



## Pre-Reading Activities

### A: Brainstorming

Work in groups of three.

Read the words on the right.

What do they have in common?

St. Mark's Square  
Glassmaking **THE GRAND CANAL**  
Bridge of Sighs  
Pigeons **Gondolas**  
The Doge's Palace



### B: Matching

What other facts do you know about this famous city? In the same groups match the sentence beginnings with their endings.

Sentence Beginnings	Sentence Endings
The city of Venice...	...contain the body of an early Christian.
Many famous people have lived there, ...	...is the gondola.
The most common form of transport...	...in Venice, and the speed limit on the canals is 5km (3mph).
The church of St Mark is said to...	...is built on water.
Pigeons are a major source of ...	...including Ernest Hemingway and Robert Browning.
There is only one traffic light...	...pollution in St Mark's Square.

### C: Discussion

What do you think are the biggest problems facing Venice today?

Rank these problems in order of importance: **1** = the most serious problem; **8** = the least serious problem.

- \_\_\_ decaying historical buildings
- \_\_\_ local health issues related to damp living conditions
- \_\_\_ pigeon droppings
- \_\_\_ cost of maintaining buildings, art works and other treasures
- \_\_\_ too many tourists
- \_\_\_ water pollution
- \_\_\_ too many rats
- \_\_\_ rising sea levels caused by global warming



## Reading Activities

### A: Predicting

Here is the headline from today's article.

### Italy Declares 'Environmental Emergency'

Today's article is about environmental emergencies. Put a tick next to the following words and phrases you might expect to find in the article. (Do **not** read the article yet!)

- |  |  |   |   |
|--|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> minor issues  | <input type="checkbox"/> state of emergency  | <input type="checkbox"/> air pollution              | <input type="checkbox"/> extraordinary measures |
| <input type="checkbox"/> gases         | <input type="checkbox"/> no necessary action | <input type="checkbox"/> eroding historic buildings | <input type="checkbox"/> health hazards         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> places to see | <input type="checkbox"/> water pollution     | <input type="checkbox"/> global warming             | <input type="checkbox"/> cafes and shops        |

Compare your answers with a partner when you have finished.



## B: Skimming

**Part One:** Read today's article quickly, looking for any of the above words and phrases. When you find them, highlight them with a colored pen or underline them.

### Italy Declares 'Environmental Emergency'

ROME Thursday November 15 (Reuters) - Italy declared a state of environmental emergency in Venice, one of its most popular tourist destinations, and two other cities on Thursday, paving the way for urgent measures to tackle pollution. "Extraordinary measures are needed because of the high levels of pollution," said Federica Cingolani, the environment ministry press secretary. "The states of emergency could last a year but it will be up to local officials to decide."

Growing boat traffic in the world-famous waterways of Venice prompted the ministry to declare an emergency there, while air pollution from heavy road traffic raised fears of health hazards in the Sicilian city of Messina and the industrial hub of Milan. In Venice, a city built on stilts in the middle of a lagoon in northern Italy, water pollution and the wake from boats plying its canals are eroding historic buildings.

By declaring a state of emergency, the ministry paves the way for parliament to nominate local commissioners who can draw up and implement extraordinary measures, which are yet to be decided. They could include closing certain areas to boat or road traffic, charging tolls or imposing fines. "The decision gives local commissioners the authority to act quickly and independently," Cingolani said.

It is the first time the Italian environment ministry has declared a state of emergency in cities. In the past it has declared emergencies in whole regions in southern Italy due to drought or severe sewage problems. Italy, along with other European Union states, backs the Kyoto accord on restricting gases that cause global warming, some of the same gases that are exacerbating the air pollution problems in Milan and Messina.

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**Part Two:** Now go back to your answers in **Pre-Reading Activity C:** Discussion and change your answers (if necessary) to match the information in the article.

## C: Reading for Deeper Understanding

Now read the article again more carefully and answer the following questions in your own words.

1. Why are urgent measures being taken in three Italian cities?
2. What is the cause of the high levels of pollution in Venice?
3. What is the cause of the high levels of pollution in Messina and Milan?
4. What is the aim of the Kyoto accord?
5. What is different about the emergencies declared in Venice, Messina and Milan compared with previous emergencies elsewhere in Italy?

Now compare your answers with a partner. Do you have the same information or are your answers quite different? If your answers are different, explain your reasons for your answers to your partner. Try to persuade your partner to agree with you. Finally, your teacher will check your answers as a class.

## D: Language

**Part One:** Work with your partner. Here are some words from today's article. Match the words which collocate with each other. Do **not** look back at the article.

health	measures
urgent	famous
world	measures
high	hazards
extraordinary	levels

**Part Two:** Listen as your teacher dictates some sentences to you. Write down each sentence. There are some gaps in each sentence. Your teacher will say **blank** when there is a gap.

When you have finished writing down the sentences, try to think of the most suitable word to put in the gap. (These are collocations, so the words you choose should be those which most people commonly say in sentences like these.)



## E: Thinking Carefully

Look at the following excerpts from today's article. Use your own knowledge and your understanding of the article to try and answer the questions that follow them.

1. *Italy...backs the Kyoto accord on restricting gases that cause global warming, some of the same gases that are exacerbating the air pollution problems in Milan and Messina.* How do gases cause global warming?
2. *In Venice, a city built on stilts in the middle of a lagoon in northern Italy, water pollution and the wake from boats plying its canals are eroding historic buildings.* Why does erosion occur in this situation?

## Post-Reading Activities

You may do one or more of these.

### A: Role-play

Your group of three or four students is going to role-play a situation. Use the information in the article to help you prepare what you want to say but put it in your own words.

**Student A:** You are a tour guide. You are taking a group of people around the city of Venice. Describe the problems Venice is facing and what they are caused by. Explain what the government is trying to do about these problems.

**Other students:** You are tourists visiting Venice. Think of some questions to ask your tour guide about the environmental problems you have noticed during your stay in Venice. (Each person should have two or three questions to ask.)

### B: Research

Using books, travel guides, magazines and / or the Internet, find pictures and information about a city of your choice. Prepare a travel brochure about the city you have chosen. Include information about the following things:

1. Important facts about the city: historical and / or interesting facts, population, main industries, geography, language, currency, climate, etc.
2. Things to do and see in the city
3. Useful information: public transportation, accommodation, shopping, clothes to take, etc.

When you have finished, exchange your brochure with a partner, and talk about anything interesting you found out that you didn't know before.

Finally, display all the brochures in class. Take a class vote to find out which city most people would like to visit.

### C: Writing / Peer Editing

Work with your partner to write a letter to the city council of a major city in your country.

1. Think of an environmental problem facing this major city in your country. Write the first draft of a letter, in English, to the city council which administers this city. In your letter;
  - a. describe the problem as you understand it.
  - b. explain how you think it could be solved.
  - c. ask the council to take action to solve the problem.

Remember to use the layout and language of a formal letter.

2. Exchange your draft letter with a partner. Look for anything in your partner's letter which you think could be improved, e.g. grammar, spelling, punctuation, and layout. Discuss your suggestions for improvement with your partner. If there is anything you don't understand, ask your partner to explain.
3. After discussing your drafts with each other, rewrite your letter, making changes where you and your partner think they should be made.
4. Finally, give your draft and your rewritten copies to your teacher for checking.



## TEACHERS' NOTES AND ANSWER KEY

**Please Note:** This lesson also has further exercises for your students to do online at [www.instantworkbook.com](http://www.instantworkbook.com). To get a username and password for your students, click on the blue icon next to this lesson description in the teachers' room at [www.english-to-go.com](http://www.english-to-go.com).

### A: Brainstorming - Answer

All of these words and phrases describe something that can be seen in Venice, Italy.

### B: Matching - Answers

The city of Venice is built on water.

Many famous people have lived there, including Ernest Hemingway and Robert Browning.

The most common form of transport is the gondola.

The church of St Mark is said to contain the body of an early Christian.

Pigeons are a major source of pollution in St Mark's Square.

There is only one traffic light in Venice, and the speed limit on the canals is 5km (3mph).

### C: Discussion - Notes

At this stage just let students speculate about what they think is the likely ranking. Once they have read the article, encourage them to go back and modify their answers.

### Reading Activities

#### A: Predicting - Notes

Do not tell the students the answers yet. They can check these for themselves when they do the skimming activity.

#### B: Skimming - Answers

#### Italy Declares 'Environmental Emergency'

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Growing boat traffic in the world-famous waterways of Venice prompted the ministry to declare an emergency there, while **air pollution** from heavy road traffic raised fears of **health hazards** in the Sicilian city of Messina and the industrial hub of Milan. In Venice, a city built on stilts in the middle of a lagoon in northern Italy, **water pollution** and the wake from boats plying its canals are **eroding historic buildings**.

By declaring a **state of emergency**, the ministry paves the way for parliament to nominate local commissioners who can draw up and implement **extraordinary measures**, which are yet to be decided. They could include closing certain areas to boat or road traffic, charging tolls or imposing fines. "The decision gives local commissioners the authority to act quickly and independently," Cingolani said.

It is the first time the Italian environment ministry has declared a **state of emergency** in cities. In the past it has declared emergencies in whole regions in southern Italy due to drought or severe sewage problems. Italy, along with other European Union states, backs the Kyoto accord on restricting **gases** that cause **global warming**, some of the same gases that are exacerbating the **air pollution** problems in Milan and Messina.

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#### C: Reading for Deeper Understanding - Suggested Answers

1. To try to resolve the problems caused by pollution.
2. Water pollution caused by heavy boat traffic.
3. Air pollution caused by heavy road traffic.
4. The Kyoto accord aims to restrict gases that cause global warming.
5. This is the first time a state of emergency has been declared in cities. Normally, the Italian Government has done this on a regional basis.

### D: Language - Notes

**Part One:** Ask students what 'collocations' are. Hopefully, students at this level will have come across the word 'collocation' before. If not, explain that in English, certain words always belong together. An alternative cannot be used as the language sounds unusual. There is no magic rule for the way these function, students simply have to memorize them. Encourage them to have a section in their vocabulary notebook where collocations can be collected, as they come across them.

**Part Two:** Read the sentences below to the students. Where there is a gap, say the word 'Blank'. When students have written their sentences, get them to compare what they have written with each other before you put the sentences on the board for final checking. (Note: You may like them to write the sentences on the board.) Then encourage them to work together to fill the gaps with suitable answers.

### D: Language - Part Two - Sentences to be read aloud to students

(Say **blank**, where there is a gap in the sentence.)

- a. Last night, I was very tired, so I went to bed early. By 9 pm I was \_\_\_\_\_ asleep.
- b. He always leaves the refrigerator door \_\_\_\_\_ open when he takes something out.
- c. The police were amazed because the attack occurred in \_\_\_\_\_ daylight.
- d. My sister never buys \_\_\_\_\_ furniture. Everything in her house is \_\_\_\_\_ new.
- e. My \_\_\_\_\_ clock went off at 2 am and I couldn't go back to sleep after that because I was \_\_\_\_\_ awake.

### D: Language - Answers

**Part One:** health hazards; urgent measures; world famous; high levels; extraordinary measures

**Part Two:** a. fast b. wide c. broad d. secondhand; brand e. alarm; wide

### E: Thinking Carefully - Notes

Encourage students to write their answers in their own words. They should write just a one sentence explanation for each question. If a student is struggling with this task, let them use a dictionary - preferably an English dictionary - but remind them to use their own words.

### E: Thinking Carefully - Suggested Answers

1. Large amounts of greenhouse gases (e.g. carbon dioxide) in the atmosphere trap the heat of the sun, causing global warming.
2. Erosion occurs because water with different agents in it (e.g. oil, salt) can cause most anything, including buildings, to wear down.

### Post-Reading Activities

#### A: Role-play - Notes

Make sure students participate equally, especially those who take the role of tourists. Encourage them to have the same number of questions each. Be sure not to let the 'tour guide' dominate too much.

#### B: Research - Notes

You may need to provide some resources such as website addresses, old travel brochures, paper, colored pens, scissors and glue. Students may also like to use computers to do the word processing so that the writing on their brochure looks more professional.

#### C: Writing / Peer Editing - Notes

One of the main goals of this activity is to point out to students in a practical way that satisfying writing is never a 'once off' product, but should be a process whereby their ideas are modified and improved. Encourage them to be positive in the peer correction phase, to ask lots of questions, and to try to develop each other's ideas, not simply focus on correcting the mistakes they find. Students should find that when they have a real audience, they are much more motivated to produce the best standard of work they can.