

## Haboob!



One day in 2011, in Phoenix, Arizona, a woman was getting in her car, which was parked in her driveway. Suddenly, her husband ran out of the house. He was waving his arms and yelling.

“Haboob!” he yelled.

Without another word, the woman ran back in her house and shut the front door. The husband and wife stood at their front window. A few minutes later, the sky began to darken. And then, sand began to swirl around the house. Soon, sand and dust were everywhere, blowing all around the house. This lasted for almost an hour.

The woman and her husband were watching a type of dust storm, called a “haboob.” A dust storm is a kind of storm where wind picks up sand and dust from the desert and blows them into the air. Phoenix is built in the middle of the Sonoran Desert. It gets several haboobs every year. Most of these haboobs are very small, but some of them are very big. The large haboob that hit Phoenix in 2011 was more than a mile tall and 50 miles wide. The storms can last for up to three hours.

Haboobs happen in other countries too. Countries in the northern part of Africa can get long haboobs. If a haboob strikes near a farm, it can cover the farm with dust and sand. This means the farmer can no longer plant crops. Often the farm must be abandoned.

Haboobs may have a funny name, but they can be very dangerous. When a haboob hits, it makes it very difficult to see. If you are outside during a haboob, you may not be able to see more than a few inches in front of you. When a haboob is approaching Phoenix, the local weather stations start broadcasting warnings for people to get off the street. People are told to park their cars, so they don't crash. Airplanes are not allowed to take off from or land at the Phoenix airport because the pilots cannot see well.

The dust in a haboob can also make people sick. Some of the dust can carry pesticides and toxins. People go inside during a haboob so that they do not inhale the dust. People with pets, like dogs and cats and horses, also bring their animals inside so that they do not get sick.

Weather forecasters are always trying to get better at predicting when a haboob will happen. The sooner they know a haboob is coming, the sooner they can warn people about it. The sooner people are warned about a haboob, the more lives will be saved. This is because more people will be able to get to safety before the haboob strikes.

Paul Fisher and his family have lived in Arizona for more than 20 years. He can remember seeing many haboobs during that time. One time, he was out walking his dog, Jimbo, shortly after he had moved to Phoenix. As he was walking, he looked out at the desert and saw what looked like a big, dark wall. He stared at it for a few minutes. Suddenly, he realized what he was looking at. He grabbed Jimbo and ran back to the house. He was just able to get inside before the storm hit.

"Once you're in a haboob, you never forget it," he said. "It's like a thunderstorm, but instead of rain, all you can see is sand."

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**1.** What is a haboob?

- A) A haboob is a tropical rainstorm that forms in the Sonoran Desert.
- B) A haboob is a storm that picks up dust and sand from the desert and blows them into the air.
- C) A haboob is a type of desert found in the southwest region of America and northern Africa.
- D) A haboob is a type of home commonly built in Phoenix, Arizona.

**2.** The author lists different things people do to protect themselves during a haboob. What is one of these things?

- A) People get into their cars and drive away.
- B) People stay outdoors to protect their animals.
- C) People stay indoors with their animals.
- D) People fly away in airplanes.

**3.** The text states that haboobs can be very dangerous. What evidence from the text best supports this statement?

- A) "Soon, sand and dust were everywhere, blowing all around the house."
- B) "Weather forecasters are always trying to get better at predicting when a haboob will happen."
- C) "The storms can last for up to three hours."
- D) "The dust in a haboob can also make people sick."

**4.** Paul Fisher was out walking his dog Jimbo in Arizona when he saw a haboob approaching. The passage says that he grabbed Jimbo, ran back to the house, and was able to get inside just before the storm hit. How can Paul's actions best be described?

- A) unusual
- B) frightening
- C) reasonable
- D) irrational

5. What is the main message of this story?

- A) It is important to warn people about haboobs so they can avoid the danger.
- B) Haboobs are a very uncommon and interesting weather pattern.
- C) People should never walk their dogs in Arizona in order to stay safe from haboobs.
- D) It is a bad idea to farm in the desert because of the danger posed by haboobs.

6. Read the following sentences: "Weather forecasters are always trying to get better at **predicting** when a haboob will happen. The sooner they know a haboob is coming, the sooner they can warn people about it."

As used in the passage, what does the word "**predicting**" mean?

- A) saying that an event has happened
- B) saying that an event will happen before it happens
- C) saying that an event will never happen
- D) saying that an event has never happened

7. Choose the answer that best completes the sentence below.

During a haboob, it is important to take precautions, \_\_\_\_\_ staying indoors.

- A) such as
- B) before
- C) finally
- D) although

8. What do local weather stations in Phoenix do when a haboob is approaching the city?

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9. Why is it important for forecasters to improve their ability to predict haboobs?

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**10.** How might people be affected if forecasters did not have the ability to predict haboobs? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

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