

**"1,000 IDEAS & ACTIVITIES FOR LANGUAGE TEACHERS"**

**The Breaking News English.com Resource Book**

<http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/book.html>

## Oil prices hit \$100 a barrel

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## THE ARTICLE

Oil finally reached the record \$100-a-barrel mark for a short time yesterday. Prices dropped to \$99.76 at the close of trading, but analysts believe they will soon go over the hundred-dollar level again. Some experts warned that oil prices could soon be as much as \$110 a barrel. The main reasons for the rise are the weak US dollar, high demand and tensions around the world. Violence in the past few days in Nigeria, Algeria and Pakistan has made the markets nervous. Another factor leading to higher prices is America's refusal to sell its emergency supplies. The White House said it would not open up the country's reserves to bring down prices. Meanwhile, OPEC, the international organization of oil producing countries, said it cannot control prices, although an official said it might increase production from February.

The rising oil prices have led to fears that inflation may start increasing across the world. Analysts predict many countries will suffer economic problems as prices spiral out of control. The huge demand for energy in emerging economies such as China and India means demand is far greater than supply. Economists say Chinese and Indian growth will mean an even greater demand for the black stuff in 2008 and more oil needs to be produced. However, Shokri Ghanem, the chairman of Libya's National Oil Corporation said this would not happen: "OPEC's production is already close to maximum capacity and the organization can do nothing to curb prices," he said. The oil price rise has led to a drop in share prices and an increase in gold prices as investors move their money to safer options.

## WARM-UPS

**1. OIL:** Walk around the class and talk to other students about oil. 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.

*barrels / trading / analysts / weak US dollar / tensions / reserves / production / inflation / emerging economies / growth / capacity / share prices / gold*

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

**3. LIFE WITHOUT OIL:** How would we survive? Discuss with your partner(s) what you / we would do without these oil-based products.

- gasoline / petrol
- plastic
- asphalt roads
- heating oil
- jet fuel
- plastic bags
- nylon
- PVC

**4. OIL HEADLINES:** With your partner(s), discuss these headlines about oil. Could they come true? What would happen if they did?

- World's oil to run out next week
- Billions of barrels of oil found under Moon's surface
- Oil prices top \$1,000 a barrel
- Gulf countries refuse to export beyond their borders
- Renewable energies to completely replace fossil fuels by July
- Oil field leaks out of control – all oceans suffer major damage
- Country X floods markets with new-found oil – now \$2.53 a barrel
- World Oil War now in thirtieth year

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

**6. QUICK ROLE PLAY:** Student A **strongly** believes oil prices will come back down to the \$50-a-barrel level; Student B **strongly** believes they'll stay at over \$100. Change partners again and talk about your roles and conversations.

## BEFORE READING / LISTENING

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

- |   |       |
|---|-------|
| a. Oil prices closed at just over \$100 a barrel after active trading.  | T / F |
| b. An analyst warned prices could rise by another ten percent.          | T / F |
| c. America is fully prepared to release its emergency oil supplies.     | T / F |
| d. The oil organization OPEC cannot control world oil prices.           | T / F |
| e. There are no fears that rising oil prices will increase inflation.   | T / F |
| f. China and India will demand less oil in 2008.                        | T / F |
| g. A Libyan oilman said OPEC can't produce much more oil.               | T / F |
| h. People are shifting their investments into safer bets, such as gold. | T / F |

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

- |             |                 |
|-------------|-----------------|
| 1. dropped  | a. spokesperson |
| 2. trading  | b. disorder     |
| 3. violence | c. choices      |
| 4. nervous  | d. resulted in  |
| 5. official | e. business     |
| 6. predict  | f. limit        |
| 7. led to   | g. forecast     |
| 8. spiral   | h. decreased    |
| 9. curb     | i. soar         |
| 10. options | j. edgy         |

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

- |  |                               |
|--|-------------------------------|
| 1. Prices dropped to \$99.76 at            | a. emergency supplies         |
| 2. oil prices could soon be                | b. around the world           |
| 3. high demand and tensions                | c. economies                  |
| 4. America's refusal to sell its           | d. safer options              |
| 5. OPEC, the international organization    | e. prices                     |
| 6. prices spiral out                       | f. as much as \$110           |
| 7. huge demand for energy in emerging      | g. of oil producing countries |
| 8. even greater demand for the black       | h. of control                 |
| 9. the organization can do nothing to curb | i. stuff                      |
| 10. investors move their money to          | j. the close of trading       |

## WHILE READING / LISTENING

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

Oil finally reached the record \$100-a-barrel \_\_\_\_\_ for a short time yesterday. Prices dropped to \$99.76 at the \_\_\_\_\_ of trading, but analysts believe they will soon go \_\_\_\_\_ the hundred-dollar level again. Some experts warned that oil prices could soon be as much as \$110 a barrel. The \_\_\_\_\_ reasons for the rise are the weak US dollar, high demand and \_\_\_\_\_ around the world. Violence in the past few days in Nigeria, Algeria and Pakistan has made the markets nervous. Another \_\_\_\_\_ leading to higher prices is America's refusal to sell its emergency supplies. The White House said it would not open up the country's \_\_\_\_\_ to bring down prices. Meanwhile, OPEC, the international organization of oil producing countries, said it cannot control prices, although an official said it might increase \_\_\_\_\_ from February.

*reserves*  
*main*  
*close*  
*tensions*  
*production*  
*mark*  
*factor*  
*over*

The rising oil prices have led to \_\_\_\_\_ that inflation may start increasing across the world. Analysts predict many countries will suffer economic problems as prices \_\_\_\_\_ out of control. The huge demand for energy in \_\_\_\_\_ economies such as China and India means demand is far greater than \_\_\_\_\_. Economists say Chinese and Indian growth will mean an even greater demand for the black \_\_\_\_\_ in 2008 and more oil needs to be produced. However, Shokri Ghanem, the chairman of Libya's National Oil Corporation said this would not happen: "OPEC's production is already close to maximum \_\_\_\_\_ and the organization can do nothing to \_\_\_\_\_ prices," he said. The oil price rise has led to a drop in share prices and an increase in gold prices as \_\_\_\_\_ move their money to safer options.

*capacity*  
*fears*  
*emerging*  
*investors*  
*stuff*  
*spiral*  
*curb*  
*supply*

**LISTENING: Listen and fill in the spaces.**

Oil finally reached the record \$100-a-barrel mark \_\_\_\_\_ yesterday. Prices dropped to \$99.76 at \_\_\_\_\_, but analysts believe they will soon go over the hundred-dollar level again. Some experts warned that oil prices could soon \_\_\_\_\_ \$110 a barrel. The main reasons for the rise are the weak US dollar, high demand and tensions around the world. Violence \_\_\_\_\_ days in Nigeria, Algeria and Pakistan has made the markets nervous. Another factor leading to higher prices is America's \_\_\_\_\_ emergency supplies. The White House said it would not open up the country's reserves \_\_\_\_\_ prices. Meanwhile, OPEC, the international organization of oil producing countries, \_\_\_\_\_ prices, although an official said it might increase production from February.

The rising oil prices \_\_\_\_\_ that inflation may start increasing across the world. Analysts predict many countries will suffer economic problems as prices \_\_\_\_\_ control. The huge demand for energy in emerging economies such as China and India means \_\_\_\_\_ than supply. Economists say Chinese and Indian growth \_\_\_\_\_ greater demand for the black stuff in 2008 and more oil needs to be produced. However, Shokri Ghanem, the chairman of Libya's National Oil Corporation said \_\_\_\_\_: "OPEC's production is already close to maximum capacity and the organization can \_\_\_\_\_ prices," he said. The oil price rise \_\_\_\_\_ in share prices and an increase in gold prices as investors move their money \_\_\_\_\_.

## AFTER READING / LISTENING

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

oil	price

- 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"> <li>• finally</li> <li>• close</li> <li>• weak</li> <li>• nervous</li> <li>• open up</li> <li>• February</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• fears</li> <li>• spiral</li> <li>• emerging</li> <li>• stuff</li> <li>• curb</li> <li>• safer</li> </ul>
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## STUDENT OIL SURVEY

Write five GOOD questions about oil 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 term 'oil prices'?
  - c) How does the price of oil affect your wallet on a daily basis?
  - d) Do you think oil at \$100 a barrel is a problem?
  - e) Do you believe OPEC when they say they have no control over oil prices?
  - f) Why doesn't the US sell some of its oil reserves to help bring prices down?
  - g) Why doesn't OPEC simply increase production now?
  - h) Do you think the markets will be more or less nervous in 2008?
  - i) Do you think it's possible that there'll be oil wars in the future?
- 

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

- a) Did you like reading this article?
- b) Has the recent rises in oil prices led to inflation in your country?
- c) What will you cut back on if prices spiral out of control?
- d) Do you think oil prices will reach \$1,000 a barrel as more and more countries increase their demand for the black stuff?
- e) Would you like to work in oil?
- f) Would you invest in oil companies?
- g) Do you think oil companies are good for the world?
- h) When do you think the world will greatly reduce its need for oil?
- i) Did you like this discussion?

## LANGUAGE

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

Oil finally reached the record \$100-a-barrel (1) \_\_\_\_\_ for a short time yesterday. Prices dropped to \$99.76 at the (2) \_\_\_\_\_ of trading, but analysts believe they will soon go over the hundred-dollar level again. Some experts warned that oil prices could soon be as much as \$110 a barrel. The main reasons (3) \_\_\_\_\_ the rise are the weak US dollar, high demand and tensions around the world. Violence in the (4) \_\_\_\_\_ few days in Nigeria, Algeria and Pakistan has made the markets nervous. Another factor leading to higher prices is America's (5) \_\_\_\_\_ to sell its emergency supplies. The White House said it would not open up the country's reserves to bring down prices. Meanwhile, OPEC, the international organization of oil (6) \_\_\_\_\_ countries, said it cannot control prices, although an official said it might increase production from February.

The rising oil prices have led to fears (7) \_\_\_\_\_ inflation may start increasing across the world. Analysts predict many countries will suffer economic problems as prices spiral (8) \_\_\_\_\_ of control. The huge demand for energy in emerging economies such as China and India means demand is (9) \_\_\_\_\_ greater than supply. Economists say Chinese and Indian growth will mean an even greater demand for the black stuff in 2008 and more oil needs to be produced. However, Shokri Ghanem, the chairman of Libya's National Oil Corporation said this would not happen: "OPEC's production is already close (10) \_\_\_\_\_ maximum capacity and the organization can do nothing to curb prices," he said. The oil price rise has led to a (11) \_\_\_\_\_ in share prices and an increase in gold prices as (12) \_\_\_\_\_ move their money to safer options.

- |     |                |               |                |                 |
|-----|----------------|---------------|----------------|-----------------|
| 1.  | (a) marks      | (b) mark      | (c) markets    | (d) marketing   |
| 2.  | (a) close      | (b) closed    | (c) closing    | (d) closer      |
| 3.  | (a) at         | (b) with      | (c) by         | (d) for         |
| 4.  | (a) continuous | (b) future    | (c) present    | (d) past        |
| 5.  | (a) refusal    | (b) refuse    | (c) refuel     | (d) refund      |
| 6.  | (a) product    | (b) producing | (c) production | (d) produce     |
| 7.  | (a) so         | (b) which     | (c) for        | (d) that        |
| 8.  | (a) in         | (b) up        | (c) out        | (d) around      |
| 9.  | (a) long way   | (b) near      | (c) close      | (d) far         |
| 10. | (a) to         | (b) at        | (c) down       | (d) in          |
| 11. | (a) droplet    | (b) droop     | (c) drop       | (d) droopy      |
| 12. | (a) investing  | (b) investors | (c) invest     | (d) investments |



## **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 OPEC and the different oil producing countries. Talk about what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

**3. ENVIRONMENT:** Make a poster about the harm oil does to the environment. Include what oil companies say they do to protect the environment. Show your poster to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all have similar things?

**4. OIL:** Write a magazine article about how oil affects different people's lives. Include imaginary interviews with the CEO of an oil company and a gas station attendant.

Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Write down new words and expressions.

**5. LETTER:** Write a letter to the CEO of an oil company. Ask him/her three questions about oil and the environment. Give him/her three suggestions on what he/she should do to better protect our planet. Read your letter to your partner(s) in your next lesson. Your partner(s) will answer your questions.

## ANSWERS

### TRUE / FALSE:

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

### SYNONYM MATCH:

- |             |                 |
|-------------|-----------------|
| 1. dropped  | a. decreased    |
| 2. trading  | b. business     |
| 3. violence | c. disorder     |
| 4. nervous  | d. edgy         |
| 5. official | e. spokesperson |
| 6. predict  | f. forecast     |
| 7. led to   | g. resulted in  |
| 8. spiral   | h. soar         |
| 9. curb     | i. limit        |
| 10. options | j. choices      |

### PHRASE MATCH:

- |  |                               |
|--|-------------------------------|
| 1. Prices dropped to \$99.76 at            | a. the close of trading       |
| 2. oil prices could soon be                | b. as much as \$110           |
| 3. high demand and tensions                | c. around the world           |
| 4. America's refusal to sell its           | d. emergency supplies         |
| 5. OPEC, the international organization    | e. of oil producing countries |
| 6. prices spiral out                       | f. of control                 |
| 7. huge demand for energy in emerging      | g. economies                  |
| 8. even greater demand for the black       | h. stuff                      |
| 9. the organization can do nothing to curb | i. prices                     |
| 10. investors move their money to          | j. safer options              |

### GAP FILL:

#### Oil prices hit \$100 a barrel

Oil finally reached the record \$100-a-barrel **mark** for a short time yesterday. Prices dropped to \$99.76 at the **close** of trading, but analysts believe they will soon go **over** the hundred-dollar level again. Some experts warned that oil prices could soon be as much as \$110 a barrel. The **main** reasons for the rise are the weak US dollar, high demand and **tensions** around the world. Violence in the past few days in Nigeria, Algeria and Pakistan has made the markets nervous. Another **factor** leading to higher prices is America's refusal to sell its emergency supplies. The White House said it would not open up the country's **reserves** to bring down prices. Meanwhile, OPEC, the international organization of oil producing countries, said it cannot control prices, although an official said it might increase **production** from February.

The rising oil prices have led to **fears** that inflation may start increasing across the world. Analysts predict many countries will suffer economic problems as prices **spiral** out of control. The huge demand for energy in **emerging** economies such as China and India means demand is far greater than **supply**. Economists say Chinese and Indian growth will mean an even greater demand for the black **stuff** in 2008 and more oil needs to be produced. However, Shokri Ghanem, the chairman of Libya's National Oil Corporation said this would not happen: "OPEC's production is already close to maximum **capacity** and the organization can do nothing to **curb** prices," he said. The oil price rise has led to a drop in share prices and an increase in gold prices as **investors** move their money to safer options.

### LANGUAGE WORK

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