Blizzards!

A Reading A–Z Level L Leveled Book
Word Count: 491

Connections

Writing and Art

Imagine being in the middle of a blizzard. Write a journal entry about what happened, including how you prepared for the blizzard and what you saw.

Science

Use a Venn diagram to compare a blizzard with another type of storm. Share your Venn diagram with a partner.

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Blizzards!

MULTI LEVEL I•L•O

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Focus Question

What is a blizzard, and how does it affect people?

Words to Know

biting	hurricane
blizzard	whiteout
dangerous	wind chill

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Correlation

LEVEL L	
Fountas & Pinnell	K
Reading Recovery	18
DRA	20

Table of Contents

The Great White Hurricane 4

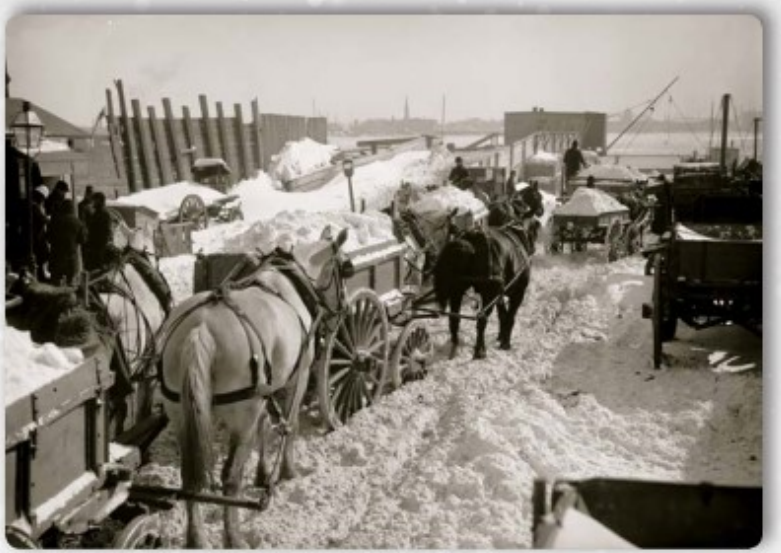
Extreme Storms 6

Birth of a Blizzard 9

Blizzard Country 11

Being Prepared
and Staying Safe 13

Glossary 16



Horse carts in New York City haul snow away after the Blizzard of 1888.

The Great White Hurricane

On a March Sunday in 1888, it began to rain in New York. The temperature dropped quickly as night fell. The rain turned to ice, then to snow. On Monday, people woke to howling winds. Snow piled high in the streets. The "Great White **Hurricane**" lasted three long days. The storm buried the northeastern United States.

Huge snow piles line the roads beneath elevated train tracks in New York City.

When it was over, more than four hundred people had died. The storm caused millions of dollars in damage. It would be summer before the last of the snow would melt. The **Blizzard** of 1888 was one of the worst storms in history.

Blizzards are known for fierce winds and blowing snow.

Extreme Storms

Three things turn a snowstorm into a blizzard—strong winds, blinding snow, and freezing cold. In a blizzard, winds blow at speeds of 35 miles (56 km) per hour. They blow for at least three hours. Wind gusts may even reach a hurricane force of 75 miles (119 km) per hour or more.

Our chickens depend on us to take good care of them. We keep their coop clean and fill their **nesting boxes** with soft **bedding**. In the summer, we hang a screen on their coop to keep out the hot sun.

Each afternoon, our chickens eat grass, bugs, and pebbles in the yard. Chickens don't have teeth—eating pebbles helps them **grind** up their food. We feed the chickens corn **pellets** and table scraps, too. They really like grapes and watermelon.

The winds whip snow through the air, making it hard to see. This is known as a **whiteout**. A whiteout is when no one can see anything more than a quarter of a mile (402 m) away. Safe travel is nearly impossible during a whiteout.

Whiteout conditions make driving difficult.

Bundling up protects against wind chill and keeps skin safe from freezing.

Blowing winds also create something called **wind chill**. Wind chill causes the body to lose heat faster. Skin feels like it is in air that is much colder. Wind chill can cause bare skin to freeze.

Word Wise

The word *blizzard* originally meant "a violent hit or blow." It was used to describe shots fired from a cannon. A small-town Iowa newspaper was the first to use it to describe a powerful snowstorm in the 1870s.

Snowstorm clouds form and roll across a lake.

Birth of a Blizzard

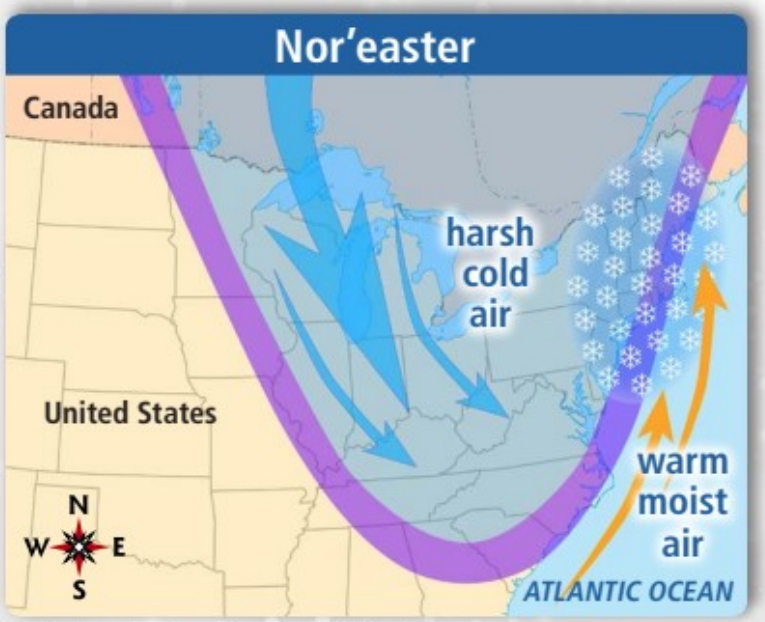
Blizzards begin as snowstorms. A layer of moist warm air meets cold air. Clouds form, and the water in them freezes into flakes. The flakes fall from the sky as snow.

In 2016, a huge blizzard dumped several feet of snow across Virginia and Washington, D.C. The conditions made it hard to get from place to place.

Blizzard Country

Blizzards can happen anywhere there is snow. There is a greater chance of them happening in some places than others. The East Coast of the United States is one such place.

Storms called *nor'easters* often hit this area. A nor'easter can last for several days and brings lots of snow.

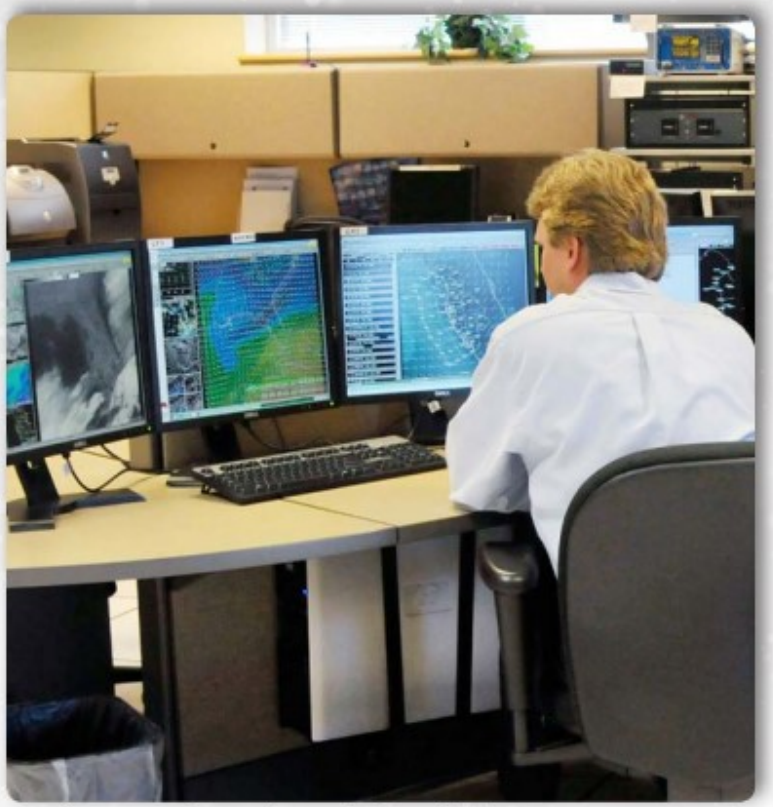


Nor'easters travel north up the East Coast.

This map shows the typical path of an Alberta Clipper snowstorm.

Sometimes a snowstorm begins in western Canada. It then travels quickly across the American plains, and heads east. This type of storm is called an Alberta Clipper. Clippers don't bring a lot of snow. They are known instead for their strong winds and **biting** cold.

Many of North America's blizzards start out as snowstorms that are nor'easters or Alberta Clippers.

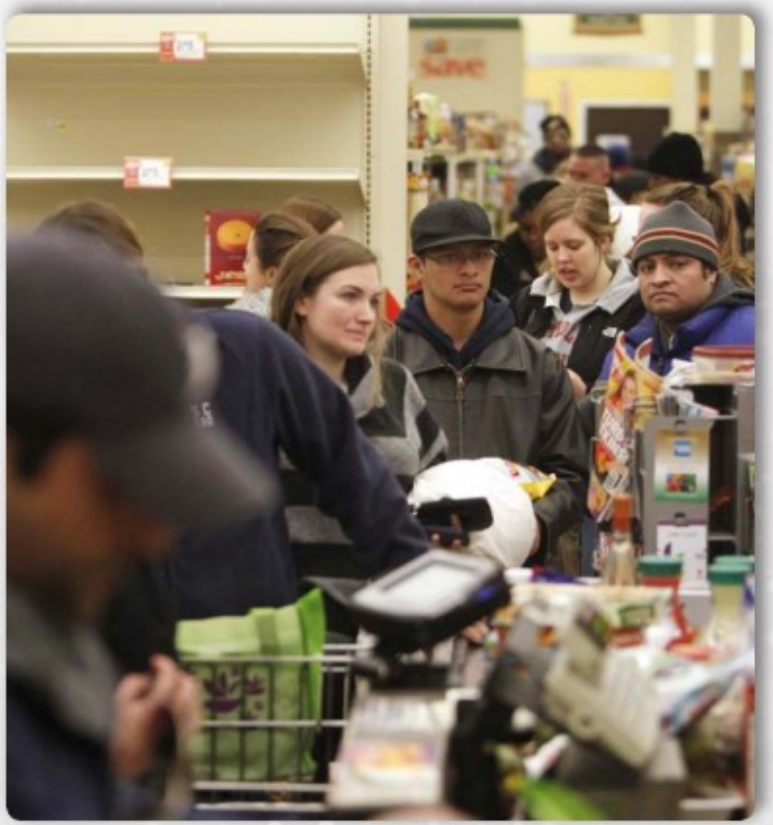


A worker at a weather station tracks the path of a storm.

Being Prepared and Staying Safe

The mix of wind, snow, and cold makes blizzards **dangerous**. Years ago, blizzards caught people by surprise. Today, it is easier to know when and where blizzards will strike next.

This gives people time to prepare. They can make sure they have batteries and flashlights in case of a power loss. Families can make sure they have enough food and water to last for several days. They can hurry home before the snow starts.



People wait in line to buy groceries before a blizzard.

It's best to stay inside during a blizzard.

Once they are prepared, people should settle in and wait out the storm. The best place to be in a blizzard is inside. In time, the storm will end. Then it will be safe to have fun in the snow it left behind!

Glossary

biting *(adj.)*	painfully cold (p. 12)
blizzard *(n.)*	a severe snowstorm with cold temperatures, heavy snows, and strong steady winds (p. 5)
dangerous *(adj.)*	able or likely to cause harm (p. 13)
hurricane *(n.)*	a strong, spinning storm with heavy rain and high winds that starts over an ocean (p. 4)
whiteout *(n.)*	a situation where blowing snow fills the air and makes it difficult to see anything around one (p. 7)
wind chill *(n.)*	an effect of blowing wind that causes the body to lose heat faster and makes the air feel colder than it really is (p. 8)

Name _____

Reading A-Z

Instructions: Read each sentence. If the sentence has an introductory word or phrase, underline the word or phrase and add a comma where it belongs. If not, put an X on the number of the sentence.

1. On Monday people woke to howling winds.
2. In a blizzard winds blow at speeds of 35 miles per hour.
3. In 2016 a huge blizzard dumped several feet of snow across Virginia.
4. Blizzards can be very scary if you're not prepared.
5. Years ago blizzards caught people by surprise.
6. Today it is easier to know when and where blizzards will strike next.
7. The most important thing is to stay safe during a blizzard!

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Name _____

Reading A-Z

Instructions: Write an antonym for each word on the lines below. Then, choose three of the antonyms and use each one in an original sentence on the lines provided.

inside _____ fast _____

safe _____ heavy _____

quickly _____ wet _____

cold _____ long _____

My Sentence:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Blizzards! • Level L • 3

Skill: Antonyms

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