



BLIZZARD OF THE CENTURY HITS US



Scan to review worksheet

Expemo code:

1FF8-81LD-62D



1

Warm up

Discuss the questions in pairs or small groups.

1. Does it snow much in your country?
2. In general, do you associate snow with positive or negative things?
3. Have you ever had any travel problems due to extreme weather?
4. Would you know what to do if you were caught in a blizzard?
5. Have you ever had holiday plans ruined by circumstances out of your control?





2

Pre-listening task: vocabulary focus**Part A: Match words with the correct definitions.**

- | | |
|----------------------------|--|
| 1. <u>epic</u> (adj.) | a. very great and impressive |
| 2. <u>outrage</u> (n) | b. keep hitting somebody/something hard, especially with your fists |
| 3. knock out (phr. v) | c. a decision to stop something that has already been arranged from happening |
| 4. snarl (v) | d. make or become stuck, knotted or blocked, and so unable to move easily |
| 5. <u>pummel</u> (v) | e. stop a piece of equipment, etc. by damaging it or destroying it |
| 6. <u>cancellation</u> (n) | f. a record of the number of something, especially one that you can keep adding to |
| 7. <u>tally</u> (n) | g. a period of time when the supply of electricity, etc. is not working |
| 8. <u>frigid</u> (adj.) | h. very cold |

Part B: Complete the sentences with the missing words from Part A. You may need to change the form of the word.

1. The conditions in northern Finland can only be described as _____ during winter.
2. After an _____ struggle, my cat managed to scare away the fox.
3. Over the course of its history, the Earth has been _____ by all sorts of objects from space.
4. When on holiday, it's a good idea to keep a _____ of how much you are spending each day.
5. The brush became _____ in my dog's fur, and we had to cut it out.
6. I was intending on returning home for Christmas, but the flight _____ meant that I had to rethink my plans.
7. During a power _____, it's best to keep the fridge closed to try to keep the temperature down.
8. The enemy decided to try to _____ our generators so that civilians would be left without power.

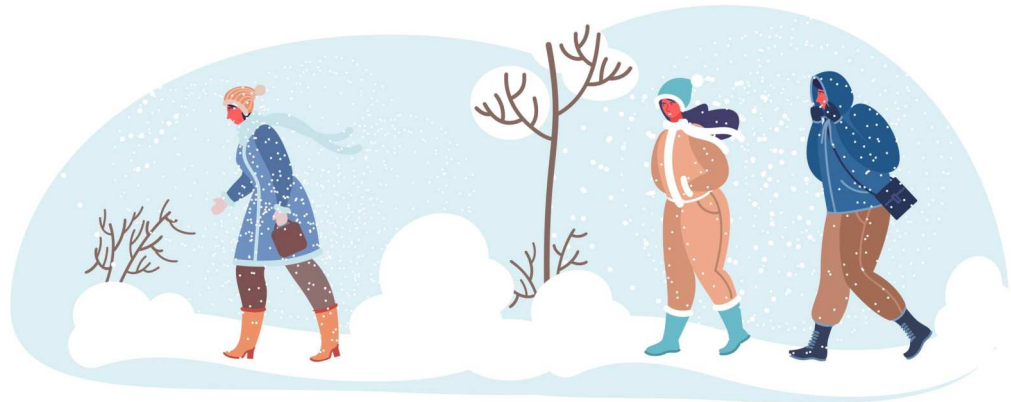


3

Listening for specific information

Listen to the report. Write down the missing information.

1. Where the blizzard trapped people in their cars: _____
2. The death toll in Erie County: _____
3. The death toll across the US: _____
4. The number of flights that were cancelled as of midday on Sunday: _____



4

Listening for comprehension

Listen to the report again. Answer the questions true (T), false (F) or not given (NG).

1. The skies had cleared by Christmas morning. _____
2. Kathy Hochul is from Buffalo. _____
3. This is the first major storm to have hit Buffalo. _____
4. After hitting Buffalo, the storm was reported to be moving towards the Mexican border on Sunday.

5. The storm has also affected Canada. _____
6. By midday on Sunday, flights were back to normal. _____

Why do you think that Kathy Hochul said that "this is a war with Mother Nature"? Discuss in pairs.



5

Reading: general vocabulary

Part A: Match the words and phrases in bold with the correct definitions.

1. The **paramedics** were great – they looked after me all the way to the hospital. (n)
 2. **Prolonged** exposure to chemicals used in cleaning can lead to health issues. (adj.)
 3. Many of us are familiar with **meteorology** on a daily basis through weather forecasts. (n)
 4. In England, a **general practitioner** often makes a good salary but may have to work long hours. (n)
 5. The **strain** of my father's job wasn't good for his health at all. Fortunately, he seems a lot better since he retired. (n)
 6. I'm beginning to **question** my friend's intentions. I think he might want something more than friendship. (v)
 7. When I **dropped** my daughter **off** at school this morning, I saw my old teacher. I can't believe he still works there! (phr. v)
 8. Certain medicines may be harmful for your **vascular system**. (n)
- a. the scientific study of the earth's atmosphere and its changes, used especially in predicting what the weather will be like
 - b. take someone to a place and leave them there
 - c. a person trained to give emergency medical care, often working in ambulances
 - d. of or containing the tubes that carry liquids around the bodies of animals and plants
 - e. continuing for a long time
 - f. have or express doubts about something
 - g. pressure on a system or relationship because great demands are being placed on it
 - h. In Britain and the Commonwealth countries, a doctor who is trained in general medicine and who works in the local community, not in a hospital (in the US, a physician)

Part B: Complete the dialogue below with the words from the above exercise. You may need to change the tense of the word. After completing the dialogue, read it out with a partner, focusing on pronouncing the key vocabulary correctly.

Matt: Is Tim okay? I heard what happened!



- Lynette:** I think so. Apparently, the _____¹ found him wandering around outside his car in the middle of a blizzard. They _____² him _____³ at the nearest hospital, and he's still there.
- Matt:** If he was walking around, he must be fine, right?
- Lynette:** Well, it's not quite that simple. I studied medicine for a few years, and I remember learning about how the _____⁴ that _____⁵ exposure to intense cold can put on your body is quite dangerous for your organs and _____⁶. Still, he's young and he's in good hands!
- Matt:** I hope so, I didn't realise that cold weather could be so dangerous! I guess I should read up on _____⁷. You know, when I was a kid, I wanted to be a weather forecaster.
- Lynette:** Well, you might be better off asking a _____⁸ for advice on the effect of cold on the body! Why did you change your mind?
- Matt:** I suppose, as a teenager, I just started _____⁹ everything. I thought education was for losers. I wish I'd studied harder, now.

Discuss these questions in pairs.

1. Do you think that **meteorology** should be taught at school, or is it too specific?
2. Do you **question** everything you read in the news, or do you usually trust certain sources?

6

Pre-reading task: reading for general understanding

You are going to read a text about people's experiences and advice regarding winter storms. Scan the text quickly and match the profession with the correct speaker. One profession cannot be matched to any of the four speakers in the text and should be marked 'Not given'.

	Ken	Clive	Sofia	Marianne	Not given
surgeon					
meteorologist					
paramedic					
musician					
waitress					



Winter storms: how have they affected you?

Four members of the public share their experiences

A. Ken, 26

Well, Christmas has been a bit of a disaster for me this year, unfortunately! I'm a guitarist based in New York, but my family live on the other side of the country – over in California – and I usually fly home for the holidays. This year, I had my new girlfriend with me, and we booked our tickets a few months in advance. We got to the airport in the middle of a snowstorm to find that our flights had been cancelled. We were advised to find alternative means of transport. We then decided, somewhat foolishly, to drive part of the way and try to fly from an airport in another state. We made it about 50 miles before getting stuck in the snow. At this point, we had a big argument, during which my girlfriend questioned my intelligence. We broke up then and there, but we were still trapped in the car. Luckily, we got rescued, and I ended up spending Christmas by myself in a motel. At least I got to chat with my parents over Zoom, though.

B. Clive, 58

I started working in meteorology almost twenty years ago, and this is one of the worst storms I've seen. My first job as a weather forecaster was back home in the UK, where we don't usually experience extreme conditions. I then moved to Los Angeles, where I lived for almost a decade. I've seen earthquakes, wildfires, hurricanes, and – more recently – blizzards. I moved to the East Coast two winters ago, and the cold is just something else. This year it's been different, though: the snow came so suddenly that some people were buried in their cars, and in these sorts of conditions, there's very little you can do to prepare for the worst-case scenario. From a professional point of view, I would, of course, advise everybody to check the weather forecast before setting off on a journey, and to avoid inessential travel, which is difficult during the holidays!

C. Sofia, 23

I came to the United States in 2018. I wanted to be a singer, but I found it very difficult to get work in the music business, and my English wasn't very good, so I ended up working as a waitress. I send some money home every month, and each Christmas I return home to Mexico with an armful of presents for my family. I was very close to my mother growing up, and we haven't spent Christmas apart – until this year. After my flight was delayed, I booked a coach from Texas across the border, but the temperature dropped and we were told it would be too dangerous, with ice on the road. I went back to my little flat feeling very sad. Thankfully, my friends decided to invite me to their apartment for Christmas. I was well-fed and looked after, and after dinner we played games around the open fire. That evening I got a call from my mum – she said she's going to fly up to see me next week!

D. Marianne, 39

The hospital is busy this time of year. We have a lot of people needing urgent care, and ambulances are often queuing to drop off patients. Unfortunately, we also have to deal with power outages and ice on the roads, which can be dangerous for paramedics as well as the public. Yesterday, I had to operate on a young man who had skidded off the road and into a tree. We're confident he'll make a full recovery. Sometimes, friends ask me for advice for staying safe during winter. Although I'm not a general practitioner, I can think of a couple of tips which may be worth remembering. Firstly, try to avoid strenuous activity during cold weather, especially in the mornings. The strain that this can put on the heart has led to a large number of cardiac arrests among people shovelling snow off their driveways in the winter. Secondly, try to keep warm at home, even if it's expensive to turn the heating on. Prolonged exposure to severe cold can be very bad for your vascular system.

Sources: BBC, The Guardian, CNN



7

Reading comprehension

Part A: Read the article again. Match statements with the correct speakers. Some statements can be matched to more than one speaker. One of the statements cannot be matched to any of the speakers and should be marked 'Not given'.

1. They offer advice on what to do if you get caught in a storm. → _____
2. Their plans to return home for the holidays have been ruined by bad weather. → _____
3. They are doing a different job from the one that they wanted to do. → _____
4. They know somebody who died during a winter storm. → _____
5. They became trapped in the snow when trying to travel. → _____

Part B: For each question, choose the answer you believe best suits the speaker.

1. Why did Ken end up spending Christmas alone in a motel room?
 - a. His girlfriend went home to see her family, and he checked into a motel on the way back.
 - b. He couldn't get home to see his family and his girlfriend broke up with him.
 - c. It was the cheapest option.
2. Where does Clive live at the moment?
 - a. He's British, and used to live on the West Coast of the US, but now lives on the East Coast.
 - b. He's American, and used to live on the East Coast of the US, but now lives in the US.
 - c. He's British, and used to live on the East Coast of the US, but now lives on the West Coast.
3. What is Sofia looking forward to in the future?
 - a. She is going to start a new job as a singer and is very excited.
 - b. She's looking forward to going back to Mexico to see her family.
 - c. She is excited because her mum is going to come and visit her next week.
4. Why does Marianne recommend that people should try to keep warm at home?
 - a. She says that exposure to extreme cold for long periods could affect your vascular system.
 - b. She recommends trying to stay warm because the cold can affect mental health.
 - c. She says that prolonged exposure to severe cold can cause memory loss.

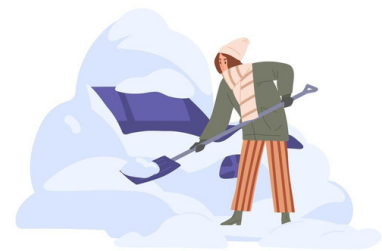


8

Talking Point

In pairs or small groups, discuss the following questions.

1. Should airlines offer passengers a refund if their flights are cancelled due to bad weather? Why/why not?
2. Apart from blizzards, what kinds of extreme weather can you think of?
3. Do you think that extreme weather events will become more common in the future?
4. Can authorities ever truly prepare for a blizzard or storm?
5. Should people who have jobs that involve working outdoors be forced to work during bad weather?
6. Do you check the weather forecast every day? Why/why not?
7. Why do you think that, in the 21st century, we aren't better at predicting the weather?



9

Extended activity/writing homework

Write a discussion essay on the topic below. Your essay should discuss arguments for and against the statement and should be between 260 – 320 words.

Governments should invest significant amounts of money in order to prepare for extreme weather events, no matter how rare they might be.

Alternative extended activity:

In pairs or groups, think of seven tips for dealing with cold weather.