

Emergency!

Choose the correct title for each paragraph:

Title: _____

On January 15, 2009, air traffic controller Patrick Harten arrived at work as usual at 12:30 p.m. As part of his job, he was responsible for all the airplanes leaving LaGuardia Airport in New York. At 3:25 P.M., U.S. Airways Flight 1549 took off and Harten instructed the pilot to climb to 15,000 feet. Soon after, the pilot, Captain Sullenberger, informed Harten that he was in trouble. The plane had hit a flock of birds and lost power. The pilot needed to return to LaGuardia Airport immediately to make an emergency landing.

Title: _____

As Harten later explained, "When a pilot tells a controller he needs to make an emergency landing, the controller must act quickly..." Harten made a quick decision to offer Captain Sullenberger Runway 13, which was the closest runway. Harten gave the pilot instructions to turn back. He also immediately contacted LaGuardia and told them to prepare for an emergency landing. Seconds later Captain Sullenberger said, "We're unable." Harten quickly gave the pilot another option: Land on Runway 31. The Captain replied in one tragic word, "Unable." Harten quickly asked the pilot where he could land safely. The pilot told him that he could not turn back to LaGuardia. He asked if he could land at Teterboro Airport in New Jersey.

Title: _____

Harten immediately contacted the controllers there. The airport workers hurried to prepare Runway 1 for an emergency landing. Harten instructed the pilot to land on Runway 1.

Captain: We can't do it.

Harten: Which runway would you like at Teterboro?

Captain: We're going to be in the Hudson.

Harten knew that people do not survive landings in the Hudson River. "I believed at that moment, I was going to be the last person to talk to anyone on that plane alive," Harten later said.

Title: _____

Then Harten lost contact with Flight 1549. Only two minutes had passed since the first sign of trouble. Harten was in shock – he was sure the plane had crashed. The plane crash-landed in the freezing cold water of the Hudson River and started filling with water. But the passengers were able to get out of the plane and stand on the wings. Police and fireboats hurried to the plane and rescued all the passengers. It was a miracle. Everybody was alive. Harten later described how he felt at the time: "During the emergency itself, I was hyper-focused. I had no choice but to think and act quickly and remain calm. But when it was over, it hit me hard. Truth was I felt like I had been hit by a bus.