



WILDFIRES RAGE ACROSS THE WORLD



Scan to review worksheet

Exemo code:
1BH9-Z1LC-R5F9



1

Warm up

Discuss the questions in pairs or small groups.

1. Have you ever witnessed a fire, either in nature or in an urban environment?
2. Has this summer been hotter than usual in your country?
3. How do you deal with hot weather? Do you have air conditioning in your home or workplace?
4. Do many tourists visit your country?
5. Have you ever experienced a natural disaster while on holiday? If so, what happened?





2 Pre-listening task: vocabulary focus

Part A: Complete the definitions below by filling in the gaps with the correct words from the list.

Group 1

a) in a place c) exists or happens d) very quickly e) a particular area

1. **rage** (v): spread _____
2. **strand** (v): leave somebody _____ from which they have no way of leaving
3. **community** (n): all the people who live in _____, country, etc. when talked about as a group
4. **phenomenon** (n): something that _____, usually something unusual

Group 2

a) can be moved c) is easy to hurt d) negative reaction e) people or things

1. **belongings** (n): the things that you own which _____, for example not land or buildings
2. **succession** (n): a number of _____ that follow each other in time or order
3. **backlash** (n): a strong _____ by a large number of people, for example to something that has recently changed in society
4. **vulnerable** (adj.): describing someone or something that _____, damage or attack physically or emotionally

Part B: Discuss the questions in pairs.

1. Have you ever been **stranded** somewhere? If so, what happened?
2. If you discovered a fire in your home, would you take any of your **belongings** with you?
3. Which natural **phenomenon** do you find the scariest?
4. Is your country more **vulnerable** than others to the effects of climate change



3 Listening for specific information

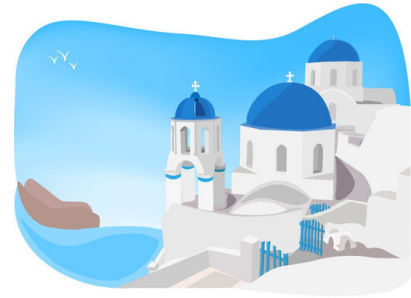
Listen to the report. Write down the numbers mentioned next to the things they relate to.

Audio



- the number of Greek islands mentioned in the report → _____
- the number of people evacuated from Rhodes → _____
- the number of villages evacuated in Corfu → _____
- the temperature (in degrees Celsius) that has been reached in some parts of Greece → _____
- the number of people who died as a result of wildfires in Attica in 2018 → _____
- the number of countries experiencing wildfires mentioned in the report → _____
- the number of fires currently raging in Sicily → _____
- the percentage of the GDP that tourism accounts for in Greece → _____

Video



Glossary:

GDP: the total value of all goods and services produced by a country in one year (the abbreviation for 'gross domestic product')

4 Listening for comprehension

Listen to the report again. Answer the questions true, false or not given.

- Greece has carried out its second largest evacuation. _____
- Some visitors to Rhodes had to leave their possessions behind. _____
- Evia is Greece's largest island. _____
- Wildfires are always triggered by natural causes. _____
- Climate change brought about by humans has created the ideal conditions for wildfires to spread, according to scientists. _____
- Palermo is the largest city in Sicily. _____
- Twenty percent of jobs in Greece are related to tourism. _____
- Most holiday cancellations due to the fires have been covered by insurance companies. _____



5 Reading: general vocabulary

Part A: Match the words in bold with the correct definitions.

Group 1

1. The **myriad** species that live in our oceans form an important part of the ecosystem. (adj.)
 2. If the **permafrost** melts, it will cause all kinds of problems for humanity. (n)
 3. Many forms of **escapism** are harmless, such as watching television after a long day. (n)
 4. The mayor's party has been accused of **concocting** lies in order to stay in power. (v)
 5. Hot summer days are not **conducive** to productivity. (adj.)
 6. There is a general **malaise** in our country following a succession of public scandals. (adj.)
 7. We watched the disaster **unfurl** over a number of hours, live on television. (v)
 8. The storm **derailed** our plans to spend the day at the beach. (v)
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- a. a layer of soil that is permanently frozen, in very cold regions of the world
 - b. open up from a closed state, often over a period of time
 - c. stop a process from continuing in the way it was intended to
 - d. extremely large in number
 - e. a general feeling of being ill, unhappy or not satisfied, or that something is wrong in society, without being able to explain or identify what is wrong
 - f. invent a story, an excuse, etc. or create a plan, especially for a dishonest purpose
 - g. making it easy, possible or likely for something to happen
 - h. an activity, a form of entertainment, etc. that helps you avoid or forget unpleasant or boring things



**Group 2**

1. The newspaper attempted to **discredit** my grandfather by describing him as a 'mad scientist'. (v)
 2. We're hoping that our new charity will **foster** positive discussions on climate action. (v)
 3. When my parents began to argue, I decided to **retreat** to my bedroom. (v)
 4. **Denial** can have a strong effect on somebody's life, and can stop them from wanting to take part in social activities. (n)
 5. The **discourse** on artificial intelligence is generally negative. (n)
 6. Sarah **opted** to buy an electric car after passing her driving test. (v)
 7. After the summer, the restaurant is intending to **retain** some of its temporary staff. (v)
 8. The detective **seized on** a comment I made which contradicted my earlier statement. (v)
-
- a. choose to take or not to take a particular course of action
 - b. keep or continue to have something
 - c. the action of stating that something is not true, does not exist or has not occurred
 - d. a long and serious treatment or discussion of a subject in speech or writing
 - e. escape to a place that is quieter or safer
 - f. make people stop respecting somebody/something
 - g. encourage something to develop
 - h. suddenly show a lot of interest in something, especially because you can use it to your advantage





Part B: Complete the short text below with the words and phrases from the above exercise. You may need to change the tense of the word or phrase.

As a journalist covering the climate crisis, I have made some interesting observations over the last few years. Firstly, the way in which we report stories related to global warming has changed, as public _____¹ has shifted from issuing warnings to demanding action, to _____² of what's happening. At first, many of my colleagues would focus on scary stories about the _____³ melting or countries sinking beneath the sea. Then, as awareness increased and the climate disaster began to _____⁴, many of us _____⁵ to focus on positive changes that each one of us could make. We ran a _____⁶ of articles about personal responsibility, as well as the necessary action that governments would need to take. Something changed recently, and we noticed that many people were beginning to _____⁷ from reality, choosing _____⁸ over news. Sales of print newspapers dropped with streaming services seeing a huge rise. On the other hand, some of our competitors seemed determined to _____⁹ climate science, _____¹⁰ the sense of _____¹¹ that had followed the pandemic and the war in Ukraine. Some of these so-called journalists _____¹² stories that were obviously not true, in an effort to _____¹³ the green movement.

My editor decided that we need to alter our thinking. Instead of responding to these fake news stories, we should focus on _____¹⁴ positive change. We started running stories about people who were making a genuine difference in the battle against global warming. Anger and fear, we decided, may not be _____¹⁵ to action being taken. Cooperation and acts of kindness are far more important. Our new approach has seen us _____¹⁶ readers, and has even helped us to gain new ones, too.

6

Reading for general understanding

Part A: You are going to read a text about reactions to global warming. Scan the text quickly and match the headings with the correct paragraphs. One heading cannot be matched to any of the paragraphs in the text and should be marked 'Not given'.

Glossary:

the Gulf Stream: a warm current of water flowing across the Atlantic Ocean from the Gulf of Mexico towards Europe

- A focus on fear
- A shift to positive ideas
- The age of fire
- Using AI to fight global warming
- A disaster we're already aware of
- Taking advantage of discontent



A world of flames

How do we react to our burning planet?

A. _____

Our planet is burning. The summer has seen most of southern Europe hit by a swarm of wildfires, with smoke darkening the long days and infrastructure buckling under the weight of the disaster. This is, scientists suggest, only the beginning. In the coming years, we can expect deadlier heatwaves that stretch out, blurring together into one infernal haze, turning the hottest parts of the world into uninhabitable deserts. This may sound like the worst-case scenario, but researchers are worried that we may have underestimated the scope of human-caused climate change. We may, it seems, have been overly optimistic in our predictions. What, then, can we do about global warming? Should we give in to despair, or are there positive steps we can take?

B. _____

Flick through a newspaper or scroll through a social network and you will encounter your fair share of doom and gloom, with many opting to attempt to scare the world into action on the climate crisis. We read about the permafrost melting, about the Gulf Stream* shutting down, about island nations set to sink below the waves. On the back of dire warnings, climate protesters around the world have utilised a variety of methods – some more extreme than others – in order to focus public discourse on the environment. Meanwhile, populist politicians, often backed by oil lobbies, have seized on the general malaise surrounding the issue to sow the seeds of discontent, concocting conspiracy theories in an effort to discredit scientists. Denialism is on the rise at the precise moment in which action is most needed. What can be done about it?

C. _____

A change of tactics might be wise. The majority of us are aware of climate change, with many around the world experiencing the effects of global warming either directly or indirectly, through extreme weather events, droughts and rising sea levels. A survey from earlier in the year showed that two-thirds of Americans are "somewhat worried" with thirty percent stating that they are "very worried" about the climate crisis – but is fear a suitable motivator? The nature of the emergency; one which may be happening incredibly quickly on a geological time scale, but is unfurling relatively slowly from a human point of view may make it easier to ignore.

D. _____

We handle our fears in different ways, but, by and large, human beings find it difficult to live in a state of constant fear. We adapt, employing a range of psychological tools, such as distraction and denial. We rely on these methods in particular when faced with a situation which we cannot control. If we only believe that we can manage our reaction to the cause of our fear, rather than the cause itself, it becomes easier to retreat from reality. Instead of focusing on feelings of helplessness, we think about short-term plans, such as holidays or parties, or fall into escapism through the myriad media we have at our disposal. Fear becomes an immobilising force, freezing us in place at a time in which mobilisation is becoming increasingly necessary.

E. _____

Such reactions are not conducive to action being taken. Perhaps the key for all climate scientists, protest groups and those passionate about protecting our planet is to shift to a more positive message. Yes, the world is burning, and we have, indeed, caused damage to our beautiful world – some of which may be irreparable – but it is not too late to change, and there are many different paths we can follow. Alterations to our way of living may well be needed in the future, but new technologies could allow us to retain many of the small comforts we have created. Going forward, the emphasis should be on fostering constructive discussions; on supporting and funding research into all alternatives to fossil fuels, on implementing greener practises in the least disruptive way possible, and on holding those who are actively seeking to derail green efforts to account.

Sources: BBC, The Guardian, Independent



7

Reading comprehension

Read the article again. Complete the sentences with between **ONE** to **THREE** words from the article.

1. The wildfires spreading across Europe this summer may only be the _____, according to scientists.
2. In the near future, heatwaves are expected to be longer and _____.
3. Many climate-related articles seem to be written in an attempt to _____ into taking action.
4. Conspiracy theories have started popping up as _____ begin to take advantage of public malaise.
5. Most of us have, either directly or indirectly, experienced _____ of global warming.
6. Although the climate is changing very quickly in terms of a geological timescale, from a human _____ the crisis is unfurling relatively slowly.
7. As humans, we struggle to live in a state of _____ fear.
8. Focusing on _____, rather than feelings of helplessness, can be a way of managing fear.
9. The _____ for those who wish to protect our planet may well be shifting to a more positive message.
10. Funding and support for research into _____ fuel sources could be vital.





8

Post-reading task: words, expressions and phrases

Part A: Match the expressions and phrases with the correct definitions.

1. flick through (phr. v)
 2. dire warning (collocation)
 3. doom and gloom (idiom)
 4. buckle under the weight of something (expression)
 5. sow the seeds of something (idiom)
 6. infernal (adj.)
 7. swarm (of something) (n)
 8. at your/somebody's disposal (idiom)
-
- a. connected with hell
 - b. look quickly through a book, magazine, website, etc. without reading everything
 - c. start the process that leads to a particular situation or result
 - d. a large group of something, such as insects, moving together in the same direction
 - e. a prediction about something very serious and terrible that will happen in the future
 - f. become bent, damaged or broken under a weight or force
 - g. a general feeling of having lost all hope, and of expecting things to go badly
 - h. available for use as you prefer/somebody prefers

Part B: Complete the sentences with the missing expressions and phrases from Part A. You may need to change the form of the expression or phrase.

1. If you have a frying pan _____, it'll be easier to follow this particular recipe.
2. It was an _____ scene: the sky was filled with smoke and flames. We were lucky to escape!
3. Joe's arrival in the office _____ of discontent. Two weeks later, most of us had quit.
4. The news isn't all _____. Sometimes, there are positive stories too!
5. I saw my neighbour being chased by a _____ of bees earlier. I hope he's okay!
6. The new bridge is _____ t of all the cars that cross it each day.
7. I saw the advert when _____ a magazine.
8. Our planet is giving us a _____. Whether we act on it or not is up to us.



Part C: Why do you think writers use language like 'infernal' or 'swarm' to describe things? What purpose does this kind of language have? Discuss in pairs.

9

Talking point

In pairs or small groups, discuss the following questions.

1. Should insurance companies refund travellers whose plans were affected by natural disasters?
2. When planning a holiday, would you rather go to a warmer or cooler region during the summer?
3. Do you think the era of global travel is coming to an end? Why/why not?
4. Should travel companies that continued to send tourists to Rhodes after the evacuations had started to be punished?
5. Do you worry about climate change often, or do you try not to think about it?
6. Can ordinary people do anything about global warming? If so, what?
7. Do you think that some parts of the world will become uninhabitable due to human-caused climate change in your lifetime? Can anything be done to prevent this?

10

Extended activity/writing homework

Write an opinion essay on ONE of the topics below. Your essay should agree with or disagree with the statement and should be between 280 – 340 words.

1. The holiday companies that continued to send tourists to Rhodes, despite an ongoing evacuation, should be held to account.
2. Scaring people won't make them change their ways. We need to find other methods of forcing change in the battle against global warming.

Alternative extended activity:

Your holiday, which you booked almost a year ago, was cut short due to wildfires. Write a letter to your travel company, arguing that you deserve a refund or some form of compensation. Your letter should be persuasive and should highlight the reasons why you believe you deserve to be refunded for your trip.