

TRACKING HURRICANES

Can you locate something in the Atlantic Ocean? Sure, if you know where to go. Certain instruments can be used. They will provide a pair of numbers called coordinates. These coordinates will guide you to the exact location. Coordinates are used to track hurricanes across the Atlantic Ocean. Satellite photos and radar are used to find the hurricane's coordinates. In this activity, you will be able to track, or plot, a hurricane's movement. Hurricane season is June 1 - November 30.

You Will Need

hurricane tracking map

What to Do

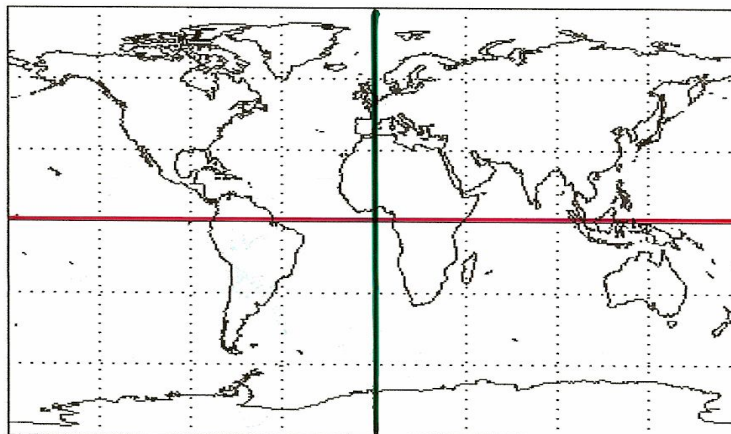
Go to:

www.nhc.noaa.gov/AT_Track_chart.pdf

and print the map.

Latitude and Longitude

When you look at a map, you usually see lines going up and down (north to south), and right to left (east to west). These imaginary lines give the coordinates for finding locations on the Earth's surface.



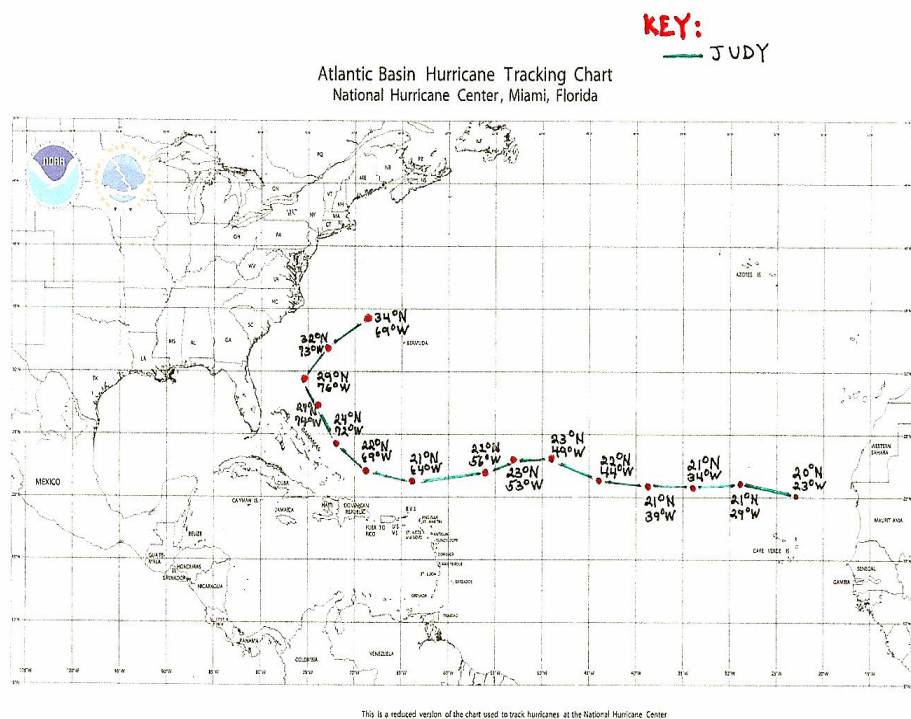
Observe the equator (red) on the world map above. This is the starting location for finding distance north and south on the Earth. The equator is zero degrees (0°). Distance north and south on the Earth's surface is called *latitude*. Print latitude on the right and left sides of your hurricane tracking map beside the latitude numbers.

The green line on the map is called the Prime Meridian. This is the starting location for finding distance east and west on the Earth's surface. The Prime Meridian is zero degrees (0°). Distance east and west on the Earth's surface is called *longitude*. Print longitude on the top and bottom of your hurricane tracking map beside the longitude numbers.

On your map, find Bermuda off the east coast of the United States. Observe its latitude. Bermuda is about 32° north latitude (32°N). Observe the longitude. The island is about 65° west longitude (65°W). These are Bermuda's coordinates.

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More accurate coordinates are given using a decimal point. For example, a hurricane's coordinates can be 27.5°N and 63.3°W. In this activity, we will use whole numbers which are to the left of the decimal.



Tracking Hurricanes

The map above shows the path for an imaginary hurricane called Judy. You can obtain coordinates from weather forecasters. Place plots (dots) about every 1-2 days. Plot each hurricane in a different color. Provide a key as shown at the top of the map. You can also use a separate map for each storm.



This is a satellite photo of a hurricane. Observe the “eye” in the center of the storm.

On the Internet

You can learn more about hurricanes at the following site:

www.fema.gov/kids/hurr.htm