



**New
Internationalist**

Climate change news

An Intermediate + Ready Lesson

This lesson:

- Reading
- Vocabulary
- Grammar: urgency
- Speaking: role plays
- Error correction
- Discovering new vocabulary and grammar



What are these people doing? Why?



What are these people doing? Why?

Protesting in the British Museum, London against sponsorship by BP (British Petroleum): 'BP fiddles as the world burns'

Have you heard of other protests related to climate change?

Have they been successful?

Why / why not?



What's the best thing and the worst thing about climate change in this article?

1 minute to skim through the next slide and decide



Fires Hot streets. Record June temperatures. At the beginning of summer 2021, the Pacific coast from Canada to California already had heatwaves and wildfires. In Australia the weather was wetter than usual and a report predicts fewer fires in the coming months.

But with the climate heating up, can we expect more fires everywhere every year? Well, things aren't so simple. The warming climate increases the risks of fires with bigger chances of long, hot periods of weather that dry out vegetation and make grassland and forest into possible fuel.

As these hot, dry periods become more likely as the temperatures rise, local conditions mean the hot weather is not always so easy to predict. In Australia in 2021, the global weather cycle - La Niña - has brought wetter weather. That should stop the fires this year. The other thing is of course the human fire-starters. People start 96 per cent of wildfires, including efforts (often illegal) to clear forest land for agriculture or other projects.

But positive action such as land management by indigenous peoples and controlled burning in Australia can reduce the risk of fires.

Fungus With floods, fires, and droughts, climate change is bringing new kinds of fungal disease. For thousands of years, our high body temperature has protected us from most infections, as the spores could not survive inside us.

But things may be changing. The rise of the fungal infection *Candida auris* in the last few years makes researchers think that these fungi are slowly adapting to the warming environment.

Here comes the sun There is positive news, electricity is the cheapest it's been in human history – thanks to solar power. The International Renewable Energy Agency says the projects built last year will generate cheaper electricity than the world's cheapest coal plants. The cost of solar panels fell by 7 per cent in 2020 and solar power became 16 per cent cheaper to produce. At the same time, the costs of offshore and onshore wind fell by 9 per cent and 13 per cent respectively. A change to clean energy is possible now – if we can overcome the big companies stopping it.

Match:

1/ wildfire

2/ flood

3/ drought

4/ fungus

5/ spore

6/ renewable

7/ offshore

8/ onshore

a) It can be used again and again – it never ends

b) No rain / water for a long time

c) In the sea – away from the land

d) On land

e) A very very small cell produced by some plants for reproduction

f) A big destructive fire that spreads quickly over land

g) Too much water over what is normally dry land

h) An organism that feeds on organic matter eg. mushrooms, mould and yeast

KEY:

1/ wildfire f

2/ flood g

3/ drought b

4/ fungus h

5/ spore e

6/ renewable a

7/ offshore c

8/ onshore d

a) It can be used again and again – it never ends

b) No rain / water for a long time

c) In the sea – away from the land

d) On land

e) A very very small cell produced by some plants for reproduction

f) A big destructive fire that spreads quickly over land

g) Too much water over what is normally dry land

h) An organism that feeds on organic matter eg. mushrooms, mould and yeast

Reading for detail

Now read the article again, and in pairs, make a list of all the:

1/ problems:

2/ solutions:

Grammar – expressing urgency / importance:
complete these sentences with urgent ideas about the climate crisis

- a) We/you must ...
- b) We/you have to ...
- c) We really need to ...
- d) It's really important to ...
- e) It's urgent/critical/vital/essential that we/you ...
- f) We demand/insist that you ...



Role play:

a) YOU

- you have 1 minute –
use as many ‘urgent’
phrases as you can to
make the world leader
change the world!

b) A world leader at COP 26

- listen and ask questions

Now compare the Easier English article with the original

1/ Find 5 new words / phrases:

2/ Find 3 complex grammar structures:

THE BURNING ISSUE

Sweltering streets. Record-breaking June temperatures. Summer 2021 had barely begun and the Pacific coast from Canada to California was already being ravaged by heatwaves and wildfires, driven by a 'heat dome' of high pressure. In Australia, however, wetter-than-average conditions saw the release of a report that cautiously predicts a less devastating fire season in the coming months, compared to recent years.

But with the climate heating up, shouldn't we expect fires *everywhere* to worsen every year? Well, things aren't quite that simple. The warming climate raises the risks of fires by increasing the likelihood of long, hot spells of weather that dry out vegetation, turning swathes of grassland and forest into potential fuel.

While these hot, dry spells become more likely as the temperatures rise, they are still affected by local factors and so are not completely predictable. In the case of Australia in 2021, the global weather cycle known as La Niña has brought wetter conditions which, at the time of going to press, were expected to dampen down the fires this year.

The other factor is of course the human fire-starters. It's not inevitable that dried-out vegetation catches fire – 96 per cent of wildfires are ignited by human activity, including purposeful (and often illegal) efforts to clear forest land for agriculture or other extractive projects.

Conversely, good interventions such as indigenous land management and controlled burning in Australia can reduce the risk of fires. Let's hope a quieter fire season can give space for those solutions – raised by groups like the indigenous youth climate network SEED – to be heard.

BREAKING THE MOULD

On top of floods, fires and droughts, climate change is bringing a less visible type of threat: new strains of fungal disease. For millennia, our high body temperature has protected us from most infections, as the spores were unable to survive inside us. In fact, warm-bodied resistance to fungal disease may have been a key factor in the rise of mammals as a dominant species after the end of the dinosaurs.

But the balance may be shifting. The rise of the fungal infection *Candida auris* in the last few years has led researchers to believe that these microscopic moulds have been gradually adapting to the warming environment, to the point where they are now able to get a foothold inside previously off-limits human hosts.

HERE COMES THE SUN

On a more positive note, electricity is the cheapest it's been in human history – thanks to solar. The projects built last year will generate cheaper electricity than even the world's cheapest coal plants, according to the International Renewable Energy Agency. Rounding off a decade of falling prices, the cost of solar panels fell by a further 7 per cent in 2020, while concentrating solar power became 16 per cent cheaper to produce. At the same time, the costs of offshore and onshore wind fell by 9 per cent and 13 per cent respectively. A clean energy transition is in reach – if we can overcome the vested interests standing in its way.

Speaking: role play

A/ news
journalist

- interview the
author and ask
questions

B/ author of the
article

- answer the
questions and tell
the public what is
going on

After the lesson:

Go to this website:

[https://eewiki.newint.org/index.php?title=SPECIAL_FOCUS: CLIMATE EMERGENCY](https://eewiki.newint.org/index.php?title=SPECIAL_FOCUS:CLIMATE_EMERGENCY)

and choose some more articles to read about the climate emergency.

Then click on the original at the bottom of the articles to read that too and learn more vocabulary / grammatical structures.