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Global warming threatens Arctic

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29 September, 2005

THE ARTICLE

Global warming threatens Arctic

BNE: The Arctic ice cap is melting so rapidly it may completely disappear by the end of the century, US scientists have warned. Experts at America's National Snow and Ice Data Centre* (NSIDC) have reported that recent satellite images revealed the volume of sea ice was the lowest figure on record. The polar ice pack has shrunk by 30 percent since 1978. An area five times larger than the UK has vanished and the Arctic's disappearing act is quickening. This year saw the warmest Arctic summer in 400 years. Dr. Mark Serreze from the NSIDC said: "The year 2005 puts an exclamation point on the pattern of Arctic warming." He attributes the worrying trend of melting ice caps to global warming.

The NSIDC's leader Dr. Ted Scambos said the Arctic Circle is receding at such a rate that it is now close to a "tipping point" from which it may never recover. He said the Arctic is caught in a vicious circle, which, within a century, may lead to high temperatures not seen for a million years. Less sea ice means the planet cannot reflect the sun's rays and cool itself. Warmer seas and oceans absorb more of the sun's heat, which in turn melts more ice. The loss of sea ice is a self-perpetuating recipe for climate disaster. Current shrinkage is estimated at eight percent per decade, which means there may be no ice at all during the Arctic summer of 2060. Dr. Scambos issued a dire warning that it is "pretty certain a long-term decline is underway".

*http://nsidc.org/news/press/20050928_trendscontinue.html

WARM-UPS

1. ARCTIC SEARCH: You must find out as much information as you can from other students about the Arctic Circle and the North Pole. After you have finished, sit down with your partner(s) and tell each other what you found out.

2. DISAPPEARING: Talk with your partner(s) about which of the following things you would worry about most if they started disappearing at a rate of eight percent per decade.

- Arctic ice
- Elephants
- Your country's land
- Your savings
- Your country's population
- The size of your stomach and bottom
- Rainforests
- Your hair

3. CHAT: In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words are most interesting and which are most boring.

The Arctic / ice / satellite images / disappearing acts / warm summers / vicious circles / high temperatures / the sun's rays / climate disaster / long-term declines

Have a chat about the topics you liked. For more conversation, change topics and partners frequently.

4. ICE: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word "ice". Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

5. IF: In pairs / groups, agree on the endings to the following "If" sentences. Talk about what you wrote. Change partners and share your sentences and ideas.

- a. If sea levels rise, _____.
- b. If governments don't act, _____.
- c. If polar bears become extinct, _____.
- d. If temperatures continue to rise, _____.
- e. If summers get hotter, _____.
- f. If we keep creating greenhouse gases, _____.
- g. If the Arctic disappears, _____.
- h. If the world's weather changes, _____.

6. POLAR BEAR: You are a polar bear. Talk to the other "polar bears" in the classroom about life in the Arctic Circle and the terrible rumors you are hearing that man is destroying your habitat.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

1. TRUE / FALSE: Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- | | |
|--|-------|
| a. The Arctic Circle ice may disappear completely within a decade. | T / F |
| b. The volume of sea ice is at the lowest levels on record. | T / F |
| c. An area fifty times larger than the UK has already been lost. | T / F |
| d. The loss of ice has nothing to do with global warming. | T / F |
| e. The ice has receded to a once inland area called Tipping Point. | T / F |
| f. Temperatures could reach levels not seen for a million years. | T / F |
| g. Current shrinkage is occurring at a rate of eight percent a year. | T / F |
| h. There may be no ice in the Arctic summer of 2060. | T / F |

2. SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article:

- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| a. images | endless loop |
| b. shrunk | holds responsible |
| c. vanished | thinning |
| d. attributes | course |
| e. trend | rebound |
| f. receding | dwindled |
| g. vicious circle | grim |
| h. reflect | everlasting |
| i. self-perpetuating | pictures |
| j. dire | disappeared |

3. PHRASE MATCH: Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| a. Arctic ice | the pattern of Arctic warming |
| b. satellite | such a rate that ... |
| c. the Arctic's disappearing act | images |
| d. puts an exclamation point on | suns rays and cool itself |
| e. attributes the worrying trend of | vicious circle |
| f. receding at | cap |
| g. caught in a | warning |
| h. the planet cannot reflect the | is quickening |
| i. a self-perpetuating recipe | melting ice caps to global warming |
| j. issued a dire | for climate disaster |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

GAP FILL: Put the words in the column on the right into the gaps in the text.

Global warming threatens Arctic

BNE: The Arctic ice cap is melting so _____ it may completely disappear by the end of the _____, US scientists have warned. Experts at America's National Snow and Ice Data Centre (NSIDC) have reported that recent satellite images revealed the _____ of sea ice was the lowest figure on record. The polar ice _____ has shrunk by 30 percent since 1978. An area five times larger than the UK has _____ and the Arctic's disappearing _____ is quickening. This year saw the warmest Arctic summer in 400 years. Dr. Mark Serreze from the NSIDC said: "The year 2005 puts an _____ point on the pattern of Arctic warming." He attributes the worrying _____ of melting ice caps to global warming.

The NSIDC's leader Dr. Ted Scambos said the Arctic Circle is _____ at such a rate that it is now close to a "tipping point" from which it may never _____. He said the Arctic is caught in a _____ circle, which, within a century, may lead to high temperatures not seen for a million years. Less sea ice means the planet cannot _____ the sun's rays and cool itself. Warmer seas and oceans _____ more of the sun's heat, which in _____ melts more ice. The loss of sea ice is a self-perpetuating _____ for climate disaster. Current shrinkage is estimated at eight percent per decade, which means there may be no ice at all during the Arctic summer of 2060. Dr. Scambos issued a dire warning that it is "pretty certain a long-term decline is _____".

act
pack
trend
rapidly
exclamation
volume
vanished
century
vicious
turn
underway
receding
reflect
recipe
recover
absorb

AFTER READING / LISTENING

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'polar' and 'ice'.

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. GAP FILL: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the gap fill. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. STUDENT "GLOBAL WARMING" SURVEY: In pairs / groups, write down questions about global warming.

- Ask other classmates your questions and note down their answers.
- Go back to your original partner / group and compare your findings.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

6. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall exactly how these were used in the text:

- | | |
|--------------|------------|
| • rapidly | • receding |
| • satellite | • vicious |
| • shrunk | • reflect |
| • UK | • absorb |
| • warmest | • recipe |
| • attributes | • dire |

DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a. What were your initial thoughts on this headline?
- b. Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- c. How concerned are you about melting ice?
- d. Do you think melting ice caps will affect your life?
- e. Do you think the damage will repair itself?
- f. Do you think global warming is because of man's actions?
- g. What should we do in our everyday lives to reverse global warming?
- h. Who has the greater responsibility to reverse global warming, our governments or us?
- i. What do you think of the figures and statistics in the article?
- j. Is your country at risk from rising sea levels?

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a. Did you like reading this article?
- b. What do you think about what you read?
- c. Are you surprised at anything you read in the article?
- d. Do you think governments are taking global warming seriously?
- e. Do you think a shrinkage of eight percent a decade is serious?
- f. Do you think the disappearance of the Arctic ice would mark the beginning of the end of the world?
- g. Do you think governments are prepared for the more violent weather generated by global warming?
- h. Is the melting of Arctic ice the biggest catastrophe facing the Earth?
- i. What other self-perpetuating recipes for disaster are there in the world today?
- j. Did you like this discussion?

AFTER DISCUSSION: Join another partner / group and tell them what you talked about.

- a. What question would you like to ask about this topic?
- b. What was the most interesting thing you heard?
- c. Was there a question you didn't like?
- d. Was there something you totally disagreed with?
- e. What did you like talking about?
- f. Do you want to know how anyone else answered the questions?
- g. Which was the most difficult question?

SPEAKING

GLOBAL WARMING: In pairs / groups, discuss what we can do to try and reverse global warming. How effective do you think the ideas in the left hand column are? How could they be made more effective? How realistic is it that these ideas would happen on a scale large enough to make a difference?

IDEAS	EFFECTIVENESS	MORE EFFECTIVE	REALISTIC?
Use lights less at home, school or in the office.			
Use bicycles instead of cars.			
Produce cars with engines that turn off each time the car stops.			
Write a letter to the leaders of major polluting countries.			
Plant more trees.			
Increase education in schools about global warming.			
Your idea			

Change partners and tell each other the good ideas you heard.

LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

Global warming threatens Arctic

BNE: The Arctic ice cap is melting _____ it may completely disappear by the end of the century, US scientists have warned. Experts at America's National Snow and Ice Data Centre (NSIDC) have reported that recent _____ revealed the volume of sea ice was the lowest figure on record. The polar _____ has shrunk by 30 percent since 1978. An area five times larger than the UK has _____ and the Arctic's disappearing act is quickening. This year saw the warmest Arctic summer in 400 years. Dr. Mark Serreze from the NSIDC said: "The year 2005 puts an _____ point on the pattern of Arctic warming." He attributes the worrying trend of _____ ice caps to global warming.

The NSIDC's leader Dr. Ted Scambos said the Arctic Circle is _____ at such a rate that it is now close to a "_____ point" from which it may never recover. He said the Arctic is caught in a _____, which, within a century, may lead to high temperatures not seen for a million years. Less sea ice means the planet cannot _____ the sun's rays and cool itself. Warmer seas and oceans _____ more of the sun's heat, which in turn melts more ice. The loss of sea ice is a self-_____ recipe for climate disaster. Current shrinkage is estimated at eight percent per decade, which means there may be no ice at all during the Arctic summer of 2060. Dr. Scambos issued a _____ warning that it is "pretty certain a long-term _____ is underway".

HOMEWORK

1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION: Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

2. INTERNET: Search the Internet and find more information on the National Snow and Ice Data Centre (NSIDC). Share your findings with your class in the next lesson.

3. GLOBAL WARMING: Make a poster about the causes and effects of global warming. Show your posters to your classmates in your next lesson. Did you all write about similar things?

4. LETTER: Write a letter to your government about global warming. Give your government advice on what it should do to try and reverse global warming. How can your government educate people about the danger of global warming. Read your letter to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all write about similar things?

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

- a. F b. T c. F d. F e. F f. T g. F h. T

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| a. images | pictures |
| b. shrunk | dwindled |
| c. vanished | disappeared |
| d. attributes | holds responsible |
| e. trend | course |
| f. receding | thinning |
| g. vicious circle | endless loop |
| h. reflect | rebound |
| i. self-perpetuating | everlasting |
| j. dire | grim |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| a. Arctic ice | cap |
| b. satellite | images |
| c. the Arctic's disappearing act | is quickening |
| d. puts an exclamation point on | the pattern of Arctic warming |
| e. attributes the worrying trend of | melting ice caps to global warming |
| f. receding at | such a rate that ... |
| g. caught in a | vicious circle |
| h. the planet cannot reflect the | suns rays and cool itself |
| i. a self-perpetuating recipe | for climate disaster |
| j. issued a dire | warning |

GAP FILL:

Global warming threatens Arctic

BNE: The Arctic ice cap is melting so **rapidly** it may completely disappear by the end of the **century**, US scientists have warned. Experts at America's National Snow and Ice Data Centre (NSIDC) have reported that recent satellite images revealed the **volume** of sea ice was the lowest figure on record. The polar ice **pack** has shrunk by 30 percent since 1978. An area five times larger than the UK has **vanished** and the Arctic's disappearing **act** is quickening. This year saw the warmest Arctic summer in 400 years. Dr. Mark Serreze from the NSIDC said: "The year 2005 puts an **exclamation** point on the pattern of Arctic warming." He attributes the worrying **trend** of melting ice caps to global warming.

The NSIDC's leader Dr. Ted Scambos said the Arctic Circle is **receding** at such a rate that it is now close to a "tipping point" from which it may never **recover**. He said the Arctic is caught in a **vicious** circle, which, within a century, may lead to high temperatures not seen for a million years. Less sea ice means the planet cannot **reflect** the sun's rays and cool itself. Warmer seas and oceans **absorb** more of the sun's heat, which in **turn** melts more ice. The loss of sea ice is a self-perpetuating **recipe** for climate disaster. Current shrinkage is estimated at eight percent per decade, which means there may be no ice at all during the Arctic summer of 2060. Dr. Scambos issued a dire warning that it is "pretty certain a long-term decline is **underway**".