Hōlei Sea Arch falls into Pacific

LEVEL B2


Photo: Tyler Mower / Unsplash

I. WARM-UP

1. Have you ever visited a natural rock arch or cave? Where?
2. What places in nature do tourists most often photograph? Why?
3. How does the sea change coastlines in your country?

II. KEY VOCABULARY

arch
A curved rock shape like a bridge with open space under it.

collapse
To fall down suddenly and lose structure.

coastline
The land along the edge where the sea meets the land.

instability
A state of being weak or likely to change or fall.

eruption
When a volcano releases lava, ash, and gas.

earthquake
A sudden shaking of the ground caused by movement in the earth.

cliff
A high, steep rock face, usually by the sea.

temporary
Lasting for a short time; not permanent.

III. READING

Hawaii's Hōlei Sea Arch, a 90-foot-tall (27.4m) lava formation that formed about 550 years ago, has collapsed into the Pacific Ocean. The National Park Service (NPS) says the exact time is unknown: the arch was still visible on 23 September and was gone by 27 September.

The arch stood at the end of Chain of Craters Road in Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park, on the island of Hawaii, and it was a popular, heavily photographed stop for tourists. NPS had warned in 2021 that the coastline flanking the arch showed signs of instability and that the arch would eventually crumble.

It also said new features will replace it as the cliff slowly moves inland. The fall is believed to have happened during a temporary park closure caused by Tropical Storm Nolo last weekend. Earlier damage played a role: earthquakes during the 2018 Kīlauea eruption and summit collapse weakened nearby cliffs.

In 2020, cracks forced the park to close the original viewing area and later open a safer one, and waves that year broke rock from the base. Thousands have now shared memories and photos online.

Reading text adapted from reporting by **BBC News**: *"Hawaii's iconic 550-year-old Hōlei Sea Arch...". Original article linked at theenglishwire.com.*

IV. COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. What happened to the Hōlei Sea Arch?
2. When was the arch last seen and when was it found gone?
3. Where was the arch located within the national park?
4. Which past natural events weakened the nearby cliffs?
5. What did the NPS warn in 2021 about the arch?

V. DISCUSSION

1. Why do people travel to see fragile natural sites?
2. Should parks limit access to dangerous viewpoints? Why or why not?
3. How can tourism adapt when a landmark disappears?
4. What coastal changes will your region face in the next 50 years?

VI. GRAMMAR FOCUS

Will vs going to (prediction)

Use will for general predictions or quick decisions. Use be going to when there is present evidence or a plan. Forms: will + base; am/is/are + going to + base.

"It also said new features **will replace** *it."*
"Look at those fresh cracks—the cliff **is going to fall**.*"*

VII. GRAMMAR EXERCISE

Complete each gap with will or am/is/are going to.

1. Dark clouds are gathering; a storm (hit) ___ the coast soon. _____
2. I think people (remember) ___ the arch for years. _____
3. Waves are pounding the base; rocks (erode) ___ fast. _____
4. I'm sure tourists (miss) ___ the famous arch. _____
5. The cliff is crumbling; the shoreline (move) ___ inland. _____

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, 10 minutes vocabulary, 12–15 minutes reading and comprehension, 8–10 minutes grammar, 10–12 minutes discussion.
- Pre-teach or check pronunciation of Hōlei, Kīlauea, Hawai'i, arch, and instability. Use photos or a quick sketch to show arch, cliff, and coastline.
- Run a two-stage reading: first skim for what happened and when; second scan for causes and past warnings. Sensitive point: the loss of a beloved place; open discussion in pairs first and allow students to talk about the news rather than personal losses.
- Differentiation: stronger students summarise the timeline; others match events to years. Fast finishers list two ways parks can improve safety messages for tourists.

II. DISCUSSION FACILITATION TIPS

1. Elicit personal motives (beauty, challenge, social media). Push for pros and cons and examples.
2. Take a quick show of hands. Pair opposites to debate, then swap sides to deepen reasons.
3. Prompt concrete ideas: new routes, virtual tours, updated signs. Ask who pays and who benefits.
4. Have students predict with evidence from the text, then compare with local news or maps.

III. EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

Role-play: In pairs, act as an NPS ranger and a visitor: plan a 60-second talk explaining the new safer viewing area after the Hōlei Sea Arch collapse.

Timeline: Create a one-page timeline poster (2018 quakes, 2020 closures, 2021 warning, 23–27 Sept loss, storm) and present it in 90 seconds.

IV. ANSWER KEY OVERVIEW

Comprehension questions: short factual answers from the text.

Grammar exercise: Will vs going to (prediction)

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

Answer Key

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These answers are for teachers only. Please do not share this page with students.


Photo: Tyler Mower / Unsplash

IV. COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. What happened to the Hōlei Sea Arch?
   It collapsed into the Pacific Ocean.
2. When was the arch last seen and when was it found gone?
   It was visible on 23 September and gone by 27 September.
3. Where was the arch located within the national park?
   At the end of Chain of Craters Road in Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park, on Hawaii island.
4. Which past natural events weakened the nearby cliffs?
   Earthquakes during the 2018 Kīlauea eruption and summit collapse, and waves in 2020.
5. What did the NPS warn in 2021 about the arch?
   That the unstable coastline meant the arch would eventually crumble.

V. DISCUSSION

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

VI. GRAMMAR FOCUS

Key point: Use will for general predictions or quick decisions. Use be going to when there is present evidence or a plan. Forms: will + base; am/is/are + going to + base. (Example 2 constructed.)

"It also said new features **will replace** *it."*

"Look at those fresh cracks—the cliff **is going to fall**.*"*

VII. GRAMMAR EXERCISE

Complete each gap with will or am/is/are going to.

1. Dark clouds are gathering; a storm ___ the coast soon. **is going to hit**
2. I think people ___ the arch for years. **will remember**
3. Waves are pounding the base; rocks ___ fast. **are going to erode**
4. I'm sure tourists ___ the famous arch. **will miss**
5. The cliff is crumbling; the shoreline ___ inland. **is going to move**