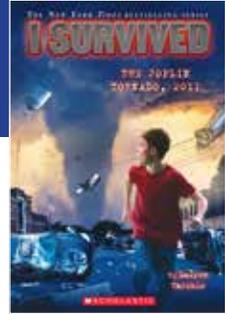


Name: _____

I Survived The
Joplin Tornado, 2011



CRITICAL-THINKING QUESTIONS AND INFORMATIVE-ESSAY ASSIGNMENT

CRITICAL-THINKING QUESTIONS:

1. What happened between Dex and Dylan? What role does Jeremy play in Dex's and Dylan's friendship?

2. Why does Dex feel a mix of fear and excitement when Dr. Gage says a tornado might strike in Galena, about seven miles from Joplin?

3. How does Mom respond after Dex asks her about going storm chasing with Dr. Gage? How does Dad respond? What is the outcome of the discussion?

4. What is Dr. Gage researching and why is his research important? How is he doing his research?

5. How did Dr. Gage become interested in tornados, and what is unexpected or surprising about his story?

Name: _____

CRITICAL-THINKING QUESTIONS AND INFORMATIVE-ESSAY ASSIGNMENT (CONTINUED)

6. What kind of information does Dr. Gage get from the radar in Chapters 9 and 10, and what does it look like?

7. How does plowing into a chain-link fence after a telephone pole falls across the road actually help Dr. Gage and Dex later?

8. How does Dex feel when he realizes that Dr. Gage is severely injured, and why? How does he find the strength to help and what does he do?



9. What big decision does Dex make in Chapter 13? Why is it a big decision?

10. How is Dex affected by his experience with the Joplin tornado?

ESSAY ASSIGNMENT: Answer the organizer questions on the next page to help you write a three-paragraph informative essay about where tornadoes form and how they're detected, what makes them dangerous, and why it's important to research them.

Name: _____

CRITICAL-THINKING QUESTIONS AND INFORMATIVE-ESSAY ASSIGNMENT (CONTINUED)

THREE-PARAGRAPH ESSAY ORGANIZER FOR *I SURVIVED THE JOPLIN TORNADO, 2011*

Answer the questions below to brainstorm ideas for your first paragraph, which will be your introduction:

Go back through Chapters 1–6 and take some notes on where tornadoes form and how they're detected.

For your second paragraph, list two reasons that tornadoes are dangerous:

1. _____

2. _____

Next, for your conclusion, explain why it's important to research tornadoes. (Hint: Think about what Dr. Gage is researching and why.)

Now, write your essay on the back of this page or on a computer using your notes above.

Name: _____

I Survived The Joplin Tornado, 2011

ANSWERS

CRITICAL-THINKING QUESTIONS:

1. Dex and Dylan used to be close friends, but then Dylan started spending more time with his baseball buddies and an invisible wall formed between them. Later, because Dylan and his friends want to hear about Jeremy's life as a Navy SEAL, Dylan and Dex start sitting together at lunch.
2. Dex thinks tornados are fascinating and has always wanted to see one with his own eyes, but he also knows that tornados are terrifying and are one of the most destructive forces in nature.
3. Mom says that storm chasing is too dangerous and doesn't like the idea of Dex going off with some "thrill seeker." Dad responds that Dr. Gage is a serious scientist who is trustworthy and doesn't take risks. Finally, Mom gives in and says yes.
4. Dr. Gage is researching whether a tornado makes a sound as it's beginning to form inside a storm. This is important research because if a tornado does make a sound when it's forming and scientists can find a way to detect the sound, they can warn people before a storm touches down. Dr. Gage is using a modified paintball gun to launch sound pods with a recording instrument inside of them into storm clouds.
5. When Dr. Gage was a kid, he got caught in an EF-3 tornado and a hunk of steel pipe hit him at 150 miles per hour, slicing open his arm. Surprisingly this experience made him want to learn everything he could about tornadoes rather than making him want to stay as far away from tornadoes as possible.
6. Dr. Gage can see if there is more than just one storm coming, and that they're supercells—they look like red blobs on the radar. Later, he can see pink dots scattered across the red blobs. The pink dots represent debris, or pieces of houses, buildings, and cars that have been sucked into the sky.
7. The SUV gets tangled in the fence, and when the tornado tries to pull it into the air, the fence anchors it to the ground.
8. Dex wants to curl up and disappear because he's just an 11-year-old kid who can't even hit a baseball. But he hears Jeremy's voice in his head telling him that even when things are terrible for the Navy SEALs, they can't quit because their team is depending on them, and they must find the strength to complete their mission. Dex then gets up to help Dr. Gage.
9. Dex decides not to go with Sara and Jimmy to take Dr. Gage to the hospital; instead, he's going to try to find his mom and dad. This is a big decision because he's setting out on his own even though he doesn't want to be alone, heading into the ruins to discover what—if anything—is left.
10. He has trouble sleeping, often waking up sweating and nauseous with his heart pounding after the tornado has howled through his dreams.

ESSAY ASSIGNMENT: Answers will vary but should include the fact that tornadoes form deep in storm clouds but can't be seen on radar. The only way to know a tornado is coming is to see it with your own eyes; tornadoes are dangerous because of extremely strong winds that can lift houses and cars into the sky and then drop them, along with heavy and sharp debris. They are also dangerous because of the hail; it's important to research tornadoes because understanding them better could help us build a better warning system and save lives.