

Hurricanes are here again

The Northern Atlantic hurricane season occurs between June 1st and November 30th and the season sharply peaks from late August through September.

The chart below tells how hurricanes are classified by wind speed. The higher the wind speed the higher the category. This scale is called the Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale.

The Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale is a 1 to 5 categorization based on the hurricane's intensity at the time. The scale – originally developed by wind engineer Herb Saffir and meteorologist Bob Simpson – has been an excellent tool for alerting the public to the possible intensity of each hurricane. The scale provides examples of the type of damage and impacts in the United States associated with winds of these intensities. **In general, damage rises by about a factor of four for every category increase.**

Scale Number (Category)	Winds Maximum 1-min (mph)
1	74 - 95
2	96 - 110
3	111 - 130
4	131 - 155
5	> 155

1. According to the readings from the National Weather Service that are shown above, each higher category level can cause about four times as much damage as the previous category level (all other variables being the same).
 - a. How many times greater damage could a category three hurricane cause then a category one hurricane?
 - b. How many times greater damage could a category four hurricane cause then a category one hurricane?
 - c. How many times greater damage could a category five hurricane cause then a category one hurricane?

We found this chart of the most costly hurricane damages at

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Atlantic_hurricane_records

Top Ten Most Costly Hurricanes in U.S. History

Damage amounts in U.S. Dollars, adjusted for inflation. Includes all possible hurricanes from 1900 to 2022 (in 2019 equivalent dollars).

rank	name	year	category at US landfall	damage amount
1	Katrina	2005	5	\$ 125.0 billion
2	Harvey	2017	4	\$ 125.0 billion
3	Ian	2022	5	\$113.1 billion
4	Maria	2017	5	\$ 91.6 billion
5	Irma	2017	5	\$ 77.2 billion
6	Ida	2021	4	\$ 75.3 billion
7	Sandy	2012	3	\$ 68.7 billion
8	Ike	2008	4	\$ 38.0 billion
9	Andrew	1992	5	\$ 27.3 billion
10	Ivan	2004	5	\$ 26.1 billion

4. Where do you think Hurricane Idalia will fall in the rankings of most costly hurricanes above?

5. I thought that the most damaging and costly hurricanes in U.S. history would have been all category 4 or 5. What is the typical category of these top ten most damaging hurricanes? Explain how you determined your answer.

6. What other factors may come into play that may determine how damaging a hurricane is beside wind speed?

7. Using your estimation skills, about how much in 2019 dollars have these ten hurricanes caused in total damage?

Hurricane Data Chart

Decade	Total number	Category					Major
	1,2,3,4,5	1	2	3	4	5	3,4,5
1851-1860	18	7	5	5	1	0	6
1861-1870	15	8	6	1	0	0	1
1871-1880	20	7	6	7	0	0	7
1881-1890	22	8	9	4	1	0	5
1891-1900	21	8	5	5	3	0	8
1901-1910	18	10	4	4	0	0	4
1911-1920	20	8	5	4	3	0	7
1921-1930	15	8	2	3	2	0	5
1931-1940	19	4	7	6	1	1	8
1941-1950	24	8	6	9	1	0	10
1951-1960	18	8	1	6	3	0	9
1961-1970	14	3	5	4	1	1	6
1971-1980	12	6	2	4	0	0	4
1981-1990	15	9	2	3	1	0	4
1991-2000	14	3	6	4	0	1	5
2001-2010	19	8	4	6	1	0	7
2011-2020	19	9	5	1	3	1	5
all decades	303	122	80	76	21	4	101

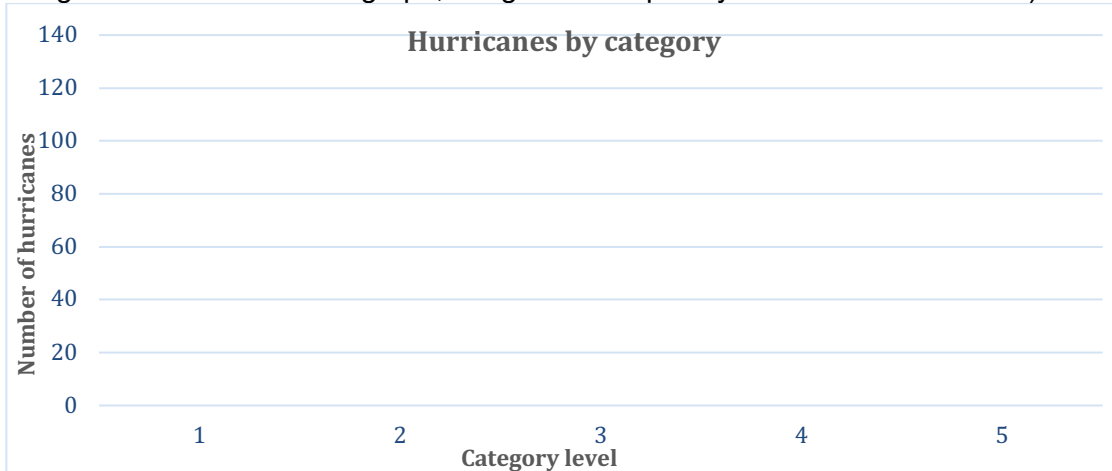
8. I thought that the occurrence of hurricanes has been increasing over the last several years. Using the data in the chart create a visual representation (a graph) that shows the number of hurricanes per ten year period, since 1851. Carefully consider what type of graph you will create, and how you will set it up. Create your graph on a separate sheet of paper ... preferably graph paper if available.

9. What does your graph tell you? Describe how the occurrence of hurricanes in the U.S. has changed over the last 170 years. How has it changed recently? Are hurricanes occurring more often?

10. About how many hurricanes occur in the U.S. each *decade*? Explain how you determined your answer.

11. Use your answer to question 10 to determine about how many hurricanes hit the U.S. each *year*.

12. What category is the typical hurricane? To find out create a histogram that displays the number of hurricanes that have occurred in each category since 1851. We have started the histogram for you (a histogram is similar to a bar graph, but gives a frequency distribution of the data).



13. Make some mathematical observations from your frequency distribution in regards to how frequent each category of hurricane occurs? Category five hurricanes are often catastrophic. About how often do they occur?
14. Using the chart, bar graph and/or frequency table, describe how many hurricanes the U.S. should expect in one decade. How many category 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 hurricanes should we expect in a decade? Show how you found your answers.

Major Hurricanes are noted as having Saffir-Simpson wind scale of types 3, 4, or 5.

15. How many major hurricanes would you expect in one decade?

We've looked at windspeed of hurricanes with the Saffir-Simpson scale and costliness of various hurricanes. There are hurricane comparisons involving tidal surge, erosion, deaths, and number of people displaced by an event.

16. Are our comparison's not seeing the whole picture of the growth of cyclone events? If yes, how so?

All hurricane data was referenced from the National Hurricane Center website: <http://www.nhc.noaa.gov/>

* Note: The Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale is roughly logarithmic. To learn more visit <http://www.nhc.noaa.gov/aboutsshs.shtml>

For more hurricane resources we've used: http://www.education.noaa.gov/Weather_and_Atmosphere/Hurricanes.html

<https://www.wunderground.com/hurricane/damage.asp>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_costliest_Atlantic_hurricanes