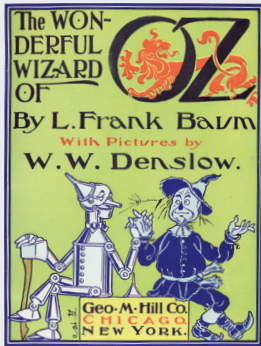


# Tornado Tales

Do you remember the story of *The Wizard of Oz*? It starts in Kansas, which is in a part of the United States where many tornadoes happen. In fact, more tornadoes happen in the central and southern U.S. than anywhere else in the world!

*The Wizard of Oz* starts with a tornado. (The author, L. Frank Baum, uses a different word – *cyclone* – but in this case it means the same thing.) Read the beginning of the story, then answer the questions below.



Dorothy lived in the midst of the great Kansas prairies, with Uncle Henry, who was a farmer, and Aunt Em, who was the farmer's wife.

Uncle Henry looked anxiously at the sky, which was even grayer than usual. From the far north came a low wail of the wind, and Uncle Henry

and Dorothy could see where the long grass bowed in waves before the coming storm. Then they heard a sharp whistling in the air from the south, and as they turned their eyes that way they saw ripples in the grass coming from that direction.

Suddenly Uncle Henry stood up. "There's a cyclone coming, Em," he called to his wife. Aunt Em dropped her work. "Quick, Dorothy!" she screamed. "Run for the storm cellar!"

Dorothy's little dog, Toto, jumped out of her arms and hid under the bed, and the girl started to get him. Aunt

Em, badly frightened, threw open the trap door in the floor and climbed down the ladder into a small, dark hole where they would be safe. Dorothy caught Toto at last and started to follow her aunt, but when she was halfway across the room there came a great shriek from the wind. The house shook so hard that she lost her footing and sat down suddenly upon the floor.

Then a strange thing happened. The house whirled around two or three times and rose slowly through the air. Dorothy felt as if she were going up in a balloon.



This is a wonderful way to start a story, but do you think it could ever really happen? Find out about real tornadoes by visiting [www.ready.gov/kids/know-the-facts/tornado](http://www.ready.gov/kids/know-the-facts/tornado). Then answer these questions:

1. Does the wind always come from opposite directions when a real tornado forms? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What sound does a real tornado make when it is nearby? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What do you think would happen to Dorothy's house if it were hit by a real tornado? \_\_\_\_\_

ANSWERS: 1-No, the wind can come from any direction; 2-Tornadoes sound like a train or jet engine; 3-The house would probably be broken apart.

**Be Prepared!** Talk to grownups about tornadoes. Make a plan about what to do if you live where tornadoes happen, then practice your plan. Remind grownups to listen to the news to find out what to do for tornado watches and warnings. The best way to stay safe during a tornado is to have a storm shelter or a safe room. (Finding out about these special rooms ahead of time might be a good project for your family or school class.) If a storm shelter or safe room is not available, find a safety spot like a basement or a windowless room on the lowest floor of your home, kneel down and bend over as tight as ball with your hands over your head to protect yourself from things blown around by the wind. Stay there until the tornado goes away. If you live in a manufactured or mobile home, and you hear there is a tornado warning, get out and go to a safety spot, safe room, or storm shelter in a sturdy building.

**To Learn More** about tornadoes, visit [www.noaa.gov/resource-collections/tornadoes](http://www.noaa.gov/resource-collections/tornadoes) and [www.ready.gov/kids/know-the-facts/tornado](http://www.ready.gov/kids/know-the-facts/tornado), play the tornado episode of Monster Guard, a free app available at [redcross.org/monsterguard](http://redcross.org/monsterguard). You can also ask an adult to download the free Red Cross emergency apps at [redcross.org/mobile-apps](http://redcross.org/mobile-apps). To learn more about all kinds of emergencies, visit [redcross.org/pillowcase](http://redcross.org/pillowcase).