

## Topics: Weather by Adrian Tennant

**LEVEL:** Intermediate +  
**AGE:** Teenagers / Adults  
**TIME NEEDED:** 90 minutes + project  
**LANGUAGE FOCUS:** Reported speech, understand vocabulary in context, topic words relating to weather

### LEAD-IN

Put students in pairs and ask them to look at the pictures and answer the questions. Elicit ideas from students as a whole class discussion.

**Key** \_\_\_\_\_  
 1. A: *this picture shows the after effects of an earthquake;*  
 2. B: *forest fire (caused by drought); C: flood; D: hurricane;*  
 E: *snow*

### READING 1: HEADLINES

Ask students to read the headlines and, in pairs, discuss what they think happened in each of the situations. Elicit ideas from students as a whole class discussion.

### READING 2: NEWS IN BRIEF

Ask students to read through the stories and match the headlines from the Reading 1: Headlines exercise, and the pictures from the Lead-in exercise, to the correct one. Explain that one of the pictures does not accurately match the story and ask them to identify it. Tell them they don't need to understand every word (you could give them a short time limit, e.g. three minutes). Get students to check their answers in pairs before checking as a class.

**Key a** \_\_\_\_\_  
 1. *Country grinds to a halt: picture E*  
 2. *Small tremor rocks Manchester: picture A (although this is not an accurate match as the headline describes a minor earthquake)*  
 3. *Three blows in a month: picture D*  
 4. *Fires sweep across much of southern Europe: picture B*  
 5. *Heavy rain causes havoc: picture C*

Next, ask students to read the five comprehension questions and answer each one. Monitor and help where necessary before checking as a class.

**Key b** \_\_\_\_\_  
 1. *in southern Europe;* 2. *three;* 3. *an earthquake;* 4. *because of snow;* 5. *tornadoes*

### WORKING WITH THE LANGUAGE

#### Focus 1: Understanding meaning

Ask students what word you can use instead of *Saturday and Sunday* and elicit *weekend*. Put students in pairs and ask them to help each other to find the words in the text for each of the expressions and then discuss the question. Monitor and help where necessary before checking as a class.

**Key a** \_\_\_\_\_  
 1. *four weeks;* 2. *24 hours;* 3. *12 months*

**Key b** \_\_\_\_\_  
*because they sound longer and, therefore, more dramatic*

#### Focus 2: Language use

Tell students to look at the example of reported speech. Then tell them that information is from the Reading 2: News in brief exercise, but it doesn't appear how it did in the story (2). Ask them if they can remember the exact words that were used in the newspaper story without looking back.

**Key** \_\_\_\_\_  
*"My house started shaking. I was terrified," said one resident.*

Discuss what happened when the sentence was reported and try to elicit that *my* changed to *his*, and that the past tense *started* and *was* changed to the past perfect *had started* and *had been*.

Then, ask students to try and turn the four quotes from the newspaper stories into reported speech. Put students in pairs and get them to check their answers together before checking as a class.

**Key** \_\_\_\_\_  
 1. *One stranded motorist said (that) it was the worst winter he had ever known.*  
 2. *One firefighter said (that) they were doing the best they could.*  
 3. *He said (that) things were really bad at the moment.*  
 4. *The authorities said people should stay at home unless they really had to travel.*

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### WORKING WITH VOCABULARY

#### Focus 1: Meaning

Ask students to look back at the newspaper stories, from Reading 2: News in brief, and find words that match the definitions. Encourage them to work in pairs and discuss their ideas as they look at the stories.

**Key** \_\_\_\_\_  
*a. havoc; b stranded; c. damage; d terrified; e. pummel;  
 f. unprecedented; g. raging; h. inevitable; i. freak; j. severe*

#### Focus 2: Topic-related words

Ask students to work together to complete the sentences. Tell them that all the words are in the Reading 2: News in brief stories. Monitor and help where necessary.

**Key** \_\_\_\_\_  
*1. storm; 2. drought(s); 3. floods (and possible landslides);  
 4. torrential*

### LISTENING

Tell students that they are going to listen to a short radio news report. Play the report, then ask students to read the third story from the Reading 2: News in brief exercise again. Now, ask students to circle any differences between the story and the radio report. Put students in pairs and ask them to discuss their answers together. Play the recording again, if necessary, and check answers as a class.

#### Transcript:

Hurricane Henrietta, the eighth of the year, has pummelled the coast of Cuba causing significant damage to property. This is the first hurricane of the year to hit Cuba, but residents are worried as last year was the worst hurricane season in recent history and more storms are expected over the coming weeks.

**Key** \_\_\_\_\_  
*Hurricane Henrietta / Georgina; eighth / seventh hurricane of the year; Cuba / Florida; first / third hurricane to hit the area; last year was / this year is the worst hurricane season; they are expecting more storms / no mention of more storms*

### SPEAKING

Put students in small groups and ask them to discuss the questions together.

Afterwards, ask a few groups to report back on their discussion. You might want to open this out to the whole class.

### PROJECT

Ask students to carry out the project for homework and follow it up in the next lesson.

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LEAD-IN

Look at the pictures below and answer the following questions:

1. Which picture does not show the effects of extreme weather?
2. What type of extreme weather, or effect of extreme weather, is being shown in the other four pictures?

A. \_\_\_\_\_



B. \_\_\_\_\_



C. \_\_\_\_\_



D. \_\_\_\_\_



E. \_\_\_\_\_





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READING 1: HEADLINES

Read the headlines.

Heavy rain causes havoc

SMALL TREMOR ROCKS MANCHESTER

Fires sweep across much of southern Europe

THREE BLOWS  
IN A MONTH

Country grinds  
to a halt

What do you think happened in each story?

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READING 2: NEWS IN BRIEF

a. Read the newspaper stories below and match the headlines and pictures from the previous page to the correct story.

1. Picture:

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|   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>More than 30 centimetres of snow has fallen in just 24 hours causing havoc to much of the south of England. "It's the worst winter I've ever known," said one stranded</p> | <p>motorist. Airports were closed and emergency services were at full stretch. "Stay at home, unless you really have to travel," was the advice from the authorities.</p> |
|---|---|

2. Picture:

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|  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>EARTHQUAKES AND TORNADOES IN THE UK? YOU'RE JOKING! NO, NORTH-WEST ENGLAND EXPERIENCED AN EARTHQUAKE OF 2.0 LAST NIGHT. CERTAINLY NOT AS BAD AS THOSE IN CHINA, JAPAN AND NEW ZEALAND</p> | <p>OVER THE PAST FEW YEARS, BUT IT DID DAMAGE BUILDINGS AND SEVERAL MINOR INJURIES WERE REPORTED. "MY HOUSE STARTED SHAKING. I WAS TERRIFIED," SAID ONE RESIDENT.</p> |
|--|---|

3. Picture:

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|  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>Hurricane Georgina, the seventh of the year, pummelled the coast of Florida causing significant damage to property. It's the third major hurricane to hit the coast in the last</p> | <p>four weeks and residents are worried that this year will be the worst in recent history. "It's unprecedented for us to have this number of category seven storms this early in the year," said one expert.</p> |
|--|---|

4. Picture:

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|  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>Wildfires have been raging out of control across much of southern Europe. Serious droughts and searing heat has led to conditions where fires</p> | <p>are almost inevitable. "We're doing the best we can," said one firefighter, "but things are so bad at the moment! We're at our limit." Fortunately, rain is predicted for the weekend.</p> |
|--|---|

5. Picture:

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|   |  |
|---|--|
| <p>With torrential rain leading to landslides and then flooding, many people in Brazil are suffering from the third natural disaster in the last twelve months. Last year the same area experienced a</p> | <p>freak tornado and then six months later an earthquake that caused severe damage to many buildings. "These people are desperate for aid. They've lost everything - not once, but three times!"</p> |
|---|--|

b. Read the newspaper stories again and answer these questions.

1. Where do people want rain?
2. How many hurricanes have hit Florida in the last month?
3. What was the second disaster to hit one part of Brazil?
4. Why were airports in the UK closed?
5. What extreme weather is very unusual in the UK?

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WORKING WITH THE LANGUAGE

Focus 1: Understanding meaning

a. Find words in the newspaper stories which mean:

1. a month
2. a day
3. a year

b. Why do you think these words are used, rather than *a day, a month, etc?*

Focus 2: Language use

Newspapers often use reported speech to cover stories. Look at this example:

ONE RESIDENT SAID HIS HOUSE HAD STARTED SHAKING AND THAT HE HAD BEEN TERRIFIED.

Here are some quotes from the newspaper stories. Write the sentences as reported speech.

1. "It's the worst winter I've ever known," said one stranded motorist.  
*One stranded motorist said* \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. "We're doing the best we can," said one firefighter.  
*One firefighter said* \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. "Things are really bad at the moment!"  
*He said* \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. "Stay at home, unless you really have to travel," was the advice from the authorities.  
*The authorities said people should* \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

WORKING WITH VOCABULARY

Focus 1: Meaning

Find words in the newspaper stories, from Reading 2: News in brief, to match with these definitions.

- a. a situation in which something cannot continue in its normal way because of problems
- b. left somewhere with no way of going anywhere else
- c. physical harm caused to something so that it is broken or spoiled
- d. extremely frightened
- e. to cause a lot of damage to a place by hitting it many times
- f. the greatest in size, amount, degree, etc. that has ever been known
- g. happening with a lot of force or violence
- h. impossible to avoid or prevent
- i. extremely unusual and unexpected
- j. very serious and worrying

Focus 2: Topic-related words

Use words from the newspaper stories to complete these sentences.

1. Hurricanes and tornadoes are both types of \_\_\_\_\_
2. When there isn't enough rain places suffer from \_\_\_\_\_
3. When there is too much rain places often suffer from \_\_\_\_\_
4. Rain is often described as light, heavy or \_\_\_\_\_

**Topics: Weather  
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Listen to the radio news report and read the third newspaper story from the Reading 2: News in brief exercise, then answer the questions below.

1. How many differences between the newspaper story and radio report did you hear?
2. What were they?

**SPEAKING**

Discuss these questions in small groups.

1. Have you ever experienced extreme weather?
2. What was it? What happened?
3. What types of extreme weather are most common in your country?
4. Has the weather changed in the last few years in your country?
5. What can people do to protect themselves against the consequences of extreme weather?

**PROJECT**

Find as many stories as you can about extreme weather in the news. What types of weather are described?