Delhi steps up curbs as AQI hits 377

LEVEL B1


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I. WARM-UP

1. What comes to your mind when you hear the word pollution?
2. How is the air quality in your city at different times of year?
3. Do festivals in your country affect the environment? How?

II. KEY VOCABULARY

pollution
dirty or harmful substances in the air, water or land

vulnerable
more likely to be harmed or affected by something

restriction
a rule that limits what people can do

fireworks
small explosives used for light and colour during celebrations

emissions
gases or particles sent out by vehicles, factories or fires

congestion
too many vehicles in one place, causing slow traffic

stagger
to arrange times so people do not all start or finish together

enforce
to make sure people follow a law or rule

III. READING

Delhi is battling worsening air pollution as winter begins. The city's air quality index (AQI) reached 377, which India's watchdog classifies as very poor (301–400). Long exposure can cause illness, and children and older people are especially vulnerable.

Authorities have invoked Stage II of the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) with restrictions to cut dust and emissions. Steps include extra road cleaning, higher parking fees, and 20 more weekday trips on the Delhi Metro. Government office hours are staggered to ease congestion. Diwali is only days away.

Fireworks can push levels higher. The Supreme Court allowed certified green firecrackers for short periods on 7–8 November (06:00–07:00 and 20:00–22:00) and banned them near hospitals, care homes and schools. Enforcing the rules is difficult.

Experts link the spike to falling temperatures, slow winds and crop burning in Punjab and Haryana. A recent storm cleared the air, then winds carried smoke back. Mumbai also recorded very poor air, with an AQI of 322 on 24 October.

Reading text adapted from reporting by **BBC News***: "Delhi air quality worsens ahead of Diwali as...". Original article linked at theenglishwire.com.*

IV. COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. What AQI level did Delhi record in the report?
2. Which plan stage did authorities invoke to fight pollution?
3. Name one measure introduced to reduce emissions or congestion.
4. When are green firecrackers allowed during Diwali?
5. What reasons did experts give for the recent spike in pollution?

V. DISCUSSION

1. Should fireworks be limited during festivals? Why or why not?
2. Which restriction from the text would work best in your city?
3. What can individuals do to reduce emissions where they live?
4. How could public transport be made more attractive in Delhi?

VI. GRAMMAR FOCUS

Question tags

Question tags are short questions at the end to check or confirm. Positive sentence → negative tag; negative sentence → positive tag. Repeat the auxiliary or modal with a pronoun: is → isn't it?; can't → can they? With no auxiliary, use do/does/did: lives → doesn't he?

"The city is battling pollution, ***isn't it?****"*
"The storm didn't clear the air for long, ***did it?****"*

VII. GRAMMAR EXERCISE

Choose the correct option in each sentence.

1. Delhi's AQI reached 377, (didn't it? / wasn't it?) _____
2. Authorities have invoked GRAP, (haven't they? / don't they?) _____
3. Fireworks are banned near hospitals, (are they? / aren't they?) _____
4. Winds carried smoke back, (didn't they? / weren't they?) _____
5. Children are especially vulnerable, (don't they? / aren't they?) _____

Teacher's Notes

TEACHERS ONLY

These notes are designed to help you get the most out of this lesson. Please do not share this page with students.


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I. LESSON GUIDE

- Timing: 8–10 minutes warm-up, 8–10 minutes vocabulary, 12–15 minutes reading, 8–10 minutes comprehension, 10 minutes grammar, 10 minutes discussion.
- Pre-teach key items that appear in the text: AQI, Diwali, GRAP, Metro, and the word firecrackers; check students understand the 'very poor' category.
- Run the reading once for gist (what happened and where), then again for detail (numbers, measures, dates). Sensitivity: health effects are mentioned; allow students to talk about the news rather than personal medical issues.
- For discussion, start in pairs so quieter students can prepare ideas, then report to groups. Encourage short examples from students' cities and keep focus on actions, not blame.

II. DISCUSSION FACILITATION TIPS

1. Take a quick class poll, then pair students to exchange reasons before open debate.
2. Ask students to choose one measure and justify it with a local example.
3. Elicit small, concrete actions first, then push for longer-term habits.
4. Have students list two Metro improvements and compare in groups for consensus.

III. EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

Debate: In teams, propose a Diwali plan balancing celebration and clean air; present in 2 minutes.

Writing: Write a 90-word public notice explaining the GRAP measures to Delhi residents.

IV. ANSWER KEY OVERVIEW

Comprehension questions: short factual answers from the text.

Grammar exercise: Question tags

Discussion: open-ended. Accept any reasonable ideas supported by examples and reasoning.

Answer Key

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IV. COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. What AQI level did Delhi record in the report?
   377, in the very poor category.
2. Which plan stage did authorities invoke to fight pollution?
   Stage II of the GRAP.
3. Name one measure introduced to reduce emissions or congestion.
   Examples: extra road cleaning; higher parking fees; 20 more Metro trips; staggered office hours.
4. When are green firecrackers allowed during Diwali?
   On 7 and 8 November, from 06:00–07:00 and 20:00–22:00.
5. What reasons did experts give for the recent spike in pollution?
   Falling temperatures, slow winds and crop burning in Punjab and Haryana.

V. DISCUSSION

Open answers. Accept any reasonable ideas supported by examples and reasoning.

VI. GRAMMAR FOCUS

Key point: Question tags are short questions at the end to check or confirm. Positive sentence → negative tag; negative sentence → positive tag. Repeat the auxiliary or modal with a pronoun: is → isn't it?; can't → can they? With no auxiliary, use do/does/did: lives → doesn't he? (Examples constructed.)

"The city is battling pollution, **isn't it?***"*

"The storm didn't clear the air for long, **did it?***"*

VII. GRAMMAR EXERCISE

Choose the correct option in each sentence.

1. Delhi's AQI reached 377, (didn't it? / wasn't it?) **didn't it?**
2. Authorities have invoked GRAP, (haven't they? / don't they?) **haven't they?**
3. Fireworks are banned near hospitals, (are they? / aren't they?) **aren't they?**
4. Winds carried smoke back, (didn't they? / weren't they?) **didn't they?**
5. Children are especially vulnerable, (don't they? / aren't they?) **aren't they?**