

A tornado is a powerful, twisting wind storm. The winds of a tornado are the most violent winds on the earth. They may whirl around the center of the storm at speeds of more than 300 miles per hour.

Sometimes tornadoes are called twisters or cyclones. A tornado that occurs over a lake or ocean is called a waterspout.

A tornado usually begins inside thunderclouds, where warm and cold air meet and begin spinning. This is called a supercell. The supercell sucks air more and more rapidly from underneath.

Finally a funnel reaches down from the cloud until it meets the ground. The spiraling wind sucks up dust and other objects, which are hurled around at high speed. The funnel destroys almost everything in its path.

Some funnel clouds do not reach the earth. Others may strike the surface of the earth, pull back into the dark clouds above, and then dip down and strike the earth again. The bottom of the twister can be only a few feet wide, or as big as half a mile wide.

Some tornadoes last for hours. Others blow out in a few seconds. Tornadoes are hard to study because they are so destructive, and because they move so fast.

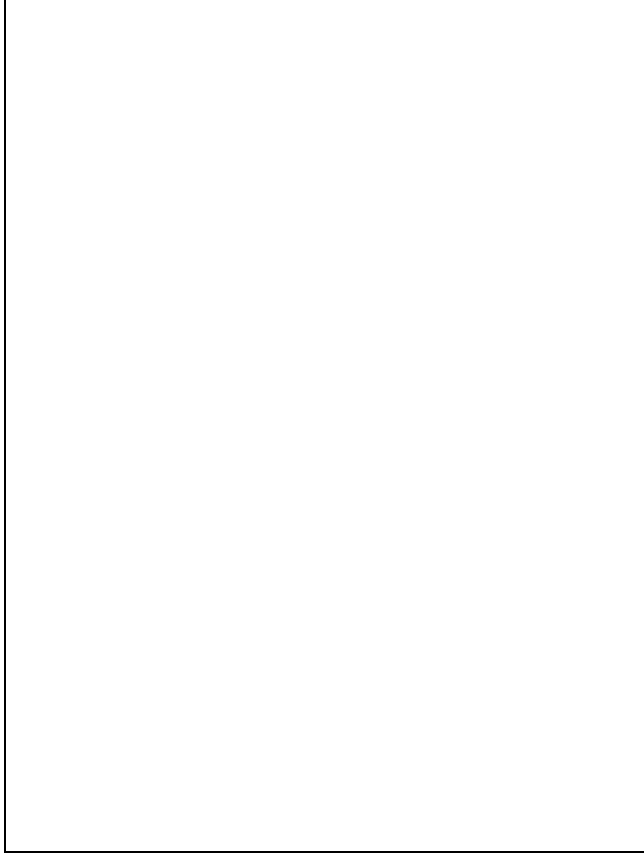
Tornadoes occur all over the world. The winds of a tornado whirl in a counterclockwise direction in the Northern Hemisphere and clockwise in the Southern Hemisphere.

Most tornadoes hit in the midwestern United States. This area is sometimes called Tornado Alley. It covers about thirteen states.

Hundreds of tornadoes strike there area each year, as hot air from the Gulf of Mexico meets cold air from Canada. These tornadoes occur mainly in spring and early summer.

Draw pictures of the way a tornado is formed.

A storm cellar or a basement is the safest place to be in a tornado. If there is no basement in the house, people should lie flat under a table or bed, away from the windows. Outside, people should lie face down, in a ditch or low place if it is possible.



Draw a picture of a good place to go during a tornado.

Choose three other words that mean almost the same as:

Rotate (spin, funnel, wind, whirl, storm, surface, spiral)

Tornado (twister, spin, cellar, cyclone, ocean, ditch, waterspout)

Finish the sentence: A supercell is formed when

Finish the sentence: A funnel cloud is formed when

On the map of the United States, do these activities:

1. Find the states in Tornado Alley and color them:

North Dakota	ND
South Dakota	SD
Minnesota	MN
Nebraska	NE
Iowa	IA
Illinois	IL
Kansas	KS
Oklahoma	OK
Texas	TX
Alabama	AL
Louisiana	LA
Arkansas	AK
Missouri	MI

2. Find Canada, where the cold air flows down into Tornado Alley. Draw a blue arrow from Canada down into Tornado Alley.
3. Find the Gulf of Mexico, where warm air

flows up into Tornado Alley. Draw a red arrow pointing from the Gulf of Mexico up into Tornado Alley. Draw a rotating cloud where they meet.

On the map of the world, do these activities:

1. Find the Northern Hemisphere. Draw a circle with an arrow pointing counterclockwise on the Northern Hemisphere.

Counterclockwise circle:

2. Find the Southern Hemisphere. Draw a circle with an arrow pointing clockwise on the Southern Hemisphere.

Clockwise circle:

TORNADOES