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Travel chaos at British airport

http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/1012/101222-travel_chaos.html

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THE ARTICLE

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1012/101222-travel_chaos.html

London's Heathrow Airport is at the centre of criticism for its virtual shutdown during recent heavy snow in England. Heathrow is one of the world's busiest airports, yet it failed to deal with snowfall of 9 centimetres, even 3 days after the snow fell. Airport authorities cancelled more than 3,200 flights, leaving thousands of frustrated passengers stranded in the terminal buildings. The situation is made worse as the Christmas holiday season is one of the busiest times of the year for air travel. What has been frustrating travelers most is the lack of flight information and basics like food and water. Passengers who have spent days sleeping on the airport floor are perplexed as to why only one third of flights are leaving, mainly long haul, when there has been no snow for three days.

Colin Matthews, chief executive of British Airports Authority, is facing a storm of criticism over this problem. Mr Matthews could not give any real answers to journalists' questions about the mess. He said in an interview with BBC radio: "I am really sorry...We are going to crawl over every aspect of these last few days when we've got every passenger in the right place." Britain's Prime Minister David Cameron has added his worries that the airport should not come to a standstill because of snow. He said: "I'm frustrated on behalf of all those affected that it's taking so long for the situation to improve." Mr Cameron offered the help of Britain's Army to help clear the snow from the runways, but the airport declined, saying they already have 200 volunteers.

WARM-UPS

1. AIRPORTS: Walk around the class and talk to other students about airports. 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.

criticism / heavy snow / airports / cancelled flights / terminals / air travel / floors / chief executives / answers / passengers / worries / snow / frustrated / volunteers

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

3. AIR TRAVEL: How to improve it? Complete this table with your partner(s). Change partners and share what you wrote. Change and share again.

Improvements to	What?	Why?
airports		
checking-in		
airplanes		
airplane food		
immigration		
security		

4. SNOW: Students A **strongly** believe snow will always disrupt air travel; Students B **strongly** believe snow won't be a problem in the future. Change partners again and talk about your conversations.

5. ON THE FLOOR: What's the worst thing about sleeping on an airport floor? Rank these and share your rankings with your partner. Put the worst at the top. Change partners and share your rankings again.

- it being hard and cold
- security
- missing info while you're asleep
- noise
- missing home
- being so close to many strangers
- terrorist attack
- not knowing when you'll fly

6. CHAOS: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word 'chaos'. 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/1012/101222-travel_chaos.html

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

- | | |
|--|-------|
| a. London's Heathrow Airport totally shut down for 3 days due to snow. | T / F |
| b. Heathrow is the world's busiest airport. | T / F |
| c. Over 3,200 flights were cancelled. | T / F |
| d. There was plenty of food and water for stranded passengers. | T / F |
| e. The airport CEO answered all journalists' questions. | T / F |
| f. The British Prime Minister said he was not worried about the situation. | T / F |
| g. The Prime Minister said he understood people's frustrations. | T / F |
| h. The airport turned down help from the British Army. | T / F |

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

- | | |
|---------------|----------------|
| 1. criticism | a. upset |
| 2. deal with | b. halt |
| 3. frustrated | c. impacted |
| 4. lack | d. disapproval |
| 5. perplexed | e. proper |
| 6. real | f. manage |
| 7. aspect | g. refused |
| 8. standstill | h. shortage |
| 9. affected | i. part |
| 10. declined | j. puzzled |

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

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. at the centre | a. the runways |
| 2. recent | b. information |
| 3. it failed to deal | c. haul |
| 4. the lack of flight | d. come to a standstill |
| 5. long | e. of criticism |
| 6. chief | f. journalists' questions |
| 7. answers to | g. all those affected |
| 8. the airport should not | h. heavy snow |
| 9. I'm frustrated on behalf of | i. with snowfall |
| 10. clear the snow from | j. executive |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1012/101222-travel_chaos.html

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

London's Heathrow Airport is at the _____ of criticism for its virtual shutdown during recent _____ snow in England. Heathrow is one of the world's busiest airports, yet it failed to _____ with snowfall of 9 centimetres, even 3 days after the snow fell. Airport authorities cancelled more than 3,200 flights, leaving thousands of _____ passengers stranded in the terminal buildings. The situation is made worse as the Christmas holiday _____ is one of the busiest times of the year for air travel. What has been frustrating travelers most is the _____ of flight information and basics like food and water. Passengers who have _____ days sleeping on the airport floor are perplexed as to why only one third of flights are leaving, mainly long _____, when there has been no snow for three days.

Colin Matthews, chief _____ of British Airports Authority, is facing a _____ of criticism over this problem. Mr Matthews could not give any real answers to journalists' questions about the _____. He said in an interview with BBC radio: "I am really sorry...We are going to crawl over every _____ of these last few days when we've got every passenger in the right place." Britain's Prime Minister David Cameron has added his _____ that the airport should not come to a standstill because of snow. He said: "I'm frustrated on _____ of all those affected that it's taking so long for the situation to improve." Mr Cameron _____ the help of Britain's Army to help clear the snow from the runways, but the airport _____, saying they already have 200 volunteers.

season

deal

spent

haul

centre

lack

heavy

frustrated

worries

mess

executive

declined

offered

aspect

storm

behalf

LISTENING – Listen and fill in the gaps

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1012/101222-travel_chaos.html

London's Heathrow Airport _____ criticism for its virtual shutdown during recent heavy snow in England. Heathrow is one of the world's busiest airports, _____ with snowfall of 9 centimetres, even 3 _____ fell. Airport authorities cancelled more than 3,200 flights, leaving thousands of frustrated passengers stranded in the terminal buildings. The situation is made worse as the Christmas holiday season is one _____ of the year for air travel. What has been frustrating travelers most is the lack of flight information _____ and water. Passengers who have spent days sleeping on the airport floor are perplexed as to why only one third of flights are leaving, _____, when there has been no snow for three days.

Colin Matthews, chief executive of British Airports Authority, is facing a _____ this problem. Mr Matthews could not give any real answers to journalists' questions about the mess. He said in an interview with BBC radio: "I am really sorry...We _____ over every _____ few days when we've got every passenger _____."

Britain's Prime Minister David Cameron has added his worries that the airport should not come to a standstill because of snow. He said: "I'm frustrated _____ those affected that it's taking so long for the situation to improve." Mr Cameron offered the help of Britain's Army to help _____ the runways, but the airport declined, saying they already have 200 volunteers.

AFTER READING / LISTENING

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1012/101222-travel_chaos.html

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

stand	still
--------------	--------------

- 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">• virtual• heavy• deal• season• lack• mainly	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• facing• real• crawl• place• improve• clear
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STUDENT TRAVEL CHAOS SURVEY

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1012/101222-travel_chaos.html

Write five GOOD questions about travel chaos 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.

TRAVEL CHAOS 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 'chaos'?
- c) What do you think of air travel?
- d) When was the last time you had a terrible journey?
- e) What do you think of Heathrow Airport closing because of snow?
- f) How would you feel if you were one of the stranded passengers?
- g) Why do you think there has been such a lack of information for passengers?
- h) Why do you think such a busy airport cannot deal with snow?
- i) Has the weather ever stopped one of your travel plans?
- j) Do you like snow?

Travel chaos at British airport – 22nd December, 2010
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TRAVEL CHAOS DISCUSSION

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

- a) Did you like reading this article?
- b) Do you think Mr Matthews should lose his job?
- c) Have you ever faced a storm of criticism? What do you think it's like?
- d) Why do you think Mr Matthews did not fully answer journalists' questions?
- e) Do you think the British Prime Minister should have done more to help this problem?
- f) What are the best and worst things about air travel?
- g) How would you pass the time if you had to spend three days at an airport ?
- h) What advice would you give to stranded passengers?
- i) Why do you think the airport said no to British Army volunteers?
- j) What questions would you like to ask Colin Matthews?

LANGUAGE – MULTIPLE CHOICE

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1012/101222-travel_chaos.html

London's Heathrow Airport is at the centre of (1) _____ for its virtual shutdown during recent (2) _____ snow in England. Heathrow is one of the world's busiest airports, yet it failed to (3) _____ with snowfall of 9 centimetres, even 3 days after the snow fell. Airport authorities cancelled more than 3,200 flights, leaving thousands of frustrated passengers (4) _____ in the terminal buildings. The situation is made worse as the Christmas holiday season is one of the busiest times of the year for air travel. What has been frustrating travelers most is the (5) _____ of flight information and basics like food and water. Passengers who have spent days sleeping on the airport floor are perplexed (6) _____ to why only one third of flights are leaving, mainly long haul, when there has been no snow for three days.

Colin Matthews, chief executive of British Airports Authority, is facing a (7) _____ of criticism over this problem. Mr Matthews could not give any (8) _____ answers to journalists' questions about the (9) _____. He said in an interview with BBC radio: "I am really sorry...We are going to crawl over every aspect of these last few days when we've got every passenger in the right place." Britain's Prime Minister David Cameron has added his worries that the airport should not (10) _____ to a standstill because of snow. He said: "I'm frustrated (11) _____ behalf of all those affected that it's taking so long for the situation to improve." Mr Cameron offered the help of Britain's Army to help clear the snow from the runways, but the airport (12) _____, saying they already have 200 volunteers.

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

- | | | | | |
|-----|--------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|
| 1. | (a) critical | (b) criticize | (c) critics | (d) criticism |
| 2. | (a) heavy | (b) full | (c) tough | (d) strength |
| 3. | (a) deals | (b) deal | (c) dealing | (d) dealt |
| 4. | (a) strand | (b) stands | (c) stranded | (d) stood |
| 5. | (a) slack | (b) luck | (c) lack | (d) slick |
| 6. | (a) has | (b) as | (c) was | (d) ease |
| 7. | (a) thunder | (b) lightning | (c) stormy | (d) storm |
| 8. | (a) real | (b) really | (c) reality | (d) realism |
| 9. | (a) mass | (b) mess | (c) miss | (d) mesh |
| 10. | (a) go | (b) arrive | (c) depart | (d) come |
| 11. | (a) in | (b) an | (c) on | (d) so |
| 12. | (a) declined | (b) reclined | (c) inclined | (d) climbed |

Travel chaos at British airport – 22nd December, 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 travel chaos at Heathrow. Share what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

3. AIR TRAVEL: Make a poster about air travel. Show your work to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all have similar things?

4. STRANDED: Write a magazine article about passengers being stranded at Heathrow. Include imaginary interviews with a passenger and the airport CEO.

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 Heathrow chief executive Colin Matthews. Ask him three questions about travel chaos. Suggest three solutions to this problem. 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. T d. F e. F f. F g. T h. T

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|---------------|----------------|
| 1. criticism | a. disapproval |
| 2. deal with | b. manage |
| 3. frustrated | c. upset |
| 4. lack | d. shortage |
| 5. perplexed | e. puzzled |
| 6. real | f. proper |
| 7. aspect | g. part |
| 8. standstill | h. halt |
| 9. affected | i. impacted |
| 10. declined | j. refused |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. at the centre | a. of criticism |
| 2. recent | b. heavy snow |
| 3. it failed to deal | c. with snowfall |
| 4. the lack of flight | d. information |
| 5. long | e. haul |
| 6. chief | f. executive |
| 7. answers to | g. journalists' questions |
| 8. the airport should not | h. come to a standstill |
| 9. I'm frustrated on behalf of | i. all those affected |
| 10. clear the snow from | j. the runways |

GAP FILL:

Travel chaos at British airport

London's Heathrow Airport is at the **centre** of criticism for its virtual shutdown during recent **heavy** snow in England. Heathrow is one of the world's busiest airports, yet it failed to **deal** with snowfall of 9 centimetres, even 3 days after the snow fell. Airport authorities cancelled more than 3,200 flights, leaving thousands of **frustrated** passengers stranded in the terminal buildings. The situation is made worse as the Christmas holiday **season** is one of the busiest times of the year for air travel. What has been frustrating travelers most is the **lack** of flight information and basics like food and water. Passengers who have **spent** days sleeping on the airport floor are perplexed as to why only one third of flights are leaving, mainly long **haul**, when there has been no snow for three days.

Colin Matthews, chief **executive** of British Airports Authority, is facing a **storm** of criticism over this problem. Mr Matthews could not give any real answers to journalists' questions about the **mess**. He said in an interview with BBC radio: "I am really sorry...We are going to crawl over every **aspect** of these last few days when we've got every passenger in the right place." Britain's Prime Minister David Cameron has added his **worries** that the airport should not come to a standstill because of snow. He said: "I'm frustrated on **behalf** of all those affected that it's taking so long for the situation to improve." Mr Cameron **offered** the help of Britain's Army to help clear the snow from the runways, but the airport **declined**, saying they already have 200 volunteers.

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

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