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## Ten-day Chinese traffic jam

[http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/1008/100824-traffic\\_jams.html](http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/1008/100824-traffic_jams.html)

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# THE ARTICLE

From [http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1008/100824-traffic\\_jams.html](http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1008/100824-traffic_jams.html)

Motorists in China are experiencing a traffic jam from hell. Thousands of drivers have been stuck in their cars for ten days on the Beijing-Tibet Expressway just outside the Chinese capital. The gridlock started on August 14th when roadworks began. The bad news is that the chaos will continue for another month. The tailbacks stretch back for 100km. The situation has been made worse by dozens of cars breaking down or overheating. Around 400 traffic police have been assigned to patrol the jam to make sure tensions don't rise too far. The horrendous snarl-up is the result of the explosion in the number of cars on Chinese roads. As China becomes wealthier, more people are buying cars, thus causing more traffic problems.

Drivers trapped in the traffic jam know they have to be patient and sit for long hours in their cars. There are no showers for them to use and if they need to use a toilet, they have to lock their car and wander off to the nearest café. There are many complaints of local people taking advantage of the stranded motorists by charging them more than double prices for drinks and snacks. People are keeping themselves busy by playing cards or board games. Some have reported feeling homesick. One truck driver Juang Shao expressed his frustration over the situation: "I've missed my daughter's birthday and the food in my truck has probably turned into soup," he said. He said he was worried his truck could be stuck in the traffic forever.

# WARM-UPS

**1. TRAFFIC JAMS:** Walk around the class and talk to other students about traffic jams. 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.

*motorists / traffic jams / roadworks / overheating / police / explosion / wealthier / patience / showers and toilets / snacks / playing cards / board games / frustration*

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

**3. FROM HELL:** Who/which was your worst? Complete this table and show it to your partner(s). Change partners and share what you heard. Change and share again.

	What was so bad?
The teacher from hell	
The journey...	
The holiday...	
The date...	
The homework...	
The boss...	

**4. NO JAMS:** Students A **strongly** believe there'll be no traffic jams in the future; Students B **strongly** believe the opposite. Change partners again and talk about your conversations.

**5. STUCK:** What's best to do in a traffic jam? Rank these and share your rankings with your partner. Put the best at the top. Change partners and share your rankings again.

- Listen to music
- Write and send text messages
- Sleep
- Shout at the driver in front
- Change lanes at every opportunity
- Play cards
- Chat to the people in the nearest car
- Clean the inside of the car

**6. JAM:** Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word 'jam'. 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/1008/100824-traffic\\_jams.html](http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1008/100824-traffic_jams.html)

## 1. TRUE / FALSE:

Read the headline. Guess if a-h below are true (T) or false (F).

- |  |       |
|--|-------|
| a. A traffic jam in China started ten days ago.                        | T / F |
| b. The traffic jam won't last as long as three weeks.                  | T / F |
| c. There are 400 police officers stuck in the gridlocked roads.        | T / F |
| d. One of the reasons for the jam is richer people in China.           | T / F |
| e. Chinese authorities have moved many mobile showers to those stuck.  | T / F |
| f. People who live near the jam are making money from those stranded.  | T / F |
| g. People are amusing themselves by playing cards and games.           | T / F |
| h. A truck driver who was interviewed is transporting soup to Beijing. | T / F |

## 2. SYNONYM MATCH:

Match the following synonyms from the article.

- |                |                             |
|----------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. motorists   | a. mayhem                   |
| 2. gridlock    | b. anger                    |
| 3. chaos       | c. richer                   |
| 4. tensions    | d. protests                 |
| 5. wealthier   | e. jam                      |
| 6. patient     | f. stroll                   |
| 7. wander      | g. nerves                   |
| 8. complaints  | h. drivers                  |
| 9. frustration | i. until the cows come home |
| 10. forever    | j. calm                     |

## 3. PHRASE MATCH:

(Sometimes more than one choice is possible.)

- |                                 |                               |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. a traffic jam                | a. or overheating             |
| 2. the chaos will               | b. stranded motorists         |
| 3. cars breaking down           | c. feeling homesick           |
| 4. police have been assigned to | d. patient and sit            |
| 5. the explosion in the         | e. continue for another month |
| 6. they have to be              | f. from hell                  |
| 7. taking advantage of the      | g. traffic forever            |
| 8. People are keeping           | h. number of cars             |
| 9. Some have reported           | i. themselves busy            |
| 10. stuck in the                | j. patrol the jam             |

# WHILE READING / LISTENING

From [http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1008/100824-traffic\\_jams.html](http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1008/100824-traffic_jams.html)

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

Motorists in China are experiencing a traffic jam from \_\_\_\_\_ . Thousands of drivers have been \_\_\_\_\_ in their cars for ten days on the Beijing-Tibet Expressway just outside the Chinese capital. The gridlock started on August 14th when \_\_\_\_\_ began. The bad news is that the \_\_\_\_\_ will continue for another month. The tailbacks stretch back for 100km. The situation has been made worse by \_\_\_\_\_ of cars breaking down or overheating. Around 400 traffic police have been assigned to \_\_\_\_\_ the jam to make sure tensions don't rise too far. The horrendous snarl-up is the result of the \_\_\_\_\_ in the number of cars on Chinese roads. As China becomes wealthier, more people are buying cars, thus \_\_\_\_\_ more traffic problems.

*patrol*  
*roadworks*  
*dozens*  
*stuck*  
*causing*  
*hell*  
*explosion*  
*chaos*

Drivers \_\_\_\_\_ in the traffic jam know they have to be patient and sit for long hours in their cars. There are no showers for them to use and if they need to use a toilet, they have to \_\_\_\_\_ their car and \_\_\_\_\_ off to the nearest café. There are many complaints of local people taking \_\_\_\_\_ of the stranded motorists by charging them more than \_\_\_\_\_ prices for drinks and snacks. People are keeping themselves busy by playing cards or \_\_\_\_\_ games. Some have reported feeling homesick. One truck driver Juang Shao expressed his \_\_\_\_\_ over the situation: "I've missed my daughter's birthday and the food in my truck has probably \_\_\_\_\_ into soup," he said. He said he was worried his truck could be stuck in the traffic forever.

*advantage*  
*frustration*  
*lock*  
*double*  
*trapped*  
*turned*  
*board*  
*wander*

## LISTENING – Listen and fill in the gaps

From [http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1008/100824-traffic\\_jams.html](http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1008/100824-traffic_jams.html)

Motorists in China are experiencing \_\_\_\_\_. Thousands of drivers \_\_\_\_\_ cars for ten days on the Beijing-Tibet Expressway just outside the Chinese capital. The gridlock started on August 14th when roadworks began. The bad \_\_\_\_\_ will continue for another month. The tailbacks stretch back for 100km. The situation has been \_\_\_\_\_ of cars breaking down or overheating. Around 400 traffic police have been assigned to patrol the jam to make sure tensions don't rise too far. The horrendous snarl-up is the \_\_\_\_\_ in the number of cars on Chinese roads. As China becomes wealthier, more people are buying cars, thus \_\_\_\_\_.

Drivers trapped in the traffic jam know \_\_\_\_\_ and sit for long hours in their cars. There are no showers for them to use and if they need to use a toilet, they have to \_\_\_\_\_ off to the nearest café. There are many complaints of local people taking advantage of the stranded motorists by charging them \_\_\_\_\_ for drinks and snacks. People are keeping themselves busy by playing cards or board games. Some have \_\_\_\_\_. One truck driver Juang Shao expressed his \_\_\_\_\_: "I've missed my daughter's birthday and the food in my truck has probably turned into soup," he said. He said he was worried his truck could be \_\_\_\_\_.

# AFTER READING / LISTENING

From [http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1008/100824-traffic\\_jams.html](http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1008/100824-traffic_jams.html)

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

<b>traffic</b>	<b>jam</b>
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- 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>• hell</li><li>• capital</li><li>• began</li><li>• dozens</li><li>• rise</li><li>• wealthier</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• patient</li><li>• lock</li><li>• advantage</li><li>• snacks</li><li>• situation</li><li>• forever</li></ul>
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# STUDENT TRAFFIC JAMS SURVEY

From [http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1008/100824-traffic\\_jams.html](http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1008/100824-traffic_jams.html)

Write five GOOD questions about traffic jams 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.



# TRAFFIC JAMS 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 'traffic jam'?
- c) What do you do when you're stuck in traffic?
- d) Can you remember a traffic jam from hell?
- e) What would you do if you were stuck in traffic for 10 days?
- f) Should the Chinese government do anything to help those stuck?
- g) What traffic problems are there in your country?
- h) Should cars be designed to have more traffic jam entertainment features?
- i) Describe your emotions when you are stuck in traffic?
- j) What will the roads be like 20 years from now?

*Ten-day Chinese traffic jam - 24th August, 2010*  
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# TRAFFIC JAMS DISCUSSION

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

- a) Did you like reading this article?
- b) Do you have a lot of patience?
- c) What do you think it'd be like to be in a car and have no shower for 10 days?
- d) Should the government stop locals from making money out of the stranded motorists?
- e) How do you pass the time in a car / on the train?
- f) Can any good things happen while you are caught in traffic?
- g) What can governments do to reduce the number of traffic jams?
- h) What do you think of the word "traffic jam"?
- i) When was the last time you felt homesick?
- j) What questions would you like to ask a motorist trapped for 10 days?

# LANGUAGE – MULTIPLE CHOICE

From [http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1008/100824-traffic\\_jams.html](http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1008/100824-traffic_jams.html)

Motorists in China are experiencing a traffic jam from (1) \_\_\_\_\_. Thousands of drivers have been stuck (2) \_\_\_\_\_ their cars for ten days on the Beijing-Tibet Expressway just outside the Chinese capital. The gridlock started on August 14th when roadworks began. The bad news is that the (3) \_\_\_\_\_ will continue for another month. The tailbacks stretch back for 100km. The situation has been made worse by dozens of cars breaking down or (4) \_\_\_\_\_-heating. Around 400 traffic police have been assigned to patrol the jam to make sure (5) \_\_\_\_\_ don't rise too far. The horrendous snarl-up is the result of the explosion in the number of cars on Chinese roads. (6) \_\_\_\_\_ China becomes wealthier, more people are buying cars, thus causing more traffic problems.

Drivers trapped in the traffic jam know they have to be (7) \_\_\_\_\_ and sit for long hours in their cars. There are no showers for them to use and if they need to use a toilet, they have to lock their car and (8) \_\_\_\_\_ off to the nearest café. There are many complaints of local people taking advantage (9) \_\_\_\_\_ the stranded motorists by charging them more than double prices for drinks and snacks. People are keeping themselves busy (10) \_\_\_\_\_ playing cards or board games. Some have reported feeling homesick. One truck driver Juang Shao (11) \_\_\_\_\_ his frustration (12) \_\_\_\_\_ the situation: "I've missed my daughter's birthday and the food in my truck has probably turned into soup," he said. He said he was worried his truck could be stuck in the traffic forever.

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

- |     |                |                |                  |               |
|-----|----------------|----------------|------------------|---------------|
| 1.  | (a) hell       | (b) the desert | (c) heaven       | (d) highways  |
| 2.  | (a) on         | (b) under      | (c) in           | (d) on top of |
| 3.  | (a) annoys     | (b) messy      | (c) catastrophic | (d) chaos     |
| 4.  | (a) under      | (b) over       | (c) pre          | (d) boil      |
| 5.  | (a) tense      | (b) tensed     | (c) tenses       | (d) tensions  |
| 6.  | (a) Was        | (b) Is         | (c) As           | (d) Has       |
| 7.  | (a) patience   | (b) patient    | (c) patiently    | (d) patent    |
| 8.  | (a) wander     | (b) wager      | (c) wonder       | (d) wind      |
| 9.  | (a) of         | (b) off        | (c) by           | (d) from      |
| 10. | (a) at         | (b) to         | (c) by           | (d) so        |
| 11. | (a) expression | (b) express    | (c) expresses    | (d) expressed |
| 12. | (a) on         | (b) over       | (c) under        | (d) as        |

Ten-day Chinese traffic jam – 24th August, 2010



# 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 China traffic jam. Share what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

**3. TRAFFIC JAMS:** Make a poster about traffic jams. Show your work to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all have similar things?

**4. STUCK:** Write a magazine article about being stuck in traffic for ten days. Include imaginary interviews with stranded motorists.

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 the head of China's roads department. Ask him/her three questions about the traffic jam. Give him/her three ideas on how to help the people. Read your letter to your partner(s) in your next lesson. Your partner(s) will answer your questions.

# ANSWERS

## TRUE / FALSE:

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

## SYNONYM MATCH:

- |                |                             |
|----------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. motorists   | a. drivers                  |
| 2. gridlock    | b. jam                      |
| 3. chaos       | c. mayhem                   |
| 4. tensions    | d. nerves                   |
| 5. wealthier   | e. richer                   |
| 6. patient     | f. calm                     |
| 7. wander      | g. stroll                   |
| 8. complaints  | h. protests                 |
| 9. frustration | i. anger                    |
| 10. forever    | j. until the cows come home |

## PHRASE MATCH:

- |                                 |                               |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. a traffic jam                | a. from hell                  |
| 2. the chaos will               | b. continue for another month |
| 3. cars breaking down           | c. or overheating             |
| 4. police have been assigned to | d. patrol the jam             |
| 5. the explosion in the         | e. number of cars             |
| 6. they have to be              | f. patient and sit            |
| 7. taking advantage of the      | g. stranded motorists         |
| 8. People are keeping           | h. themselves busy            |
| 9. Some have reported           | i. feeling homesick           |
| 10. stuck in the                | j. traffic forever            |

## GAP FILL:

### Ten-day Chinese traffic jam

Motorists in China are experiencing a traffic jam from **hell**. Thousands of drivers have been **stuck** in their cars for ten days on the Beijing-Tibet Expressway just outside the Chinese capital. The gridlock started on August 14th when **roadworks** began. The bad news is that the **chaos** will continue for another month. The tailbacks stretch back for 100km. The situation has been made worse by **dozens** of cars breaking down or overheating. Around 400 traffic police have been assigned to **patrol** the jam to make sure tensions don't rise too far. The horrendous snarl-up is the result of the **explosion** in the number of cars on Chinese roads. As China becomes wealthier, more people are buying cars, thus **causing** more traffic problems.

Drivers **trapped** in the traffic jam know they have to be patient and sit for long hours in their cars. There are no showers for them to use and if they need to use a toilet, they have to **lock** their car and **wander** off to the nearest café. There are many complaints of local people taking **advantage** of the stranded motorists by charging them more than **double** prices for drinks and snacks. People are keeping themselves busy by playing cards or **board** games. Some have reported feeling homesick. One truck driver Juang Shao expressed his **frustration** over the situation: "I've missed my daughter's birthday and the food in my truck has probably **turned** into soup," he said. He said he was worried his truck could be stuck in the traffic forever.

## LANGUAGE WORK

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