

Read the text and answer the questions that follow.

HURRICANES – WHAT’S IN A NAME?

Occurring only during the summer months, a hurricane is a huge tropical storm that gathers heat and energy through contact with warm ocean waters. Every few years, one of these storms makes international news when it causes havoc. What makes hurricanes remain in public memory, though, is their distinctive names.

5 Actually, naming storms is nothing new. For hundreds of years in the Caribbean islands, storms were named after the saint of the day they occurred in the Roman Catholic calendar – for example, Hurricane San Felipe. As meteorology developed, hurricanes were referred to by the map coordinates of their places of origin. However, this was often difficult to remember. During World War II, meteorologists began giving names to the storms in the Pacific Ocean as it made tracking them easier. This was eventually adopted for hurricanes in the Atlantic Ocean as well.

10 At first, only women’s names were used. Because the meteorologists were all men, they did this as a joke, explaining that tropical storms were like women because their behaviour was so unpredictable! However, by the 1970s, women had begun to express offence at the fact that hurricanes, which cause so much suffering, were given only female names. Therefore, from 1978, half of the year’s storms were given men’s names.

15 For each year, a list of 21 names in alphabetical order (without the letters Q, U, X, Y and Z) was developed. For example, in the year 2015, the first hurricane was called Hurricane Ana and the second, Hurricane Bill. Six different lists were created and are reused every six years. However, a name given to a particularly destructive hurricane may become off limits. “Katrina” was removed from the list after that hurricane destroyed parts of New Orleans in 2005. This is done to show sensitivity to people’s feelings, as victims of the hurricane may be haunted by bad memories if they hear the name being used again only six years later.

20 There is no doubt that today, these names are part of common language and have helped increase public awareness of the danger of hurricanes.

1 Choose the correct answer.

- 1 People remember hurricanes because
 - a they are named for distinctive saints
 - b they are given the names of people
 - c they occur during summer
- 2 Why did meteorologists stop using map coordinates as hurricane names?
 - a Methods of hurricane tracking changed.
 - b They had trouble remembering the coordinates.
 - c Map coordinates couldn’t be used during World War II.

2 Decide if the following sentences are true (T) or false (F). Find evidence in the text to support your answers.

- 1 People have been giving names to hurricanes for many centuries.
.....
- 2 A hurricane’s name cannot begin with the letter V.
.....

3 Complete the sentences.

- 1 Hurricanes get stronger when they
- 2 After Hurricane Katrina, meteorologists

4 Answer the question.

Why were women offended that hurricanes were given female names?
.....

5 Choose the best synonym for the words and expressions below.

1 gathers (line 1)

a collects

b meets

c enables

d turns into

2 havoc (line 2)

a huge loss of life

b worldwide interest

c destruction and chaos

d long-term problems

3 tracking (line 8)

a reporting on

b following

c predicting

d referring to

4 off limits (line 17)

a bad luck

b controversial

c hurtful

d not permitted