



Activity: Hurricane Message Match

Purpose: Helping students understand precautionary steps to take to avoid or reduce hurricane threat and impact

Age level: 9-13

Time needed: 30 minutes

Resources:

- ✓ A cut-up set of hurricane messages
- ✓ Chart paper, markers and other materials/equipment for poster making (for *Extension*)

Procedure

The teacher asks students to stand in an open area and gives each pupil one piece of a hurricane message and explains that each message contains two parts and that everyone has one message part. Students are invited to move around the open area looking for someone they can join with so that their part-messages, joined together, makes sense. When everyone is part of a complete message, each pair is asked to read out their message. The teacher asks for any questions about the messages, encouraging class members to answer them.

When the discussion is petering out, the teacher tells the class that some of the messages advise on what to do *before* a hurricane strikes, others advise on what to do *during* a hurricane, and yet others advise on what to do *after* a hurricane so as to keep safe. Pairs are invited to decide which category their message belongs to and move around to join other pairs whose message they think falls in the same category.

When large groups are formed, each group is asked to read out their messages. The teacher asks if everyone feels pairs have joined the right group. If not, the class discusses where they should belong. The teacher then leads a discussion on issues and concerns raised and questions students have. (The activity can end at that point or the class can move on to the extension below.)



Extension

Student groups are invited to work together to turn their messages into the *Before a Hurricane*, *During a Hurricane* or *After a Hurricane* sections of a Hurricane Code of Behavior for households and the local community. They can do this by rewriting their messages in an advisory 'guideline' style. They can also prepare posters to convey safety messages, and be encouraged to present and speak to their completed posters at a whole school gathering.

Potential/Facilitation Guidance

This is a lively, interactive approach to learning about practical safety measures and procedures in the face of hazard from hurricanes. Opening questions for the post-activity debriefing sessions and in anticipation of work under *Extension* might include:

- Did the messages offer any good advice on what to do in the event of a hurricane that was new to you? If so, what was that advice? Is any good advice missing?
- Were there pieces of advice that you didn't understand or that raise questions in your mind?
- Has anything you learnt during the activity worried you?

It is particularly important to bring students' concerns and fears out into the open so that they can be discussed. A key point to reinforce is that working to reduce risk by knowing what to do in the event of hazard is the best way of reassuring and protecting people. Parents/guardians can be alerted to the activity, and students can take a copy of the messages home for family discussion.



Handout: Hurricane Message Match

Build an emergency kit	and make a family hurricane communications plan
Consider whether your home is on low or high ground	and whether the land is flood-prone
Learn community hurricane evacuation routes	and determine where you would go if you needed to evacuate.
Cover all of your home's windows	by permanent storm shutters (if you have them) or using plywood
Be sure trees and shrubs around your home	are well trimmed so they are more wind resistant
Bring in all outdoor furniture, decorations, and garbage cans,	and anything else that is not tied down.
Find out how to keep food safe	during and after an emergency
Ensure a supply of water for sanitary purposes	by filling the bathtub and other larger containers with water.
Evacuate if you are directed by local authorities to do so	and if you are unable to evacuate, go to your chosen storm-safe room
Continue listening to	the local news for the latest updates
Do not be fooled if there is a lull;	it could be the eye of the storm – winds may pick up again.
Stay alert in the event of extended rainfall and subsequent flooding	even after the hurricane or tropical storm has ended.
If you have become separated from your family,	use your family communications plan or contact the Red Cross
If you evacuated,	return home only when officials say it is safe.
Keep away from loose or dangling power lines	and report them immediately to the power company
Stay out of any building	if you smell gas or if floodwaters remain around the building
Watch out for wild animals, especially poisonous snakes	and use a stick to poke through debris
Avoid drinking or preparing food with tap water	until you are sure it's not contaminated



Note: Handout contents are adapted from the FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency, USA) website on hurricanes. <http://www.ready.gov/hurricanes>

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