VALENTINE'S DAY BLIZZARD



Plus a BOXING DAY TSUNAMI and a GOOD FRIDAY EARTHQUAKE

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Nelson Literacy Directions

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1 Valentine's Day Blizzard

TEXT TYPE
Description

Eight Long Days in February 2007

The Valentine's Day blizzard was one of the largest to ever strike North America.

The storm began two days before Valentine's Day in 2007 and lasted for eight days.



send your pet a Valentine

Social Studies

Valentine's Day for All

Valentine's Day is celebrated on 14 February by people around the world. People write cards to their friends and families, and may even give their pets a Valentine's hug!

Case Study: The Valentine's Day Blizzard

Weather conditions during the Valentine's Day blizzard were extreme. Winds were recorded at greater than 100 kilometres per hour. Temperatures reached minus 35 degrees Celsius. There were heavy snowfalls and severe thunderstorms.

BLIZZARDS

What, Where, Why, When and How!

WHAT Is a Blizzard?

A **blizzard** is a snowstorm that lasts for at least three hours. It has:

- wind speeds over 56 kilometres per hour
- temperatures below minus 7 degrees Celsius
- blowing snow that severely reduces visibility.

WHAT Happened During the Valentine's Day Blizzard?

Some of the worst affected states in the USA declared a state of emergency for days. They also called out the National Guard (army reserves) to help. There were 37 deaths, mostly in car accidents. There were many power failures, especially from ice storms. Flights were cancelled and schools were closed.

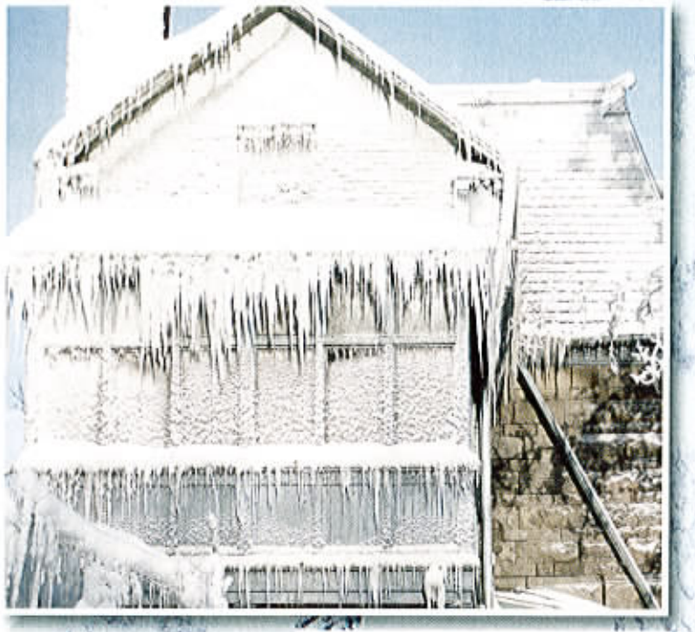


SNOWDRIFTS

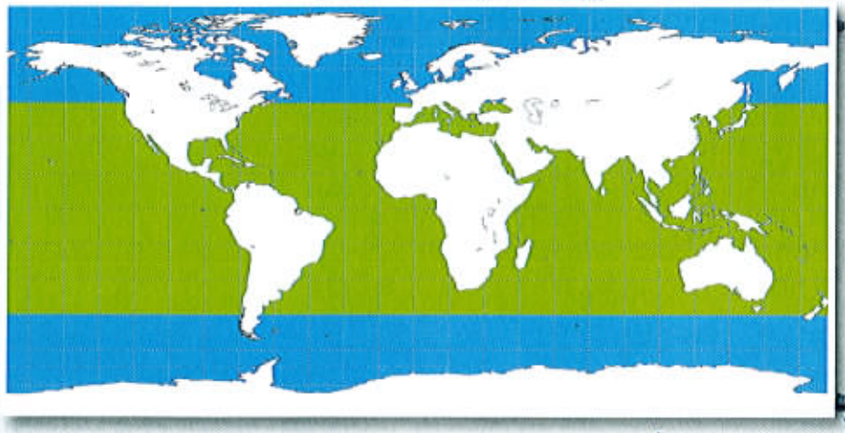
After a blizzard, large piles of snow called snowdrifts cover trees, buildings and fields.

WHERE Do Most Blizzards Happen?

In the Northern Hemisphere, blizzards are most common in the Arctic areas, Canada, North America and Russia. In the Southern Hemisphere, more blizzards occur in and around the Antarctic region, and at the bottom of South America.



the effects of an icy blizzard in Canada



KEY

Regions where blizzards are more common

Regions where blizzards are less common



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WHERE Was the Valentine's Day Blizzard?

The Valentine's Day blizzard affected a huge area of North America and Canada. It stretched from Nebraska through Pennsylvania to New York, Maine and New Brunswick on the east coast.

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WHY Do Blizzards Happen?

Blizzards can occur when there is a mixture of different types of weather elements:

- **cold** – air temperatures below freezing
- **moisture** – picked up by air passing over lakes and oceans to form clouds and snow
- **strong winds** – caused by air moving from areas of high pressure (warm air) to areas of low pressure (cold air)
- **lift** – warm, moist air is forced to go up over cold air, because warm air rises and cold air sinks. The moisture in the air forms snow.

GROUND BLIZZARD

Ground blizzards occur in flat areas, when strong winds blow the existing snow around. They happen even when no more snow is falling.



A blizzard makes all forms of transport difficult.

WHY Did the Valentine's Day Blizzard Happen?

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) reported that December 2006 and January 2007 were warmer winter months than usual for North America. Snowfalls were light.

Then, days before the Valentine's Day blizzard, the temperatures became much colder.

The Valentine's Day blizzard happened when warm air from the Gulf of Mexico blew north to meet cold polar air blowing down from the Arctic. Winds were as strong as tornadoes and snow falls were severe.



people struggling through a blizzard



a New York street during the Valentine's Day blizzard

Earth Science

NOAA

The National Weather Service is run by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). NOAA studies the oceans and the atmosphere and warns of dangerous weather. It is a US government agency.

the logo of the NOAA