

www.**Breaking News English**.com

Ready-to-use ESL / EFL Lessons

"1,000 IDEAS & ACTIVITIES FOR LANGUAGE TEACHERS"

The Breaking News English.com Resource Book

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

Millions stranded in Chinese freeze

URL: <http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/0802/080206-china.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

6th February, 2008

THE ARTICLE

The worst snow storms seen in China for 50 years have brought havoc to the country. More than 100 million people have been affected by being stranded at railway stations or having no food and electricity. The snow has severely disrupted China's transportation system. Hundreds of railway lines and highways are impassable as the record snowfall has cut power lines and blocked roads. Many of the nation's airports are closed. The government has called upon nearly half a million soldiers to try and clear the snow but it has so far been an uphill struggle. Officials have promised huge amounts of financial aid. So serious is the situation that even premier Wen Jiabao has taken the unprecedented move of visiting the worst affected areas. The government has admitted it was caught unawares by the scale of the disruptions.

Some of the most chaotic scenes have been at Guanzhou railway station in southern China. Hundreds of thousands of people have been stranded there for days in freezing conditions, trying to board the few trains that are running. They are all desperate to get to their homes around China in time for the Chinese New Year holiday. One of those surviving in the cold, Miss Wong, said: "The whole country is paralyzed and I fear the holiday will pass before things get running back to normal." Local authorities have drafted in 20,000 extra police officers to try and keep the angry crowds under control. Hundreds of makeshift tents have been erected to house some of the would-be passengers. Many people have been airlifted out to receive medical attention after being crushed by the crowds. Weather forecasts predict more snow.

WARM-UPS

1. FREEZING: Walk around the class and talk to other students about freezing and freezing weather. Change partners often. After you finish, sit with your original partner(s) and share what you found out.

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

snow storms / havoc / being stranded / uphill struggles / financial aid / crises / freezing conditions / being desperate / Chinese Lunar Year / tents / crowds

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

3. PREDICTION: With your partner(s), use all of the above words and phrases to make your own story of what you think is in the article. Change partners and share your stories.

4. STRANDED: Talk with your partner(s) about being stranded in the situations below. Rank them in order of the worst. What would you do in each situation? Share your ideas with others.

- a. _____ outside a railway station for days in freezing conditions
- b. _____ alone on a desert island
- c. _____ in the middle of the jungle with no map
- d. _____ at a railway station far from home with no money
- e. _____ in your car in the middle of the desert
- f. _____ in life with no mobile phone
- g. _____ in a foreign country with no passport, credit cards or money
- h. _____ in life, alone, without love

5. WEATHER HAVOC: With your partner, talk about how these severe weather conditions might affect life in your town.

- snowstorms
- hurricanes / typhoons
- 50-degree heatwave
- 3-week monsoon rains
- drought - no rain for one year
- minus 25-degree cold spell for months
- raining cats and dogs
- REALLY thick fog for a month

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

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

- | | |
|--|-------|
| a. China has banned people from abandoning freezers on the streets. | T / F |
| b. Over a hundred million people have been affected by bad weather. | T / F |
| c. The government will not provide financial help to those stranded. | T / F |
| d. China's premier has made the unusual step of visiting people. | T / F |
| e. Scores of people have waited outside Guanzhou train station. | T / F |
| f. There are no trains at all running from Guanzhou Station. | T / F |
| g. Some of those waiting outside the station can sleep in a tent. | T / F |
| h. Brighter weather is on its way. | T / F |

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

- | | |
|------------------|----------------|
| 1. havoc | a. fight |
| 2. stranded | b. get on |
| 3. disrupted | c. temporary |
| 4. struggle | d. helpless |
| 5. unprecedented | e. dying |
| 6. board | f. accommodate |
| 7. desperate | g. disabled |
| 8. paralyzed | h. chaos |
| 9. makeshift | i. unheard of |
| 10. house | j. interrupted |

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

- | | |
|--|--------------------------|
| 1. The worst snow storms seen | a. transportation system |
| 2. The snow has severely disrupted China's | b. to normal |
| 3. highways are | c. move of visiting... |
| 4. it has so far been an uphill | d. have been erected |
| 5. taken the unprecedented | e. impassable |
| 6. Some of the most chaotic | f. crushed by the crowds |
| 7. The whole country | g. in China for 50 years |
| 8. before things get running back | h. is paralyzed |
| 9. Hundreds of makeshift tents | i. struggle |
| 10. receive medical attention after being | j. scenes |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

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

The worst snow storms _____ in China for 50 years have brought havoc to the country. More than 100 million people have been affected by _____ stranded at railway stations or having no food and electricity. The snow has _____ disrupted China's transportation system. Hundreds of railway lines and highways are impassable as the _____ snowfall has cut power lines and blocked roads. Many of the nation's airports are closed. The government has called _____ nearly half a million soldiers to try and clear the snow but it has so far been an _____ struggle. Officials have promised huge amounts of financial aid. So serious is the situation that even premier Wen Jiabao has taken the unprecedented _____ of visiting the worst affected areas. The government has admitted it was _____ unawares by the scale of the disruptions.

upon
being
record
move
seen
caught
uphill
severely

Some of the _____ chaotic scenes have been at Guanzhou railway station in southern China. Hundreds of thousands of people have been stranded there for days in freezing _____, trying to board the few trains that are _____. They are all desperate to get to their homes around China in time for the Chinese New Year holiday. One of those surviving in the cold, Miss Wong, said: "The whole country is paralyzed and I _____ the holiday will pass before things get running back to normal." Local authorities have drafted in 20,000 extra police officers to try and keep the angry crowds _____ control. Hundreds of makeshift tents have been _____ to house some of the would-be passengers. Many people have been airlifted out to receive medical attention after being _____ by the crowds. Weather forecasts _____ more snow.

predict
conditions
erected
fear
crushed
running
most
under

LISTENING: Listen and fill in the spaces.

The worst snow storms seen in China for 50 years _____ the country. More than 100 million people have _____ stranded at railway stations or having no food and electricity. The snow _____ China's transportation system. Hundreds of railway lines and highways are impassable as the record snowfall has cut power lines and blocked roads. _____ airports are closed. The government has called upon nearly half a million soldiers to try and clear the snow but it has so far _____. Officials have promised huge amounts of financial aid. So serious is the situation that even premier Wen Jiabao has taken the _____ visiting the worst affected areas. The government has admitted it was _____ scale of the disruptions.

Some of _____ have been at Guanzhou railway station in southern China. Hundreds of thousands of people have been stranded there for days in freezing conditions, _____ few trains that are running. They are all desperate to get to their homes around China in time for the Chinese New Year holiday. _____ in the cold, Miss Wong, said: "The whole country is paralyzed and I fear the holiday will pass before things get _____ normal." Local authorities have drafted in 20,000 extra police officers to try and keep the angry crowds under control. Hundreds of _____ been erected to house some of the would-be passengers. Many people _____ receive medical attention after being crushed by the crowds. Weather forecasts _____.

AFTER READING / LISTENING

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

snow	storm

- 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 exactly how these were used in the text:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • havoc • severely • record • called upon • huge • admitted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • scenes • desperate • fear • control • would-be • predict
--	---

STUDENT WEATHER SURVEY

Write five GOOD questions about bad 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.

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 'snow'?
 - c) Have you ever been stranded anywhere?
 - d) Has bad weather ever upset your plans?
 - e) What would you do if you were stranded at a railway station for three days?
 - f) What kind of weather problems does your country frequently face?
 - g) What more do you think China's authorities should do to help the stranded people?
 - h) Is your country's leader good in a crisis?
 - i) What uphill struggles have you faced in your life?
-

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

- a) Did you like reading this article?
- b) When in your life have you been freezing cold for a long time?
- c) What do you think it's like for those waiting outside Guanzhou railway station?
- d) What would you do if you were stranded and really wanted to get home for an important holiday?
- e) Are there celebrations in your country for the Chinese New Year?
- f) Have you ever been caught up in angry crowds?
- g) What questions would you like to ask Chinese premier Wen Jiabao?
- h) What do you think his answers would be?
- i) Did you like this discussion?

LANGUAGE

CORRECT WORD: Put the correct words from a–d below in the article.

The (1) ____ snow storms seen in China for 50 years have brought havoc to the country. More than 100 million people have been affected by (2) ____ stranded at railway stations or having no food and electricity. The snow has (3) ____ disrupted China's transportation system. Hundreds of railway lines and highways are impassable as the record snowfall has cut power lines and blocked roads. Many of the nation's airports are closed. The government has called (4) ____ nearly half a million soldiers to try and clear the snow but it has so far been an uphill struggle. Officials have promised huge amounts of financial aid. (5) ____ serious is the situation that even premier Wen Jiabao has taken the unprecedented move of visiting the worst affected areas. The government has admitted it was (6) ____ unawares by the scale of the disruptions.

Some of the most chaotic scenes have been at Guanzhou railway station in (7) ____ China. Hundreds of thousands of people have been stranded there for days in freezing conditions, trying to (8) ____ the few trains that are running. They are all desperate to get to their homes around China in time for the Chinese New Year holiday. One of those surviving in the cold, Miss Wong, said: "The whole country is paralyzed and I (9) ____ the holiday will pass before things get running (10) ____ to normal." Local authorities have drafted in 20,000 extra police officers to try and keep the angry crowds under control. Hundreds of makeshift tents have been erected to (11) ____ some of the would-be passengers. Many people have been airlifted out to receive medical attention after being crushed by the crowds. Weather forecasts (12) ____ more snow.

- | | | | | |
|-----|----------------|--------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| 1. | (a) worse | (b) worsen | (c) worsening | (d) worst |
| 2. | (a) be | (b) been | (c) being | (d) have been |
| 3. | (a) severely | (b) severe | (c) severer | (d) severest |
| 4. | (a) down | (b) upon | (c) more | (d) round |
| 5. | (a) So | (b) Such | (c) The | (d) Because |
| 6. | (a) thrown | (b) dropped | (c) caught | (d) hit |
| 7. | (a) southerly | (b) southern | (c) southbound | (d) southerner |
| 8. | (a) shelf | (b) wood | (c) plank | (d) board |
| 9. | (a) fearsome | (b) afraid | (c) fierce | (d) fear |
| 10. | (a) front | (b) back | (c) side | (d) top |
| 11. | (a) flat | (b) home | (c) house | (d) residence |
| 12. | (a) prediction | (b) predict | (c) predictability | (d) predictably |

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 about the chaos in China. Share what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

3. BAD WEATHER: Make a poster about different kinds of severe weather around the world. Include the problems they cause people. Show your work to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all have similar things?

4. CHAOS: Write a magazine article about bad weather causing chaos. Include imaginary interviews with a weather forecaster and someone severely affected by the bad weather.

Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Write down new words and expressions.

5. LETTER: Write a letter to China's premier Wen Jiabao. Ask him three questions about the chaos. Give him three suggestions on what he should do to help those stranded have a good Chinese New Year. Read your letter to your partner(s) in your next lesson. Your partner(s) will answer your questions.

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

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

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------|
| 1. havoc | a. chaos |
| 2. stranded | b. helpless |
| 3. disrupted | c. interrupted |
| 4. struggle | d. fight |
| 5. unprecedented | e. unheard of |
| 6. board | f. get on |
| 7. desperate | g. dying |
| 8. paralyzed | h. disabled |
| 9. makeshift | i. temporary |
| 10. house | j. accommodate |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------|
| 1. The worst snow storms seen | a. in China for 50 years |
| 2. The snow has severely disrupted China's | b. transportation system |
| 3. highways are | c. impassable |
| 4. it has so far been an uphill | d. struggle |
| 5. taken the unprecedented | e. move of visiting... |
| 6. Some of the most chaotic | f. scenes |
| 7. The whole country | g. is paralyzed |
| 8. before things get running back | h. to normal |
| 9. Hundreds of makeshift tents | i. have been erected |
| 10. receive medical attention after being | j. crushed by the crowds |

GAP FILL:

Millions stranded in Chinese freeze

The worst snow storms **seen** in China for 50 years have brought havoc to the country. More than 100 million people have been affected by **being** stranded at railway stations or having no food and electricity. The snow has **severely** disrupted China's transportation system. Hundreds of railway lines and highways are impassable as the **record** snowfall has cut power lines and blocked roads. Many of the nation's airports are closed. The government has called **upon** nearly half a million soldiers to try and clear the snow but it has so far been an **uphill** struggle. Officials have promised huge amounts of financial aid. So serious is the situation that even premier Wen Jiabao has taken the unprecedented **move** of visiting the worst affected areas. The government has admitted it was **caught** unawares by the scale of the disruptions.

Some of the **most** chaotic scenes have been at Guanzhou railway station in southern China. Hundreds of thousands of people have been stranded there for days in freezing **conditions**, trying to board the few trains that are **running**. They are all desperate to get to their homes around China in time for the Chinese New Year holiday. One of those surviving in the cold, Miss Wong, said: "The whole country is paralyzed and I **fear** the holiday will pass before things get running back to normal." Local authorities have drafted in 20,000 extra police officers to try and keep the angry crowds **under** control. Hundreds of makeshift tents have been **erected** to house some of the would-be passengers. Many people have been airlifted out to receive medical attention after being **crushed** by the crowds. Weather forecasts **predict** more snow.

LANGUAGE WORK

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