

Twister!

Wild Weather

What do you know about tornadoes?



Pete Turner/Getty Images

Tornado season has started in the United States. A **tornado** is a powerful, spinning wind. It is also known as a twister.

Most tornadoes last fewer than 15 minutes. During that time, a twister can travel across a large area of land and destroy everything in its path.



Steve Bloom Images/Alamy

The strong winds in some tornadoes reach speeds of up to 300 miles per hour. Those winds can toss cars and other objects high into the air.

Tornadoes can happen any time of the year. However, they are most common from March through July.



Getty Images

A tornado can destroy homes and trees.

How Does a Tornado Form?

Most tornadoes start as thunderstorms. During those storms, heavy rain and lightning are common. Large **hail**, or ball-shaped pieces of ice, may also fall.



Tina Rencelj/Shutterstock

Large thunderstorm clouds appear in the sky. The clouds become dark. Thunder can be heard.



Jim Reed/Getty Images

Warm and cold air meet. Air rises from the ground to the clouds. If the rising air starts to spin, a funnel-shaped cloud can form.



The funnel-shaped cloud spins faster. When the bottom of the cloud touches the ground, it becomes a tornado.

Jim Reed/Getty Images



As the tornado travels across the ground, it picks up anything in its way.

A.T. Willett/Getty Images

Name: _____

Date: _____

Directions: Answer the following four questions based on the information in the passage.

1. What is a tornado?

2. When do most tornadoes occur?

3. According to the article, how does a tornado form?

4. What is this passage mostly about?

Directions: Please read the sentence below and then write the word or phrase that best answers the questions. The first answer has been provided for you.

Between March and July, people can tell that a tornado has been through an area by seeing the destruction that it caused.

Who? people

5. (can do) What?

6. When?

7. How?

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

Tornadoes can happen any time of the year, _____ they are most common from March through July.

- A but
- B because
- C so

Directions: Read the vocabulary word and definition below. Then answer questions 9 and 10.

Vocabulary Word: **weather** (weath · er): description of what the air is like and what it might be carrying such as rain, snow, or clouds.

9. Read the sentences below and underline all forms of the word **weather**.
- a. During the winter, the boy looked out the window and saw that the weather was snowy.
 - b. The thunderstorm caused bad weather with lots of rain and thunder, so the family had to miss their camping trip.
 - c. It was sunny and very warm outside and the weather was perfect to go swimming.
 - d. When the weather forecast says it's going to rain, many people don't want to go outside.
 - e. The weather outside was very cold and cloudy so the students couldn't go outside for recess.

10. Who is dressed for cold weather?



Teacher Guide and Answer Key

Passage Reading Level: Lexile 610

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

Passage Summary: The passage is focused on tornadoes. It provides information about what a tornado is, how it forms, and the damage that it can cause.

To the Teacher: Read the passage aloud to the class [TIP: while reading aloud, show the passage on a whiteboard or give each student a copy of the passage so they can follow along].

Then, use the text-dependent questions 1-8 to facilitate a whole class discussion to ensure students comprehend the key details from the passage.

Finally, use questions 9-10 to deep teach one important vocabulary word [TIP: you can use the model provided for teaching additional vocabulary].

1. What is a tornado? [Important Detail]

Suggested answer: A tornado is a powerful, spinning wind, and it is also known as a twister. Most tornadoes only last 15 minutes or less but they can travel across a large area of land and destroy everything in its path. [paragraphs 1, 2, 3]

2. When do most tornadoes occur? [Important Detail]

Suggested answer: Tornadoes can happen during any time of the year, but most occur between the months of March to July. [paragraph 3]

3. According to the article, how does a tornado form? [Important Detail]

Suggested answer: The majority of tornadoes start as thunderstorms. First, thunderstorm clouds appear in the sky and people can hear thunder. Then, warm air and cold air meet and create a funnel-shaped cloud. The funnel-shaped cloud spins faster, and when the bottom of the cloud touches the ground, it is a tornado. [paragraphs 5, 6, 7, 8]

4. What is this passage mostly about? [Main Idea]

Suggested answer: This passage is mostly about tornadoes and how they form. A tornado is a powerful, spinning wind, and it is also known as a twister.

Directions: Please read the sentence below and then write the word or phrase that best answers the questions. The first answer has been provided for you.

Between March and July, people can tell that a tornado has been through an area by seeing the destruction that it caused.

Who? people

5. (can do) What? **tell that a tornado has been through an area**

6. When? **between March and July**

7. How? **by seeing the destruction that it caused**

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

Tornadoes can happen any time of the year, _____ they are most common from March through July.

A but

B because

C so

To the Teacher: ReadWorks recommends that you teach this vocabulary word to the whole class out loud using the four steps listed below.

Vocabulary Word: **weather** (weath · er): description of what the air is like and what it might be carrying such as rain, snow, or clouds.

Step 1: Introduce the word

- a. Teacher writes the word on the board and divides it into syllables: (weath · er)
- b. Teacher says: "This word is weather. What is the word?" [All students reply together out loud: "Weather."]

Step 2: Provide a child-friendly definition

- a. Teacher says: "Weather describes what the air is like and what it might be carrying such as rain, snow, or clouds."
- b. Teacher says: "The word 'weather' is used when talking about what the air is like and what the air might be carrying. In this passage, the author discusses how tornadoes are a type of weather."
- c. Teacher says: "What is the word?" [All students reply together out loud: "Weather."]

Step 3: Practice the word

Teacher provides examples and additional opportunities to repeat the word. Read the first sentence out loud to your students. Begin reading it again and when you come to the vocabulary word prompt students to say the vocabulary word out loud. Then, finish reading the sentence out loud to your students.

Directions: Read the vocabulary word and definition below. Then answer questions 9 and 10.

Vocabulary Word: **weather** (weath · er): description of what the air is like and what it might be carrying such as rain, snow, or clouds.

9. Read the sentences below and underline all forms of the word **weather**.
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 - d. When the weather forecast says it's going to rain, many people don't want to go outside.
 - e. The weather outside was very cold and cloudy so the students couldn't go outside for recess.

Step 4: Check for student understanding

To the Teacher: This step can be completed as a whole class activity or as an independent practice.

10. Who is dressed for cold weather?



Suggested Additional Vocabulary: hail, tornado, thunderstorm