How a Hurricane Grows

Read the passage. Then answer the questions in full sentences.

Name _____ Date _____

Hurricanes are the most violent storms on Earth. Scientists call them tropical cyclones. Only the ones that form over the Atlantic Ocean or the eastern Pacific Ocean are called hurricanes.

A hurricane is like a giant engine that runs on warm, moist air. That is why hurricanes form only over warm ocean water near the equator. The warm air rises and cools, and the water in it forms clouds. More air swirls in to take its place. The clouds and wind spin and grow, fed by the ocean's heat.

As the storm spins faster, a calm, clear eye forms in the middle. When the winds reach 39 miles per hour, the storm is called a tropical storm. At 74 miles per hour, it is a hurricane.

Over land, a hurricane usually gets weaker, because the warm ocean water no longer feeds it. But it can still bring many inches of rain and a lot of wind damage far inland.

1. **Where do hurricanes form?**

2. **What is the middle of a hurricane like?**

3. **Why does a hurricane usually get weaker over land?**

4. **A storm over the Atlantic Ocean has winds of 50 miles per hour. What is it called? Why?**

Answer key

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1. Where do hurricanes form?
   Only over warm ocean water near the equator.

2. What is the middle of a hurricane like?
   It is calm and clear. It is called the eye.

3. Why does a hurricane usually get weaker over land?
   Because the warm ocean water no longer feeds it.

4. A storm over the Atlantic Ocean has winds of 50 miles per hour. What is it called? Why?
   Sample answer: a tropical storm, because its winds have reached 39 miles per hour but not yet 74, when it would be a hurricane.