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## **Amazon region hit by drought**

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**17 October, 2005**

## **THE ARTICLE**

### **Amazon region hit by drought**

Drought has dried up huge areas of the Amazon region, affecting the lives of thousands of people. Many of the river's tributaries have turned into dusty roads and have left 30,000 people in urgent need of food, water and medicine. Thousands of fishing communities in the area now have little food and no source of income. Their waterways have disappeared and their fish stocks have been destroyed. Dead fish have made it dangerous to drink what little water there is. The drought has also damaged the region's dairy farms. About 20 percent of the 1.3 million cows in the state of Amazonas have died of thirst.

In some areas the water level has dropped from 11 meters to just 1.5 meters. This makes it impossible to bring emergency supplies to the region by boat. One anxious resident said: "This is worrisome, because the rivers are our roads." Brazil's military has been dropping supplies and medicine to stranded communities. Environmental campaign group Greenpeace has blamed Brazilian loggers, deforestation and global warming for the drought. The Brazilian government disagrees. It says warmer ocean temperatures have caused the lack of rain.

## WARM-UPS

**1. AMAZON LIFE:** You live in the Amazon jungle. Walk around the classroom and talk to the other “Amazonians” about your daily lives, worries, hobbies, joys, etc. Talk also about how important the Amazon River is to you. What would happen if it dried up?

**2. DISASTERS:** People are affected by many different disasters. Talk about these disasters with your partner(s). Where in the world do they usually happen? Do you know of any that have happened recently? What can we do to reduce their effect on humans?

- Drought
- Earthquakes
- Hurricanes
- Influenza pandemics
- AIDS
- Floods
- Fire
- Famine

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

*Drought / Amazon / tributaries / dusty roads / drinking water / cows / emergency supplies / rivers / Greenpeace / loggers / deforestation / warmer oceans*

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

**4. WATER:** In pairs / groups, talk about how much water you use. What do you use water for? Try to guess how much or how many liters of water you use every day. What could you do to use less? Which student is the biggest consumer of water?

**5. AMAZON:** Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the Amazon. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

**6. WATER OPINIONS:** In pairs / groups, talk about these opinions on water:

- a. Water will be the cause of future wars.
- b. People need to be educated about how valuable water is.
- c. Globalization means many rivers will become polluted and die.
- d. Governments should charge more money for water to make people save it.
- e. Global warming will dry up many rivers and millions of people will die of thirst.
- f. A lack of water will never be a problem – we will use seawater.
- g. It’s always the poor people who die of thirst. Rich nations don’t care.
- h. Your opinion \_\_\_\_\_.

## BEFORE READING / LISTENING

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

- |  |       |
|--|-------|
| a. Drought has dried up huge areas of the Amazon region.         | T / F |
| b. Many tributaries have turned into dusty roads.                | T / F |
| c. Local people have saved most of their fish stocks.            | T / F |
| d. The drought has killed about two thirds of the region's cows. | T / F |
| e. Water levels have dropped 10 meters in places.                | T / F |
| f. A local resident said the roads are like rivers.              | T / F |
| g. Greenpeace has blamed loggers for the drought.                | T / F |
| h. Brazil's government agrees with Greenpeace.                   | T / F |

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

- |               |              |
|---------------|--------------|
| a. huge       | organization |
| b. urgent     | one fifth    |
| c. income     | helpless     |
| d. 20 percent | revenue      |
| e. cows       | area         |
| f. dropped    | enormous     |
| g. region     | cattle       |
| h. stranded   | serious      |
| i. group      | resulted in  |
| j. caused     | fallen       |

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

- |                              |                              |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| a. affecting the lives       | urgent need of food          |
| b. 30,000 people in          | has blamed Brazilian loggers |
| c. fishing                   | of income                    |
| d. source                    | dropped from 11 meters       |
| e. died                      | group                        |
| f. the water level has       | of thousands of people       |
| g. emergency                 | of thirst                    |
| h. environmental campaign    | have caused the lack of rain |
| i. Greenpeace                | communities                  |
| j. warmer ocean temperatures | supplies                     |

## WHILE READING / LISTENING

**SYNONYM FILL:** Place the number of the synonym group below in the correct gap in the text. It is not important to guess a correct word - any of the synonyms from each group could be put into the correct gap.

### Amazon region hit by drought

Drought has dried up \_\_\_\_ areas of the Amazon region, affecting the lives of thousands of people. Many of the river's tributaries have turned into dusty roads and have left 30,000 people in \_\_\_\_ need of food, water and medicine. Thousands of fishing communities in the area now have little food and no source of \_\_\_\_\_. Their waterways have disappeared and their fish stocks have been \_\_\_\_\_. Dead fish have made it dangerous to drink what little water there is. The drought has also damaged the region's dairy farms. About 20 percent of the 1.3 million cows in the state of Amazonas have died of thirst.

In some areas the water level has dropped from 11 meters to just 1.5 meters. This makes it impossible to bring emergency supplies to the region by boat. One \_\_\_\_ resident said: "This is worrisome, because the rivers are our roads." Brazil's military has been dropping \_\_\_\_ and medicine to \_\_\_\_ communities. Environmental campaign group Greenpeace has blamed Brazilian loggers, deforestation and global warming for the drought. The Brazilian government disagrees. It says warmer ocean temperatures have \_\_\_\_ the lack of rain.

1  
stranded  
helpless  
isolated  
marooned

2  
income  
revenue  
earnings  
cash

3  
urgent  
serious  
immediate  
vital

4  
huge  
enormous  
large  
vast

5  
anxious  
concerned  
worried  
fearful

6  
caused  
resulted in  
led to  
brought about

7  
supplies  
food  
necessities  
provisions

8  
destroyed  
wiped out  
killed  
ruined

## **LISTENING**

Listen and fill in the spaces.

### **Amazon region hit by drought**

Drought has \_\_\_\_\_ huge areas of the Amazon region, affecting the lives of thousands of people. Many of the river's tributaries have turned into \_\_\_\_\_ roads and have left 30,000 people in \_\_\_\_\_ need of food, water and medicine. Thousands of fishing communities in the area now have little food and no \_\_\_\_\_ of income. Their waterways have disappeared and their fish stocks have been destroyed. Dead fish have made it dangerous to drink what \_\_\_\_\_ water there is. The drought has also damaged the \_\_\_\_\_ dairy farms. About 20 percent of the 1.3 million cows in the state of Amazonas have died of \_\_\_\_\_.

In some areas the water \_\_\_\_\_ has dropped from 11 meters to just 1.5 meters. This makes it impossible to bring emergency \_\_\_\_\_ to the region by boat. One \_\_\_\_\_ resident said: "This is worrisome, because the rivers are our roads." Brazil's military has been dropping supplies and medicine to \_\_\_\_\_ communities. Environmental campaign group Greenpeace has blamed Brazilian loggers, deforestation and global warming for the drought. The Brazilian government \_\_\_\_\_. It says warmer ocean temperatures have caused the \_\_\_\_\_ rain.

## AFTER READING / LISTENING

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

- 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. SYNONYM FILL:** In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the synonym 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 "AMAZON" SURVEY:** In pairs / groups, write down questions about the Amazon River and drought.

- 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:

- dried up
- dusty
- urgent
- income
- little
- thirst
- level
- supplies
- worrisome
- stranded
- Greenpeace
- lack

## DISCUSSION

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

- a. Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- b. Are you surprised by this news?
- c. What do you think of when you hear the word 'Amazon'?
- d. What feelings do you have when you think of the Amazon River?
- e. Do you think other countries in the world should protect the Amazon?
- f. What would you do if your country was hit by drought?
- g. What can the world do to prevent people dying in droughts?
- h. Do you think rich governments care about droughts in poorer countries?
- i. Do you think global warming will create more droughts?
- j. What do you know about the Amazon River?

### 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. Would you like to visit the Amazon?
- d. Have you heard or read about this drought?
- e. What do you think life would be like with a lack of water?
- f. Will reading this article make you more careful about using water?
- g. Do you think Brazil's government does enough to prevent logging?
- h. Where and when do you think the first water war will start?
- i. What do you think of Amazon.com – the online bookstore?
- 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

**WATER CONSERVATION:** You are head of the new National Water Conservation Department of your government. In pairs / groups, discuss how people can save water. You must create rules for the points in the left hand column will save water.

POINTS	RULES
Bathing / showering	
Washing dishes	
Washing clothes	
Cleaning teeth	
Gardening	
Washing cars	
Leisure activities	
Other	

Change partners and tell each other the rules you created and the reasons for them.

Decide which of the rules are best.

Role play the government advisor telling an angry water consumer of the new rules. Take turns in being advisor and consumer.

Change partners again. Talk about how necessary and effective the rules might be.

## **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 Amazon River. Share your findings with your class in the next lesson.

**3. SAVE WATER:** Make a poster explaining what people can do in their everyday lives to save water. Show your posters to your classmates in your next lesson. Did you all think of similar things?

**4. NO WATER:** What would life be like without water? Write an imaginary diary / journal entry about a week in your life when the water supply in your town completely dried up. What did you do? What were you worried about? Read what you wrote to your classmates in your next lesson. Did you all write about similar things?

## ANSWERS

### TRUE / FALSE:

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

### SYNONYM MATCH:

- |               |              |
|---------------|--------------|
| a. huge       | enormous     |
| b. urgent     | serious      |
| c. income     | revenue      |
| d. 20 percent | one fifth    |
| e. cows       | cattle       |
| f. dropped    | fallen       |
| g. region     | area         |
| h. stranded   | helpless     |
| i. group      | organization |
| j. caused     | resulted in  |

### PHRASE MATCH:

- |                              |                              |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| a. affecting the lives       | of thousands of people       |
| b. 30,000 people in          | urgent need of food          |
| c. fishing                   | communities                  |
| d. source                    | of income                    |
| e. died                      | of thirst                    |
| f. the water level has       | dropped from 11 meters       |
| g. emergency                 | supplies                     |
| h. environmental campaign    | group                        |
| i. Greenpeace                | has blamed Brazilian loggers |
| j. warmer ocean temperatures | have caused the lack of rain |

### SYNONYM FILL:

#### Amazon region hit by drought

Drought has dried up ---4--- areas of the Amazon region, affecting the lives of thousands of people. Many of the river's tributaries have turned into dusty roads and have left 30,000 people in ---3--- need of food, water and medicine. Thousands of fishing communities in the area now have little food and no source of ---2---. Their waterways have disappeared and their fish stocks have been ---8---. Dead fish have made it dangerous to drink what little water there is. The drought has also damaged the region's dairy farms. About 20 percent of the 1.3 million cows in the state of Amazonas have died of thirst.

In some areas the water level has dropped from 11 meters to just 1.5 meters. This makes it impossible to bring emergency supplies to the region by boat. One ---5--- resident said: "This is worrisome, because the rivers are our roads." Brazil's military has been dropping ---7--- and medicine to ---1--- communities. Environmental campaign group Greenpeace has blamed Brazilian loggers, deforestation and global warming for the drought. The Brazilian government disagrees. It says warmer ocean temperatures have ---6--- the lack of rain.