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## Burma cyclone death toll may reach 80,000

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6<sup>th</sup> May, 2008

# THE ARTICLE

The death toll in the Burmese cyclone may reach 80,000. There are 22,000 confirmed deaths and up to 60,000 people still missing. The killer storm struck the country on Saturday and caused widespread destruction. Millions of people are without electricity, food or clean drinking water. Reporters say the capital, Rangoon, looks like a war zone. Hundreds of homes have been flattened by the winds, and uprooted trees are blocking the streets. This is making it difficult for emergency supplies to reach people in need. Residents say it is the worst storm to hit their city in living memory. United Nations disaster experts say it will take many days to find out exactly how many people died in the deadly winds. The current fear is that diseases such as cholera will break out as people drink dirty water.

The normally secretive Burmese government is allowing aid agencies to help with relief efforts. It seems the damage to cities, towns and rural communities is too great for the government to cope with alone. A UN spokesperson said Burma's military rulers were, "having as much trouble as anyone else in getting a full overview of the destruction". Naing Aung from the Forum for Democracy in Burma said: "International expertise in dealing with natural disasters is urgently required....The military regime is ill-prepared to deal with the aftermath of the cyclone." There are now fears that the cyclone will further push up world rice prices. Rice has already increased in price by 75 per cent in the past year. Burma is a key exporter of the food staple to Sri Lanka and Bangladesh.

# WARM-UPS

**1. NATURAL DISASTERS:** Walk around the class and talk to other students about natural disasters. 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.

*death toll / killer storms / destruction / drinking water / war zone / in living memory / being secretive / relief efforts / coping / aftermath / rice prices / food staples*

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

**3. WIDESPREAD DESTRUCTION:** What would you do if a natural disaster caused widespread disaster in your town? Complete this table. Talk with your partners about your answers. Change partners and share your findings.

Disaster	How would you feel?	What would you do?
flattened home		
no electricity		
no water		
no communications		
no roads		
disease spreading		

**4. DISASTERS:** Which disasters are you most afraid of? Rank these disasters in order of which would frighten and shock you most. Talk about your rankings. Change partners and share your ideas.

\_\_\_\_\_ cyclone / hurricane / typhoon

\_\_\_\_\_ earthquake

\_\_\_\_\_ war

\_\_\_\_\_ flood

\_\_\_\_\_ famine

\_\_\_\_\_ drought

\_\_\_\_\_ bird flu epidemic

\_\_\_\_\_ tsunami / tidal wave

**5. HEADLINE PREDICTION:** With your partner(s), use the words in the "Chat" activity above to predict what the news article will be about. Once you have your story, change partners and share them. Who was closest to the real story?

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

# BEFORE READING / LISTENING

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

- |   |       |
|---|-------|
| a. Everyone affected by the Burma cyclone has been found.                   | T / F |
| b. Luckily, the cyclone did not damage the electricity supply.              | T / F |
| c. Rangoon residents say it is the worst storm they can remember.           | T / F |
| d. People are afraid that dirty drinking water will spread deadly diseases. | T / F |
| e. Burma's government is keeping many secrets about the cyclone.            | T / F |
| f. The government has a very clear idea about how big the damage is.        | T / F |
| g. The government is not equipped to help Burma's people on its own.        | T / F |
| h. The price of rice has increased by 75 per cent in the past 12 months.    | T / F |

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

- |                |                   |
|----------------|-------------------|
| 1. death toll  | a. crushed        |
| 2. destruction | b. important      |
| 3. flattened   | c. countryside    |
| 4. deadly      | d. number of dead |
| 5. break out   | e. general idea   |
| 6. normally    | f. lethal         |
| 7. rural       | g. needed         |
| 8. overview    | h. usually        |
| 9. required    | i. start          |
| 10. key        | j. damage         |

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

- |  |                            |
|--|----------------------------|
| 1. The killer storm struck               | a. without electricity     |
| 2. Millions of people are                | b. with natural disasters  |
| 3. Hundreds of homes have been flattened | c. will break out          |
| 4. the worst storm to hit their city in  | d. Burmese government      |
| 5. diseases such as cholera              | e. by the winds            |
| 6. The normally secretive                | f. with alone              |
| 7. too great for the government to cope  | g. the country on Saturday |
| 8. getting a full overview               | h. rice prices             |
| 9. International expertise in dealing    | i. living memory           |
| 10. push up world                        | j. of the destruction      |

# WHILE READING / LISTENING

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

The death \_\_\_\_\_ in the Burmese cyclone may reach 80,000. There are 22,000 confirmed deaths and up to 60,000 people still missing. The killer storm \_\_\_\_\_ the country on Saturday and caused widespread destruction. Millions of people are \_\_\_\_\_ electricity, food or clean drinking water. Reporters say the capital, Rangoon, looks like a war \_\_\_\_\_. Hundreds of homes have been flattened by the winds, and \_\_\_\_\_ trees are blocking the streets. This is making it difficult for emergency supplies to reach people in \_\_\_\_\_. Residents say it is the worst storm to hit their city in living memory. United Nations disaster experts say it will take many days to find out \_\_\_\_\_ how many people died in the deadly winds. The current fear is that diseases such as cholera will break out as people drink \_\_\_\_\_ water.

The normally \_\_\_\_\_ Burmese government is allowing aid agencies to help with \_\_\_\_\_ efforts. It seems the damage to cities, towns and rural communities is too great for the government to \_\_\_\_\_ with alone. A UN spokesperson said Burma's military rulers were, "having as much trouble as anyone else in getting a full \_\_\_\_\_ of the destruction". Naing Aung from the Forum for Democracy in Burma said: "International expertise in \_\_\_\_\_ with natural disasters is urgently required....The military regime is ill-prepared to deal \_\_\_\_\_ the aftermath of the cyclone." There are now fears that the cyclone will further push up world rice prices. Rice has already increased in price by 75 per cent in the past year. Burma is a \_\_\_\_\_ exporter of the food \_\_\_\_\_ to Sri Lanka and Bangladesh.

*need*  
*zone*  
*struck*  
*dirty*  
*uprooted*  
*toll*  
*exactly*  
*without*

*dealing*  
*cope*  
*key*  
*overview*  
*secretive*  
*staple*  
*with*  
*relief*

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

The death toll in the Burmese cyclone may reach 80,000. There are 22,000 confirmed \_\_\_\_\_ 60,000 people still missing. The killer storm \_\_\_\_\_ on Saturday and caused widespread destruction. Millions of \_\_\_\_\_ electricity, food or clean drinking water. Reporters say the capital, Rangoon, looks like a war zone. Hundreds of homes have \_\_\_\_\_ the winds, and uprooted trees are blocking the streets. This is making it difficult for emergency supplies to reach \_\_\_\_\_. Residents say it is the worst storm to hit their city \_\_\_\_\_. United Nations disaster experts say it will take many days to find out exactly how many people died in the deadly winds. The current fear is that diseases such as cholera \_\_\_\_\_ people drink dirty water.

\_\_\_\_\_ Burmese government is allowing aid agencies to help \_\_\_\_\_. It seems the damage to cities, towns and rural communities is too great for the government \_\_\_\_\_. A UN spokesperson said Burma's military rulers were, "having as much trouble \_\_\_\_\_ getting a full overview of the destruction". Naing Aung from the Forum for Democracy in Burma said: "International expertise \_\_\_\_\_ natural disasters is urgently required....The military regime is ill-prepared \_\_\_\_\_ aftermath of the cyclone." There are now fears that the cyclone will \_\_\_\_\_ world rice prices. Rice has already increased in price by 75 per cent in the past year. Burma is a key exporter \_\_\_\_\_ to Sri Lanka and Bangladesh.

## AFTER READING / LISTENING

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

<b>war</b>	<b>zone</b>
------------	-------------

- 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 how they were used in the text:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• toll</li><li>• caused</li><li>• homes</li><li>• reach</li><li>• memory</li><li>• fear</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• normally</li><li>• alone</li><li>• overview</li><li>• expertise</li><li>• push up</li><li>• staple</li></ul>
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# STUDENT DISASTER SURVEY

Write five GOOD questions about disasters 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.



# NATURAL DISASTERS 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 'disaster'?
- c) Why do you think these disasters always affect poor countries?
- d) Have you been following this story on TV / on the radio / on the Internet / in newspapers?
- e) What can you do to help those in need in Burma?
- f) When was the last time a natural disaster hit your country?
- g) What do you think it's like to be without food, water, electricity, roads, communications, etc?
- h) What's the worst thing to happen to your country in your living memory?
- i) How can authorities act to prevent the outbreak of disease?
- j) Do you fear the power of nature?

*Burma cyclone death toll may reach 80,000 - 6<sup>th</sup> May, 2008*  
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# NATURAL DISASTERS DISCUSSION

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

- a) Did you like reading this article?
- b) Are you surprised that Burma's government is accepting international help?
- c) What do you think it's like to work for a relief or aid agency?
- d) Are you surprised the government still doesn't have a clear picture of the damage done to the country?
- e) What things would you worry about after a disaster?
- f) What would you like your government to do to help the Burmese people?
- g) Are you worried about rising food prices?
- h) What three adjectives describe your feelings about this disaster?
- i) What questions would you like to ask Burma's leaders about the cyclone?
- j) Did you like this discussion?

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# LANGUAGE

The death toll in the Burmese cyclone may reach 80,000. There are 22,000 confirmed (1) \_\_\_\_\_ and up to 60,000 people still missing. The killer storm (2) \_\_\_\_\_ the country on Saturday and caused widespread destruction. Millions of people are (3) \_\_\_\_\_ electricity, food or clean drinking water. Reporters say the capital, Rangoon, looks like a war zone. Hundreds of homes have been flattened (4) \_\_\_\_\_ the winds, and uprooted trees are blocking the streets. This is making it difficult for emergency supplies to reach people in (5) \_\_\_\_\_. Residents say it is the worst storm to hit their city in living memory. United Nations disaster experts say it will take many days to find out exactly how many people died in the deadly winds. The (6) \_\_\_\_\_ fear is that diseases such as cholera will break out as people drink dirty water.

The normally secretive Burmese government is allowing aid agencies to help with (7) \_\_\_\_\_ efforts. It seems the damage to cities, towns and rural communities is too great for the government to cope (8) \_\_\_\_\_ alone. A UN spokesperson said Burma's military rulers were, "having as much trouble as anyone (9) \_\_\_\_\_ in getting a full overview of the destruction". Naing Aung from the Forum for Democracy in Burma said: "International expertise (10) \_\_\_\_\_ dealing with natural disasters is urgently required....The military regime is ill-prepared to deal with the aftermath of the cyclone." There are now fears that the cyclone will further (11) \_\_\_\_\_ up world rice prices. Rice has already increased in price by 75 per cent in the past year. Burma is a (12) \_\_\_\_\_ exporter of the food staple to Sri Lanka and Bangladesh.

**Put the correct words from the table below in the above article.**

- |     |               |               |              |             |
|-----|---------------|---------------|--------------|-------------|
| 1.  | (a) dies      | (b) die       | (c) dying    | (d) deaths  |
| 2.  | (a) struck    | (b) strike    | (c) stricken | (d) strikes |
| 3.  | (a) less      | (b) without   | (c) no       | (d) nothing |
| 4.  | (a) with      | (b) for       | (c) by       | (d) to      |
| 5.  | (a) needed    | (b) necessary | (c) need     | (d) needs   |
| 6.  | (a) currently | (b) current   | (c) currency | (d) currant |
| 7.  | (a) relieved  | (b) relive    | (c) relieve  | (d) relief  |
| 8.  | (a) with      | (b) for       | (c) in       | (d) on      |
| 9.  | (a) other     | (b) else      | (c) who      | (d) another |
| 10. | (a) for       | (b) at        | (c) on       | (d) in      |
| 11. | (a) pushes    | (b) pushed    | (c) push     | (d) pushing |
| 12. | (a) key       | (b) lock      | (c) chain    | (d) entry   |

## WRITING:

Write about *natural disasters* for 10 minutes. Correct your partner's paper.

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the 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 out about the Burma Cyclone. Share what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

**3. DISASTER:** Make a poster about all the things you can do to cope after a disaster destroys your town. Show your work to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all have similar things?

**4. FLATTENED:** Write a magazine article about someone whose home was flattened in a storm. Include imaginary interviews with the person and relief workers trying to help.

Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Write down any new words and expressions you hear from your partner(s).

**5. LETTER:** Write a letter to Burma's military rulers. Give them three pieces of advice on what they should do to help their country recover quickly. Ask them three questions about the cyclone. Read your letter to your partner(s) in your next lesson. Your partner(s) will answer your questions.

**6. DIARY / JOURNAL:** You experienced a cyclone. Write your diary entry for the day after the storm struck. Include your thoughts on how you felt during the cyclone. Read your entry to your classmates in the next lesson.

# ANSWERS

## TRUE / FALSE:

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

## SYNONYM MATCH:

- |                |                   |
|----------------|-------------------|
| 1. death toll  | a. number of dead |
| 2. destruction | b. damage         |
| 3. flattened   | c. crushed        |
| 4. deadly      | d. lethal         |
| 5. break out   | e. start          |
| 6. normally    | f. usually        |
| 7. rural       | g. countryside    |
| 8. overview    | h. general idea   |
| 9. required    | i. needed         |
| 10. key        | j. important      |

## PHRASE MATCH:

- |  |                            |
|--|----------------------------|
| 1. The killer storm struck               | a. the country on Saturday |
| 2. Millions of people are                | b. without electricity     |
| 3. Hundreds of homes have been flattened | c. by the winds            |
| 4. the worst storm to hit their city in  | d. living memory           |
| 5. diseases such as cholera              | e. will break out          |
| 6. The normally secretive                | f. Burmese government      |
| 7. too great for the government to cope  | g. with alone              |
| 8. getting a full overview               | h. of the destruction      |
| 9. International expertise in dealing    | i. with natural disasters  |
| 10. push up world                        | j. rice prices             |

## GAP FILL:

### Burma cyclone death toll may reach 80,000

The death toll in the Burmese cyclone may reach 80,000. There are 22,000 confirmed deaths and up to 60,000 people still missing. The killer storm **struck** the country on Saturday and caused widespread destruction. Millions of people are **without** electricity, food or clean drinking water. Reporters say the capital, Rangoon, looks like a war **zone**. Hundreds of homes have been flattened by the winds, and **uprooted** trees are blocking the streets. This is making it difficult for emergency supplies to reach people in **need**. Residents say it is the worst storm to hit their city in living memory. United Nations disaster experts say it will take many days to find out **exactly** how many people died in the deadly winds. The current fear is that diseases such as cholera will break out as people drink **dirty** water.

The normally **secretive** Burmese government is allowing aid agencies to help with **relief** efforts. It seems the damage to cities, towns and rural communities is too great for the government to **cope** with alone. A UN spokesperson said Burma's military rulers were, "having as much trouble as anyone else in getting a full **overview** of the destruction". Naing Aung from the Forum for Democracy in Burma said: "International expertise in **dealing** with natural disasters is urgently required....The military regime is ill-prepared to deal **with** the aftermath of the cyclone." There are now fears that the cyclone will further push up world rice prices. Rice has already increased in price by 75 per cent in the past year. Burma is a **key** exporter of the food **staple** to Sri Lanka and Bangladesh.

## LANGUAGE WORK

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