

Lesson Six – Sample News Story

In this scenario a reporter is filing a story on a hurricane that is hitting the east coast of Florida. The reporter has been on vacation and has stayed in the U.S. state to cover the storm. He/she is calling in a story on a cell phone. A map of Florida posted on the board will help students visualize where the hurricane is causing damage.

Here's what the reporter tells the newsroom:

Residents living on the coastline in the southern part of Florida, from the Keys north to Vero Beach, have been told to leave their homes and go to shelters.

I saw homes with their roofs missing.

A lot of trees have fallen.

Frances is a Category 2 storm

Frances is hitting Florida just three weeks after Hurricane Charley killed 27 people and billions of dollars in damages.

Electricity is out in most communities.

Hurricane Frances packs winds in excess of 160 km/h.

A state of emergency is in effect across Florida.

Frances has begun to slow down as it nears the east coast of Florida. It stalled over the warm water which means it could dump a huge amount of rain in some areas, forecasters said.

Even the Tampa theme park Busch Gardens has shut down for the storm.

As many as 2.8 million people were ordered to leave their homes and go inland.

Airline companies put on extra flights to accommodate the fleeing vacationers.

Winds aren't the only worry. Heavy rain is causing flooding.

Florida's famous theme parks, Walt Disney World, Universal Studios, Sea World (all in Orlando) have been shut down until the storm passes.

The National Hurricane Center (U.S. spelling in a proper name) has rated Frances a Category 2 storm. It was expected to be a Category 4 storm.

How the Story Appeared in a Canadian Daily Newspaper

Frances Tormenting Florida (headline)

Slow storm begins assault, with worst to come (subhead 1)

Residents urged to remain in shelters, safe rooms (subhead 2)

VERO BEACH, FLA – A stubborn, slow-moving Hurricane Frances began a long-dreaded and extended assault on Florida yesterday.

Packing winds in excess of 160 km/h, the storm pummeled a large swath of the state's eastern coastline. Its leading edge knocked out electricity for about two million people. Wind uprooted trees, peeled off roofs and left coastal waters resembling a churning hot

tub. But the storm had not yet resulted in the feared scenario of widespread death and destruction.

Last night, about 500 kilometres of coastline remained under a hurricane warning. Frances is so big that virtually the entire state feared damage from wind and water. And its slow path – Frances crawled toward Florida at just 8 km/h before stalling over warm water – means it could dump a huge quantity of rain, perhaps as much as 50 centimetres in some areas, forecasters said. The heavy rain forecast threatened to cause widespread flooding.

The storm's arrival on the coast came more than a day later than predicted, and its eye wasn't expected to hit east-central Florida until early today.

Frances' arrival came three weeks after Hurricane Charley killed 27 people and caused billions of dollars in damage in southwestern Florida. Still reeling from that storm, officials warned people to hang tough in shelters and safe rooms.

Frances, downgraded to a Category 2 storm from its previous Category 4 designation, was still packing plenty of punch.

The size of the storm necessitated the largest evacuation in state history with 2.8 million residents ordered inland and 70,000 residents and tourists sent to shelters. The storm shut down much of Florida, including airports and amusement parks.

A state of emergency is in effect across Florida.