

1. Extraordinary ice

This week's lesson is about the huge iceberg – measuring 120 square kilometers – that broke off from a glacier in Greenland earlier this month, fueling the debate about whether global warming is shrinking the Earth's polar ice caps.

Level

Upper intermediate and above (equivalent to CEF level B2 and above)

How to use the lesson

1. Raise the subject of climate change and decide how much of the relevant vocabulary you want to pre-teach (a few relevant terms, for example *global warming*, *fossil fuels*, come up in the text). What evidence is there that the Earth's climate is changing? More specifically, what (according to many scientists) is happening in the Earth's polar regions? If we assume that climate change is taking place, what do the students think is causing it? How serious a problem is climate change, and what, if anything, should be done about it?
2. Give your students between five and ten minutes to read through Worksheet A, encouraging them to look up new vocabulary. Note, however, that many of the words that might be new are not in the glossary because they form part of Exercise 1.
3. Give each student a copy of Worksheet B, then divide the class into pairs and ask students to work together to do Exercise 1, in which they have to find the words to match the definitions. Note that the words are not necessarily in the same form as they appear in the text.
4. Check answers in open class.
5. Ask the students to turn over their copies of Worksheet A or to give them back to you temporarily. Then, keeping the students in their pairs, hand out Worksheet C and ask them to move on to Exercise 2, in which one word has been omitted from each line of the text. With no indication of what the words were, or any blanks to show exactly where they have been taken from, how many of the words can the students remember and replace? This is not a test of memory alone, however: the students should be able to draw on their grammatical and lexical knowledge, and you should also point out that both the glossary and the students' correct answers to Exercise 1, on Worksheet B, should be of some use. Award a point for each word that is correctly replaced. (You could perhaps award half a point if the students come up with a word that fits the sentence but is not actually the original word.)
6. Check answers in open class.

Answers:

Exercise 1

1. shrink
2. melt
3. undergo
4. fossil fuel
5. gradually
6. man-made
7. northern hemisphere
8. chunk
9. detect
10. fuel

Exercise 2

1. satellite
2. Greenland
3. world
4. event
5. square
6. glaciers
7. off
8. but
9. debate
10. a
11. temperatures
12. In
13. month
14. is
15. so
16. last
17. the
18. causing
19. time
20. of
21. human
22. warming
23. activity
24. increased
25. atmosphere
26. burning

2. Related websites

Send your students to these websites, or just take a look yourself.

<http://magma.nationalgeographic.com/ngexplorer/0501/quickflicks/>

Although from the “kids” section of the National Geographic website, this animated movie and quiz about glaciers are interesting and fun for all ages. Challenging for Upper intermediate level (the movie speech is fast-paced, but good practice for understanding native English speakers!).

http://news.bbc.co.uk/cbbcnews/hi/find_out/guides/world/global_warming/newsid_1575000/1575441.stm

From CBBC Newsround, a series of facts and discussion points about global warming and greenhouse gases. Challenging for Upper intermediate level.

<http://earthobservatory.nasa.gov/NaturalHazards/view.php?id=78556>

From the NASA website, pictures of the Petermann Glacier at different stages. Accessible to Upper intermediate level.