

Subject

Hurricanes have names too, just like you.

Language arts

BACKGROUND

Summary

Storms and hurricanes created problems for thousands, even millions, of people in North America and Central America in 2005. Who chooses names for tropical storms and hurricanes? Let's find out.

Students learn about names used for hurricanes and storms including letters of the Greek alphabet.

What's in a name?

All hurricanes are given names. Why is that? To help us identify storms and track them as they move across the ocean. Remember, there can be more than one hurricane at a time and without naming them, we could get confused about which storm we're tracking.

Overall Expectations

Students explore ideas and information related to names and alphabets.

For hundreds of years, hurricanes in the West Indies were named after the particular saint's day on which the hurricane occurred. An Australian meteorologist began giving women's names to tropical storms before the end of the 19th century. In 1953, the U.S. National Weather Service, which is the federal agency that tracks hurricanes and issues warnings and watches, began using female names for storms.

Specific Expectations

Students will communicate effectively using another form of alphabet.

In 1979, both women's and men's names were used. One name for each letter of the alphabet is selected, except for Q, U and Z. For Atlantic Ocean hurricanes, the names may be French, Spanish or English, since these are the major languages bordering the Atlantic Ocean where the storms occur.

So who decides what names are used each year? The World Meteorological Organization uses six lists in rotation. The same lists are reused every six years. The only time a new name is added is if a hurricane is very deadly or costly. Then the name is retired and a new name is chosen. (www.FEMA.gov)

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After you've read the article, answer the questions on the next page.

1. What is the name of the organization that names hurricanes?
2. When was the first year when both men's and women's names were used?
3. Look at Atlantic Hurricane Names www.fema.gov/kids/hunames3.htm Is your name in any of the lists? Do you see any of your friend's names in the lists? Write down any that you find.
4. The last hurricane with a person's name in 2005 was Wilma. In which other year could the name Wilma have been used? You will have to click on the link 1996 – 2001 Hurricane Names. Write your answer.

More about names:

5. So many tropical storms and hurricanes happened in 2005 that all the names were used up. No names beginning with Q U X Y or Z are used. Can you think of any names beginning with these letters? How many can you write down? Can you tell why these letters are not used for the names of hurricanes?
6. When all the names for one season have been used up, then the storms are given a letter from the Greek alphabet. In 2005 there were two more storms, Alpha and hurricane Beta.
7. The Greek alphabet is the oldest one in the world still being used since ancient times. Look at the chart of Greek letters on the next page. Notice that some of the letters look the same as English letters. Which ones are the same? Write them down.
8. Other letters are very different. Try making your own name using Greek letters.
9. Unless you know how to pronounce words made with Greek letters it can be very confusing to use them. They are great for secret messages though. Try creating a secret message for someone in the class by using Greek letters instead of English ones. Trade messages and see if you can break the secret code using the chart. If it takes too much time to decode the message in class, you could take it home and bring it back next day. Maybe your family would like to see how you can make secret messages. Good luck.

THE GREEK ALPHABET

Capital	Low-case	Greek Name	English
Α	α	Alpha	a
Β	β	Beta	b
Γ	γ	Gamma	g
Δ	δ	Delta	d
Ε	ε	Epsilon	e
Ζ	ζ	Zeta	z
Η	η	Eta	h
Θ	θ	Theta	th
Ι	ι	Iota	i
Κ	κ	Kappa	k
Λ	λ	Lambda	l
Μ	μ	Mu	m
Ν	ν	Nu	n
Ξ	ξ	Xi	x
Ο	ο	Omicron	o
Π	π	Pi	p
Ρ	ρ	Rho	r
Σ	σ	Sigma	s
Τ	τ	Tau	t
Υ	υ	Upsilon	u
Φ	φ	Phi	ph
Χ	χ	Chi	ch
Ψ	ψ	Psi	ps
Ω	ω	Omega	o

Extra reading:

People in Toronto, Canada, and some northeastern American states may think they are too far away from the areas where most hurricanes happen. In 1954 they got an unpleasant surprise when Hazel arrived all the way from the tropics. October 2004 marked the 50th anniversary of the disaster that caught many people unprepared. Follow the link below for tons of information and pictures. Who in your family remembers Hurricane Hazel? Her name was retired so no other Hazels have happened since.

www.atl.ec.gc.ca/weather/hurricane/hazel/en/index.html