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# About This Book

The primary goal of any reading task is comprehension. *Document-Based Questions for Reading Comprehension and Critical Thinking* uses high-interest grade-level nonfiction passages, related documents, and critical thinking assessment practice to help you develop confident readers who can demonstrate their skills on standardized tests. In addition, you will build the comprehension skills necessary for a lifetime of learning.

There are five topic areas with six or seven lessons in each. Each lesson consists of three pages: a passage, a related document, and an assessment practice page containing multiple choice, true-false-explain, and short-answer document-based questions. This gives your students practice in all of the question types used in standardized testing. The students respond to the document-based questions based on the information gleaned from the passage plus its related document. Such questions improve a student's ability to apply prior knowledge, integrate information, and transfer knowledge to a new situation.

## Readability

These passages have a 5.0–5.9 reading level based on the Flesch-Kincaid Readability Formula. This formula, built into *Microsoft® Word™*, determines readability by calculating the number of words, syllables, and sentences. Average readability was determined for each of the five topic areas. The topics are presented in order of increasing difficulty.

The documents are not leveled. Many of them are historical pieces and therefore replicated with the exact wording. Some terminology may be challenging, but your students can handle difficult words within the context given.

## Preparing Students to Read Nonfiction Text

One of the best ways to prepare students to read expository text is to read a short selection aloud to them daily. Reading expository text aloud is critical to developing your students' ability to read it themselves. Since making predictions is another way to make students tap into their prior knowledge, read the beginning of a passage, then stop, and ask them to predict what might occur next. Do this at several points throughout your reading of the text. By doing this, over time you will find that your students' ability to make accurate predictions increases.

Your questions will help students, especially struggling readers, focus on what's important in a text. Also, remember the significance of wait time. Research has shown that the amount of time an educator waits for a student to answer after posing a question has a critical effect on learning. So after you ask a student a question, silently count to five (ten if you have a student who really struggles to put his or her thoughts into words) before giving any additional prompts or redirecting the question to another student.

Talking about nonfiction concepts is also important. Remember, however, that discussion can never replace reading aloud because people rarely speak using the vocabulary and complex sentence structures of written language.

# The Wrath of Hurricane Katrina

Hurricane Katrina was one of the worst storms ever to strike the United States. It formed in the Caribbean Sea. On August 25, 2005, the storm grazed the tip of Florida. It grew stronger as it swirled across the Gulf of Mexico. It made landfall near the Louisiana-Mississippi border on the morning of August 29.

The day before it reached land, weather forecasters said that the storm's track was headed for New Orleans, Louisiana. This city lies below sea level. Concrete barriers called levees surround it. They are there to prevent flooding. As the storm bore down on them, people were told to get out of the city. But many of the poor and elderly had no way to leave.

Hurricane Katrina's high winds and giant waves wiped out parts of Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama. A giant wall of water called a storm surge smashed onto shore. In Biloxi and Gulfport, Mississippi, this surge was 29 feet high. Much of both of these cities vanished. The remaining buildings were ruined.

New Orleans had the worst loss of life. Four of its levees broke. As a result, 80 percent of the city flooded. In some places the water was 20 feet deep. It covered the roofs of one-story homes. This water was filled with sewage, gas, chemicals, dead animals, mud, and debris.

For a week after the storm, the news showed images of hundreds of people stuck on roofs while dead people floated by in the flooded streets. Hundreds were stranded in the hot sun on highway overpasses. More than 20,000 people were inside the city's sports stadium and a convention center. No one had drinking water or electricity. The situation was bad in hospitals and nursing homes. To keep seriously ill people breathing, nurses had to work ventilators by hand 24 hours a day.

Rescue teams worked day and night. But some survivors caused trouble. Robbers used boats to move through the city and break into stores and homes. Someone even shot at nurses trying to move patients out of the hospital!

It took a week to bus everyone out of the city. They went to shelters in other places. Even so, a month passed before everyone had a roof over his or her head. About half a million people left the city. The storm had left many of them without a home or a job. They decided not to come back.

Hurricane Katrina killed more than 1,700 people. It left hundreds of thousands homeless. It took billions of dollars and many years to restore the area.
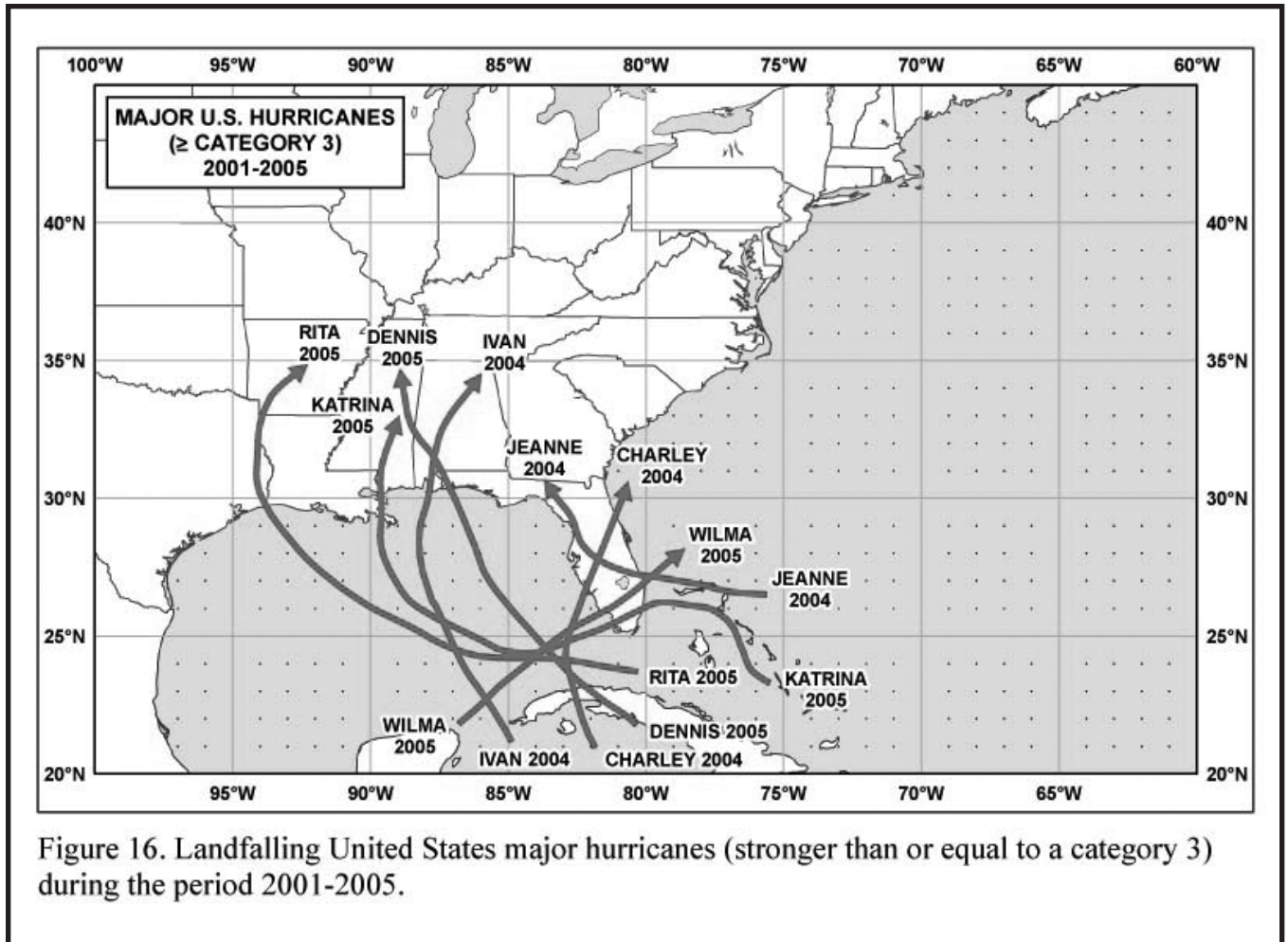
# The Wrath of Hurricane Katrina



Figure 16. Landfalling United States major hurricanes (stronger than or equal to a category 3) during the period 2001-2005.

National Weather Service National Hurricane Center web site, "Major U.S. Hurricanes 2001-2005"
**http://www.nhc.noaa.gov/gifs/DC_16_2001-2005.jpg**

# The Wrath of Hurricane Katrina

**1.** Which state was not affected by Hurricane Katrina?

a. Mississippi

b. Alabama

c. Georgia

d. Florida

**2.** Hurricane Katrina caused the most deaths in

a. Biloxi.

b. New Orleans.

c. Gulfport.

d. the Gulf of Mexico.

**3.** Ventilators are used to

a. maintain a person's heartbeat.

b. monitor a person's vital signs (heartbeat, breathing, blood pressure).

c. help a patient to breathe.

d. prevent a patient from choking.

**4.** Hurricane Katrina formed in the Gulf of Mexico. True or False? Explain.

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**5.** Look at the map. Between 2001 and 2005, which year had the most strong hurricanes? Did Hurricane Katrina strike during that year?

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**6.** Should New Orleans have been rebuilt? Defend your stance.

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