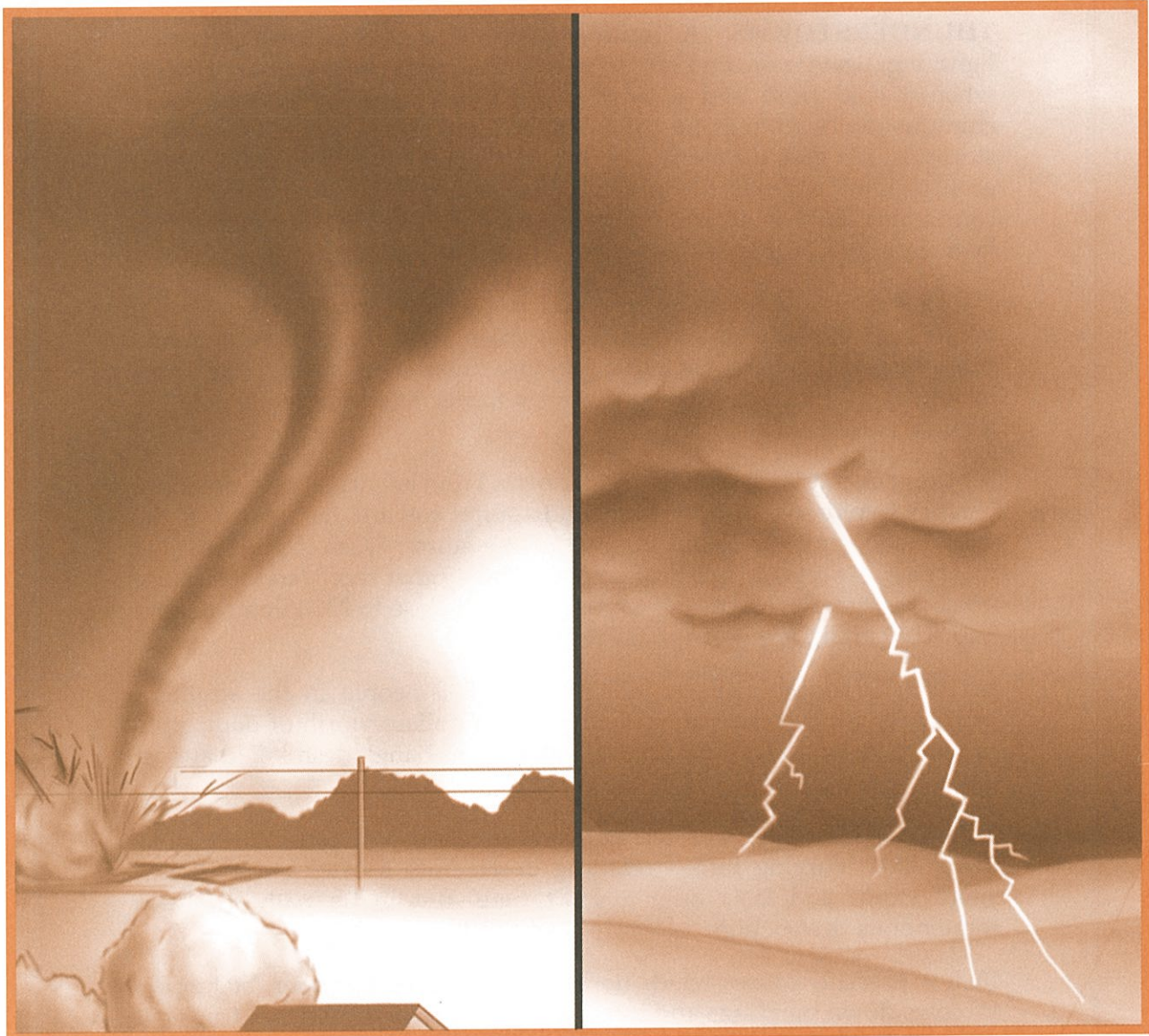


What are thunderstorms, hurricanes, and tornadoes?



KEY TERMS

hurricane: tropical storm with very strong winds

thunderstorm: storm with thunder, lightning, heavy rain, and strong winds

tornado: small, very violent funnel-shaped storm

MORE ABOUT HURRICANES AND TORNADOES



Figure A

Would you want to fly directly into a hurricane? That is what some hurricane hunters do! Hurricane hunters often take pictures of hurricanes. They fly over the hurricane and take the pictures. Hurricane hunters who fly into the storm gather information for the National Weather Service.



Figure B



Figure C

Tornadoes occur in many parts of the world. However, more tornadoes occur in the United States than anywhere else. During some years, there are more than 800 tornadoes.

Oklahoma and Kansas have more tornadoes than any other states. Most of these tornadoes form in the Great Plains and the southwestern United States. This area is called the "Tornado Belt" or "Tornado Alley."

Most tornadoes in the "Tornado Belt" happen during April, May, and June. They usually strike during the late afternoon. These are the times when conditions are best for tornadoes to form.

COMPLETE THE CHART

Decide whether each characteristic listed in the table belongs to a hurricane, a thunderstorm, or a tornado. Place a check mark in the correct column.

	Characteristic	Hurricane	Thunderstorm	Tornado
1.	Funnel-shaped cloud			
2.	Lightning			
3.	Calm and clear eye			
4.	Cold front and warm front meet			
5.	Winds spiral toward center			
6.	Very small			
7.	Forms during late spring			
8.	Huge cumulus clouds			
9.	Clouds give off electricity			
10.	Looks like bands of spinning clouds			
11.	Acts like giant vacuum cleaner			
12.	Loud noise caused by expanding and contracting air			

NOW TRY THIS

Answer the questions below about severe storms.

1. What are two characteristics of thunderstorms?

2. What are two characteristics of tornadoes?

3. What are two characteristics of hurricanes?

4. Sketch a picture of a tornado cloud in the space provided.

