El Niño is reshaping global weather

LEVEL A2/B1


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I. WARM-UP

1. What kind of weather is common in your country?
2. Have you ever experienced a storm, flood or heatwave? What happened?
3. How do you get weather news: TV, phone app or radio?

II. KEY VOCABULARY

drought
a long time with little or no rain

wildfire
a large fire that burns in forests or fields

hurricane
a very strong tropical storm with powerful winds

monsoon
the rainy season in parts of Asia

rainfall
the amount of rain that falls

haze
dirty or smoky air that makes it hard to see

typhoon
a very strong tropical storm in the western Pacific

agency
an official organisation that gives information or services

III. READING

El Niño is strengthening and is already affecting weather around the world. The World Meteorological Organization, the UN weather agency, says this very strong event will persist until at least 2027. Many places are seeing drought and heatwaves, while others are getting extreme rain.

Indonesia is battling its worst wildfire season since 2015. Since January, 895,657 hectares have burned, sending haze over Sumatra and Kalimantan and closing schools. In the eastern Pacific, hurricane activity is surging: 22 named storms and 12 hurricanes, including 10 major.

Hurricane Polo rapidly intensified over very warm water. By contrast, the Atlantic is quiet, with only one hurricane, Isaias. In India, monsoon rainfall is 13% below average, adding pressure on farms. In eastern China and Japan, strong typhoons are hitting. In August alone, 10 typhoons formed in the western Pacific, the most in one month for 60 years.

Reading text adapted from reporting by **BBC News***: "Five ways El Niño is affecting the weather...". Original article linked at theenglishwire.com.*

IV. COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. What does the World Meteorological Organization say about this El Niño?
2. How much land has burned in Indonesia since January?
3. How active is the eastern Pacific hurricane season so far?
4. How does the Atlantic hurricane season compare?
5. What weather change is India seeing with its monsoon?

V. DISCUSSION

1. Which El Niño effect in the text surprises you most? Why?
2. How could people prepare for droughts or heatwaves in your area?
3. What information do you want from weather warnings?
4. Should schools or offices close during severe storms? Why or why not?

VI. GRAMMAR FOCUS

Present continuous

Use am/is/are + verb-ing for actions happening now or around now, and for changes in progress. Form: am/is/are + verb-ing.

"El Niño **is strengthening**.*"*
"Many places **are seeing** *drought and heatwaves."*

VII. GRAMMAR EXERCISE

Complete the sentences with the present continuous form.

1. Forecasters (track) ___ storms right now.
2. Many areas (get) ___ heavy rain this week.
3. Fire crews (battle) ___ fires at the moment.
4. A warm ocean (power) ___ hurricanes today.
5. Schools (close) ___ because of haze today.

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, 10–12 minutes reading, 8–10 minutes comprehension, 10 minutes grammar, 10 minutes discussion.
- Pre-teach place names (Indonesia, Sumatra, Kalimantan, India, Japan) and check students recognise storm words (hurricane, typhoon, cyclone). Use the vocabulary box to anchor meanings before reading.
- Reading and discussion: Some students may have recent experience of fires, floods or illness from haze. Run first reactions in pairs, and say they may speak about the news rather than personal stories if they prefer.
- Differentiation: Stronger students can scan for numbers and make a quick fact list (dates, totals, names). Others can underline weather words and match them to places in the text.

II. DISCUSSION FACILITATION TIPS

1. Take a quick show of hands for the most surprising effect, then ask pairs to explain one reason.
2. Elicit simple actions first (water, shade, checking neighbours), then have pairs add one local example.
3. Have small groups list three key warning details, then compare and agree a class top three.
4. Set up a quick line debate: agree on one side, disagree on the other; then swap sides once.

III. EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

Writing: In pairs, write a 60-word safety notice for a school during haze or storm closures.

Presentation: On a blank world map, mark the places in the text and add one key number for each; 10 minutes.

IV. ANSWER KEY OVERVIEW

Comprehension questions: short factual answers from the text.

Grammar exercise: Present continuous

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

Answer Key

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IV. COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. What does the World Meteorological Organization say about this El Niño?
   It says this very strong event will persist until at least 2027.
2. How much land has burned in Indonesia since January?
   895,657 hectares have burned.
3. How active is the eastern Pacific hurricane season so far?
   There have been 22 named storms and 12 hurricanes, including 10 major.
4. How does the Atlantic hurricane season compare?
   It is quiet, with only one hurricane, Isaias.
5. What weather change is India seeing with its monsoon?
   Monsoon rainfall is 13% below average.

V. DISCUSSION

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

VI. GRAMMAR FOCUS

Key point: Use am/is/are + verb-ing for actions happening now or around now, and for changes in progress. Form: am/is/are + verb-ing.

> *"El Niño* **is strengthening**.*"*
> *"Many places* **are seeing** *drought and heatwaves."*

VII. GRAMMAR EXERCISE

Complete the sentences with the present continuous form.

1. Forecasters ___ storms right now. **are tracking**
2. Many areas ___ heavy rain this week. **are getting**
3. Fire crews ___ fires at the moment. **are battling**
4. A warm ocean ___ hurricanes today. **is powering**
5. Schools ___ because of haze today. **are closing**