

The Worcester tornado

1953 | Grade 4 · Explain with evidence

Teacher note: this topic includes loss, violence, discrimination, or criminal allegations. Preview and choose a suitable reading together. No reenactment of harm is needed.

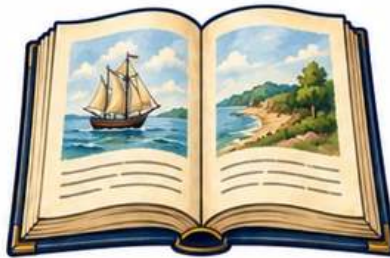
Words to know

warning — a message about possible danger

damage — harm that makes something less safe or useful

recover — regain strength or rebuild after harm

Look closely



Modern topic illustration created for Massachusetts History Explorers. It is not a historical artifact.

Read the story

A powerful tornado struck the Worcester area. Ninety-four people died, and many homes were damaged. Neighbors helped one another recover. Weather experts studied the storm and how warnings could improve.

The June 9 tornado crossed several communities. It is commonly rated F4 on the historical Fujita scale. Modern warning tools differ from those available then; compare information systems carefully.

Think, talk, and show evidence

1. State the main idea. Support it with two details from the reading.
2. Explain a change or challenge described in the text. Which words support your answer?
3. Use one vocabulary word in a new sentence about this event.
4. What can the image and caption help explain? What can they not tell you?

Follow-up reading: A successful kidney transplant

1954

A medical team in Boston performed the first successful human kidney transplant. The donor and recipient were identical twins. The operation became an important step in transplant medicine.

The surgery took place at Peter Bent Brigham Hospital. The twins' relationship mattered to the outcome. This historical milestone did not solve all problems of rejection, consent, or access to care.

Compare the two readings. Explain one similarity or difference using a detail from each. Their order does not prove that one caused the other.

Teacher guide & source trail

Original classroom adaptation. Suggested reading levels are instructional choices, not standardized readability certifications. Use professional judgment and learner feedback.

ELA practice: RI.4.1: refer to details; RI.4.2: main idea and summary; RI.4.3: explain events; RI.4.7: interpret visual information; W.4.2 and SL.4.1: explain and discuss.

These tasks support selected skills in the [Massachusetts 2017 ELA framework](#); they do not establish mastery of an entire standard.

Answer guidance

Factual anchor: A powerful tornado struck the Worcester area. Ninety-four people died, and many homes were damaged. Neighbors helped one another recover. Weather experts studied the storm and how warnings could improve. The June 9 tornado crossed several communities. It is commonly rated F4 on the historical Fujita scale. Modern warning tools differ from those available then; compare information systems carefully.

Accept accurate main ideas and explanations supported by the text. Vocabulary meanings are in the opening word bank. For picture questions, use the caption and credit below; distinguish what is visible from what is inferred. For comparison, accept a specific connection supported by both readings. Do not require personal accounts of trauma.

Continue the inquiry

[Research source for this event ↗](#)

[Research source for follow-up ↗](#)

[Event page, accessible HTML reading, and vocabulary game ↗](#)

Image: Original site illustration.

[Image source and rights record ↗](#)

The PDF contains selectable English text and embedded fonts. For adjustable text and browser reading tools, use the event's [HTML page](#). External sources may need adult guidance.