

Title: Tornadoes: Danger of the Plains

Word Study

Fill in the blanks using the words.

moisture	spin	radar	destroyed	picks up
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1. Clouds are made up of dust and _____.
2. The police can use _____ to tell how fast drivers are going.
3. Dust devils form when the wind _____ dry soil and blows it around.
4. The student asked why we can't feel the earth _____.
5. Hundreds of homes were _____ by the earthquake.

Reading Comprehension

A. Circle T for true or F for false.

1. Some tornadoes are hard to see. T / F
2. Scientists are not sure exactly why tornadoes form. T / F
3. Even small flying objects can be deadly in a tornado. T / F
4. Scientists find it easy to predict tornadoes today. T / F
5. A tornado watch means that a tornado has already formed. T / F

B. Circle the correct word(s).

1. People watch for tornadoes on warm, (clear / cloudy) days.
2. Only some (waterspouts / dust devils) are actually tornadoes.
3. Hurricanes usually do (more / less) damage than tornadoes.
4. Tornadoes are especially dangerous (at night / during the day).
5. In the past, the NWS didn't warn people about (small / possible) tornadoes.

C. Choose the best answer.

1. All of the following are true of the Great Plains EXCEPT:

- a. It is in the middle of the US
- b. It is mostly covered with trees
- c. It has some small hills
- d. It has a lot of farmland

2. When do tornadoes usually form?

- a. In winter
- b. In fall
- c. In spring and summer
- d. In summer and fall

3. To be called a tornado, a vortex must _____.

- a. be visible
- b. be destructive
- c. have a funnel shape
- d. touch the ground

4. Which is NOT true about the 1925 tornado?

- a. It was predicted by scientists.
- b. It lasted for over three hours.
- c. It traveled over 300 kilometers.
- d. It caused 690 deaths.

5. Which is NOT true of the first tornado warning?

- a. People ignored it.
- b. It happened in 1948.
- c. A tornado struck six hours later.
- d. The tornado did not kill anyone.

Summary

Fill in the blanks with the words.

column	conditions	occur	predict	warning
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The Great Plains are a large, flat area in the central US. This area is called Tornado Alley because so many tornadoes _____ there. This dangerous weather event is a vortex, or a spinning _____ of air, reaching from a cloud to the ground. When warm, wet air meets cold, dry air, a storm usually forms. But sometimes a tornado results as well. Most are only on land for a short time. But they can be very destructive over a small area. High winds can destroy buildings, trees, and cars. People are hurt by flying objects. The worst tornado in American history hit in 1925, killing hundreds of people. There was no _____ system then. Tornadoes are still hard to _____. But nowadays many lives are saved by tornado watches and warnings. These are announced on the radio or on TV. A watch means _____ are right for tornadoes. A warning means a tornado has been seen, and people must take shelter. These weather events are both fascinating and scary.