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Deadly forest fires blaze across Greece

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28th August, 2007

THE ARTICLE

Deadly forest fires blaze across Greece

Dozens of devastating forest fires are creating death, havoc and destruction across Greece. Greek authorities have enlisted the help of fire-fighting aircraft from across Europe in an attempt to tackle the blazes that have so far killed 61 people and caused millions of dollars of damage to properties. The fires have gutted hundreds of homes, forcing thousands of villagers to flee in panic. Large areas of the country have been scorched and blackened. Flames as tall as apartment buildings have beat the efforts of local fire-fighters, whose brave work has not been enough to stop more fires from breaking out. Dozens of new fires are being fanned by hot, dry winds. It is becoming increasingly dangerous for anyone to try to defeat the infernos from the ground. Efforts by the Greek army have proved ineffective.

The Greek government is furious that many of the fires have been started on purpose by arsonists. Closed-circuit TV cameras have caught several arsonists igniting the fires. The government has issued a 1m euro (\$1.3m) reward for anyone with information to help catch the arsonists. "The reward is set between 100,000 and 1m euros for every act of arson, depending on whether death or serious injury occurred and the size of the damage," a Greek government official said in a statement to the press. There is speculation that the fires may have been started by property developers who want to build more tourist facilities. Current Greek law forbids any development on forested land. With a lack of trees because of the fires, the property developers may now be able to get permission to build.

WARM-UPS

1. FIRE: Walk around the class and talk to other students about fire. Change partners often. After you finish, sit with your original partner(s) and share what you found out.

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

forest fires / death / havoc / destruction / fire fighters / fleeing / panic / bravery / fury / arsonists / rewards / speculation / property developers / tourist facilities

Have a chat about the topics you liked. Change topics and partners frequently.

3. DESTRUCTION: In pairs / groups, discuss which of these natural disasters would scare you most.

- forest fires
- earthquakes
- volcanoes
- typhoons / hurricanes
- floods
- tidal waves / tsunamis
- droughts
- other _____

4. RESCUE: In pairs / groups, rank the following in order of which you would save first if you had to evacuate your house because of a forest fire.

- | | |
|----------------------------|--------------------|
| _____ passport / documents | _____ grandmother |
| _____ money | _____ photo albums |
| _____ pet | _____ clothes |
| _____ computer | _____ car |

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

6. FIRE: Forest fires are all around your house. What will you do? Walk around the class and talk to other students about the fires and what your next steps are.

7. QUICK DEBATE: Students A think arsonists should go to prison for life. Students B think arsonists should go to prison for three years. Change partners often. Share your findings.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

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

- a. Fires have destroyed large parts of several Greek forests and cities. T / F
- b. Firefighters from all over the world are helping to fight the blazes. T / F
- c. The Greek people affected by the fires have stayed very calm. T / F
- d. The Greek army has helped fight the fires. T / F
- e. CCTV cameras caught some of the arsonists lighting the fires. T / F
- f. There is a million-dollar reward for those who can help the police. T / F
- g. Some of the fires may have been started to build tourist facilities. T / F
- h. Property developers have permission to build many tourist resorts. T / F

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

- | | |
|----------------|-----------------|
| 1. devastating | a. blazes |
| 2. havoc | b. fruitless |
| 3. flee | c. rumour |
| 4. infernos | d. chaos |
| 5. ineffective | e. irate |
| 6. furious | f. journalists |
| 7. on purpose | g. destructive |
| 8. the press | h. prohibits |
| 9. speculation | i. run away |
| 10. forbids | j. deliberately |

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

- | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| 1. devastating forest fires are creating | a. the blazes |
| 2. authorities have enlisted the | b. to help catch the arsonists |
| 3. an attempt to tackle | c. purpose by arsonists |
| 4. beat the efforts | d. help of fire-fighting aircraft |
| 5. new fires are being fanned | e. arsonists igniting the fires |
| 6. many of the fires have been started on | f. of local fire-fighters |
| 7. TV cameras have caught several | g. started by property developers |
| 8. reward for anyone with information | h. death, havoc and destruction |
| 9. speculation that the fires may have been | i. development on forested land |
| 10. Current Greek law forbids any | j. by hot, dry winds |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

GAP FILL: Put the words into the gaps in the text.

Deadly forest fires blaze across Greece

Dozens of devastating forest fires are creating death, _____ and destruction across Greece. Greek authorities have _____ the help of fire-fighting aircraft from across Europe in an attempt to _____ the blazes that have so far killed 61 people and caused millions of dollars of damage to properties. The fires have _____ hundreds of homes, forcing thousands of villagers to flee in _____. Large areas of the country have been scorched and blackened. Flames as tall as apartment buildings have beat the efforts of local fire-fighters, whose _____ work has not been enough to stop more fires from breaking out. Dozens of new fires are being _____ by hot, dry winds. It is becoming increasingly dangerous for anyone to try to defeat the infernos from the ground. Efforts by the Greek army have _____ ineffective.

panic
fanned
tackle
havoc
brave
gutted
proved
enlisted

The Greek government is _____ that many of the fires have been started on purpose by arsonists. Closed-circuit TV cameras have caught several arsonists _____ the fires. The government has issued a 1m euro (\$1.3m) _____ for anyone with information to help catch the arsonists. "The reward is _____ between 100,000 and 1m euros for every act of arson, depending on whether death or _____ injury occurred and the size of the damage," a Greek government official said in a statement to the press. There is _____ that the fires may have been started by property developers who want to build more tourist facilities. Current Greek law _____ any development on forested land. With a lack of trees because of the fires, the property developers may now be able to get _____ to build.

forbids
furious
reward
speculation
set
igniting
permission
serious

LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

Deadly forest fires blaze across Greece

Dozens of devastating forest fires are creating death, _____ across Greece. Greek authorities have _____ of fire-fighting aircraft from across Europe in an attempt _____ that have so far killed 61 people and caused millions of dollars of damage to properties. The fires _____ of homes, forcing thousands of villagers to flee in panic. Large areas of the country have been _____. Flames as tall as apartment buildings have _____ local fire-fighters, whose brave work has not been enough to stop more fires from breaking out. Dozens of new fires are being _____, dry winds. It is becoming increasingly dangerous for anyone to try to defeat the infernos from the ground. Efforts by the Greek army _____.

The Greek government is _____ the fires have been started on purpose by arsonists. Closed-circuit TV cameras have caught several _____ fires. The government has issued a 1m euro (\$1.3m) reward for anyone with information to _____. "The reward is set between 100,000 and 1m euros for every act of arson, depending on _____ injury occurred and the size of the damage," a Greek government official said in a statement to the press. There is _____ fires may have been started by property developers who want to build more tourist facilities. Current Greek law forbids any development _____. With a lack of trees because of the fires, the property developers may now be able to get permission to build.

AFTER READING / LISTENING

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

forest	fire
---------------	-------------

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

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• havoc• tackle• gutted• apartment• fanned• army	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• furious• caught• reward• press• facilities• permission
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STUDENT FIRES SURVEY

Write five GOOD questions about FIRES in the table. Do this in pairs. Each student must write the questions on his / her own paper.

When you have finished, interview other students. Write down their answers.

	STUDENT 1	STUDENT 2	STUDENT 3
Q.1.			
Q.2.			
Q.3.			
Q.4.			
Q.5.			

- Now return to your original partner and share and talk about what you found out. Change partners often.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

DISCUSSION

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

- a) What did you think when you read the headline?
- b) What springs to mind when you hear the word 'forest fire'?
- c) Is your country hit by forest fires?
- d) Have you ever seen a building on fire?
- e) What would you do if your house was on fire?
- f) How would you feel if your house was burning down?
- g) Do you think Greece has acted too late in calling for the help of European countries?
- h) What part do you think global warming plays in these forest fires?
- i) Have you ever fled anything in panic?
- j) Are there any natural disasters that could hit your town?



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

- a) Did you like reading this article?
- b) What do you think it is like to be a fire fighter?
- c) What do you think of the arsonists who started the fires?
- d) What do you think motivates arsonists?
- e) What punishment would you give to the arsonists?
- f) Do you think property developers could have started the fires?
- g) How would you feel if the countryside around your town was scorched and blackened by fires?
- h) What can world governments do to fight forest fires more effectively?
- i) What questions would you like to ask an arsonist?
- j) Did you like this discussion?

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

- a) What was the most interesting thing you heard?
- b) Was there a question you didn't like?
- c) Was there something you totally disagreed with?
- d) What did you like talking about?
- e) Which was the most difficult question?

LANGUAGE

CORRECT WORD: Put the correct words from a–d below in the article.

Deadly forest fires blaze across Greece

Dozens of devastating forest fires are creating death, (1) _____ and destruction across Greece. Greek authorities have enlisted the help of fire-fighting aircraft from across Europe (2) _____ an attempt to (3) _____ the blazes that have so far killed 61 people and caused millions of dollars of damage to properties. The fires have gutted hundreds of homes, forcing thousands of villagers to (4) _____ in panic. Large areas of the country have been scorched and blackened. Flames as tall as apartment buildings have beat the (5) _____ of local fire-fighters, whose brave work has not been enough to stop more fires from breaking out. Dozens of new fires are being (6) _____ by hot, dry winds. It is becoming increasingly dangerous for anyone to try to defeat the infernos from the ground. Efforts by the Greek army have proved ineffective.

The Greek government is (7) _____ that many of the fires have been started (8) _____ purpose by arsonists. Closed-circuit TV cameras have caught several arsonists igniting the fires. The government has issued a 1m euro (\$1.3m) reward for anyone with information to help catch the arsonists. "The reward is (9) _____ between 100,000 and 1m euros for every (10) _____ of arson, depending on whether death or serious injury occurred and the size of the damage," a Greek government official said in a statement to the press. There is speculation that the fires may have been started (11) _____ property developers who want to build more tourist facilities. Current Greek law forbids any development on forested land. With a (12) _____ of trees because of the fires, the property developers may now be able to get permission to build.

- | | | | | |
|-----|-------------|----------------|-------------|-------------|
| 1. | (a) hovel | (b) hullabaloo | (c) hammock | (d) havoc |
| 2. | (a) by | (b) on | (c) in | (d) with |
| 3. | (a) tackle | (b) tickle | (c) trickle | (d) tuck |
| 4. | (a) flea | (b) flee | (c) free | (d) fled |
| 5. | (a) affects | (b) effects | (c) efforts | (d) affairs |
| 6. | (a) found | (b) fanned | (c) funded | (d) founded |
| 7. | (a) furious | (b) fury | (c) furry | (d) fuzzy |
| 8. | (a) in | (b) by | (c) for | (d) on |
| 9. | (a) setting | (b) sat | (c) sit | (d) set |
| 10. | (a) act | (b) acts | (c) actor | (d) action |
| 11. | (a) on | (b) with | (c) by | (d) of |
| 12. | (a) slack | (b) lack | (c) luck | (d) flack |

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WRITING:

Write about *fire* for 10 minutes. Correct your partner’s paper.

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 about forest fires around the world. Talk about what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

3. DISASTER POSTER: Make a poster about different recent natural disasters. Show your poster to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all find out similar things?

4. MAGAZINE ARTICLE: Write a magazine article about forest fires and the havoc they create. Include imaginary interviews with a fire fighter and someone whose house was destroyed in a fire.

Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Which article was best and why?

5. LETTER: Write a letter to the head of Greece's government. Ask him/her three questions about the forest fires. Give him/her three pieces of advice about how to avoid more fires breaking out in the future. Read your letter to your partner(s) in your next lesson. Your partner(s) will answer your questions.

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

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

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|----------------|-----------------|
| 1. devastating | a. destructive |
| 2. havoc | b. chaos |
| 3. flee | c. run away |
| 4. infernos | d. blazes |
| 5. ineffective | e. fruitless |
| 6. furious | f. irate |
| 7. on purpose | g. deliberately |
| 8. the press | h. journalists |
| 9. speculation | i. rumour |
| 10. forbids | j. prohibits |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| 1. devastating forest fires are creating | a. death, havoc and destruction |
| 2. authorities have enlisted the | b. help of fire-fighting aircraft |
| 3. an attempt to tackle | c. the blazes |
| 4. beat the efforts | d. of local fire-fighters |
| 5. new fires are being fanned | e. by hot, dry winds |
| 6. many of the fires have been started on | f. purpose by arsonists |
| 7. TV cameras have caught several | g. arsonists igniting the fires |
| 8. reward for anyone with information | h. to help catch the arsonists |
| 9. speculation that the fires may have been | i. started by property developers |
| 10. Current Greek law forbids any | j. development on forested land |

GAP FILL:

Deadly forest fires blaze across Greece

Dozens of devastating forest fires are creating death, **havoc** and destruction across Greece. Greek authorities have **enlisted** the help of fire-fighting aircraft from across Europe in an attempt to **tackle** the blazes that have so far killed 61 people and caused millions of dollars of damage to properties. The fires have **gutted** hundreds of homes, forcing thousands of villagers to flee in **panic**. Large areas of the country have been scorched and blackened. Flames as tall as apartment buildings have beat the efforts of local fire-fighters, whose **brave** work has not been enough to stop more fires from breaking out. Dozens of new fires are being **fanned** by hot, dry winds. It is becoming increasingly dangerous for anyone to try to defeat the infernos from the ground. Efforts by the Greek army have **proved** ineffective.

The Greek government is **furious** that many of the fires have been started on purpose by arsonists. Closed-circuit TV cameras have caught several arsonists **igniting** the fires. The government has issued a 1m euro (\$1.3m) **reward** for anyone with information to help catch the arsonists. "The reward is **set** between 100,000 and 1m euros for every act of arson, depending on whether death or **serious** injury occurred and the size of the damage," a Greek government official said in a statement to the press. There is **speculation** that the fires may have been started by property developers who want to build more tourist facilities. Current Greek law **forbids** any development on forested land. With a lack of trees because of the fires, the property developers may now be able to get **permission** to build.

LANGUAGE WORK

1 - d 2 - c 3 - a 4 - b 5 - c 6 - b 7 - a 8 - d 9 - d 10 - c 11 - a 12 - b