Preparing for a Disaster

By Megan McGibney

Some disasters cannot be stopped. These disasters include earthquakes and tornadoes. They almost always ruin whatever is in their path. They can destroy houses and buildings. It is very hard to deal with these disasters, and it takes a very long time for life to get back to normal.

Because these kinds of disasters are a force of nature, people have to deal with them as they come. There is very little time to get ready once it is known that an earthquake or tornado is going to hit. However, people can still prepare so that the disaster’s impact is not so serious.

Earthquakes cannot be predicted. They can happen at any time, no matter what anyone is doing. While scientists are able to figure out where earthquakes are most likely to happen, there is no way an earthquake can be foreseen. But for people who live in places where these disasters usually take place, such as California, Japan, or Italy, they know what to do when the ground begins to shake. They know they have to get on their hands and knees, so the earthquake doesn’t make them fall first. They then will take shelter under a desk that will cover their whole body. If there is no desk around, people going through an earthquake would crawl to a wall and cover their head and neck. They could also stand against a wall that does not have any heavy objects, such as paintings, that might fall and hurt someone.

If people are outside during an earthquake, it is best that they get into an open spot. They must get away from streetlamps, electric wires, and anything else that may fall and hurt them.
Preparing for a Disaster

Earthquakes do not last very long. They mostly last less than a minute but can cause a lot of damage. This all depends on how big the quake is. Most earthquakes are small and don’t have much impact. But some can be very damaging, and if some places are not ready for the impact, the damage can be much worse. In places where earthquakes often strike, there are strict codes for buildings so that the earthquakes do not cause serious destruction. These buildings must be built in such a way that they do not fall apart as a result of a big quake.

Because earthquakes cannot be predicted, it is difficult to be fully prepared when they happen. Even so, knowing what to do when they do happen usually prevents terrible damage.

The same goes for tornadoes. While some places get tornadoes more than others, it is not easy to predict them. There may be warnings that they will happen, but tornadoes cannot be predicted in the same way a rainstorm can, days before it happens.

In order to be safe when a tornado does strike, people must already know where they will find shelter. Families and schools must have tornado drills and discuss where to go once a tornado has been spotted. The best place to go to is a basement. If there is no basement, then people will have to go into hallways or rooms with no windows. Tornadoes can be so strong that they make the glass from windows break, which can injure anyone nearby. Also, people must cover their head in case the tornado damages the ceiling above them and throws objects around.

If people are outside when a tornado hits, they must lie flat on the ground away from vehicles. The worst place to be during a tornado is in a car, truck, or bus because they can easily be thrown around. Tornadoes are very powerful and can even move trailer homes.

Just like places that have earthquakes, places with tornados usually have codes to prevent buildings from being badly damaged. But sometimes codes cannot stop this natural disaster from doing a lot of damage.

Although scientists are trying to find ways to predict these two natural disasters, it is still very hard to know when exactly they will hit and how much damage they will cause. In the meantime, people must always be aware that an earthquake or tornado can happen without warning. The important thing is to be prepared so that there won’t be as much damage.
1. What types of natural disasters are discussed in this passage?
   
   A  earthquakes and floods  
   B  earthquakes and tornadoes  
   C  tornadoes and floods  
   D  tornadoes and hurricanes  

2. The author explains the importance of preparing for natural disasters. How many examples of natural disasters does she provide?
   
   A  one  
   B  two  
   C  three  
   D  four  

3. During an earthquake, people indoors take shelter under desks, cover their head and neck, or stand against walls without heavy objects on them. These actions suggest that during an earthquake there is a danger of what?
   
   A  cars, trucks, and buses being thrown around  
   B  trailer homes getting picked up and moved  
   C  heavy objects falling and hurting people  
   D  a rainstorm happening at the same time  

4. Earthquakes and tornadoes can be described as all of the following EXCEPT
   
   A  dangerous  
   B  powerful  
   C  difficult to predict  
   D  impossible to prepare for
5. The main purpose of this passage is

A  to explain why and how to prepare for earthquakes and tornadoes
B  to describe how tornadoes form and where they are likely to happen
C  to prove that earthquakes cause more damage than tornadoes
D  to warn people about the risks of living in places like California, Japan, and Italy

6. Read the following sentence: “Although scientists are trying to find ways to predict these two natural disasters, it is still very hard to know when exactly they will hit and how much damage they will cause.”

What is the meaning of the word predict in this sentence?

A  to prevent something from doing damage
B  to study something until it is completely understood
C  to ignore something until it goes away on its own
D  to tell ahead of time when something is going to happen

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

Earthquakes cannot be predicted; ________, they can be prepared for.

A  for example
B  however
C  therefore
D  particularly

8. Being inside a car, truck, bus, or trailer home during a tornado is dangerous.

What evidence from the passage supports this statement?

______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
9. According to the passage, what are two things people should do during an earthquake?

______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________

10. Explain how preparing for earthquakes and tornadoes could minimize the damage from these two natural disasters. Support your answer with information from the passage.

______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
Passage Reading Level: Lexile 1010

Passage Summary: This passage discusses two types of natural disasters, earthquakes and tornadoes. It emphasizes their unpredictability and describes safety measures that are taken to minimize their impact.

1. What types of natural disasters are discussed in this passage?
   A earthquakes and floods
   B earthquakes and tornadoes
   C tornadoes and floods
   D tornadoes and hurricanes

2. The author explains the importance of preparing for natural disasters. How many examples of natural disasters does she provide?
   A one
   B two
   C three
   D four

3. During an earthquake, people indoors take shelter under desks, cover their head and neck, or stand against walls without heavy objects on them. These actions suggest that during an earthquake there is a danger of what?
   A cars, trucks, and buses being thrown around
   B trailer homes getting picked up and moved
   C heavy objects falling and hurting people
   D a rainstorm happening at the same time

4. Earthquakes and tornadoes can be described as all of the following EXCEPT
   A dangerous
   B powerful
   C difficult to predict
   D impossible to prepare for

5. The main purpose of this passage is
   A to explain why and how to prepare for earthquakes and tornadoes
   B to describe how tornadoes form and where they are likely to happen
   C to prove that earthquakes cause more damage than tornadoes
   D to warn people about the risks of living in places like California, Japan, and Italy
6. Read the following sentence: “Although scientists are trying to find ways to predict these two natural disasters, it is still very hard to know when exactly they will hit and how much damage they will cause.”

What is the meaning of the word predict in this sentence?

A  to prevent something from doing damage  
B  to study something until it is completely understood  
C  to ignore something until it goes away on its own  
D  to tell ahead of time when something is going to happen

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

Earthquakes cannot be predicted; ______, they can be prepared for.

A  for example  
B  however  
C  therefore  
D  particularly

8. Being inside a car, truck, bus, or trailer home during a tornado is dangerous.

What evidence from the passage supports this statement?

Suggested answer: The passage states that tornados can throw around or move cars, trucks, buses, and trailer homes. If a person is inside one during a tornado, he or she could get thrown around with it.

9. According to the passage, what are two things people should do during an earthquake?

Suggested answer: If indoors, people should take shelter under a desk that covers their bodies. If outdoors, people should move away from streetlamps and anything else that might fall and hurt them.

10. Explain how preparing for earthquakes and tornadoes could minimize the damage from these two natural disasters. Support your answer with information from the passage.

Answers could include: Strict codes for buildings in areas where earthquakes happen can protect those buildings and the people inside from damage. Preparing for tornadoes would ensure that people know where they can seek shelter. People would also have the knowledge to stay out of cars and trailers.