

## **New York severely battered by Hurricane Sandy**

New York recently looked like the set of a disaster movie after being severely battered by Hurricane Sandy. President Obama declared the city and state of New York 'a major disaster'. The superstorm caused widespread devastation across the city and surrounding areas.

The hurricane hit the mainland at 6.30pm local time on Monday 29<sup>th</sup> October. New York's mass transit system was shut down, as were schools, the UN headquarters and the stock exchange. Hospitals saw patients evacuated. Flights were also cancelled. Thousands of New Yorkers were ordered to leave the Big Apple as Hurricane Sandy zeroed in. New York City (NYC) virtually shut down in preparation. New Yorkers knew what was coming.

When the storm did hit, a record 13 ft wall of seawater, caused by the storm surge and high tides, resulted in severe flooding to NYC's subways and tunnels. Torrents of water poured into building works. Cars were swept down streets. Power was cut across Lower Manhattan in a bid to minimise the damage to the infrastructure. A crane was left precariously hanging following the howling winds caused by the storm. Fire caused buildings to burn. The superstorm knocked out power to more than 7.4 million people.

Mayor Michael Bloomberg: "We knew this was going to be very dangerous. This was a once-in-a-lifetime storm". He added, "The city's 911 dispatchers were receiving 20,000 calls an hour and the area south of 34<sup>th</sup> Street was without power."

Earlier the superstorm had raced up the East Coast corridor causing havoc in many US States including New Jersey, Maryland, West Virginia and Pennsylvania. Big cities like Washington, Baltimore and Atlanta City caught the wrath of the storm. Unfortunately the hurricane caused the replica *HMS Bounty* to sink somewhere in the Atlantic Ocean. Thankfully the crew were rescued by helicopter though sadly the ship's Captain was declared missing.

Hurricane Sandy went on to threaten an 800-mile (1,290 km) swathe of the US from the Atlantic Ocean to the Great Lakes in the Mid-West. More than 14,000 flights were affected. Amtrak suspended train services across the North East. The economic consequences for the US are forecast to be up to US\$20bn. More than 70 people lost their lives.

**Category: New York / Weather / Hurricane Sandy**  
**Level: Intermediate / Upper intermediate**

This ESL lesson is the copyright of [www.newsflashenglish.com](http://www.newsflashenglish.com)

## EXERCISES

**1. Hurricane in New York:** Think of three things you know about the recent hurricane in New York. Go round the room swapping details with others.

**2. Dictation:** The teacher will read four to six lines of the article slowly and clearly. Students will write down what they hear. The teacher will repeat the passage slowly again. Self-correct your work from page one - filling in spaces and correcting mistakes. Be honest with yourself on the number of errors. Advise the teacher of your total number of errors. Less than five is very good. Ten is acceptable. Any more is room for improvement! More than twenty - you need to do some work!

**3. Reading:** The students should now read the article aloud, swapping readers every paragraph.

**4. Vocabulary:** Students should now look through the article and underline any vocabulary they do not know. Look in dictionaries. Discuss and help each other out. The teacher will go through and explain any unknown words or phrases.

**5. The article:** Students should look through the article with the teacher.

- a) What is the article about?
- b) What do you think about the article?
- c) Was this an easy or difficult article to understand?
- d) **Discuss the article - and the latest on this story**

**6. Geography: New York:** Where is it? Draw a map on the board then **look on Google maps** to help you.

**7. Hurricane Sandy:** In pairs choose five things from the article. Then add five thoughts of your own about the hurricane. Write them below. Discuss together.

From the article	Your thoughts
1	1
2	2
3	3
4	4
5	5

**The teacher** will choose some pairs to discuss their findings in front of the class.

**8. Let's roleplay 1: WABC:** In pairs/groups. One of you is the interviewer. The others are one of the following people. You are in the *WABC* radio studio in New York. Today's interview is about: *Hurricane Sandy - before, during and after.*

1	Someone who lives by the sea in New York state
2	Someone who lives in a high rise in New York
3	The mayor of New York
4	A tourist

New York severely battered by Hurricane Sandy – 5<sup>th</sup> November 2012

9. **Let's think!** In pairs. On the board write as many words as you can to do with **Hurricane Sandy**. *One-two minutes*. Compare with other teams. Using your words compile a short dialogue together.

10. **Let's roleplay 2:** In pairs. You are in a bar in New York. Start a conversation about 'Hurricane Sandy'. *5-minutes*.

11. **An unusual night in New York:** In pairs/as a class imagine you were in New York during the superstorm. Discuss together what *you* saw.

12. **Let's do 'The Article Quiz':** Have the students quiz each other in pairs. They score a point for each correct answer and half a point each time they have to look at the article for help. See who can get the highest score!

**Student A**

- 1) Name the city.
- 2) Name the hurricane.
- 3) Name three states the superstorm affected.
- 4) Name three cities the superstorm affected.
- 5) How many flights were cancelled?

**Student B**

- 1) Name the street and what happened there?
- 2) Name the mayor.
- 3) How high was the wall of seawater?
- 4) How many people were without power?
- 5) Name the replica ship that sank.

13. **New York:** In pairs think of five famous New York landmarks. Then add five general things you know about the Big Apple. Write them below. Discuss together.

Landmarks in New York	New York in general
1	1
2	2
3	3
4	4
5	5

**The teacher** will choose some pairs to discuss their findings in front of the class.

14. **Economic aftermath:** In pairs. Discuss the economic aftermath following the hurricane in New York. What has the US government done to help? How bad is the economic fallout to the US economy?

15. **Let's write an e-mail:** Write and send a 200 word e-mail to your teacher about: **Hurricane Sandy**.

16. **Sentence starters:** Finish these sentence starters. Correct your mistakes. Compare what other people have written.

- a) Hurricane Sandy \_\_\_\_\_
- b) The mayor \_\_\_\_\_
- c) New York \_\_\_\_\_

## DISCUSSION

### Student A questions

- 1) Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- 2) Were New Yorkers prepared for the storm?
- 3) How do you prepare for a superstorm?
- 4) Do you think the superstorm will help unite people in New York State?
- 5) What do you know about hurricanes?
- 6) How do you think the young and old managed during the superstorm in New York?
- 7) What will happen to the flooded areas, damaged cars and taxis and the damaged buildings in New York?
- 8) What has the mayor of New York done to assist the people of New York?
- 9) What advice would you give the mayor of New York?
- 10) Have you learnt anything in today's English lesson?

### Student B questions

- 1) What do you think about what you read?
- 2) Have you ever been to New York?
- 3) Have you ever been in a hurricane?
- 4) Would you like to have been in New York during the hurricane?
- 5) How bad was Hurricane Sandy?
- 6) Where were you when Hurricane Sandy hit New York?
- 7) What is the worse storm you have found yourself in?
- 8) Did you watch the TV news that showed the damage the superstorm did in New York?
- 9) How did the hurricane affect the US Presidential election race?
- 10) Did you like this discussion?

## SPEAKING

Let's play a game: Hurricane Sandy

*Allow 10 minutes – As a class / small groups – in a circle in a clockwise direction...*

**I witnessed the superstorm in New York and I saw ...**

Repeat the previous things seen then add one more...

Forget one and you are eliminated!

The teacher can moderate the session.

New York severely battered by Hurricane Sandy – 5<sup>th</sup> November 2012

## GAP FILL: READING:

*Put the words into the gaps in the text.*

### New York severely battered by Hurricane Sandy

New York recently looked like the set of a disaster movie after being (1)\_\_\_\_\_ battered by Hurricane Sandy. President Obama declared the city and state of New York 'a (2)\_\_\_\_\_ disaster'. The superstorm caused widespread (3)\_\_\_\_\_ across the city and surrounding areas.

The (4)\_\_\_\_\_ hit the mainland at 6.30pm local time on Monday 29<sup>th</sup> October. New York's mass transit system was shut down, as were schools, the UN headquarters and the stock exchange. Hospitals saw (5)\_\_\_\_\_ evacuated. (6)\_\_\_\_\_ were also cancelled. Thousands of New Yorkers were ordered to leave the Big Apple as Hurricane Sandy zeroed in. New York City (NYC) (7)\_\_\_\_\_ shut down in (8)\_\_\_\_\_. New Yorkers knew what was coming.

When the storm did hit, a record 13 ft wall of (1)\_\_\_\_\_, caused by the storm surge and high tides, resulted in severe flooding to NYC's (2)\_\_\_\_\_ and tunnels. Torrents of water poured into building works. Cars were swept down streets. Power was cut across Lower Manhattan in a bid to minimise the (3)\_\_\_\_\_ to the infrastructure. A (4)\_\_\_\_\_ was left precariously hanging following the (5)\_\_\_\_\_ winds caused by the (6)\_\_\_\_\_. Fire caused buildings to burn. The superstorm knocked out power to more than 7.4 million people.

Mayor Michael Bloomberg: "We knew this was going to be very (7)\_\_\_\_\_. This was a once-in-a-lifetime storm". He added, "The city's 911 dispatchers were receiving 20,000 calls an hour and the area south of 34<sup>th</sup> Street was without (8)\_\_\_\_\_."

*patients*

*hurricane*

*virtually*

*flights*

*severely*

*devastation*

*preparation*

*major*

*crane*

*subways*

*damage*

*howling*

*seawater*

*dangerous*

*power*

*storm*

New York severely battered by Hurricane Sandy – 5<sup>th</sup> November 2012

## GAP FILL: LISTENING

*Listen and fill in the spaces.*

### New York severely battered by Hurricane Sandy

New York recently looked like the set \_\_\_\_\_ after being severely battered by Hurricane Sandy. President Obama declared the city and state of New York 'a major disaster'. The superstorm caused \_\_\_\_\_ across the city and surrounding areas.

The hurricane hit the mainland at 6.30pm local time on Monday 29<sup>th</sup> October. New York's \_\_\_\_\_ was shut down, as were schools, the UN headquarters and the stock exchange. Hospitals saw patients evacuated. Flights were also cancelled. Thousands of New Yorkers were ordered to leave \_\_\_\_\_. Hurricane Sandy zeroed in. New York City (NYC) virtually shut down in preparation. New Yorkers \_\_\_\_\_.

When the storm did hit, a record 13 ft wall of seawater, caused by the storm \_\_\_\_\_, resulted in severe flooding to NYC's subways and tunnels. \_\_\_\_\_ poured into building works. Cars were swept down streets. Power was cut across Lower Manhattan in a bid to minimise the damage to the infrastructure. A crane was left \_\_\_\_\_ following the howling winds caused by the storm. Fire caused buildings to burn. The superstorm knocked out power to more than 7.4 million people.

Mayor Michael Bloomberg: "We knew this was going to be very dangerous. This was a \_\_\_\_\_". He added, "The city's 911 dispatchers were receiving 20,000 calls an hour and the area south of 34<sup>th</sup> Street was without power."

Earlier the superstorm had raced up the \_\_\_\_\_ causing havoc in many US States including New Jersey, Maryland, West Virginia and Pennsylvania. Big cities like Washington, Baltimore and Atlanta City caught the \_\_\_\_\_. Unfortunately the hurricane caused the replica *HMS Bounty* to sink somewhere in the Atlantic Ocean. Thankfully the crew were rescued by helicopter though sadly the ship's Captain \_\_\_\_\_.

New York severely battered by Hurricane Sandy – 5<sup>th</sup> November 2012

## GRAMMAR:

Put the words into the gaps in the text.

### New York severely battered by Hurricane Sandy

New York recently looked like the set (1)\_\_\_ a disaster movie (2)\_\_\_ being severely battered (3)\_\_\_ Hurricane Sandy. President Obama declared the city and state of New York 'a major disaster'. The superstorm caused widespread devastation across the city and surrounding areas.

The hurricane hit the mainland (4)\_\_\_ 6.30pm local time on Monday 29<sup>th</sup> October. New York's mass transit system was shut down, (5)\_\_\_ were schools, the UN headquarters and the stock exchange. Hospitals saw patients evacuated. Flights were (6)\_\_\_ cancelled. Thousands of New Yorkers were ordered to leave the Big Apple as Hurricane Sandy zeroed (7)\_\_\_. New York City (NYC) virtually shut down in preparation. New Yorkers knew (8)\_\_\_ was coming.

**at**

**by**

**of**

**in**

**as**

**after**

**also**

**what**

(1)\_\_\_ the storm did hit, a record 13 ft wall of seawater, caused (2)\_\_\_ the storm surge and high tides, resulted in severe flooding to NYC's subways and tunnels. Torrents of water poured (3)\_\_\_ building works. Cars were swept down streets. Power was cut across Lower Manhattan in a bid to minimise the damage to the infrastructure. A crane was left precariously hanging following the howling winds caused by the storm. Fire caused buildings to burn. The superstorm knocked out power to (4)\_\_\_ than 7.4 million people.

Mayor Michael Bloomberg: "(5)\_\_\_ knew (6)\_\_\_ was going to be very dangerous. This was a once-in-a-lifetime storm". (7)\_\_\_ added, "The city's 911 dispatchers were receiving 20,000 calls an hour and the area south (8)\_\_\_ 34<sup>th</sup> Street was without power."

**we**

**by**

**he**

**of**

**into**

**this**

**more**

**when**

New York severely battered by Hurricane Sandy – 5<sup>th</sup> November 2012

## SPELLING TEST

The teacher will ask the class individually to spell the following words that are in the article. Afterwards, check your answers with your teacher, using the following ratings: **Pass = 12, Good = 15, Very good = 18, Excellent = 20**

1	widespread	11	tunnels
2	disaster	12	subways
3	crane	13	preparation
4	precariously	14	hurricane
5	flooding	15	major
6	mayor	16	infrastructure
7	severe	17	dangerous
8	devastation	18	minimise
9	virtually	19	unfortunately
10	surge	20	swathe

### LINKS

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-20142923>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-20131303>

<http://edition.cnn.com/2012/10/29/us/tropical-weather-sandy/index.html>

<http://thelede.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/10/29/state-by-state-guide-to-hurricane-sandy/>

### ANSWERS

GAP FILL: New York severely battered by Hurricane Sandy: New York recently looked like the set of a disaster movie after being **severely** battered by Hurricane Sandy. President Obama declared the city and state of New York 'a **major** disaster'. The superstorm caused widespread **devastation** across the city and surrounding areas.

The **hurricane** hit the mainland at 6.30pm local time on Monday 29<sup>th</sup> October. New York's mass transit system was shut down, as were schools, the UN headquarters and the stock exchange. Hospitals saw **patients** evacuated. **Flights** were also cancelled. Thousands of New Yorkers were ordered to leave the Big Apple as Hurricane Sandy zeroed in. New York City (NYC) **virtually** shut down in **preparation**. New Yorkers knew what was coming.

When the storm did hit, a record 13 ft wall of **seawater**, caused by the storm surge and high tides, resulted in severe flooding to NYC's **subways** and tunnels. Torrents of water poured into building works. Cars were swept down streets. Power was cut across Lower Manhattan in a bid to minimise the **damage** to the infrastructure. A **crane** was left precariously hanging following the **howling** winds caused by the **storm**. Fire caused buildings to burn. The superstorm knocked out power to more than 7.4 million people.

Mayor Michael Bloomberg: "We knew this was going to be very **dangerous**. This was a once-in-a-lifetime storm". He added, "The city's 911 dispatchers were receiving 20,000 calls an hour and the area south of 34<sup>th</sup> Street was without **power**." (V3)

[www.newsflashenglish.com](http://www.newsflashenglish.com)

Created by **David Robinson**. This ESL lesson is the copyright of [www.newsflashenglish.com](http://www.newsflashenglish.com)