The environment: Hurricane Katrina

1. When did it happen?
   - a 2005
   - b 2006
   - c 2007

2. Which state is New Orleans in?
   - a Texas
   - b California
   - c Louisiana

3. Where was the most damage?
   - a Mexico
   - b New Orleans
   - c Florida

How did it all start?

A hurricane is a very strong storm with winds faster than 119 km per hour. These storms start over the sea. When the storm hits the land, it can cause serious damage from wind, floods and rain.

When the storm Katrina formed over the Caribbean on 23rd August 2005, people called it a tropical storm. Two days later it was so powerful, that it officially became a hurricane. It hit Florida, where nine people died. On 29th August it hit the Gulf Coast of the USA. By this time it was a Category 5 hurricane—the strongest kind of hurricane. The hurricane went on for nine days before it disappeared on 31st August.

Why did the city of New Orleans suffer so badly?

New Orleans is just above the Gulf of Mexico in the state of Louisiana. This area is famous for hurricanes. The Mississippi river flows through the city, and there is a big lake, Lake Pontchartrain, to the north. The river and the lake are on higher ground than the city. Because of this, the people of New Orleans built high banks, called levees, to prevent the river and lake flooding the city. But the levees weren’t strong enough to resist a Category 5 hurricane, and they broke. Water came flooding from the lake into the city. It damaged buildings, and also the water, sewage and power supplies.

What happened to the people of New Orleans?

The people of New Orleans were expecting the hurricane, and the authorities told them to leave the city. But the authorities did not organise the departure from the city very well. Many citizens did not have cars, or enough money to leave. Many were old and too weak to travel.

After the levees broke, 80% of the city was under water. About 100,000 people couldn’t leave their homes.

There was no food and water, and people began to steal from shops. About 25,000 people were living in the Superdome Stadium, in very bad conditions. There was a lot of crime there, and six people died.

After almost a week, and much criticism, the government started sending food, water and medicine. They also sent the police and the army to keep control. Helicopters and rescue boats took thousands of people away from the city.

At least 1,300 people died during the hurricane, but there are still hundreds of people missing today.

What is New Orleans like today?

Before Hurricane Katrina, the city’s population was about 450,000. Today around 150,000 people are still living somewhere else, and have not returned to their homes. Some may never return. Although things are slowly improving in New Orleans, life in the city will probably never be the same again.

“Hurricane Katrina was one of the most damaging hurricanes in the history of the USA.”

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Decidi se le frasi sono True (T) o False (F). Correggi le frasi false.

New Orleans was the first place that Hurricane Katrina hit.  
F – Florida was the first place it hit.

1 There are many hurricanes in the Gulf of Mexico.

2 The levees weren’t strong enough for such a powerful hurricane.

3 Nobody told the people of New Orleans that a hurricane was coming.

4 Most people were able to leave the city before the floods arrived.

5 The US government reacted to the emergency immediately.

6 The population of New Orleans today is less than 450,000.

Presentazione orale

Project Prepara una presentazione orale su un disastro naturale avvenuto in Italia o nel mondo. Prendi degli appunti usando le seguenti domande per aiutarti. Parla per circa 2 minuti.

- When and where did it happen?
- How did it start?
- How many people died?
- What damage did it cause?
- How did it change the area, or people’s lives?

Look!

Assicurati di saper dire correttamente i numeri in inglese:
- 100 Si dice: a hundred / one hundred
- 1,000 Si dice: a thousand / one thousand
- 1,304 Si dice: one thousand, three hundred and four
- 10,000 Si dice: ten thousand
- 1,000,000 Si dice: a million / one million

DVD 3 Puoi trovare ulteriori informazioni sull’ambiente nel Culture 1 del DVD e a pag. 30.