

Selections: Hurricane Helen by Maggie Dent

Activities author: Adrian Tennant

Level: Movers+

Recommended age: Grade 4, primary (9+)

Time needed: Indicated for each activity

Type of English: American

Activity 1 (5 minutes)

1. Hand out the worksheet with Activity 1.
2. Ask the children to look at the picture and tell you what they think has happened.
3. Elicit a few ideas and write these up on the board.

Activity 2 (5-10 minutes)

1. Put the children in pairs.
2. Ask them to circle the words in the skateboard that they can see in the picture.
3. Encourage the children to work together.
4. Monitor and help where necessary but don't give away the answers.
5. Finally, check the answers as a class.

Key:

In the picture: alarm clock; magazines, teddy bear; skateboard; satchel; sneakers; school books; tennis racket; piggy bank; pillow; roller skates

Not in the picture: pajamas; lunchbox; gloves; toothbrush

Activity 3 (10 minutes)

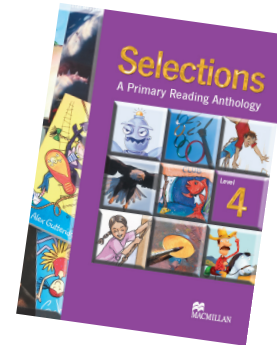
1. Hand out the worksheet with Activity 3 and explain that this is a summary of the story but that it has been mixed up.
2. Either play the recording or ask the children to read the story and put the sentences in the correct order by numbering them 1-8 (the first one has been done for them).
3. Put the children in pairs and encourage them to check together.
4. Monitor and help where necessary.
5. Play the recording or ask the children to read the story again.
6. Check the answers as a class.

Key:

[3] Helen promised to tidy her room later.

[6] Mr Philipps explained what a disaster kit was.

[7] Helen tidied up her room.



[2] Helen was eating breakfast in the kitchen.

[8] Helen's mother was really pleased when she saw Helen's room.

[5] Mr Philipps started talking about hurricanes.

[1] Helen's mother was shocked at how untidy Helen's bedroom was.

[4] Helen went to school.

Activity 4 (15-20 minutes)

1. Play the recording straight through or ask the children to read the story.
2. Explain that you want them to listen to or read the story as if they were Helen. They should think about how they feel, what they would say and how they would react as the story unfolds.
3. Play the recording again or ask the children to read the story one more time.
4. Next, ask for a volunteer to sit at the front of the class.
5. Explain to the rest of the class that the student at the front is Helen and they should ask questions as if they were asking Helen.
6. Encourage the children to ask questions and the volunteer to answer 'in character'.
7. Listen and help where necessary.

Activity 5 (5 minutes)

1. Put the children in groups.
2. Ask the groups to discuss the questions.
3. Monitor and help where necessary.
4. Ask a few children to report back on their discussion.

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1. Put the children in groups of three or four.
2. Make sure they have the resources they need, i.e. access to the internet or encyclopedias.
3. Explain to the children that you'd like each group to make a poster illustrating how hurricanes work.
4. Monitor and help where necessary.
5. Finally, display the finished posters on the classroom walls and encourage the children to look at the posters made by other groups.

Here are some useful web pages:

- <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/sci/tech/7533909.stm>
- http://news.bbc.co.uk/cbbcnews/hi/newsid_4020000/newsid_4022100/4022129.stm
- http://www.bbc.co.uk/weather/features/understanding/hurricane_cycle.shtml
- http://www.bbc.co.uk/weather/features/understanding/hurricane_season.shtml
- <http://www.weatherwizkids.com/hurricane1.htm>
- <http://www.fema.gov/kids/hurr.htm>
- <http://kids.earth.nasa.gov/archive/hurricane/>
- <http://www.enchantedlearning.com/subjects/weather/hurricane/>

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Hurricane Helen

Written by Maggie Dent

Illustrated by Tammie Lyon

Helen's mother opened the door. She looked at Helen's bedroom in horror. The drawers were wide open, with clothes spilling out. The closet was so full the door wouldn't close. On Helen's bed was a stuffed animal she had when she was a baby and, on top of it, a mountain of CDs, magazines, sneakers and schoolbooks.



'It looks like a hurricane passed through Helen's bedroom!' said Helen's mother. 'I must ask her to clean it.'



Helen was eating breakfast and reviewing for a quiz at the same time. She was always in a hurry so she usually had to do two or three things at once. Her father came into the kitchen and said, 'Mom wants you to clean your room. It looks like a hurricane passed through it.'

Joe, Helen's little brother asked, 'A hurricane? Is that a bad thing?'

'Sure is,' said his father.

'I'll do it after school, Dad,' said Helen grabbing her backpack. 'I'm late already. It's geography first period and Mr Philipps hates people to be late. And I've lost my dictionary. Have you seen it? Oh, there it is! OK, see you later!' And off she ran through the front door.

Twenty minutes later, Helen ran into Room 5B. 'You're the last one, as usual, Helen,' said Mr Philipps. 'Now come on in and close the door.'



'Today,' said Mr Philipps, 'we're going to learn about hurricanes. Have any of you seen a hurricane?' Helen thought about her bedroom, but she said nothing.

'I haven't seen one. Not a real one but I watched a program on TV and I know they destroy things and leave a mess,' said James who sat next to Helen.

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'Yes,' said Mr Philipps. 'They often do. But I'm going to surprise you now. Sometimes hurricanes do good.'

'Hurricanes can be good things?' asked Helen in amazement.

'Oh, yes,' said Mr Philipps. 'Hurricanes bring a lot of water. They bring water to rivers and lakes that are becoming dry. And that means that animals and fish come back to live in them.'

'Wow!' said James. 'I thought they were just really bad.'

'Me too,' said Helen.

'Well, it's also true that they can be bad. They're huge storms. They can destroy buildings, trees, cars and even kill people. If there's a hurricane, you must get inside where you'll be safe. Many families these days keep a disaster kit at home, just in case,' explained Mr Philipps.

'What's a disaster kit?' asked Mary.

'It's a box with fresh water, food and medicine. They're the things you might need if a hurricane comes near your home,' answered Mr Philipps.

'But,' Mr Philipps continued, 'you also need to know that hurricanes pick up heat from the very hot areas of the world and drop it in less warm places. And did you know that the wind they bring with them takes away the old, dead plants from rivers and lakes? It's just like when we pour dirty water down the sink. All the dirt goes away. Oh yes, hurricanes can be good!'

When Helen got home she took a cold soda from the kitchen and ran upstairs.

'So, hurricanes are good things,' she said out loud. 'In that case, I'm going to show Mom the good part.'

Then she began to clean up her bedroom. She picked up all the books off the floor and arranged them neatly in the bookcase. She removed the clothes from the bed and the floor and hung them up in the closet. She put all the CDs away in the CD rack and threw the old magazines in the garbage.

'Mom,' she called. 'Can you come here for a minute?'

Helen's mother put her head around the door.

'Helen!' she said 'That looks terrific! I said to your dad this morning that it looked like a hurricane had hit it!'



'Are you sure that's a bad thing, Mom?' asked Helen, smiling.

'I heard today hurricanes can be good and bad!'

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Before listening / reading

Activity 1

Look at the picture. What do you think has happened?



Activity 2

Circle the words in the skateboard that you can see in the picture.

alarm clock pajamas lunchbox
 magazines teddy bear skateboard
 satchel sneakers school books
 tennis racket piggy bank gloves
 toothpaste pillow roller skates

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Listen or read

Activity 3

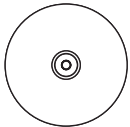
Listen to (or read) the story and number these events in the order you hear (or read) them.

- Helen promised to tidy her room later.
- Mr Philipps explained what a disaster kit was.
- Helen tidied up her room.
- Helen was eating breakfast in the kitchen.
- Helen's mother was really pleased when she saw Helen's room.
- Mr Philipps started talking about hurricanes.
- 1 Helen's mother was shocked at how untidy Helen's bedroom was.
- Helen went to school.

After you listen or read

Activity 5

Discuss these questions with your group.



1. Are you a neat and tidy person?



2. When was the last time your bedroom was in a mess?



3. How often do you tidy your room?



4. What things do you leave lying around?



5. How messy is your bedroom today?

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Activity 6

Use the internet or books from the library to find out as much as you can about hurricanes. Then, in groups, make a poster showing the information you have found out about hurricanes.

