

www.**Breaking News English**.com

Ready-to-use ESL / EFL Lessons

Amazon region hit by drought

URL: <http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/0510/051017-amazon.html>

Today's contents

The Article	2
Warm-ups	3
Before Reading / Listening	4
While Reading / Listening	5
Listening Gap Fill	6
After Reading	7
Discussion	8
Speaking	9
Homework	10
Answers	11

Buy the Breaking News English.com Resource Book
"1,000 Ideas & Activities For Language Teachers"
\$9.99

<http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/book.html>

17 October, 2005

THE ARTICLE

Amazon region hit by drought

Drought has dried up huge tracts of the Amazon basin, threatening the lives and livelihoods of thousands of the region's inhabitants. Many of the Amazon River's tributaries have turned into dusty roads and parched riverbeds have left 30,000 people in dire need of food, water and medicine. Thousands of families rely on fishing for food and revenue, but the once plentiful waterways have turned into an arid landscape that has destroyed many fish stocks and contaminated what little water there is. The size of the stricken area has exacerbated the crisis for relief workers attempting to deliver drinking water to the area. The drought has also decimated the region's livestock. It is reported that about 20 percent of the 1.3 million cattle in the state of Amazonas have died of thirst.

In some areas the water level has dropped from 11 meters to just 1.5 meters, which means emergency relief to the worst affected areas cannot not be ferried in by boat. Entire towns and communities along the world's longest river depend on its waterways to receive supplies. One anxious resident expressed his concern, saying: "This is worrisome, because the rivers are our roads." The Brazilian military has been working overtime in distributing supplies and medicine to communities left stranded by the drop in water levels. Environmental campaign group Greenpeace has blamed loggers, deforestation and global warming for the drought. The Brazilian government's meteorologists dispute this and explained warmer ocean temperatures have caused the lack of rain.

WARM-UPS

1. AMAZONIAN: You live in the Amazon jungle. Walk around the classroom and talk to the other “Amazonians” about your daily lives, hardships, hobbies, joys, etc. Talk also about how important the Amazon River is to you and the effect it would have on your life if it dried up.

2. DISASTERS: People are constantly hit by disasters. Talk about the disasters below with your partner(s). Where in the world do these usually happen? Do you know of any that have happened recently? What can we do to minimize their impact on human life and suffering?

- Drought
- Earthquakes
- Hurricanes
- Influenza pandemics
- AIDS
- Floods
- Fire
- Famine

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

Drought / Amazon / livelihoods / tributaries / dusty roads / contaminated water / water / relief workers / cattle / rivers / Greenpeace / loggers / deforestation

Have a chat about the topics you liked. For more conversation, change topics and partners frequently.

4. WATER: In pairs / groups, talk about how much water you use. What do you use water for? Try to guess how much or how many liters of water you use every day. What could you do to use less? Who is the biggest consumer of water?

5. AMAZON: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the Amazon. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

6. WATER OPINIONS: In pairs / groups, talk about these opinions on water:

- a. Water will be the cause of future wars.
- b. People need to be educated about how valuable water is.
- c. Globalization means many rivers will become polluted and die.
- d. Governments should charge more money for water to make people save it.
- e. Global warming will dry up many rivers and millions of people will die of thirst.
- f. A lack of water will never be a problem – we will use treated seawater.
- g. It’s always the poor people who die of thirst. Rich nations turn a blind eye.
- h. Your opinion _____.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

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

- | | |
|---|-------|
| a. Drought has dried up huge tracts of the Amazon basin. | T / F |
| b. Many tributaries have turned into dusty roads and parched riverbeds. | T / F |
| c. Local inhabitants have saved the majority of their fish stocks. | T / F |
| d. The drought has decimated about two thirds of the region's cattle. | T / F |
| e. Water levels have dropped 10 meters in places. | T / F |
| f. A local resident said the roads are like rivers. | T / F |
| g. Greenpeace has blamed loggers, deforestation and global warming. | T / F |
| h. Brazil's government agrees with Greenpeace. | T / F |

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

- | | |
|----------------|-----------|
| a. tracts | wiped out |
| b. parched | delivered |
| c. dire | marooned |
| d. exacerbated | urgent |
| e. decimated | plummeted |
| f. dropped | expanses |
| g. ferried in | depend |
| h. rely | worsened |
| i. stranded | refute |
| j. dispute | dried |

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

- | | |
|--|------------------------------------|
| a. threatening the lives and | waterways |
| b. parched riverbeds have left | by boat |
| c. once plentiful | what little water there is |
| d. contaminated | Amazonas have died of thirst |
| e. 1.3 million cattle in the state of | have caused the lack of rain |
| f. relief to the worst | livelihoods of thousands |
| g. cannot not be ferried in | has blamed loggers |
| h. The Brazilian military has been working | 30,000 people in dire need of food |
| i. Greenpeace | affected areas |
| j. warmer ocean temperatures | overtime in distributing supplies |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

SYNONYM FILL: Place the number of the synonym group below in the correct gap in the text. It is not important to guess a correct word - any of the synonyms from each group could be put into the relevant gap.

Amazon region hit by drought

Drought has dried up huge ____ of the Amazon basin, threatening the lives and livelihoods of thousands of the region's inhabitants. Many of the Amazon River's tributaries have turned into dusty roads and parched riverbeds have left 30,000 people in ____ need of food, water and medicine. Thousands of families rely on fishing for food and revenue, but the once plentiful waterways have turned into an ____ landscape that has destroyed many fish stocks and contaminated what little water there is. The size of the stricken area has exacerbated the crisis for relief workers attempting to deliver drinking water to the area. The drought has also ____ the region's livestock. It is reported that about 20 percent of the 1.3 million cattle in the state of Amazonas have died of thirst.

In some areas the water level has dropped from 11 meters to just 1.5 meters, which means emergency ____ to the worst affected areas cannot not be ferried in by boat. Entire towns and communities along the world's longest river depend on its waterways to receive supplies. One ____ resident expressed his concern, saying: "This is worrisome, because the rivers are our roads." The Brazilian military has been working overtime in distributing supplies and medicine to communities left ____ by the drop in water levels. Environmental campaign group Greenpeace has ____ loggers, deforestation and global warming for the drought. The Brazilian government's meteorologists dispute this and explained warmer ocean temperatures have caused the lack of rain.

1

stranded
isolated
marooned
helpless

2

decimated
wiped out
destroyed
ravaged

3

dire
urgent
acute
desperate

4

blamed
charged
incriminated
reproached

5

anxious
concerned
worried
fearful

6

tracts
expanses
extents
stretches

7

relief
aid
assistance
help

8

arid
bone-dry
parched
waterless

LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

Amazon region hit by drought

Drought has dried up huge _____ of the Amazon basin, threatening the lives and livelihoods of thousands of the region's inhabitants. Many of the Amazon River's _____ have turned into dusty roads and _____ riverbeds have left 30,000 people in _____ need of food, water and medicine. Thousands of families rely on fishing for food and revenue, but the once plentiful waterways have turned into an _____ landscape that has destroyed many fish stocks and contaminated what little water there is. The size of the _____ area has exacerbated the crisis for relief workers attempting to deliver drinking water to the area. The drought has also _____ the region's livestock. It is reported that about 20 percent of the 1.3 million cattle in the state of Amazonas have died of thirst.

In some areas the water level has dropped from 11 meters to just 1.5 meters, which means emergency _____ to the worst affected areas cannot not be _____ in by boat. Entire towns and communities along the world's longest river depend on its waterways to receive supplies. One _____ resident expressed his concern, saying: "This is _____, because the rivers are our roads." The Brazilian military has been working overtime in distributing supplies and medicine to communities left _____ by the drop in water levels. Environmental campaign group Greenpeace has blamed _____, deforestation and global warming for the drought. The Brazilian government's meteorologists _____ this and explained warmer ocean temperatures have caused the lack of rain.

AFTER READING / LISTENING

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

- 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. SYNONYM FILL: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the synonym fill. 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. STUDENT "AMAZON" SURVEY: In pairs / groups, write down questions about the Amazon River and drought.

- Ask other classmates your questions and note down their answers.
- Go back to your original partner / group and compare your findings.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

6. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall exactly how these were used in the text:

- tracts
- dusty
- dire
- contaminated
- exacerbated
- livestock
- level
- entire
- worrisome
- stranded
- Greenpeace
- dispute

DISCUSSION

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

- a. Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- b. Are you surprised by this news?
- c. What do you associate with the Amazon River?
- d. What feelings do you have when you think of the Amazon River?
- e. What kinds of responsibilities do other countries in the world have to protect the Amazon and its peoples?
- f. What would you do if your country was hit by drought?
- g. What can the world do to prevent droughts or alleviate their effect on human suffering?
- h. Do you think rich governments care about droughts in poorer countries?
- i. Do you think global warming will create more droughts?
- j. What do you know about the Amazon?

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

- a. Did you like reading this article?
- b. What do you think about what you read?
- c. Would you like to visit the Amazon?
- d. Have you heard or read about this drought?
- e. What do you think life would be like with a lack of water?
- f. Will reading this article make you more careful about the amount of water you use?
- g. Do you think Brazil's government does enough to prevent logging and look after indigenous people?
- h. Where and when do you think the first water war will break out?
- i. What do you think of Amazon.com – the online bookstore?
- j. Did you like this discussion?

AFTER DISCUSSION: Join another partner / group and tell them what you talked about.

- a. What question would you like to ask about this topic?
- b. What was the most interesting thing you heard?
- c. Was there a question you didn't like?
- d. Was there something you totally disagreed with?
- e. What did you like talking about?
- f. Do you want to know how anyone else answered the questions?
- g. Which was the most difficult question?

SPEAKING

WATER CONSERVATION: You are head of the new National Water Conservation Department of your government. In pairs / groups, discuss how people can save water. You must create rules for the points in the left hand column will save water.

POINTS	RULES
Bathing / showering	
Washing dishes	
Washing clothes	
Cleaning teeth	
Gardening	
Washing cars	
Leisure activities	
Other	

Change partners and tell each other the rules you created and the reasons for them.

Decide which of the rules are best.

Role play the government advisor telling an angry water consumer of the new rules. Take turns in being advisor and consumer.

Change partners again. Talk about how necessary and effective the rules might be.

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 more information on the Amazon River. Share your findings with your class in the next lesson.

3. SAVE WATER: Make a poster outlining what people can do in their everyday lives to conserve water. Show your posters to your classmates in your next lesson. Did you all think of similar things?

4. WATERLESS: What would life be like without water? Write an imaginary diary / journal entry about a week in your life when the water supply in your town completely dried up. What did you do? What were you worried about? Read what you wrote to your classmates in your next lesson. Did you all write about similar things?

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

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

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|----------------|-----------|
| a. tracts | expanses |
| b. parched | dried |
| c. dire | urgent |
| d. exacerbated | worsened |
| e. decimated | wiped out |
| f. dropped | plummeted |
| g. ferried in | delivered |
| h. rely | depend |
| i. stranded | marooned |
| j. dispute | refute |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|--|------------------------------------|
| a. threatening the lives and | livelihoods of thousands |
| b. parched riverbeds have left | 30,000 people in dire need of food |
| c. once plentiful | waterways |
| d. contaminated | what little water there is |
| e. 1.3 million cattle in the state of | Amazonas have died of thirst |
| f. relief to the worst | affected areas |
| g. cannot not be ferried in | by boat |
| h. The Brazilian military has been working | overtime in distributing supplies |
| i. Greenpeace | has blamed loggers |
| j. warmer ocean temperatures | have caused the lack of rain |

SYNONYM FILL:

Amazon region hit by drought

Drought has dried up huge ---6--- of the Amazon basin, threatening the lives and livelihoods of thousands of the region's inhabitants. Many of the Amazon River's tributaries have turned into dusty roads and parched riverbeds have left 30,000 people in ---3--- need of food, water and medicine. Thousands of families rely on fishing for food and revenue, but the once plentiful waterways have turned into an ---8--- landscape that has destroyed many fish stocks and contaminated what little water there is. The size of the stricken area has exacerbated the crisis for relief workers attempting to deliver drinking water to the area. The drought has also ---2--- the region's livestock. It is reported that about 20 percent of the 1.3 million cattle in the state of Amazonas have died of thirst.

In some areas the water level has dropped from 11 meters to just 1.5 meters, which means emergency ---7--- to the worst affected areas cannot not be ferried in by boat. Entire towns and communities along the world's longest river depend on its waterways to receive supplies. One ---5--- resident expressed his concern, saying: "This is worrisome, because the rivers are our roads." The Brazilian military has been working overtime in distributing supplies and medicine to communities left ---1--- by the drop in water levels. Environmental campaign group Greenpeace has ---4--- loggers, deforestation and global warming for the drought. The Brazilian government's meteorologists dispute this and explained warmer ocean temperatures have caused the lack of rain.