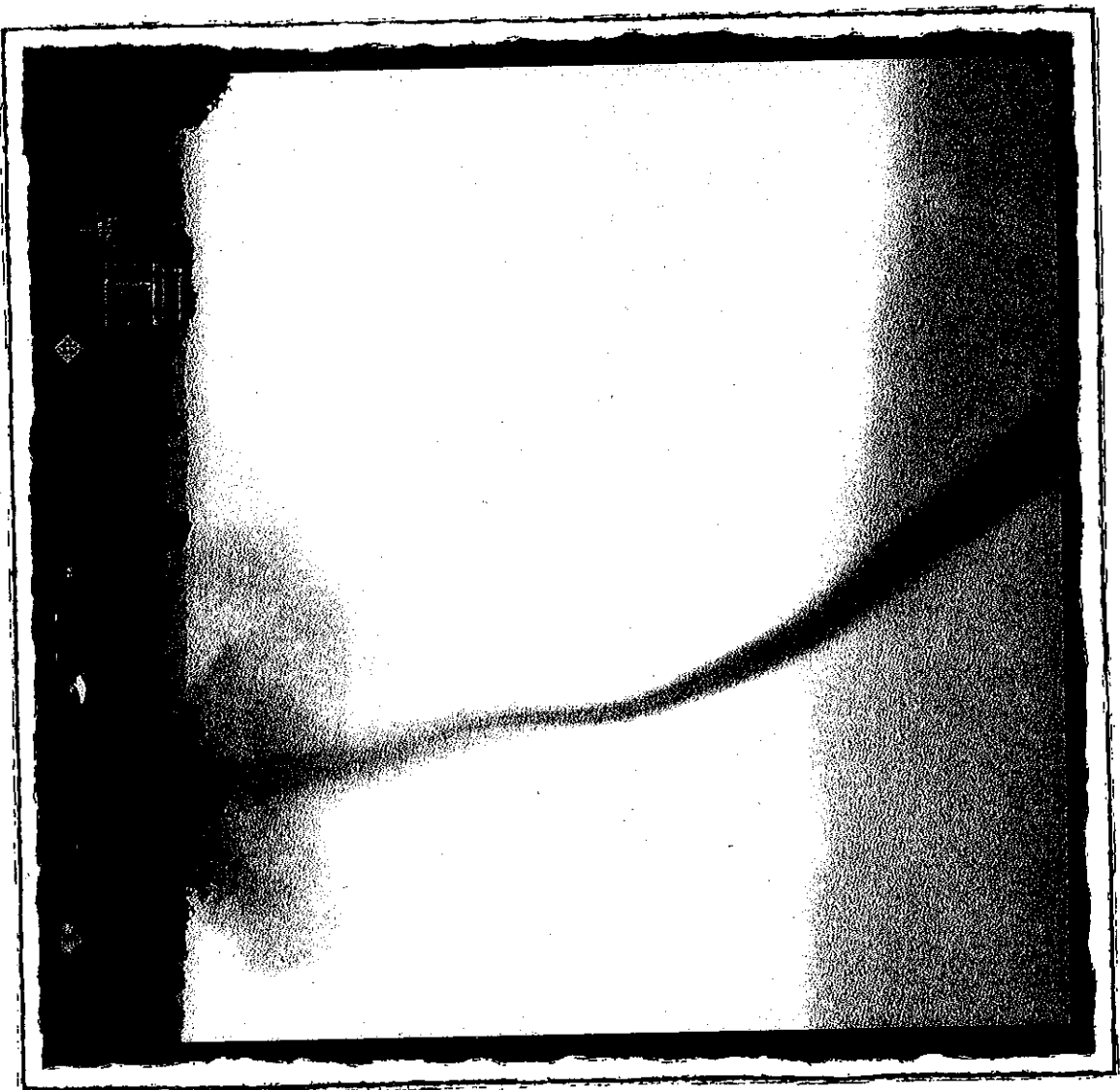


KILLER TORNADO!

Ray Westphal saw the tornado approach the small town of Jarrell, 38 miles north of Austin, Texas. It didn't seem like much when he first noticed it. But then it got ugly. "It looked about two inches tall at first," remembered Westphal. "Then it started taking up the entire horizon. As it got closer, building tops were flying around. It was picking cars right up into the air, flinging them everywhere."

² Another man was driving away from the tornado in his pickup truck. Out the window he could see a black swirling cloud hundreds of feet across. The cloud itself, the man said, was full of "pieces of tin, plywood, boards, flying cows, cornstalks, bits of trees, everything you could imagine."

³ Over the years, Texans have seen more than their fair share of tornadoes. In fact, Jarrell had been hit by twisters before. On May 17, 1989, a tornado ripped through the town. That storm left one person dead and 28 injured. It damaged or destroyed nearly 50 homes. But this tornado was worse, much worse. In fact, the tornado

This funnel cloud of a Force 5 tornado touched down in Jarrell, Texas, in 1997.

that struck on May 27, 1997, was one of the worst in Texas history.

4 Westphal and the truck driver were not the only ones to see the storm coming. Weather forecasters saw it, too. Radio and TV reports warned the people along the storm's path that a Force 5 tornado was headed their way. (This is the highest rating a twister can get. Such a rating is extremely rare. It means that winds will reach at least 260 miles per hour.) The people of Jarrell who heard the warnings tried to find a place to hide. Unfortunately, there weren't many good places. Few of the homes in Jarrell had basements or underground storm cellars.

5 Tornadoes weave a narrow path of destruction. But within that narrow path, the devastation can be absolute. Homes on one side of the road can suffer little or no damage, while those on the other side of the road get blown away. There is no telling exactly where a tornado will hit until it is too late. People have to do what seems reasonable and then just hope for the best.

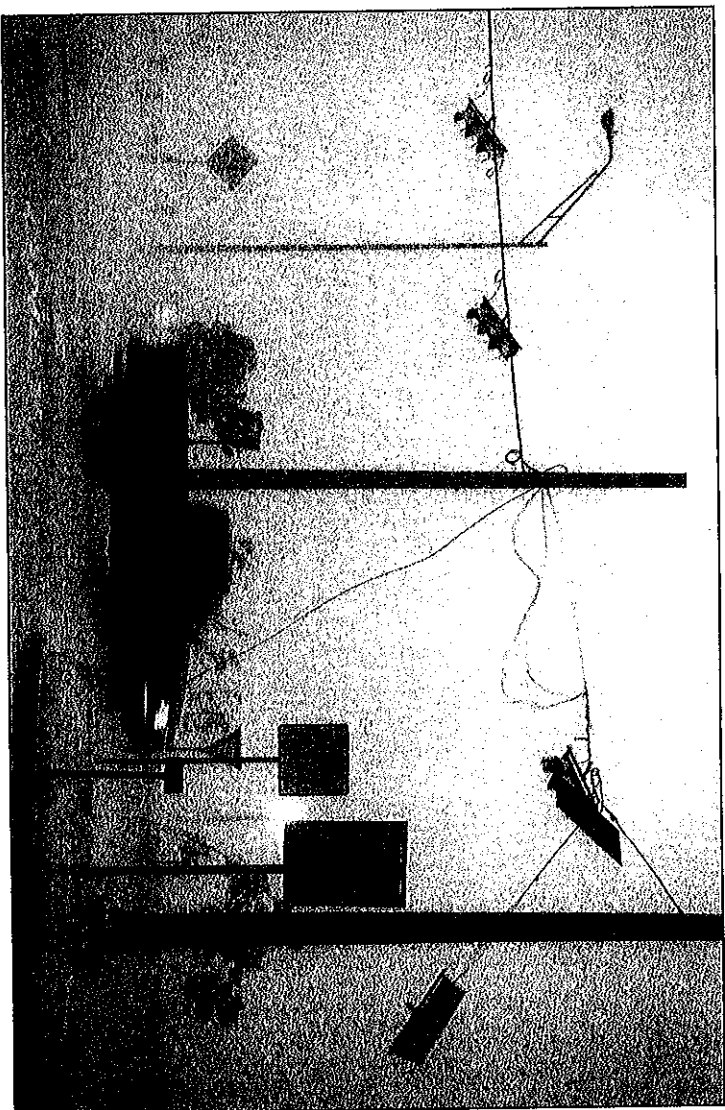
6 With a Force 5 storm, the chances of surviving a direct hit are slim at best. The power of such a tornado is hard to imagine. It will lift houses off their foundations. It will blow cars around like toys and strip the bark off trees. A Force 5

storm will suck the asphalt from paved roads, vegetation out of the ground, and even the hair off a cow's back.

7 The tornado moved slowly as it approached the town from the north. It wasn't advancing more than 20 miles per hour. "That sky was black as night, just

boiling," said Bud Taylor who watched the storm from the Speedway Inn. "[It] seemed like it set there for 10 minutes making up its mind which way to go."

8 Maria Ruiz thought the tornado was headed toward her trailer home. She knew that if her trailer were to be hit, she would



High winds and heavy rains followed the tornado. Here, a truck drives through swinging stop lights and downed electrical wires.

have no chance of surviving the storm. So Ruiz took her two sons—Michael, age 14, and John, age 15—to their family friends, the Moehring's. She felt her family would be safer in that home because it was sturdier. Sadly, the tornado hit the house with its full force, killing everyone inside. As chance would have it, the storm missed the Ruizes' trailer.

9 Fate smiled on some people. Virginia Davidson knows she was lucky to survive the wrath of the storm. "I thought for sure I was going to die, and I was just hoping it would happen very fast." She had been working in the yard when she saw the tornado coming. Davidson ran inside her house, jumped into the bathtub, and pulled a blanket over her head. The storm blew her house to smithereens. It moved the bathtub several hundred feet.

Although she was tossed out of the tub and badly bruised, Davidson survived.

10 Juanita Peterson also survived by hiding in her bathroom. She huddled there with her daughter, her daughter-in-law, and two young grandchildren. "People tell you [tornadoes] don't take long to pass through," Peterson later said.

"But when you're lying in a bathtub covering two little babies, it seems like forever."

11 The twister spun just west of the downtown area. It then smacked straight into the Double Creek neighborhood. This was where the tornado did its worst damage. The siren at the volunteer fire station had sounded a warning 10 minutes before the storm struck. But Double Creek is about two miles from the fire station. Many residents just didn't hear it. Their little neighborhood was completely destroyed.

12 The tornado lasted about 15 minutes. Then it started to rain and turn dark. Fearfully, rescue workers surveyed the damage. "All we found was dead cows, dead horses, and dead people," said Dennis Jaroszewski. "As you looked and found more and more bodies, you just said, 'Isn't this enough?'"

13 This tornado was a real killer. It left 27 dead and destroyed 50 homes. The storm caused roughly \$20 million in damages. "It was like someone dropped a bomb," said LaDonna Peterson, whose house was flattened. Referring to her home, she said

it was "like a vacuum cleaner just sucked it away."

14 Most tornadoes leave an area littered with debris. This one was different, however. It was so strong that houses were blown far away. It was as though they had simply disappeared. There was no debris; nothing was left but the bare earth.

15 Governor George W. Bush, who rushed to the scene, summed up the storm's power: "It's hard to believe you're looking at a patch of earth where life was literally sucked out of it." ❧

If you have been timed while reading this article, check your reading time below. Then turn to the words per minute table on page 21 and look up your reading speed (words per minute). Take your reading speed on the graph on page 22.

Reading Home Lesson 3

Minutes Seconds

A Finding the Main Idea

One statement below expresses the main idea of the article. One statement is too general, or too broad. The other statement explains only part of the article; it is too narrow. Label the statements using the following key:

M—Main Idea B—Too Broad N—Too Narrow

- _____ 1. The tornado is one of the most destructive types of storms.
- _____ 2. Virginia Davidson and Juanita Peterson survived the tornado by hiding in their bathrooms.
- _____ 3. A devastating tornado struck a small Texas town, killing 27 people and causing terrible damage.

_____ Score 15 points for a correct M answer.

_____ Score 5 points for each correct B or N answer.

_____ Total Score: Finding the Main Idea

B Recalling Facts

How well do you remember the facts in the article? Put an X in the box next to the answer that correctly completes each statement about the article.

1. The winds of a Force 5 tornado can reach speeds of at least
 - a. 20 miles per hour.
 - b. 100 miles per hour.
 - c. 260 miles per hour.
2. When a powerful tornado strikes, a good place to hide is in a
 - a. trailer.
 - b. basement or underground storm cellar.
 - c. car.
3. As the twister approached, Maria Ruiz thought her family would be safer in
 - a. her friends' house.
 - b. a bathtub.
 - c. her own home.
4. Many people living in the Double Creek neighborhood weren't aware of the twister's approach because
 - a. the fire station didn't sound a warning.
 - b. the tornado missed that area.
 - c. they hadn't heard the warning.
5. The tornado that struck Jarrell
 - a. left the area littered with debris.
 - b. sucked houses away leaving behind only bare earth.
 - c. lasted about 15 hours.

Score 5 points for each correct answer.

_____ Total Score: Recalling Facts

C Making Inferences

When you combine your own experience and information from a text to draw a conclusion that is not directly stated in that text, you are making an inference. Below are five statements that may or may not be inferences based on information in the article. Label the statements using the following key:

C—Correct Inference F—Faulty Inference

- _____ 1. Houses directly hit by a Force 5 tornado are completely destroyed.
- _____ 2. No one can predict the exact path of a tornado.
- _____ 3. A good place to hide from a tornado is under a tree.
- _____ 4. The people of Jarrell, Texas, have never received instructions about how to survive a tornado.
- _____ 5. Bathrooms offer more protection than other rooms in a house during a tornado.

Score 5 points for each correct answer.

_____ Total Score: Making Inferences

D Using Words Precisely

Each numbered sentence below contains an underlined word or phrase from the article. Following the sentence are three definitions. One definition is closest to the meaning of the underlined word. One definition is opposite or nearly opposite. Label those two definitions using the following key. Do not label the remaining definition.

C—Closest O—Opposite or Nearly Opposite

1. But within that narrow path, the devastation can be absolute.
 - _____ a. renewal
 - _____ b. terror
 - _____ c. destruction
2. She felt her family would be safer in that home because it was sturdier.
 - _____ a. stronger
 - _____ b. weaker
 - _____ c. farther away
3. Virginia Davidson knows she was lucky to survive the wrath of the storm.
 - _____ a. path
 - _____ b. fury
 - _____ c. calm
4. The storm blew her house to smithereens.
 - _____ a. moved her house across the street
 - _____ b. allowed her house to remain whole
 - _____ c. broke her house into small fragments

5. She huddled there with her daughter, her daughter-in-law, and two young grandchildren.

- _____ a. crowded together
 _____ b. fell asleep
 _____ c. moved apart

_____ Score 3 points for each correct C answer.
 _____ Score 2 points for each correct O answer.
 _____ **Total Score: Using Words Precisely**

Enter the four total scores in the spaces below, and add them together to find your Reading Comprehension Score. Then record your score on the graph on page 73.

Score	Question Type	Lesson 3
_____	Finding the Main Idea	
_____	Recalling Facts	
_____	Making Inferences	
_____	Using Words Precisely	
_____	Reading Comprehension Score	

Author's Approach

Put an X in the box next to the correct answer.

- The author uses the first sentence of the article to
 - inform the reader about the tornado approaching Jarrell.
 - inform the reader about Ray Westphal.
 - compare Jarrell and Austin, Texas.
- What does the author mean by the statement "A Force 5 storm will suck the asphalt from paved roads, vegetation out of the ground, and even the hair off a cow's back"?
 - A Force 5 storm doesn't hurt people.
 - Cows don't know how to hide from a Force 5 storm.
 - A Force 5 storm has tremendous power.
- What is the author's purpose in writing "Killer Tornado!?"
 - To express an opinion about the courage of the people in Jarrell, Texas
 - To inform the reader about the destruction caused by a powerful tornado
 - To emphasize the similarities between a tornado and a bomb
- The author tells this story mainly by
 - retelling several people's personal experiences of the twister that struck Jarrell.
 - comparing the May 1997 twister in Jarrell to other tornadoes that have struck the town.
 - telling different stories about tornadoes that have hit Texas in recent years.

_____ Number of correct answers

Record your personal assessment of your work on the Critical Thinking Chart on page 74.