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Cold weather brings Xmas chaos to Europe

http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/0912/091224-cold_weather.html

Contents

The Article	2
Warm-ups	3
Before Reading / Listening	4
While Reading / Listening	5
Listening Gap Fill	6
After Reading / Listening	7
Student Survey	8
Discussion	9
Language Work	10
Writing	11
Homework	12
Answers	13

THE ARTICLE

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/0912/091224-cold_weather.html

Most Europeans pray for a white Christmas. This year they have a little more of the white stuff than they hoped for. Freezing cold weather and snow have brought death and disruption across the continent. Over 100 people have died in the sub-zero temperatures. The icy conditions have brought chaos from Moscow to Milan. People have frozen to death in their cars or lost their lives in traffic accidents on roads that resemble skating rinks. The arctic weather has come at the worst possible time. Millions of people are heading places for Christmas. With no end in sight to the big chill, many people are going to be stranded this holiday time. Moscow was hit very hard. Muscovites experienced the worst snowfall in their city for over a century.

Travellers trying to get in or out of Britain are particularly angry. They are furious that a little snow has brought a halt to trains, planes and automobiles. Winter storms closed down the Eurostar trains connecting London to Paris and Brussels for three days. Tens of thousands of passengers were stranded at train stations with nowhere to stay. The situation was no better at the airports, with many closing and hundreds of flights cancelled. The roads did not escape the turmoil. Thousands of drivers abandoned their vehicles by the side of the road because it was too dangerous to drive. Canadian tourists did not quite understand. Shane Lansdon from Toronto said he failed "to see how just five centimetres of snow can bring a whole country to its knees".

WARM-UPS

1. COLD WEATHER: Walk around the class and talk to other students about cold weather. Change partners often. Sit with your first partner(s) and share your findings.

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

praying / cold weather / sub-zero temperatures / chaos / traffic accidents / Christmas / travelers / being furious / winter storms / passengers / canceled flights / tourists

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

3. CHRISTMAS: What does Christmas mean for you? Complete this table. Show your partner(s). Change partners and share what you heard.

	How much this means to me	Why
Religion		
Winter fun		
Presents		
Parties		
Holiday from work		
Eating		

4. CHAOS: Students A **strongly** believe Christmas is more like chaos as each year passes; Students B **strongly** believe Xmas is becoming more relaxing. Change partners again and talk about your conversations.

5. XMAS PRAYERS: How important are these? Rank them and share your rankings with your partner. Put the most important one at the top. Change partners and share your ratings again.

- nice weather
- world peace
- getting all the presents you want
- fluency in English
- a happy and healthy 2010
- to know God more
- to meet the person of your dreams
- a cure for all diseases

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

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/0912/091224-cold_weather.html

1. TRUE / FALSE: Read the headline. Guess if a-h below are true (T) or false (F).

- a. Europeans are praying for a white Christmas because they want snow. T / F
- b. Temperatures across Europe stayed just above zero. T / F
- c. Many drivers decided to test icy road conditions in ice skating rinks. T / F
- d. People living in Moscow saw the heaviest snowfall in over 100 years. T / F
- e. Bad weather has stopped a lot of transportation in the United Kingdom. T / F
- f. There were no trains between London and Paris for three days. T / F
- g. Many people left their cars next to the road because it was safer. T / F
- h. A Canadian tourist saw British people praying on their knees. T / F

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

- | | |
|--------------------|-----------------|
| 1. the white stuff | a. trapped |
| 2. disruption | b. below |
| 3. sub | c. stop |
| 4. resemble | d. get it |
| 5. stranded | e. interruption |
| 6. particularly | f. angry |
| 7. furious | g. look like |
| 8. halt | h. snow |
| 9. turmoil | i. especially |
| 10. understand | j. confusion |

3. PHRASE MATCH: (Sometimes more than one choice is possible.)

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Most Europeans pray | a. the big chill |
| 2. people have died in the sub- | b. better at the airports |
| 3. roads that resemble | c. for over a century |
| 4. no end in sight to | d. halt to trains |
| 5. the worst snowfall in their city | e. its knees |
| 6. a little snow has brought a | f. thousands of passengers |
| 7. Tens of | g. for a white Christmas |
| 8. The situation was no | h. their vehicles |
| 9. drivers abandoned | i. zero temperatures |
| 10. bring a whole country to | j. skating rinks |

Cold weather brings Xmas chaos to Europe - *24th December, 2009*

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WHILE READING / LISTENING

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/0912/091224-cold_weather.html

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

Most Europeans _____ for a white Christmas. This year they have a little more of the white stuff than they _____ for. Freezing cold weather and snow have brought death and disruption _____ the continent. Over 100 people have died in the _____-zero temperatures. The icy conditions have brought chaos from Moscow to Milan. People have _____ to death in their cars or lost their lives in traffic accidents on roads that resemble skating rinks. The arctic weather has come at the _____ possible time. Millions of people are _____ places for Christmas. With no end in sight to the big chill, many people are going to be stranded this holiday time. Moscow was hit very _____. Muscovites experienced the worst snowfall in their city for over a century.

heading

frozen

across

hard

pray

worst

hoped

sub

Travellers trying to get in or out of Britain are _____ angry. They are furious that a little snow has brought a _____ to trains, planes and automobiles. Winter storms closed down the Eurostar trains _____ London to Paris and Brussels for three days. Tens of thousands of passengers were stranded at train stations with nowhere to stay. The _____ was no better at the airports, with many closing and hundreds of flights _____. The roads did not escape the _____. Thousands of drivers abandoned their vehicles by the side of the road because it was too dangerous to drive. Canadian tourists did not quite _____. Shane Lansdon from Toronto said he failed "to see how just five centimetres of snow can bring a whole country to its _____".

cancelled

knees

halt

situation

particularly

understand

turmoil

connecting

LISTENING – Listen and fill in the gaps

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/0912/091224-cold_weather.html

Most Europeans pray for a white Christmas. This year they have a little more _____ than they hoped for. Freezing cold weather and snow have brought death and disruption across the continent. Over 100 people have _____ temperatures. The icy conditions have brought chaos from Moscow to Milan. People _____ in their cars or lost their lives in traffic accidents on roads that resemble skating rinks. The arctic weather has come at the _____. Millions of people are heading places for Christmas. With _____ to the big chill, many people are going to be stranded this holiday time. Moscow was hit very hard. Muscovites experienced the worst snowfall in their city _____.

Travellers trying _____ of Britain are particularly angry. They are furious that a little snow has _____ to trains, planes and automobiles. Winter storms closed down the Eurostar trains connecting London to Paris and Brussels for three days. Tens of thousands of passengers _____ train stations with nowhere to stay. The situation was no better at the airports, with many closing and hundreds of flights cancelled. The roads did not _____. Thousands of drivers abandoned their vehicles by the side of the road because it was too dangerous to drive. Canadian _____ understand. Shane Lansdon from Toronto said he failed "to see how just five centimetres of snow can bring a whole _____".

AFTER READING / LISTENING

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/0912/091224-cold_weather.html

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionary / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'cold' and 'weather'.

cold	weather
-------------	----------------

- 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">• white• sub• frozen• millions• end• worst	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• halt• tens• stay• escape• side• knees
---	--

STUDENT COLD WEATHER SURVEY

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/0912/091224-cold_weather.html

Write five GOOD questions about cold weather 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.

COLD WEATHER 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 'cold'?
- c) Do you like cold weather?
- d) What are the best things to do in the cold weather?
- e) Do you ever pray for snow (or any other kind of weather)?
- f) Has weather ever disrupted your plans?
- g) What experiences do you have of sub-zero or icy conditions?
- h) Does it need to be snowy to be a real Christmas?
- i) Are you heading anywhere for the holidays?
- j) Would you like to see record snowfalls where you live? What would you do?

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COLD WEATHER DISCUSSION

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

- a) Did you like reading this article?
- b) What do you know of / think about British weather?
- c) Is your country good at dealing with severe weather conditions?
- d) What are the best and worst things about cold weather?
- e) What would you do if you were stranded at a train station for three days?
- f) What experiences have you had of driving on icy roads?
- g) Do you understand the Canadians who did not understand how Britain cannot cope with snow?
- h) When was the last time your country was brought to its knees?
- i) What does Christmas mean to you?
- j) What questions would you like to ask Santa Claus?

LANGUAGE – MULTIPLE CHOICE

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/0912/091224-cold_weather.html

Most Europeans (1) ____ for a white Christmas. This year they have a little more of the white stuff than they hoped for. Freezing cold weather and snow have brought death and disruption across the (2) _____. Over 100 people have died in the sub-zero temperatures. The icy (3) _____ have brought chaos from Moscow to Milan. People have frozen to death in their cars or lost their (4) _____ in traffic accidents on roads that resemble skating rinks. The arctic weather has come at the worst possible time. Millions of people are (5) _____ places for Christmas. With no end in sight to the big chill, many people are going to be stranded this holiday time. Moscow was hit very (6) _____. Muscovites experienced the worst snowfall in their city for over a century.

Travellers trying to get in or out of Britain are particularly (7) _____. They are furious that a little snow has brought a halt (8) _____ trains, planes and automobiles. Winter storms closed down the Eurostar trains connecting London to Paris and Brussels for three days. Tens (9) _____ thousands of passengers were stranded at train stations with nowhere to stay. The situation was (10) _____ better at the airports, with many closing and hundreds of flights cancelled. The roads did not escape the turmoil. Thousands of drivers abandoned their vehicles by the side of the road because it was too dangerous to drive. Canadian tourists did not (11) _____ understand. Shane Lansdon from Toronto said he failed "to see how just five centimetres of snow can bring a whole country to its (12) _____".

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

- | | | | | |
|-----|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|------------------|
| 1. | (a) prays | (b) play | (c) plays | (d) pray |
| 2. | (a) continent | (b) incontinent | (c) continental | (d) containment |
| 3. | (a) conditioner | (b) conditions | (c) conditional | (d) conditioning |
| 4. | (a) alive | (b) live | (c) lives | (d) lively |
| 5. | (a) mouthing | (b) nosing | (c) heading | (d) eyeing |
| 6. | (a) hardly | (b) hard | (c) hardy | (d) hard up |
| 7. | (a) angrily | (b) anger | (c) angers | (d) angry |
| 8. | (a) to | (b) at | (c) of | (d) from |
| 9. | (a) at | (b) of | (c) by | (d) to |
| 10. | (a) non | (b) know | (c) no-no | (d) no |
| 11. | (a) quiet | (b) quit | (c) quite | (d) quote |
| 12. | (a) knees | (b) shins | (c) ankles | (d) heels |

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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 more about the cold weather in Europe. Share what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

3. COLD WEATHER: Make a poster about cold weather. Show your work to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all have similar things?

4. STRANDED: Write a magazine article about people who have been stranded for three days at a Paris railway station because of 5 cm of snow. Include imaginary interviews with a passenger and a railway boss.

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 Canadian Shane Lansdon. Ask him three questions about his cold weather experience in England. Give him three suggestions he can pass on to British authorities to help them deal better with cold weather next time. 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. T g. T h. F

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|--------------------|-----------------|
| 1. the white stuff | a. snow |
| 2. disruption | b. interruption |
| 3. sub | c. below |
| 4. resemble | d. look like |
| 5. stranded | e. trapped |
| 6. particularly | f. especially |
| 7. furious | g. angry |
| 8. halt | h. stop |
| 9. turmoil | i. confusion |
| 10. understand | j. get it |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Most Europeans pray | a. for a white Christmas |
| 2. people have died in the sub- | b. zero temperatures |
| 3. roads that resemble | c. skating rinks |
| 4. no end in sight to | d. the big chill |
| 5. the worst snowfall in their city | e. for over a century |
| 6. a little snow has brought a | f. halt to trains |
| 7. Tens of | g. thousands of passengers |
| 8. The situation was no | h. better at the airports |
| 9. drivers abandoned | i. their vehicles |
| 10. bring a whole country to | j. its knees |

GAP FILL:

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Most Europeans **pray** for a white Christmas. This year they have a little more of the white stuff than they **hoped** for. Freezing cold weather and snow have brought death and disruption **across** the continent. Over 100 people have died in the **sub-zero** temperatures. The icy conditions have brought chaos from Moscow to Milan. People have **frozen** to death in their cars or lost their lives in traffic accidents on roads that resemble skating rinks. The arctic weather has come at the **worst** possible time. Millions of people are **heading** places for Christmas. With no end in sight to the big chill, many people are going to be stranded this holiday time. Moscow was hit very **hard**. Muscovites experienced the worst snowfall in their city for over a century.

Travellers trying to get in or out of Britain are **particularly** angry. They are furious that a little snow has brought a **halt** to trains, planes and automobiles. Winter storms closed down the Eurostar trains **connecting** London to Paris and Brussels for three days. Tens of thousands of passengers were stranded at train stations with nowhere to stay. The **situation** was no better at the airports, with many closing and hundreds of flights **cancelled**. The roads did not escape the **turmoil**. Thousands of drivers abandoned their vehicles by the side of the road because it was too dangerous to drive. Canadian tourists did not quite **understand**. Shane Lansdon from Toronto said he failed "to see how just five centimetres of snow can bring a whole country to its **knees**"

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