

## NATURAL DISASTERS

**Topic:** Natural disasters

**EFL CEFR Level:** C1

**Main objectives:**

- Students will be able to describe an extreme natural event such as a hurricane, a tsunami, etc.
- Students will become aware of the use of metaphor in describing the experience of a natural disaster.

**Method:** Frame-inspired TBLT (pre-task, task cycle, language focus)

**Metaphor:** ACTION IS MOTION ALONG A PATH; NATURE IS AN AGENT

**Materials:** PC, Internet, texts, FrameNet, MetaNet

**Skills involved:** listening, speaking, reading, writing

🗨️ **How to cite:**

Dalpanagioti, Thomai (2024). *Metaphor Task Bank*. <https://www.new.enl.auth.gr/flt/metaphor-task-bank>

## A) Pre-task



- Watch a news report on Hurricane Harvey at <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/hurricane-harvey-texas-safety-tips/> (2:54 minutes). How does the newscaster describe Hurricane Harvey? When is it expected to hit Texas coast? Which areas are in the hurricane's path? How do people prepare themselves?
- Watch the beginning of the video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tYdmpLUyxNI> (0:30 minutes). A survivor recalls the moment that Hurricane Dorian struck his house. How does he describe the hurricane? Do you see any similarities with the description of Hurricane Harvey in the previous video?
- Have you ever experienced a hurricane? How would you describe it?

## B) Task cycle

### 1. Task

- Form groups of four and read your task.  
*You will participate in a Hurricane Awareness Campaign and have decided to focus on the experiences of hurricane survivors. Your task is to choose a major U.S. hurricane, collect information about it and prepare a short report to present in class.*
- Choose a U.S. hurricane (e.g. Katrina, Irma, Michael, Andrew) and search information on the Internet about it (e.g. when, where, how it hit). Consider news reports and survivors' stories.

### 2. Planning

- Organize the information you have collected and prepare the report you will present to the class.

### 3. Report

- Choose a member of your group to present your work.
- Decide which one was the most vivid report. Vote!



## C) Language focus

### 1. Analysis

We often think of and talk about a weather event as a living being that moves under its own direction and attacks places and people.

- Read the following extracts from news articles about Hurricane Irma and answer the following questions.

The month of September was a dark time for many people in South Florida, particularly in our little corner of the Florida Keys. Hurricane Irma **travelled** across the Atlantic and **made landfall** just several miles from our harbour, putting our home and the homes of every other Florida Keys resident directly in the **path** of the ‘eye wall,’ the most destructive part of category 4 hurricane-force winds.

Hurricane Irma **hit** Florida after leaving a **trail** of destruction across the Caribbean. At least four deaths were reported in Florida after the storm’s **arrival** on Sunday, adding to a death toll of at least 27 from its Caribbean **rampage**. More than three million people in Florida were without power, officials said on Sunday night. Officials along the Gulf Coast had believed they would be spared the worst of the **assault** until the storm’s **trajectory** took an unfavorable westward **bounce** late in the week. After a Saturday spent hastily converting fortified buildings into shelters, they were hurrying the final preparations into place on Sunday.

As the strongest hurricane on record **headed** toward South Florida, it first had to get past several small Caribbean nations. Hurricane Irma was 378 miles wide and near the peak of its intensity as a Category 5 hurricane when it **struck** the 62-square-mile island of Barbuda on the night of September 5 - 6, 2017. Category 5 hurricanes are rare and are capable of inflicting life-threatening winds, storm surges and rainfall. Heavy rain and howling winds **hit** the neighbouring island of Antigua, sending debris flying as people huddled in their homes or government shelters. Officials warned people to seek protection from Irma’s “**onslaught**” in a statement that closed with: “May God protect us all.”

- a) Sort the highlighted words in two groups: the [Motion] group and the [Attack] group. Read about the [Motion] frame and the [Attack] frame in [FrameNet](https://framenet2.icsi.berkeley.edu/fnReports/data/frameIndex.xml?frame=Motion)<sup>1</sup> and check your answer against the examples.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://framenet2.icsi.berkeley.edu/fnReports/data/frameIndex.xml?frame=Motion> & <https://framenet2.icsi.berkeley.edu/fnReports/data/frameIndex.xml?frame=Attack>

b) The words in the two groups are used metaphorically. Choose the most appropriate name for the two metaphors:

i. ACTION IS MOTION ALONG A PATH

ii. SAD IS DOWN

iii. NATURE IS AN AGENT

iv. SOCIETY IS A PERSON

v. EMOTION IS A FORCE

Read more examples of these metaphors in [MetaNet](https://metaphor.icsi.berkeley.edu/pub/en/index.php/Category:Metaphor) (<https://metaphor.icsi.berkeley.edu/pub/en/index.php/Category:Metaphor>).

c) Why are metaphors used in news articles?

## 2. Practice

### Activity 1

An eyewitness describes the harm caused by Hurricane Irma. Read the text and complete the gaps with words from the [Cause\_harm] frame in [FrameNet](https://framenet2.icsi.berkeley.edu/fnReports/data/frameIndex.xml?frame=Cause_harm) ([https://framenet2.icsi.berkeley.edu/fnReports/data/frameIndex.xml?frame=Cause\\_harm](https://framenet2.icsi.berkeley.edu/fnReports/data/frameIndex.xml?frame=Cause_harm)) in the correct form.

Irma **(0) punched** our area in the mouth. Mid-afternoon in Fort Myers, it was hard to tell which was worse, the wind or the rain. The wind **(1)** \_\_\_\_\_ the tops of palm trees around like pompoms in the hands of a cheerleader. At one Fort Myers hotel, the rain **(2)** \_\_\_\_\_ the building with such force that it came into rooms around window frames, stains spreading ever wider on the carpet. Fishing boats and ocean yachts were **(3)** \_\_\_\_\_ to pieces, cars were flooded, power and phone lines were **(4)** \_\_\_\_\_ out of service. Irma left an eerie, blasted-looking landscape littered with sheet metal and splintered lumber. This was a **(5)** \_\_\_\_\_ blow for our community. We were beaten and **(6)** \_\_\_\_\_, but we are still standing and we'll rebuild!

### Activity 2

Writing: Work in pairs and write possible headlines for the previous text. Work in the following way:

- Do a quick search on the Internet. Notice the length of the headlines and the metaphoric language used.
- Use [MetaNet](https://metaphor.icsi.berkeley.edu/pub/en/index.php/Category:Metaphor) (<https://metaphor.icsi.berkeley.edu/pub/en/index.php/Category:Metaphor>) to decide on the metaphor you will use.

### Activity 3

Speaking: Imagine that you were residents on Barbuda Island when Hurricane Irma hit. Describe what happened and how you felt.

## **D) Assignment**

Search information on the Internet about the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami. Consider news reports and survivors' stories. Prepare a 5-minute report to present in class next time.

### **Self-assessment criteria:**

- Did you notice that, like a hurricane, a tsunami is described as a living being that moves under its own direction and attacks places and people?
- Did you use words from the [Motion] frame, the [Attack] frame and the [Cause\_harm] frame in your report? Check [FrameNet](http://framenet.icsi.berkeley.edu/) (<http://framenet.icsi.berkeley.edu/>)!
- Do you think that your report is based on a metaphor? Can you find it in [MetaNet](https://metaphor.icsi.berkeley.edu/pub/en/index.php/Category:Metaphor) (<https://metaphor.icsi.berkeley.edu/pub/en/index.php/Category:Metaphor>)?