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**"1,000 IDEAS & ACTIVITIES FOR LANGUAGE TEACHERS"**  
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## **Arctic sea ice shrinks to record low**

**29th August, 2012**

[http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/1208/120829-arctic\\_sea\\_ice.html](http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/1208/120829-arctic_sea_ice.html)

### **Contents**

The Article	2
Warm-ups	3
Before Reading / Listening	4
While Reading / Listening	5
Listening Gap Fill	6
After Reading / Listening	7
Student Survey	8
Discussion	9
Language Work	10
Writing	11
Homework	12
Answers	13

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# THE ARTICLE

From [http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1208/120829-arctic\\_sea\\_ice.html](http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1208/120829-arctic_sea_ice.html)

Scientists have announced that the layer of ice covering the Arctic Ocean has shrunk to an all-time low record. What's more, they say the ice could disappear altogether in future summers. The area of ice recorded on August 26 covered just over four million square kilometres, which is 70,000 square kilometres less than the previous low in 2007. Experts said that record was a one-off and would not be repeated. However, conditions have changed quickly. The USA's National Snow and Ice Data Center (NSIDC) said: "The ice cover is now just so thin and weak in the springtime that large parts of it can't survive the melt season...It's almost like parts of the Arctic have become a giant slushee at this time of year."

Sea ice in the Arctic Ocean grows in winter and partly melts in summer. The amount of sea ice melting in the summer has greatly increased in the past few decades. Environmentalists attribute this to global warming. The NSIDC said the six lowest periods of sea-ice cover have now occurred in the last six years. It said more melting means there is less ice to reflect the sun's heat, which means the ocean gets warmer. This year's ice cover was fairly consistent with 2007 levels until July, after which it started disappearing at a faster rate. Meteorologists say a strong storm in early August could have broken up the thinner, weaker ice, making it melt faster.

# WARM-UPS

**1. SEA ICE:** Walk around the class and talk to other students about sea ice. Change partners often. Share your findings with your first partner.

**2. CHAT:** In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words from the article are most interesting and which are most boring.

*scientists / Arctic Ocean / future summers / sea ice / a one-off / melt / seasons / greatly increased / past few decades / environmentalists / reflect the sun's heat*

Have a chat about the topics you liked. Change topics and partners frequently.

**3. ENVIRONMENT:** How can we better protect it? Complete this table with your partner(s). Change partners and share what you wrote. Change and share again.

	Current condition / problems	Actions to make things better
Sea ice		
Pandas		
Nuclear waste		
Overpopulation		
Famines		
Air quality		

**4. GLOBAL WARMING:** Students A **strongly** believe global warming will destroy the Earth; Students B **strongly** believe it won't. Change partners again and talk about your conversations.

**5. ACTION:** Which of these actions will help the environment most? Rank them and share your rankings with your partner. Put the best at the top. Change partners often.

- walk instead of drive
- use 50% less water
- stop eating meat
- grow your own food
- use energy-saving light-bulbs
- turn heaters and AC down
- invest in solar energy
- turn off electrical goods at night

**6. ICE:** Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word 'ice'. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

# BEFORE READING / LISTENING

From [http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1208/120829-arctic\\_sea\\_ice.html](http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1208/120829-arctic_sea_ice.html)

## 1. TRUE / FALSE:

Read the headline. Guess if a-h below are true (T) or false (F).

- |   |       |
|---|-------|
| a. The article says ice in Antarctica has shrunk to an all-time low.    | T / F |
| b. The article says there may be no Arctic ice in the summer in future. | T / F |
| c. In 2012, there was 70,000 sq. km less ice than the previous low.     | T / F |
| d. An expert likened the Arctic ice to a giant frozen soft drink.       | T / F |
| e. Most of the Arctic ice melts in the summer.                          | T / F |
| f. The last six years have seen record falls in Arctic ice cover.       | T / F |
| g. The Arctic sea ice needs to absorb the sun's rays.                   | T / F |
| h. A storm that hit the Arctic in early August made the ice stronger.   | T / F |

## 2. SYNONYM MATCH:

Match the following synonyms from the article.

- |                |                |
|----------------|----------------|
| 1. announced   | a. duplicated  |
| 2. layer       | b. get through |
| 3. altogether  | c. happened    |
| 4. repeated    | d. sheet       |
| 5. survive     | e. declared    |
| 6. partly      | f. connect     |
| 7. attribute   | g. constant    |
| 8. occurred    | h. send back   |
| 9. reflect     | i. completely  |
| 10. consistent | j. somewhat    |

## 3. PHRASE MATCH:

(Sometimes more than one choice is possible.)

- |                                     |                      |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. shrunk to an all-                | a. low in 2007       |
| 2. the ice could disappear          | b. a faster rate     |
| 3. less than the previous           | c. melts in summer   |
| 4. that record was a one-           | d. time low record   |
| 5. large parts of it can't survive  | e. sun's heat        |
| 6. grows in winter and partly       | f. the melt season   |
| 7. Environmentalists attribute this | g. altogether        |
| 8. less ice to reflect the          | h. with 2007 levels  |
| 9. ice cover was fairly consistent  | i. off               |
| 10. it started disappearing at      | j. to global warming |

# WHILE READING / LISTENING

From [http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1208/120829-arctic\\_sea\\_ice.html](http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1208/120829-arctic_sea_ice.html)

**GAP FILL:** Put the words into the gaps in the text.

Scientists have announced that the (1) \_\_\_\_\_ of ice covering the Arctic Ocean has shrunk to an (2) \_\_\_\_\_-time low record. What's more, they say the ice could disappear (3) \_\_\_\_\_ in future summers. The area of ice recorded on August 26 covered (4) \_\_\_\_\_ over four million square kilometres, which is 70,000 square kilometres less than the previous low in 2007. Experts said that record was a (5) \_\_\_\_\_ -off and would not be repeated. However, conditions have changed quickly. The USA's National Snow and Ice Data Center (NSIDC) said: "The ice cover is now just (6) \_\_\_\_\_ thin and weak in the springtime that large parts of it can't (7) \_\_\_\_\_ the melt season...It's almost like parts of the Arctic have (8) \_\_\_\_\_ a giant slushee at this time of year."

*one*  
*just*  
*all*  
*become*  
*layer*  
*survive*  
*altogether*  
*so*

Sea ice in the Arctic Ocean grows in winter and (9) \_\_\_\_\_ melts in summer. The amount of sea ice melting in the summer has greatly increased in the past (10) \_\_\_\_\_ decades. Environmentalists attribute this to global warming. The NSIDC said the six lowest (11) \_\_\_\_\_ of sea-ice cover have now occurred in the last six years. It said more melting means there is less ice to (12) \_\_\_\_\_ the sun's heat, which means the ocean gets warmer. This year's ice cover was (13) \_\_\_\_\_ consistent with 2007 levels until July, after which it started disappearing at a faster (14) \_\_\_\_\_. Meteorologists say a strong storm in (15) \_\_\_\_\_ August could have broken up the thinner, (16) \_\_\_\_\_ ice, making it melt faster.

*reflect*  
*few*  
*early*  
*periods*  
*fairly*  
*partly*  
*weaker*  
*rate*

Arctic sea ice shrinks to record low – 29th August, 2012

## LISTENING – Listen and fill in the gaps

From [http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1208/120829-arctic\\_sea\\_ice.html](http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1208/120829-arctic_sea_ice.html)

Scientists have announced (1) \_\_\_\_\_ covering the Arctic Ocean has shrunk to (2) \_\_\_\_\_. What's more, they say the ice could disappear (3) \_\_\_\_\_ summers. The area of ice recorded on August 26 covered just over four million square kilometres, which is 70,000 square kilometres less than the previous low in 2007. Experts said that record (4) \_\_\_\_\_ would not be repeated. However, conditions have changed quickly. The USA's National Snow and Ice Data Center (NSIDC) said: "The (5) \_\_\_\_\_ thin and weak in the springtime that large parts of it can't survive the melt season...(6) \_\_\_\_\_ the Arctic have become a giant slushee at this time of year."

Sea ice in the Arctic Ocean grows in winter (7) \_\_\_\_\_ summer. The amount of sea ice melting in the summer has greatly increased in (8) \_\_\_\_\_. Environmentalists attribute this to global warming. The NSIDC said (9) \_\_\_\_\_ sea-ice cover have now occurred in the last six years. It said (10) \_\_\_\_\_ is less ice to reflect the sun's heat, which means the ocean gets warmer. This (11) \_\_\_\_\_ consistent with 2007 levels until July, after which it started disappearing at a faster rate. Meteorologists say a strong storm in early August could have (12) \_\_\_\_\_, weaker ice, making it melt faster.

# AFTER READING / LISTENING

From [http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1208/120829-arctic\\_sea\\_ice.html](http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1208/120829-arctic_sea_ice.html)

**1. WORD SEARCH:** Look in your dictionary / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'sea' and 'ice'.

<b>sea</b>	<b>ice</b>
------------	------------

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

**2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS:** Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

**3. GAP FILL:** In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

**4. VOCABULARY:** Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

**5. TEST EACH OTHER:** Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall how they were used in the text:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• layer</li><li>• more</li><li>• over</li><li>• one</li><li>• thin</li><li>• giant</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• partly</li><li>• past</li><li>• six</li><li>• heat</li><li>• levels</li><li>• broken</li></ul>
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# SEA ICE SURVEY

From [http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1208/120829-arctic\\_sea\\_ice.html](http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1208/120829-arctic_sea_ice.html)

Write five GOOD questions about sea ice in the table. Do this in pairs. Each student must write the questions on his / her own paper.

When you have finished, interview other students. Write down their answers.

	STUDENT 1 _____	STUDENT 2 _____	STUDENT 3 _____
Q.1.			
Q.2.			
Q.3.			
Q.4.			
Q.5.			

- Now return to your original partner and share and talk about what you found out. Change partners often.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.



## SEA ICE DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a) What did you think when you read the headline?
- b) What springs to mind when you hear the word 'Arctic'?
- c) What do you think about what you read?
- d) Are you worried about the melting sea ice?
- e) How worried are you about global warming?
- f) What happens if the Arctic sea ice disappears altogether in summer?
- g) Why is sea ice so important?
- h) What do you know about the Arctic?
- i) What can we do to help protect the Arctic sea ice?

*Arctic sea ice shrinks to record low – 29th August, 2012*  
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## SEA ICE DISCUSSION

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a) Did you like reading this article?
- b) What are the differences between the Arctic and Antarctic?
- c) What affects global warming?
- d) Many people say human activity does not contribute to global warming. What do you think?
- e) What happens to the world's weather when the oceans get warmer?
- f) Has the weather been changing a lot in your country?
- g) What would happen to polar animals if all the ice melts?
- h) Are there any advantages to the sea ice melting?
- i) What questions would you like to ask the experts about this story?

# LANGUAGE – MULTIPLE CHOICE

From [http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1208/120829-arctic\\_sea\\_ice.html](http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1208/120829-arctic_sea_ice.html)

Scientists have announced that the (1) \_\_\_\_ of ice covering the Arctic Ocean has shrunk to an all-time low record. What's (2) \_\_\_\_, they say the ice could disappear (3) \_\_\_\_ in future summers. The area of ice recorded on August 26 covered just over four million square kilometres, which is 70,000 square kilometres less than the previous low in 2007. Experts said that record was a (4) \_\_\_\_-off and would not be repeated. However, conditions have changed quickly. The USA's National Snow and Ice Data Center (NSIDC) said: "The ice cover is now just (5) \_\_\_\_ thin and weak in the springtime that large parts of it can't survive the melt season...It's (6) \_\_\_\_ like parts of the Arctic have become a giant slushee at this time of year."

Sea ice in the Arctic Ocean grows in winter and (7) \_\_\_\_ melts in summer. The amount of sea ice melting in the summer has greatly increased in the past few decades. Environmentalists (8) \_\_\_\_ this to global warming. The NSIDC said the six lowest periods of sea-ice cover have now occurred in the last six years. It said more melting means there is (9) \_\_\_\_ ice to reflect the sun's heat, which means the ocean gets warmer. This year's ice cover was (10) \_\_\_\_ consistent with 2007 levels until July, after (11) \_\_\_\_ it started disappearing at a faster rate. Meteorologists say a strong storm in early August could have broken up the thinner, weaker ice, (12) \_\_\_\_ it melt faster.

## Put the correct words from the table below in the above article.

- |     |               |                   |                |                  |
|-----|---------------|-------------------|----------------|------------------|
| 1.  | (a) layer     | (b) lair          | (c) leer       | (d) lore         |
| 2.  | (a) much      | (b) more          | (c) most       | (d) many         |
| 3.  | (a) every     | (b) whole         | (c) altogether | (d) collectively |
| 4.  | (a) single    | (b) lone          | (c) solitary   | (d) one          |
| 5.  | (a) as        | (b) by            | (c) really     | (d) so           |
| 6.  | (a) much      | (b) whole         | (c) almost     | (d) reality      |
| 7.  | (a) partly    | (b) fractionally  | (c) coldly     | (d) warmly       |
| 8.  | (a) attrition | (b) attribute     | (c) attire     | (d) attain       |
| 9.  | (a) fewer     | (b) insignificant | (c) less       | (d) downsized    |
| 10. | (a) fairly    | (b) fair          | (c) fairs      | (d) fairing      |
| 11. | (a) while     | (b) whim          | (c) whine      | (d) which        |
| 12. | (a) doing     | (b) making        | (c) being      | (d) having       |



# HOMEWORK

**1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION:** Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

**2. INTERNET:** Search the Internet and find out more about sea ice in the Arctic. Share what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

**3. SEA ICE:** Make a poster about sea ice. Show your work to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all have similar things?

**4. THE ARCTIC:** Write a magazine article about the Arctic. Include imaginary interviews with people who are for and against it.

Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Write down any new words and expressions you hear from your partner(s).

**5. LETTER:** Write a letter to a leading environmentalist. Ask him/her three questions about sea ice. Give him/her three of your ideas on how to stop it melting so quickly. Read your letter to your partner(s) in your next lesson. Your partner(s) will answer your questions.

# ANSWERS

## TRUE / FALSE:

a. F      b. T      c. T      d. T      e. F      f. T      g. F      h. F

## SYNONYM MATCH:

- |                |                |
|----------------|----------------|
| 1. announced   | a. declared    |
| 2. layer       | b. sheet       |
| 3. altogether  | c. completely  |
| 4. repeated    | d. duplicated  |
| 5. survive     | e. get through |
| 6. partly      | f. somewhat    |
| 7. attribute   | g. connect     |
| 8. occurred    | h. happened    |
| 9. reflect     | i. send back   |
| 10. consistent | j. constant    |

## PHRASE MATCH:

- |                                     |                      |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. shrunk to an all-                | a. time low record   |
| 2. the ice could disappear          | b. altogether        |
| 3. less than the previous           | c. low in 2007       |
| 4. that record was a one-           | d. off               |
| 5. large parts of it can't survive  | e. the melt season   |
| 6. grows in winter and partly       | f. melts in summer   |
| 7. Environmentalists attribute this | g. to global warming |
| 8. less ice to reflect the          | h. sun's heat        |
| 9. ice cover was fairly consistent  | i. with 2007 levels  |
| 10. it started disappearing at      | j. a faster rate     |

## GAP FILL:

### Arctic sea ice shrinks to record low

Scientists have announced that the (1) **layer** of ice covering the Arctic Ocean has shrunk to an (2) **all**-time low record. What's more, they say the ice could disappear (3) **altogether** in future summers. The area of ice recorded on August 26 covered (4) **just** over four million square kilometres, which is 70,000 square kilometres less than the previous low in 2007. Experts said that record was a (5) **one**-off and would not be repeated. However, conditions have changed quickly. The USA's National Snow and Ice Data Center (NSIDC) said: "The ice cover is now just (6) **so** thin and weak in the springtime that large parts of it can't (7) **survive** the melt season...It's almost like parts of the Arctic have (8) **become** a giant slushee at this time of year."

Sea ice in the Arctic Ocean grows in winter and (9) **partly** melts in summer. The amount of sea ice melting in the summer has greatly increased in the past (10) **few** decades. Environmentalists attribute this to global warming. The NSIDC said the six lowest (11) **periods** of sea-ice cover have now occurred in the last six years. It said more melting means there is less ice to (12) **reflect** the sun's heat, which means the ocean gets warmer. This year's ice cover was (13) **fairly** consistent with 2007 levels until July, after which it started disappearing at a faster (14) **rate**. Meteorologists say a strong storm in (15) **early** August could have broken up the thinner, (16) **weaker** ice, making it melt faster.

## LANGUAGE WORK

1 - a    2 - b    3 - c    4 - d    5 - d    6 - c    7 - a    8 - b    9 - c    10 - a    11 - d    12 - b