



Tornadoes are one of the most powerful and destructive types of storms. They are often called ‘twisters’, **1**. They can achieve the highest wind speeds on earth, and It is this extreme wind force that is believed to be the main reason for the enormous damage associated with them. Unfortunately, it is difficult for scientists to predict precisely when and where a tornado is likely to appear, making it difficult to provide sufficient warning in time to save lives. This unpredictability is what makes tornadoes so dangerous.

The time from the moment a tornado reaches the ground until it dies out is usually not much more than a few minutes. Once a tornado has touched down, it begins **2**, and even parts of buildings. The tornado’s low pressure centre is such a powerful vacuum that it can tear the roofs from houses or lift cars in the air. An average tornado usually moves in an easterly direction at a speed of about 50 kilometres per hour. However, speeds of more than 100 kilometres have been recorded, as well.

In the USA alone, about 1000 tornadoes strike every year, but certain regions are far more vulnerable to tornadoes than others. The most devastating tornado in US history took place on 18 March, 1925. It travelled at almost 100 kilometres per hour, and it lasted for three and a half hours **3** — across Missouri, Illinois and Indiana. The tornado finally dissipated after it had covered a distance of over 350 kilometres across the three states, **4**. In total, 695 people were killed, more than 2,000 were injured, and over 11,000 were made homeless. The overall worth of the damage caused by the Tri-State Tornado was over 1.5 billion dollars in today’s terms. Another example of a tornado, **5**, involved a little girl who was lifted off the ground while she was riding her horse. Both the girl and the horse survived. In fact, the girl was found almost 300 metres away and, miraculously, she had suffered only some bruises. Although it is not possible to prevent a tornado from striking, scientists are working hard **6** so as to be able to give out warnings earlier, and thus help people prepare better.



- A. which was less disastrous though
- B. sucking up material including rocks, branches of trees, cars
- C. to improve the tornado forecasting system
- D. as the wind travels at enormous speeds
- E. leaving an enormous trail of destruction
- F. which earned it the name *Tri-State Tornado*
- G. as they are made up of twisting columns of air
- H. to develop tornado-proof houses