

Tornadoes in Kentucky



Recommended Grades:

K-5



Time Needed:

15-25 minutes

Description

- Students will learn about severe tornadoes in Kentucky over the past 10 years.

Learning Objectives

- Learn where most of the severe tornadoes occur in Kentucky
- Discuss how the impact of a tornado varies depending on the location
- Use spatial thinking to help understand how tornadoes move across the state

Materials

- String

Preparation

- Review the locations of tornadoes in Kentucky on the accompanying map and briefly explain how a tornado forms.

Rules: (e.g., have students remove shoes before walking on map)

Directions

1. Divide the class into groups of two and assign them each a tornado. Hand out strings to each group of students.
2. Introduce the topic. Talk to the students about tornadoes in Kentucky. The following facts may be useful in introducing the topic:
 - Kentucky averages about 21 tornadoes a year.
 - Most tornadoes that occur are small and are EF-0s or EF-1s.
 - Kentucky has only ever had 1 EF-5 tornado.
 - Most tornadoes in Kentucky occur at night.
 - On average, tornadoes cause about 400 million dollars in damage across the United States.
3. Have two groups come up at a time and have them stand at the starting and ending point of their tornado. Show them the tornado map for reference. Then have the students hold a string between them

to mark the path. Repeat this until all groups have a tornado marked. Make sure that the students are placed in their correct approximate locations.

4. Once all groups have marked a tornado, talk to the students about how they travel across Kentucky (direction) and what impacts they can have.
5. Have the students then carefully place down their string and walk off the map so the tornado paths can all be viewed as a whole.
6. Ask the students to identify the town your school is in on the map. Has a severe tornado occurred near there within the past 10 years?
7. Ask the students, or point out yourself, any large cities that have been affected by a severe tornado.
8. Conclude by asking the students if they have any questions about the map/tornadoes and what conclusions can they draw from the map about where severe tornadoes occur.

Additional discussion: Discuss the tornado outbreak that occurred in Kentucky in December of 2021. The path of the tornado that crosses multiple states and if the students have any personal experiences with tornadoes.

Note: the multistate tornado of December 2021 is not on the map due to the GPS tracking of the path not being finished as of July 2022.

Connections to the Kentucky Curriculum:

ESS2.D: Weather and Climate- Weather is the combination of sunlight, wind, snow or rain, and temperature in a particular region at a particular time. People measure these conditions to describe and record the weather and to notice patterns over time.

ESS3.B: Natural Hazards- Some kinds of severe weather are more likely than others in a given region. Weather scientists forecast severe weather so that the communities can prepare for and respond to these events.