Melting Dolomites glaciers expose war explosives

LEVEL B1


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I. WARM-UP

1. What safety rules do you follow when you go hiking?
2. Have you ever visited a museum about history? What did you see?
3. How can melting ice or snow change a mountain trip?

II. KEY VOCABULARY

glacier
A large, slow-moving mass of ice on mountains.

hiker
A person who walks long distances for pleasure in nature.

brigade
A large, organised group of soldiers in an army.

defuse
To make a bomb safe so it cannot explode.

artillery
Large guns used by an army, firing shells over distance.

mortar
A short, portable gun that fires bombs at a high angle.

report
To tell the police or authorities about something you saw.

relic
An old object from the past that has been kept or found.

III. READING

Rapidly melting glaciers in Italy's Dolomites have revealed a cache of First World War explosives. Hikers reported sightings in the Primiero Valley near Canal San Bovo. The army's Julia Alpine brigade then swept high-altitude areas across Trentino Alto Adige.

Soldiers recovered and defused 250 devices, including 18 Italian 75mm artillery shells and 37 Thevetot mortar shells. The weapons date to the White War between Austro-Hungarian and Italian forces from 1915 to 1918. As glaciers retreat, more relics emerge each summer.

Finds range from sledges and diaries to shelters once sealed in ice. A museum in Bormio is scheduled to open in June 2027 to display such items. Authorities warn hikers: never touch any explosive you might find, and report it to police. Melting ice has also made the mountains less safe. Eleven people died when part of the Marmolada glacier collapsed in 2022.

Reading text adapted from reporting by **The Guardian***: "Melting glaciers in Dolomites reveal cache...". Original article linked at theenglishwire.com.*

IV. COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Which valley did hikers report sightings in?
2. Which army unit carried out the sweep and removal?
3. How many explosives were recovered and made safe?
4. When did the White War take place?
5. What should hikers do if they find a device?

V. DISCUSSION

1. Have you ever hiked in mountains? What safety steps did you take?
2. Should museums display war relics found in nature? Why or why not?
3. How can authorities warn visitors about old explosives in parks?
4. Do melting glaciers change how people should use high mountains?

VI. GRAMMAR FOCUS

Prepositions of time

Use at for clock times and fixed points (at 6 a.m., at night), on for days and dates (on Monday, on 15 June), and in for months, years and seasons (in June, in 2027, in winter). Use from...to for a period.

"Part of the Marmolada glacier collapsed **in 2022**.*"*

"Patrols searched high paths **at night**.*"*

VII. GRAMMAR EXERCISE

Circle the correct option in each sentence.

1. The White War ran (from 1915 to 1918 / in 1915 to 1918). _____
2. The Bormio museum is set to open (on June 2027 / in June 2027). _____
3. Many hikers stop for lunch (in noon / at noon). _____
4. More relics appear (in summer / at summer). _____
5. Report any find (in the day / on the day) you see it. _____

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 minutes discussion.
- Pre-teach key items with images where possible: glacier, explosive, brigade, defuse, artillery, mortar, report, relic.
- Run the reading as jigsaw pairs: Student A highlights who, where and numbers; Student B highlights dates, causes and advice. Then compare and answer comprehension together. Sensitivity: the story involves war risks and past deaths; start discussion in pairs and allow students to speak about the news rather than personal experience.
- Differentiation: stronger students summarise the second paragraph in 40 words; others underline verbs of advice and danger and explain them with a partner.

II. DISCUSSION FACILITATION TIPS

1. If students only list gear, prompt for route checks, weather, and telling someone the plan.
2. Invite pros and cons: education and memory versus disturbance. Ask for a clear position and reason.
3. Elicit signs, ranger talks, apps and maps. Ask which method reaches hikers fastest and why.
4. Have groups list changes to routes and seasons. Push for examples from the text and their country.

III. EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

Writing: Design a 60-word safety notice for hikers about finding explosives in the Dolomites.

Role-play: In pairs, act out a call between a hiker reporting a device and a police operator; include key details.

IV. ANSWER KEY OVERVIEW

Comprehension questions: short factual answers from the text.

Grammar exercise: Prepositions of time

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

Answer Key

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IV. COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Which valley did hikers report sightings in?
   The Primiero Valley near Canal San Bovo.
2. Which army unit carried out the sweep and removal?
   The Julia Alpine brigade of the Italian army.
3. How many explosives were recovered and made safe?
   250 devices.
4. When did the White War take place?
   From 1915 to 1918.
5. What should hikers do if they find a device?
   Do not touch it and report it to the police.

V. DISCUSSION

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

VII. GRAMMAR EXERCISE

Circle the correct option in each sentence.

1. The White War ran (from 1915 to 1918 / in 1915 to 1918). **from 1915 to 1918**
2. The Bormio museum is set to open (on June 2027 / in June 2027). **in June 2027**
3. Many hikers stop for lunch (in noon / at noon). **at noon**
4. More relics appear (in summer / at summer). **in summer**
5. Report any find (in the day / on the day) you see it. **on the day**

VI. GRAMMAR FOCUS

Key point: Use at for clock times and fixed points (at 6 a.m., at night), on for days and dates (on Monday, on 15 June), and in for months, years and seasons (in June, in 2027, in winter). Use from...to for a period. (Examples constructed.)

"Part of the Marmolada glacier collapsed **in 2022**.*"*

"Patrols searched high paths **at night**.*"*