How Hurricanes Form

Name: _____ Date: _____



A hurricane is one of the most powerful storms on Earth. It is a huge, spinning storm that forms over warm ocean water and has winds of at least 74 miles per hour. In other parts of the world, the same kind of storm is called a typhoon or a cyclone.

Hurricanes need warm water, at least 80 degrees Fahrenheit, to grow. The warm ocean heats the air above it. This warm, moist air rises quickly, and as it cools, the moisture forms towering thunderstorm clouds. More air rushes in to replace the rising air, and because Earth is spinning, the moving air begins to swirl around a center.

The calm center of a hurricane is called the eye. Inside the eye, the sky may be clear and the wind light. But the eye is surrounded by the eyewall, a ring of the storm's strongest winds and heaviest rain.

Scientists rank hurricanes from Category 1 to Category 5 based on wind speed. A Category 5 hurricane has winds of 157 miles per hour or more. When a hurricane reaches land, it can bring heavy rain, flooding and a storm surge, a rise of seawater pushed onto the shore by the wind.

Without warm ocean water to feed it, a hurricane weakens over land. Today, satellites and special airplanes called hurricane hunters track storms, giving people time to prepare.

1 WHAT? **What does a hurricane need in order to grow?**

warm ocean water cold mountain air dry desert sand

2 **Draw a line from each word to its meaning.**

eye	another name for a hurricane
eyewall	seawater pushed onto the shore
storm surge	the calm center of a hurricane
typhoon	the ring of the strongest winds

3 HOW? **Explain how warm ocean water helps a hurricane form.**

_____

_____

_____

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Answer Key



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typhoon	another name for a hurricane

3 HOW? **Explain how warm ocean water helps a hurricane form.**

Warm water heats the air, which rises and forms storm clouds that start to spin.