

COMMUNICATION GOALS

1. Convey a message.
2. Tell someone about the news.
3. Describe natural disasters.
4. Prepare for an emergency.

UNIT 5

Natural Disasters

PREVIEW

HISTORIC DISASTERS

The influenza epidemic of 1918–1919 left an estimated 25 million people dead worldwide.



Between 2000 and 2012, 260,000 people died in Somalia in one of the worst food shortages in modern history.



In February 2013, a major blizzard hit the Northeastern U.S. with heavy snowfall and high winds. Snowfall in some areas reached 100 cm, causing travel delays, school closures, and power outages.

A DISCUSSION Discuss one or more of the topics about the content of the news.

1. When stories about natural disasters such as epidemics, famines, and weather emergencies appear in the news, are you interested in knowing about them? Why or why not?
2. Why do newspapers often put stories like this on the front page?
3. Not all disasters are caused by nature. What are some other kinds of disasters? What are some of their causes?

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B PHOTO STORY Read and listen to a conversation about a natural disaster.



Rachel: Oh, my goodness. Take a look at this!
Tom: Why? What's going on?
Rachel: There's this enormous flood in Slovakia—look at these people on the roof! The water's up to the second floor. And look at these cars. I sure hope there was no one in them.
Tom: That sounds horrendous. Any word on casualties?

Rachel: It says, "No reports of deaths or injuries so far . . ." But it's in the middle of a city, for goodness sake. The death toll could end up being huge.
Tom: And can you imagine the property damage?
Rachel: Well, they estimate almost 50% of the houses in town are under water already.
Tom: What a disaster!

Rachel: I wonder how this flood compares to the one they had in New Orleans a few years back. Remember that?
Tom: You bet I do. How could anyone forget? And that flooded almost half the city, too.
Rachel: Let's turn on CNN. They usually have breaking news about stuff like this.

C FOCUS ON LANGUAGE Complete each statement with words or phrases from the Photo Story.

1. Two words that mean very big are . . . and . . .
2. The number of . . . indicates the number of people who are injured or killed in an event.
3. A two-word phrase that means the destruction of or harm to buildings, cars, and other things that belong to victims of an event is . . .
4. A two-word expression that is used to describe the first news reports of an important event that is happening at the present is . . .

SPEAKING

A Check your news sources and write an advantage and disadvantage for each one.

	Advantages	Disadvantages
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> a newspaper	you can read an article	not as up-to-date as online sites
	Advantages	Disadvantages
<input type="checkbox"/> a newspaper		
<input type="checkbox"/> Internet news sites		
<input type="checkbox"/> TV or radio newscasts		
<input type="checkbox"/> a weekly news magazine		
<input type="checkbox"/> word of mouth		

B PAIR WORK Compare opinions with your partner. Do you both use the same sources? Why or why not?

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