



## The Story of Hurricane Katrina

In late August 2005, Hurricane Katrina became one of the most devastating storms in United States history. Katrina began as a tropical depression over the Bahamas but quickly grew into a powerful hurricane fueled by the warm waters of the Gulf of Mexico. At its strongest, it reached **Category 5** with winds over 160 miles per hour.

Katrina made landfall near New Orleans, Louisiana, on August 29, 2005, as a **Category 3 hurricane**. Although the storm's winds were destructive, the most catastrophic damage came from the storm surge. Water overwhelmed the city's levee system, flooding about 80% of New Orleans. Thousands of people were forced to evacuate, while many others were stranded without food, water, or shelter.

Hurricane Katrina caused over 1,800 deaths and more than \$100 billion in damages. The storm revealed weaknesses in disaster preparation and response systems. Today, Katrina is remembered not only for its physical destruction but also for the lessons it taught about the importance of hurricane readiness and community resilience.

1. Where did Hurricane Katrina begin, and what helped it grow stronger?
2. What was Katrina's maximum category and wind speed?
3. Where did the hurricane make landfall, and what category was it at that time?
4. What caused the worst damage to New Orleans during Katrina?
5. About what percentage of New Orleans was flooded?
6. How many people died as a result of Hurricane Katrina?
7. What is one major lesson that Hurricane Katrina taught about disaster response?
8. **Critical Thinking:** If you were living in a coastal city, what steps would you take to prepare for a hurricane like Katrina?