



US Lightning Strike Locations: A Comprehensive Map Displaying 36.8 Million Strikes in 2023—How Menacing Was Your State?

Description

The USA is a hotspot for lightning strikes, according to a study conducted by the University of Wisconsin-Madison (UWM). The study found that Americans experience almost 37 million ground strikes every year, with specific areas in the US being more prone than others. Florida tops the list due to its geographical location and peninsula shape, with Miami-Fort Lauderdale area alone witnessing over 120,000 strikes in 2023.

The research also discovered that states such as Louisiana record high volumes of deadly cloud-to-ground lightning strikes. The infamous 'Tornado Alley' also receives a significant number of strikes. Surprisingly, regions like California rarely observe lightning strikes owing to the specific atmosphere of the Pacific, which oftentimes results in cloud-to-cloud lightning as opposed to cloud-to-ground discharges.

This groundbreaking study also unveiled that lightning strikes are densest along the Gulf Coast and Southern Plains, while the Western part of the country tends to experience fewer strikes. However, each flash of lightning tends to fracture, resulting in what the researchers dubbed as 'a prongs of a giant electric fork' striking the ground at multiple points simultaneously.

The study also revealed that lightning claims around 28 lives every year in the US, according to meteorologist Chris Vagasky who was part of the UWM team. He also stated that around 250,000 people across the globe either get injured or killed due to them annually.

The research was based on extensive data from the National Lightning Detection Network, revealing valuable insights into the geological and geophysical conditions that lead to lightning. This information could prove immensely beneficial in designing lightning protection systems, particularly in regions prone to multiple simultaneous strikes.

Interestingly, the study also showed that lightning contributes significantly to the economy in a negative sense. The Insurance Information Institute reported that insurance companies pay out nearly \$1 billion annually in claims arising from lightning damage, a testament to the destructive power of these natural phenomena. Additionally, the National Interagency Fire Center pointed out that approximately 4 million acres of US land are consumed by wildfires caused by lightning each year, causing substantial economic and ecological damage.

This comprehensive study, the results of which were published in the Bulletin of the American Meteorological Society, not only provides vital information for safety and protection initiatives but also paves the way for future scientific research on the complex phenomena of thunderstorms and lightning strikes. Such advanced understanding can indeed help in mitigating the devastating effects that these natural sparks of electricity, which are hotter than the surface of the sun and deliver thousands of times more power than our smartphone chargers, can have.



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Vocabulary List:

1. **Ground strike** // (noun): An instance of lightning hitting the ground.
2. **Geographical** // (adjective): Related to the features of the earth or a specific region.
3. **Peninsula** // (noun): A piece of land almost surrounded by water or projecting out into a body of water.
4. **Deadly** // (adjective): Causing or capable of causing death.
5. **Atmosphere** // (noun): The gaseous envelope surrounding the earth.
6. **Meteorologist** // (noun): A scientist who studies the processes and phenomena of the atmosphere.

Vocabulary quizzes

Multiple Choice (Select the Correct answer for each question.)

1. What is another term for distinguished or prominent?

Option: Ingenuity

Option: Audacious



Option: Eminent
Option: Unprecedented

2. What adjective describes advancements in machinery and equipment?

Option: Commendable
Option: Technological
Option: Cognitive
Option: Intrigue

3. What word refers to a difficult unpleasant or embarrassing situation?

Option: Escalation
Option: Predicament
Option: Cordoned off
Option: Tentative

4. Which term is used for bold or daring actions?

Option: Atmosphere
Option: Audacious
Option: Exit
Option: Meteorologist

5. What means the act of making something better or improving a situation?

Option: Geographical
Option: Peninsula
Option: Deadly
Option: Amelioration

6. What term refers to the force or energy with which a body moves?

Option: Infiltration
Option: Impetus
Option: Gradient
Option: Socialize

7. What word means never done or known before?

Option: Eminent
Option: Interface
Option: Unprecedented
Option: Enigma

8. Relating to cognition what term describes mental processes such as thinking reasoning and remembering?

Option: Anticipated
Option: Cognitive



- Option: Overlapping
- Option: Diligently

9. What term means to arouse the curiosity or interest of?

- Option: Revered
- Option: Intrigue
- Option: Convey
- Option: Invert

10. What term relates to the features of the earth's surface and the way they are arranged?

- Option: Metaphorical
- Option: Interface
- Option: Geographical
- Option: Objective

Gap-Fill (Fill in the blanks with the correct word from the vocabulary list.)

11. A _____ is a landform surrounded by water on most of its border.
12. She studied _____ to prepare for the exam.
13. The authorities _____ the area to investigate the crime scene.
14. The conflict showed signs of _____ after the recent events unfolded.
15. She made a _____ promise to attend the event depending on her schedule.
16. Employees should take _____ of the company policies and procedures.
17. The software developer designed a user-friendly _____ for the new application.
18. The poison was _____ when ingested.
19. The community _____ the wise elder for his knowledge and guidance.
20. The new tax incentives provided the necessary _____ for small businesses to grow.

Matching Sentences (Match each definition to the correct word from the vocabulary list.)

21. The fashion designer showcased an collection that challenged traditional norms.



22. The military planned a precise to weaken the enemy's defenses.
23. The accurately predicted the upcoming storm and warned the residents.
24. The company invested in advancements to streamline production processes.
25. His actions in the face of danger were truly and deserving of praise.
26. The story featured a complex who added depth to the plot.
27. The continuous disagreements led to an of tensions within the community.
28. The strange old house remained an to the townspeople who speculated about its secrets.
29. Being stranded in the desert without water was a dire for the lost hikers.
30. The espionage film had an plot that captivated the audience until the end.

Answer

Multiple Choice: 1. Eminent 2. Technological 3. Predicament 4. Audacious 5. Amelioration 6. Impetus 7. Unprecedented 8. Cognitive 9. Intrigue 10. Geographical

Gap-Fill: 11. peninsula 12. diligently 13. cordoned off 14. escalation 15. tentative 16. cognizance 17. interface 18. deadly 19. revered 20. impetus

Matching sentence: 1. avant-garde 2. ground strike 3. meteorologist 4. technological 5. commendable 6. antagonist 7. escalation 8. enigma 9. predicament 10. intriguing

CATEGORY

1. Sci/Tech - LEVEL6

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