



In 1992, a hurricane named Andrew struck Miami. Andrew was a Category Five hurricane. In 2005, a large hurricane named Katrina hit New Orleans. Katrina was a Category Three hurricane. One difference between Category Three and Category Five hurricanes is their wind speed.

A Category Three hurricane has wind speeds greater than 178 kilometers per hour. A Category Five hurricane has wind speeds greater than 250 kilometers per hour. However, there are other differences between Category Three and Category Five hurricanes. Another difference is their **barometric** pressure.

Barometric comes from the word **barometer**. A barometer measures air pressure. So, barometric pressure is simply air pressure. Changes in air pressure are a sign of certain **weather** conditions. For example, a drop in air pressure is usually a sign that wet weather is on its way.

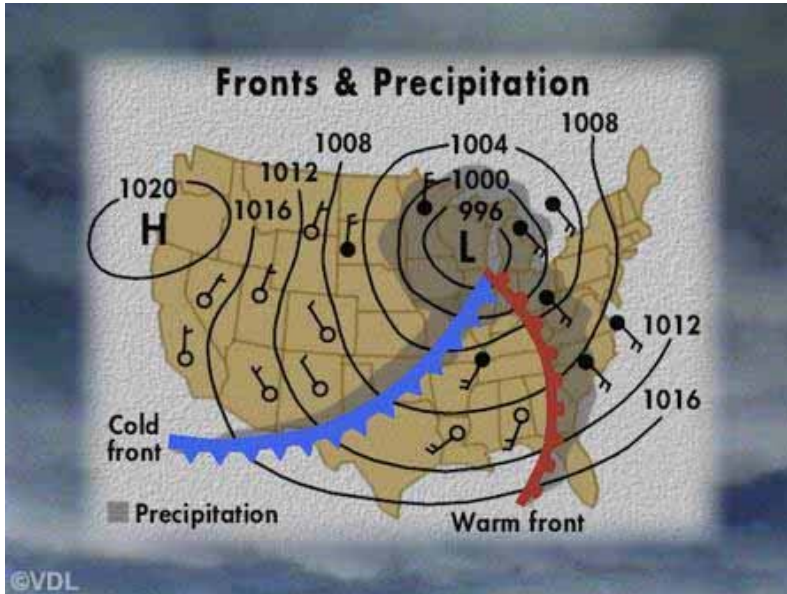


This barometer measures the air pressure.

Air pressure starts falling as a hurricane approaches. The stronger the hurricane is, the more the number on the barometer drops. Therefore, the air pressure in a Category Five hurricane is lower than the air pressure in a Category Three hurricane.

Air pressures are shown on weather maps. Weather maps use lines rather than numbers to indicate different air pressures. These lines,

called isobars, connect places that have the same air pressure. For example, if New York City and Washington, D.C., have the same air pressure, then a line would connect these two cities on a weather map. The line would also connect other places with the same air pressure.



The lines on a weather map connect places with the same air pressure.

If a line on a weather map forms a closed circle, then the area inside the circle has either low pressure or high pressure. If it has low pressure, then it's likely cloudy and raining. If it has high pressure, then it's likely sunny. However, keep an eye on that barometer. It may be falling.