

Europe freezes – coldest spell in 30 years

Sunday – The big 'Siberian like' freeze continues to tighten its grip on Europe. Most of the continent remains under a huge blanket of snow. The result is chaos in many places. Ukraine has seen the brunt of the bad weather where more than 160 people have now died because of the cold weather. Nearly 1,600 have been hospitalised with hypothermia. Hundreds of heated tents have been set up across Ukraine to help the country's homeless keep warm, with hot meals being handed out at the shelters. Temperatures in Ukraine have dropped to minus 33°C. Huge areas of Poland and Slovakia have also been affected by the bad weather with temperatures there dropping as low as -35°C. So far 20 people have perished in Poland because of the cold snap. There have been further deaths in Russia and right across Eastern Europe. Leaders of Croatia and Serbia were snowed in, after travelling to Bosnia's Jahorina Mountains for a meeting with their Bosnian counterparts. Skiers at a resort in the Bosnian Mountains were also trapped by the snow. In parts of Serbia emergency services were battling to reach remote areas with emergency food supplies.

Italy has seen the worst snowfall in more than three decades, especially in its capital Rome, leaving it eerily quiet. More than 40cm of the white fluffy stuff has fallen forcing the authorities to close the Coliseum. Rome has turned into a city of pedestrians. The bad weather has disrupted transport systems across Italy forcing some airports like Bologna to close following 55cm of snow. Even Venice has seen some canals freeze over. In London, Britain's busiest airport Heathrow was forced to cancel more than 400 flights. Meanwhile many roads across the UK have seen disruption. Similar flight cancellations have hit Schiphol in Amsterdam, which has seen a 30% reduction of flights. The Netherlands has seen its lowest recorded temperature of -21.8°C in the town of Lelystad on Saturday, the lowest recorded in the country for 27 years.

In France, the electricity generating industry has asked people to go easy on their electricity consumption. There has even been snow along the Mediterranean coast and parts of Spain. Algeria in North Africa also experienced snowfalls. Forecasters predict the cold spell to last another four days in Central and Eastern Europe.

Category: Europe / Weather - Snow / Disruption

Level: Intermediate / Upper intermediate

This ESL lesson is the copyright of www.newsflashenglish.com

EXERCISES

1. **Europe under snow:** Think of three things you know about Europe under snow. Go round the room swapping details with others.

2. **Dictation:** The teacher will read four to six lines of the article slowly and clearly. Students will write down what they hear. The teacher will repeat the passage slowly again. Self-correct your work from page one - filling in spaces and correcting mistakes. Be honest with yourself on the number of errors. Advise the teacher of your total number of errors. Less than five is very good. Ten is acceptable. Any more is room for improvement! More than twenty - you need to do some work!

3. **Reading:** The students should now read the article aloud, swapping readers every paragraph.

4. **Vocabulary:** Students should now look through the article and underline any vocabulary they do not know. Look in dictionaries. Discuss and help each other out. The teacher will go through and explain any unknown words or phrases.

5. **The article:** Students should look through the article with the teacher.

- a) What is the article about?
- b) What do you think about the article?

6. **Europe freezes:** In pairs think of five things from the article about Europe freezing. Then add five thoughts of your own. Write them below. Discuss together.

From the article	Your own information
1	1
2	2
3	3
4	4
5	5

The teacher will choose some pairs to discuss their findings in front of the class.

7. **Let's roleplay 1: Europe FM:** In pairs/groups. One of you is the interviewer. The others are one of the following people. You are in the *Europe FM* radio studio. Today's interview is about: *The big freeze in Europe*.

1	Someone cut off in a village in Serbia
2	Tourist stranded at Bologna airport in Italy
3	Homeless person in Ukraine
4	Algerian in Algeria seeing snow!

The teacher will choose some pairs to roleplay their interview in front of the class.

8. **Let's think!** In pairs. On the board write as many words as you can to do with ***The big freeze in Europe***. *One-two minutes*. Compare with other teams. Using your words compile a short dialogue together.

Europe freezes – coldest spell in 30 years – 5th February 2012

9. Let's roleplay 2: In pairs. You are in a homeless shelter in Kiev, Ukraine. One of you is homeless. The other is a charity worker helping the homeless. Start a conversation about the cold weather. *5-minutes*.

10. Let's do 'The Article Quiz': Have the students quiz each other in pairs. They score a point for each correct answer and half a point each time they have to look at the article for help. See who can get the highest score!

Student A

- 1) What happened in Rome?
- 2) What happened in France?
- 3) What happened in the UK?
- 4) What happened in the Netherlands?
- 5) What happened in Algeria?

Student B

- 1) What happened in Bosnia?
- 2) What happened in Venice?
- 3) What happened in Ukraine?
- 4) How many people have died?
- 5) Name the airports.

11. Energy to keep you warm: Think of five different ways to keep warm in Europe. Then add five different types of energy. Write them below. Discuss together with your partner.

Ways to keep warm	Types of energy
1	1
2	2
3	3
4	4
5	5

The teacher will choose some pairs to discuss their findings in front of the class.

12. Presentation: In pairs, groups or individually: Prepare in class or at home a two minute presentation on: **Europe's big freeze**. Stand at the front of the class to give your presentation to the class. The class can vote on the best presentation. Class – After the presentations go through the good and weak points on each presentation. Learn from the results.

13. Business issues: In pairs, choose two different types of business that could be affected positively and negatively by the snow. Discuss together. Explain some challenges both might face.

14. Let's write an e-mail: Write and send a 200 word e-mail to your teacher about: **Europe freezes**. Your e-mail can be read out in class.

15. Sentence starters: Finish these sentence starters. Correct your mistakes. Compare what other people have written.

- a) Transport _____
- b) The snow _____
- c) Europe freezes _____

DISCUSSION

Student A questions

- 1) Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- 2) How can you help the homeless in Ukraine?
- 3) Why do countries fall apart when a bit of snow hits the ground?
- 4) Why are airports so unprepared for snow?
- 5) What was the coldest temperature in your country this year?
- 6) What do you do to prepare for cold weather?
- 7) How do you keep warm in the cold weather?
- 8) Do you keep an eye on any old neighbours during the cold weather?
- 9) Do you live in an energy efficient building?
- 10) Do you take advantage of the cold weather to go skiing?

Student B questions

- 1) What do you think about what you read?
- 2) Have you learnt anything in today's English lesson?
- 3) Would you like to join a homeless person in Kiev? Explain.
- 4) How would you feel if you were a tourist stuck somewhere because of the bad weather?
- 5) Which shops are benefitting because of the bad weather?
- 6) Do you know anyone affected by the bad weather in Europe?
- 7) What was the coldest region in Europe recently?
- 8) What is the lowest temperature you have been in?
- 9) Is the cold weather caused by global warming?
- 10) Did you like this discussion?

SPEAKING

Let's discuss! Europe freezes – Your stories

Allow 10-15 minutes – As a class / small groups / pairs / 1 to 1

Europe freezes - Your stories

The teacher can moderate the session.

GAP FILL: READING: edited

Put the words into the gaps in the text.

Europe freezes – coldest spell in 30 years

Sunday – The big ‘Siberian like’ freeze continues to (1)_____ its grip on Europe. Most of the continent remains under a huge blanket of snow. The result is chaos in many places. Ukraine has seen the brunt of the bad (2)_____ where more than 160 people have now died because of the cold weather. Nearly 1,600 have been hospitalised with (3)_____. Hundreds of heated (4)_____ have been set up across Ukraine to help the country’s (5)_____ keep warm, with hot meals being handed out at the (6)_____. Temperatures in Ukraine have dropped to minus 33°C. Huge areas of Poland and Slovakia have also been affected by the bad weather with temperatures there dropping as low as -35°C. So far 20 people have perished in Poland because of the cold snap. There have been further (7)_____ in Russia and right across Eastern Europe. Leaders of Croatia and Serbia were snowed in, after travelling to Bosnia’s Jahorina Mountains for a meeting with their Bosnian (8)_____. Skiers at a resort in the Bosnian Mountains were also trapped by the snow.

Italy has seen the worst (1)_____ in more than three decades, especially in its capital Rome, leaving it (2)_____ quiet. More than 40cm of the white (3)_____ stuff has fallen forcing the authorities to close the Coliseum. Rome has turned into a city of (4)_____. The bad weather has disrupted transport systems across Italy forcing some airports like Bologna to close following 55cm of (5)_____. Even Venice has seen some (6)_____ freeze over. In London, Britain’s busiest airport Heathrow was forced to cancel more than 400 flights. Meanwhile many roads across the UK have seen (7)_____. Similar flight cancellations have (8)_____ Schiphol in Amsterdam, which has seen a 30% reduction of flights. The Netherlands has seen its lowest recorded temperature of -21.8°C in the town of Lelystad on Saturday, the lowest recorded in the country for 27 years.

tents
tighten
counterparts
deaths
shelters
hypothermia
homeless
weather
eerily
snowfall
disruption
canals
snow
pedestrians
hit
fluffy

GAP FILL: LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

Europe freezes – coldest spell in 30 years

Sunday – The big ‘_____’ freeze continues to tighten its grip on Europe. Most of the continent remains under a huge blanket of snow. The result is chaos in many places. Ukraine has _____ the bad weather where more than 160 people have now died because of the cold weather. Nearly 1,600 have been hospitalised with hypothermia. Hundreds of heated tents have been set up across Ukraine to help the country’s homeless keep warm, _____ handed out at the shelters. Temperatures in Ukraine have dropped to minus 33°C. Huge areas of Poland and Slovakia have also been affected by the bad weather with temperatures there dropping as low as -35°C. So far 20 people have perished in Poland because _____. There have been further deaths in Russia and right across Eastern Europe. Leaders of Croatia and Serbia were snowed in, after travelling to Bosnia’s Jahorina Mountains for a meeting with their _____. Skiers at a resort in the Bosnian Mountains were also trapped by the snow. In parts of Serbia emergency services were battling to reach remote areas with _____.

Italy has seen _____ in more than three decades, especially in its capital Rome, _____ quiet. More than 40cm of the white fluffy stuff has fallen forcing the authorities to close the Coliseum. Rome has turned into a city of pedestrians. The bad weather has disrupted _____ across Italy forcing some airports like Bologna to close following 55cm of snow. Even Venice has seen some canals freeze over. In London, Britain’s _____ Heathrow was forced to cancel more than 400 flights. Meanwhile many roads across the UK have seen disruption. Similar _____ have hit Schiphol in Amsterdam, which has seen a 30% reduction of flights. The Netherlands has seen its lowest recorded temperature of -21.8°C in the town of Lelystad on Saturday, the lowest recorded _____ 27 years.

Europe freezes – coldest spell in 30 years – 5th February 2012

GRAMMAR: edited

Put the words into the gaps in the text.

Europe freezes – coldest spell in 30 years

Sunday – The big ‘Siberian like’ freeze continues to tighten its grip on Europe. (1)___ of the continent remains under a huge blanket of snow. The result is chaos in (2)___ places. Ukraine has seen the brunt of the bad weather (3)___ more (4)___ 160 people have now died because of the cold weather. Nearly 1,600 have been hospitalised with hypothermia. Hundreds of heated tents have been set up across Ukraine to help the country’s homeless keep warm, (5)___ hot meals being handed out at the shelters. Temperatures in Ukraine have dropped to minus 33°C. Huge areas of Poland and Slovakia have also been affected by the bad weather with temperatures there dropping as low as -35°C. So far 20 people have perished in Poland because of the cold snap. (6)___ have been further deaths in Russia and right across Eastern Europe. Leaders of Croatia and Serbia were snowed in, after travelling to Bosnia’s Jahorina Mountains for a meeting with (7)___ Bosnian counterparts. Skiers at a resort in the Bosnian Mountains were (8)___ trapped by the snow.

their

where

with

also

there

many

than

most

Italy has seen the worst snowfall (1)___ more than three decades, especially in its capital Rome, leaving (2)___ eerily quiet. More than 40cm (3)___ the white fluffy stuff has fallen forcing the authorities to close the Coliseum. Rome has turned into a city of pedestrians. The bad weather has disrupted transport systems across Italy forcing some airports like Bologna to close following 55cm of snow. Even Venice has seen some canals freeze over. In London, Britain’s busiest airport Heathrow was forced to cancel more than 400 flights. Meanwhile many roads across the UK have seen disruption. Similar flight cancellations have hit Schiphol in Amsterdam, which has seen (4)___ 30% reduction of flights. The Netherlands has seen (5)___ lowest recorded temperature of -21.8°C in the town of Lelystad on Saturday, (6)___ lowest recorded in the country (7)___ 27 years.

its

the

for

a

it

in

of

Europe freezes – coldest spell in 30 years – 5th February 2012

SPELLING TEST

The teacher will ask the class individually to spell the following words that are in the article. Afterwards, check your answers with your teacher, using the following ratings: **Pass = 12, Good = 15, Very good = 18, Excellent = 20**

1	hit	11	eerily
2	hypothermia	12	fluffy
3	emergency	13	stuff
4	continent	14	pedestrians
5	blanket	15	busiest
6	hospitalised	16	consumption
7	authorities	17	remote
8	Mediterranean	18	weather
9	predict	19	counterparts
10	forecasters	20	temperatures

LINKS

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-16852065>

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/europe/2012/02/201224572785855.html>

<http://uk.news.yahoo.com/europe-freeze-kills-89-fears-rise-over-russian-024543360.html>

http://edition.cnn.com/2012/02/05/travel/europe-cold-snap/index.html?hpt=ieu_c1

<http://www.euronews.net/2012/02/05/europe-slows-down-as-big-freeze-takes-hold/>

ANSWERS

GAP FILL: Europe freezes – coldest spell in 30 years: **Sunday** – The big ‘Siberian like’ freeze continues to **tighten** its grip on Europe. Most of the continent remains under a huge blanket of snow. The result is chaos in many places. Ukraine has seen the brunt of the bad **weather** where more than 160 people have now died because of the cold weather. Nearly 1,600 have been hospitalised with **hypothermia**. Hundreds of heated **tents** have been set up across Ukraine to help the country’s **homeless** keep warm, with hot meals being handed out at the **shelters**. Temperatures in Ukraine have dropped to minus 33°C. Huge areas of Poland and Slovakia have also been affected by the bad weather with temperatures there dropping as low as -35°C. So far 20 people have perished in Poland because of the cold snap. There have been further **deaths** in Russia and right across Eastern Europe. Leaders of Croatia and Serbia were snowed in, after travelling to Bosnia’s Jahorina Mountains for a meeting with their Bosnian **counterparts**. Skiers at a resort in the Bosnian Mountains were also trapped by the snow. In parts of Serbia emergency services were battling to reach remote areas with emergency food supplies.

Italy has seen the worst **snowfall** in more than three decades, especially in its capital Rome, leaving it **eerily** quiet. More than 40cm of the white **fluffy** stuff has fallen forcing the authorities to close the Coliseum. Rome has turned into a city of **pedestrians**. The bad weather has disrupted transport systems across Italy forcing some airports like Bologna to close following 55cm of **snow**. Even Venice has seen some **canals** freeze over. In London, Britain’s busiest airport Heathrow was forced to cancel more than 400 flights. Meanwhile many roads across the UK have seen **disruption**. Similar flight cancellations have **hit** Schiphol in Amsterdam, which has seen a 30% reduction of flights. The Netherlands has seen its lowest recorded temperature of -21.8°C in the town of Lelystad on Saturday, the lowest recorded in the country for 27 years. **(V4)**

www.newsflashenglish.com

Created by **David Robinson**. This ESL lesson is the copyright of www.newsflashenglish.com