, but they were very wrong.

3

New Orleans has always been under **threat** from flooding. With the Mississippi River on two sides, Lake Pontchartrain to the north and most of the city 150-300 m below sea level, a series of high walls, called **levees**, protect it. As the hurricane came **ashore**, it brought an 800-metre-high storm surge that rode the rivers up to New Orleans, and **smashed** through the levees.

4

Over a million residents had already left the city, but tens of thousands, mainly **the elderly** and the poor, were in temporary **shelters**. As the waters rose, people were **begging** for help on roofs, and neighbourhoods were suffering from **looting** and violence. Emergency services **struggled to cope**.

5

Eventually, the military and the National Guard moved into the city and began to get food and water to the desperate few that remained. After 43 days, army engineers pumped the last of the flood water out of the city. Almost 1,500 people had lost their lives because of Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans alone.

6

These days, New Orleans is making a slow **recovery**. The city has improved the levees, the community is rebuilding itself, and everyone is working hard to make sure that nothing like this will ever happen again.