WHAT IN THE WORLD?

LEVEL 1 (GRADES 5 AND UP)



Free Sample

The Largest El Niño

Includes

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SAMPLE EDITION
2026/2027: ISSUE 3

WHAT IN THE WORLD?

WHAT IN THE WORLD?
Level 1, 2026/2027: Issue 3

PUBLISHER
Eric Wieczorek

ILLUSTRATOR
Mike Deas

CONTRIBUTORS
Krista Clarke
Darah Hansen
Rosa Harris
Catriona Misfeldt

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LesPlan Educational Services Ltd.

LesPlan
#1 - 4144 Wilkinson Road
Victoria BC V8Z 5A7
www.lesplan.com
info@lesplan.com

PHONE: (toll free) 888 240-2212

FAX: (toll free) 888 240-2246

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HAY'SXW'QA!

LesPlan is grateful to the Lkwungen Peoples, the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations, on whose unceded land we now live, and do our work.

We welcome your comments and appreciate your suggestions. Please contact us at any time.

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LesPlan Educational Services Ltd. aims to help teachers develop students' engagement in, understanding of, and ability to critically assess current issues and events by providing quality, up-to-date, affordable, ready-to-use resources appropriate for use across the curriculum.



I have had many parents comment to me about how great they think *What in the World?* is, and they look forward to each month's issue coming home... This is a great resource for a small country school to explore the global issues that affect us all.

K. Camelon, Grade 7/8 teacher
Admaston, ON

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WHAT YOU'RE MISSING

NATIONAL

ANNE CARSON, NOBEL PRIZE WINNER



Dr. Anne Carson colours outside the lines. She does so proudly. The Canadian writer just won the 2026 Nobel Prize in Literature. It is perhaps the most important honour…

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- G. Shuley, Nanaimo, BC

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- S. Giffin, Dartmouth, NS

THE LARGEST EL NIÑO EVER?

–An unusually powerful weather pattern is disrupting our winter

BEFORE READING

1. Write '**El Niño**' on the board.

2. In pairs, have students jot down as many words as they can related to El Niño. (weather, storm, warm, ocean, water, La Niña, dry, extreme, severe, etc.)

3. Debrief ideas as a class.

4. Have students watch this short video about the predicted strength of the 2026-2027 El Niño:

https://www.yout-ube.com/shorts/XoFmEEobdbA [1:30]

5. Ask students to share a question that they have about the details of the video with a partner.

6. Invite students to set a purpose for reading the article (perhaps using their question), referring to the resource page **Setting A Purpose Before Reading** as needed.



People tackling the floods of Cyclone Nisha, November 2008, in Vanni, Sri Lanka.

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:People,_bus_and_bike_in_rain_and_floodwater.jpg

Science, Technology, and the Environment

THE LARGEST EL NIÑO EVER?

–An unusually powerful weather pattern is disrupting our winter



In a parched field in India, farmer Dagdu Venkat Rao Padile yanked a stalk of sugarcane out of the ground. With harvest just weeks away, it should have full of sweet juice. Instead, it's stunted.

The problem is a lack of rain. Like millions of Indian farmers, Mr. Padile depends on the **monsoon** to water his crops. But this year's rainy season was the driest in 11 years. It dropped 13 percent less rain than average.

India is the second-biggest sugar producer in the world. Poor crops there and elsewhere caused global sugar prices to jump 15 percent in a year. So we could pay more for everything from cookies and ice cream to soft drinks and even ketchup.

Experts point to one factor helping cause the extremely dry weather. It's a climate pattern called El Niño that regularly affects the planet. There's an El Niño underway now, and it's shaping up to be a doozy. Scientists say it could become the strongest one ever recorded. Its effects won't stop at sugar. The weather system could raise the risk of floods, drought, and record heat on several continents. It's also likely to bring a much milder winter to many parts of Canada. That could make the next wildfire season especially severe.

So, what exactly is El Niño, and why is this one such a big deal?

Cyclical Phenomena

Imagine floating in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, near the equator. Most of the time, you'd feel steady gusts called **trade winds** blowing from east to west. These winds push sun-warmed surface water toward Asia and Australia.

But every few years, the trade winds weaken, and the warm water travels eastward toward South America. That's El Niño. The heat rising off the ocean changes where rain falls around the globe. So regions that are usually wet, like Indonesia, can turn dry, while places that are usually dry, like southern Peru and Brazil, can get soaked.

During an El Niño, less cold water rises from the deep. This forces the polar **jet stream** to move south. As a result, weather in Canada and the northern U.S. is warm and dry. Southern

DID YOU KNOW?

El Niño is "little boy" and La Niña is "little girl" in Spanish.

DEFINITIONS

JET STREAM: a narrow band of strong winds high in the atmosphere that generally blow from west to east and help influence weather patterns, including the movement of storms and changes in temperature. There are two main jet streams—polar and subtropical.
MONSOON: a rainy season in parts of Asia, Africa and other tropical regions when rain lasts for several months with few interruptions
TRADE WINDS: winds that reliably blow east to west near the equator. Sailors have used these winds to travel between Europe and Asia for centuries.

U.S. states get more rain and flooding.

The system has a counterpart called La Niña. A La Niña develops when Pacific Ocean waters become cooler than normal. That often results in wetter conditions in Australia and Southeast Asia and drier weather in western South America. In Canada, La Niña typically brings colder, snowier winters to western regions. Neither pattern affects every region the same way. Impacts vary from year to year.

The two systems develop during the spring or summer in the Northern Hemisphere. They're most intense between November and January, then fade in spring.

So why is this El Niño different? It's like turning up the heat on your stove, said one observer. A regular El Niño is like cooking on medium. This one has the stove cranked to high.

The U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) tracks weather, oceans, and climate. It says there's a 69 percent chance this El Niño will beat every record.

The UN's World Meteorological Organization (WMO) adds that there's nearly a 100 percent chance El Niño will last through February 2027. That could cause extreme weather all the year.

MEASURING EL NIÑO

Scientists watch a stretch of the central Pacific called the Niño 3.4 region. They compare its average surface temperature over three months with what's normal for the time of year. If the water stays at least 0.5°C warmer than normal for long enough, it counts as an El Niño. This year, surface water climbed more than 2°C above normal, according to the NOAA. Is human-caused warming making strong El Niños more likely? No one is sure. What's clear is that El Niño adds to extreme weather and could push global temperatures to record levels.

The Global Impact

In Canada, expect above-normal temperatures from B.C. and the Yukon to Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, and Atlantic Canada. That could mean more rain and less snow. So you might want to hold off on pulling out your snowboard or toboggan.

Warmer Canadian winters have other downsides. In the West, a light snowpack leaves less river water come springtime. That makes it harder for fish to spawn Less rain also hurts farmers.

Atlantic Canada may get a break, though. El Niño usually means fewer Atlantic hurricanes. In past years, storms like Hurricane Fiona in 2022 brought powerful winds and flooding to the region. Fiona caused more than $800 million in damages. It was the costliest extreme weather event ever on the East Coast

And elsewhere? Australia, Indonesia, and southern Africa will likely turn hotter and drier. Parts of East Africa and South America could get heavy rain and flooding. That could result in failed crops, extreme heat, dry wells, and flooded streets.

UNICEF says about 225 million people globally already don't have enough food. El Niño could push that number to about 274 million by the end of 2027. Youth face some of the biggest challenges. Some will be forced to leave home. Some will go hungry. Some will run short of clean water or get sick.

"This El Niño . . . is a wrecking ball," says the UN's Tom Fletcher.

A new 'super' normal

Canada has already warmed about 2°C since 1948—twice the global average. Frequent super El Niños could make things worse.

"2027 is a sneak peek of what the new normal will be in 2035," says scientist Dr. Zeke Hausfather.

Adds Ewa Jackson, of the Ontario Resource Centre for Climate Adaptation: "Canadians . . . must prepare for a hotter future and act now to avoid the worst impacts." ★

DEFINITIONS

UNICEF: (UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN'S FUND): a UN agency established in 1946, to provide humanitarian and developmental aid to children and mothers worldwide. Operating in over 190 countries and territories, it focuses on health, immunizations, nutrition, clean water and sanitation, education, and emergency relief.

THE LARGEST EL NIÑO EVER?

–An unusually powerful weather pattern is disrupting our winter

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Explain what the **trade winds** are. Where are they located?

2. Describe how an El Niño changes the Pacific Ocean surface water.

3. Describe how this change affects weather all around the world.

4. What is the name of El Niño's counterpart? Describe how this weather pattern behaves.

5. How long do these weather patterns usually last? When do they start and when are they most intense?

6. What do **NOAA** stand for? What is this American agency responsible for?

7. What warnings did this agency issue regarding this year's El Niño?

8. How will El Niño likely affect most of Canada?

9. Why will this likely be problematic in Western Canada? Explain.

THE LARGEST EL NIÑO EVER?

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QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER THOUGHT

1. The article states:

> UNICEF says about 225 million people globally already don't have enough food. El Niño could push that number to about 274 million by the end of 2027. Youth face some of the biggest challenges. Some will be forced to leave home. Some will go hungry. Some will run short of clean water or get sick.

As you see it, why might children be particularly vulnerable to the effects of El Niño? Give examples to support your ideas.

2. The article quotes Ewa Jackson, director of the Ontario Resource Centre for Climate Adaptation: ***"Canadians . . . must prepare for a hotter future and act now to avoid the worst impacts."*** What is your understanding of this quote? As you see it, what can Canadians do now to avoid the worst impacts of a hotter future? Give examples to support your ideas.

3. Experts are forecasting above-average temperatures for the coming Canadian winter. As you see it, what might be the advantages and disadvantages of a warmer winter? Give examples to explain your ideas.

THE LARGEST EL NIÑO EVER?

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QUESTIONS FOR ONLINE EXPLORATION

Note: The links below are listed at **www.lesplan.com/links** for easy access.

1. Learn why experts predict that this El Niño will be the strongest ever:
https://www.yout-ube.com/watch?v=41vjLT_fM4A [2:45]
https://www.yout-ube.com/watch?v=9OixPlkyrhc [3:22]
https://www.cbc.ca/news/science/un-wmo-el-nino-climate-9.7390417 [3:25]

What did you learn?

2. Learn how this El Nino could impact weather patterns around the globe:
https://www.yout-ube.com/watch?v=UEseLvpl9ss [5:30]

Which regions will be the most impacted?

3. Find out what this El Niño will mean for Canada:
https://www.yout-ube.com/watch?v=Ae56xxVyHo8 [3:03]
https://www.yout-ube.com/watch?v=E8gFmKF7T5g [3:25]

What questions do you have?

4. See how this El Nino will differ from previous El Niños:
https://www.theweathernetwork.com/en/news/weather/seasonal/2026-27-western-canadas-winter-sneak-peek

What differences did you notice?

5. How are the United Nations (UN) and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) preparing to support already vulnerable populations that may be impacted by this El Niño?
https://wmo.int/secretariat/celeste-saulo/el-nino-and-humanitarian-action

What did you learn?

THE LARGEST EL NIÑO EVER?

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Imagining a Before and After: Draw (or write) about what you imagine happened before this photo and what is likely to happen next. **A plausible prediction** *builds on details in the photograph, explains the context (why the event happened), is believable, and includes all 5Ws.* **A likely conclusion** *builds on details in the photograph, is logical and believable, and includes all 5Ws.*

Before



Salvadoran farmer Raul Figueroa walks through a dried-up cornfield caused by a lack of rain in Tecoluca, El Salvador, part of the Central American Dry Corridor, Wednesday, Oct. 14, 2026. (AP Photo/Salvador Melendez)

After

Prepared with assistance from TC², The Critical Thinking Consortium. © 2026

THE LARGEST EL NIÑO EVER?

–AN UNUSUALLY POWERFUL WEATHER PATTERN IS DISRUPTING OUR WINTER

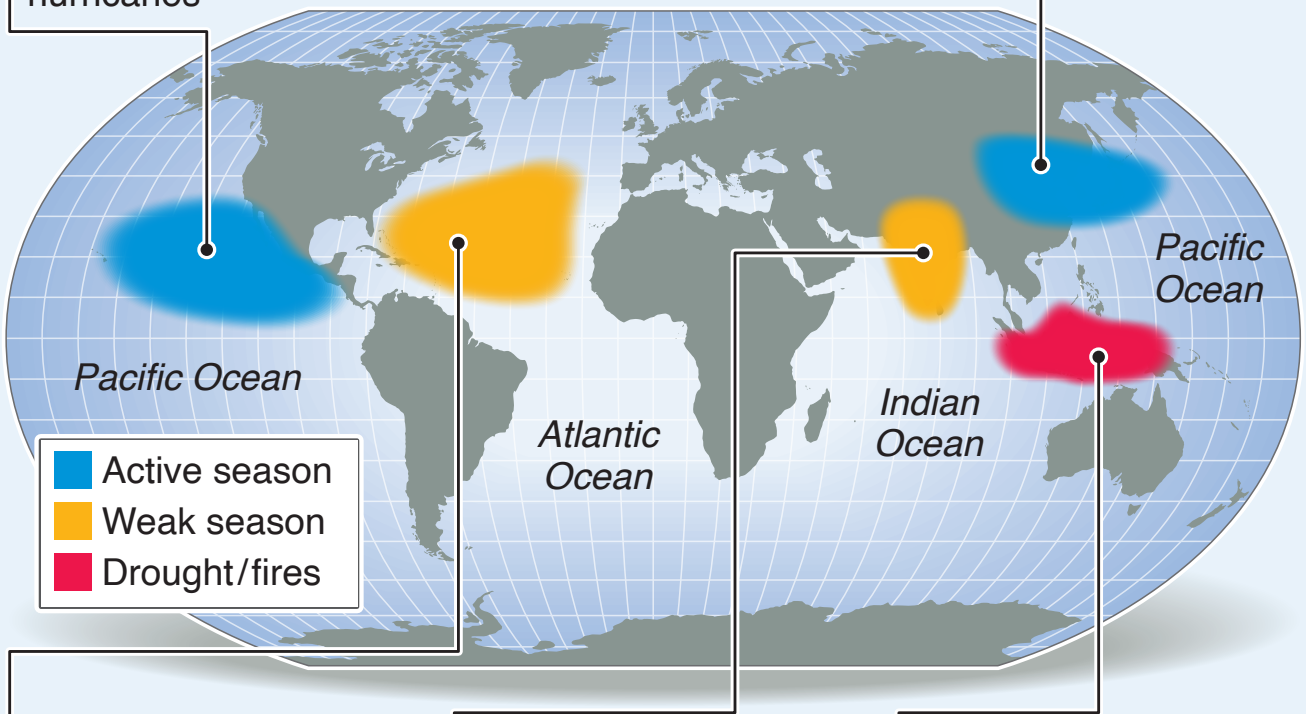
INFOGRAPHIC

How El Niño is affecting global weather

El Niño has been strengthening for several months and is already having a significant impact on weather patterns around the world

East Pacific: El Niño conditions create very active hurricane season, with **22 named storms**, including **12 hurricanes** – 10 of them major. Typical season has 15 named storms and eight hurricanes

East China and Japan: Strong typhoons, including ***Maysak*** and ***Dujuan***, bring widespread flooding and landslides. Total of **10 tropical cyclones** – highest number since 1966



Atlantic: Eerily quiet season as El Niño limits storm formation. Only eight tropical storms and one hurricane – ***Isaias***. Average season would see 10 named storms and five hurricanes by this point

India: El Niño contributes to warmer and drier conditions. Monsoon rain has been **13% below average**, with erratic rainfall patterns posing severe risks to agricultural output

Data as of Oct 20, 2026

Indonesia: Dry weather driven by El Niño is fuelling worst wildfire season since 2015. Almost **two million hectares** of land burned and millions of people exposed to toxic haze from fires

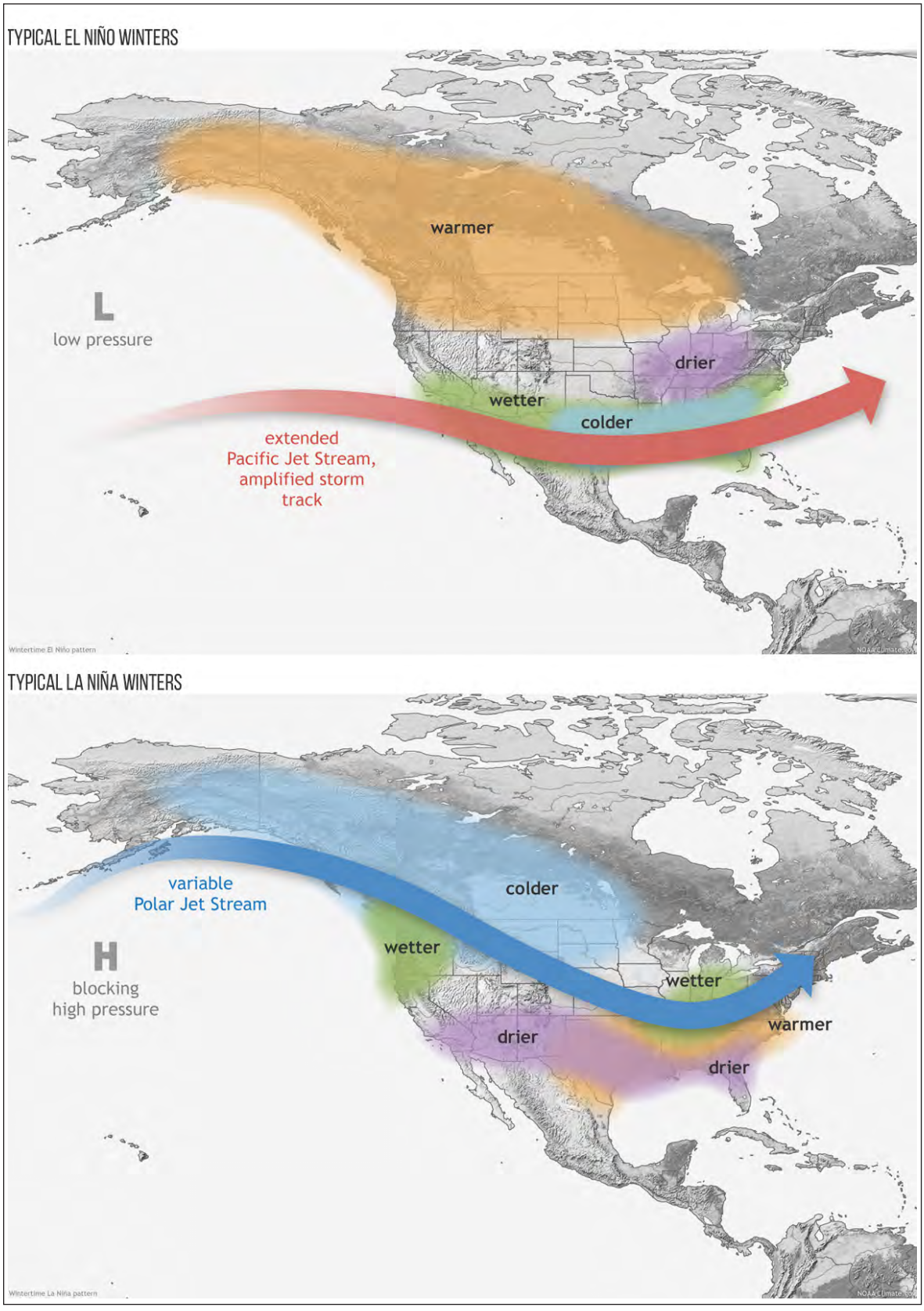
Sources: BBC Weather, NOAA

© GRAPHIC NEWS

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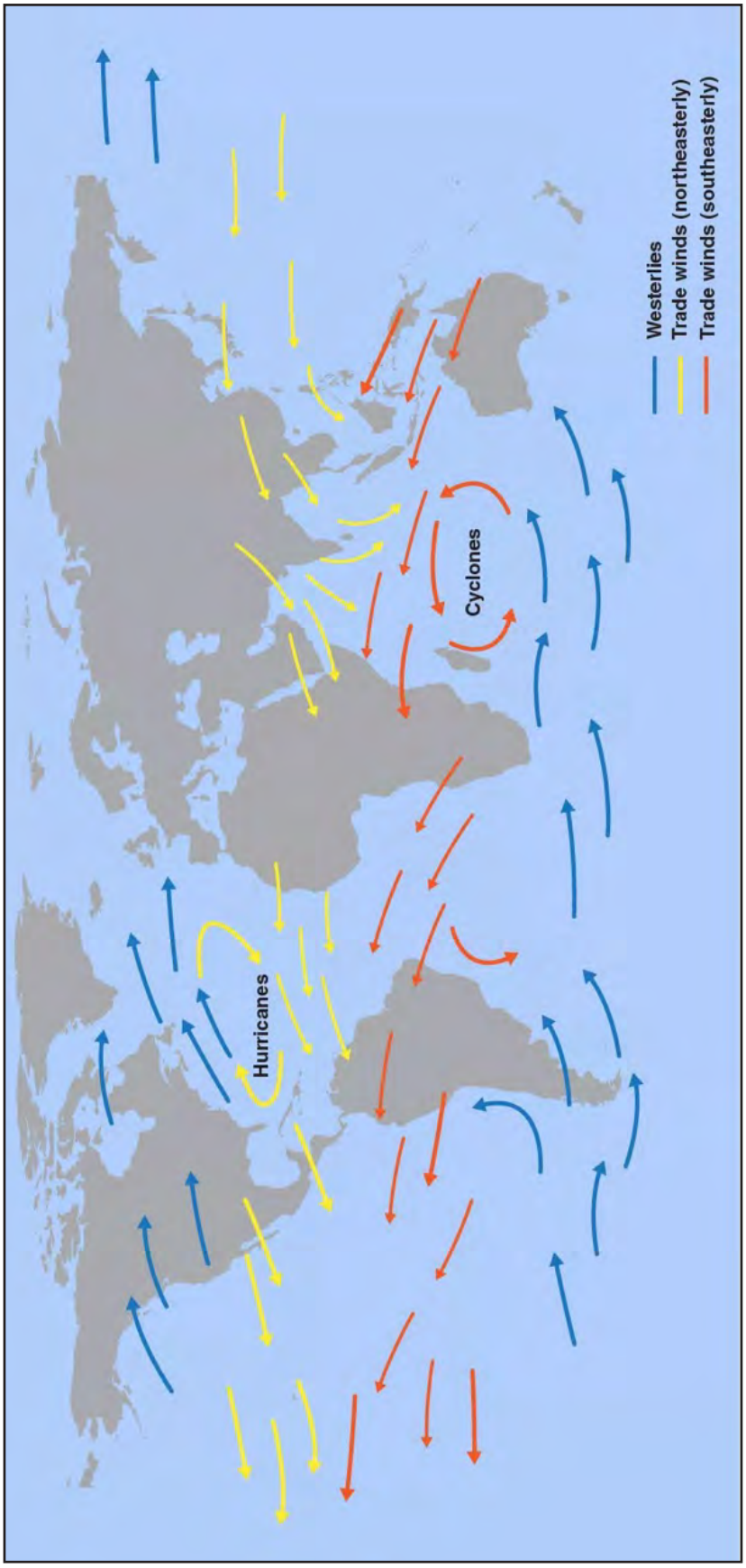
INFOGRAPHIC



https://www.climate.gov/media/13109

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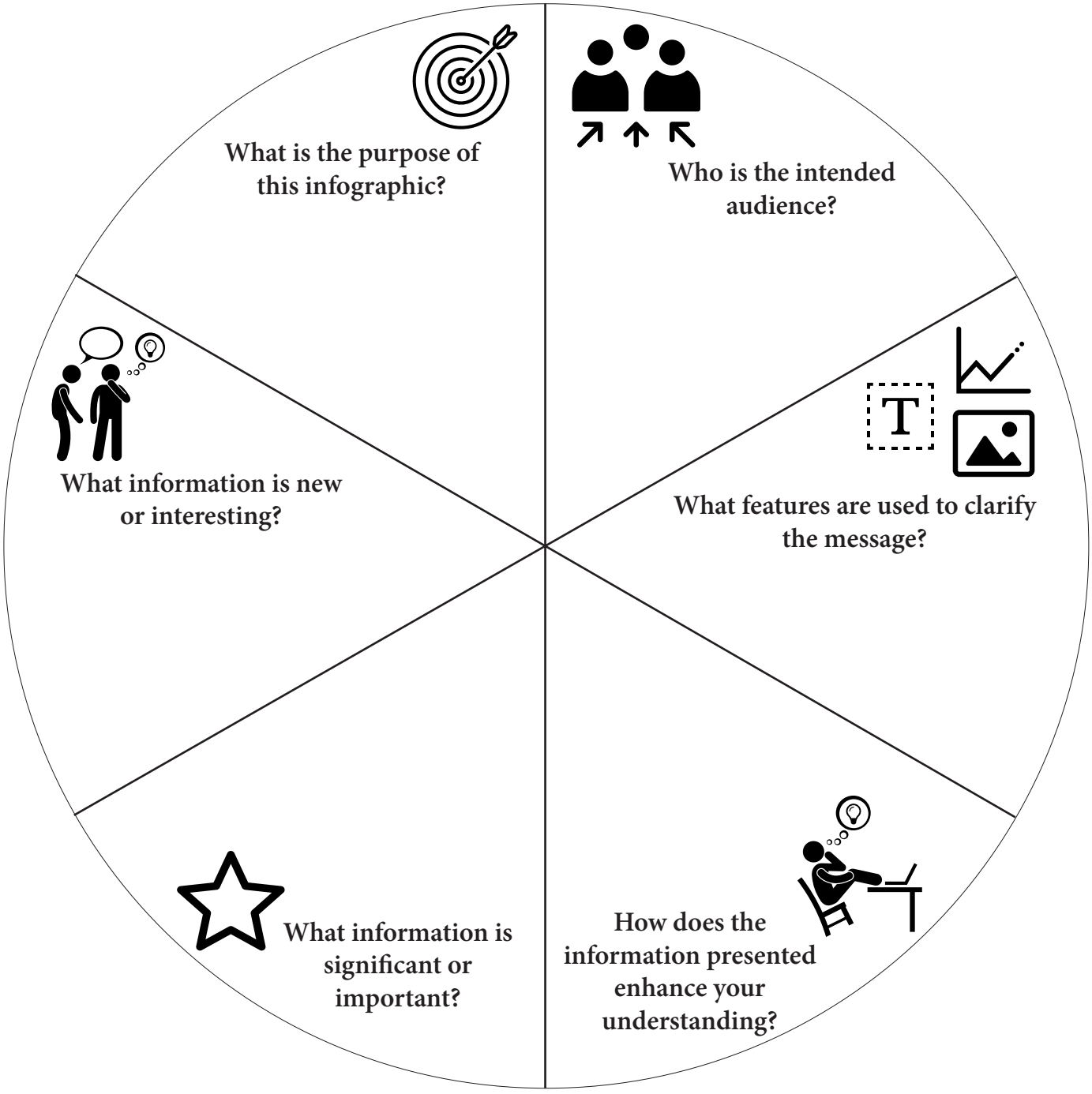
The trade winds blow from east to west near the equator.

https://www.nesdis.noaa.gov/about/k-12-education/atmosphere/what-are-trade-winds

THE LARGEST EL NIÑO EVER?

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ANALYZING AN INFOGRAPHIC



1. What questions do you still have about the topic presented?

MAP ASSIGNMENT
PACIFIC OCEAN

Complete this map assignment to better understand the article ***The Largest El Niño Ever?***

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Obtain the required resources and read all the instructions before starting.

2. Colour your map **after** all labelling is completed.

3. Print in pencil only first, then go over the printing in black ink.

4. Work carefully and neatly.

Resources Required: pencil, black pen, pencil crayons, ruler, eraser and an atlas.

Part A Locate and label the Equator 0°.

Part B Locate and label the following countries that the Equator passes through in CAPITAL letters and shade each as indicated:

Indonesia (orange) Ecuador (orange)
Colombia (pink) Brazil (green)

Part C Locate and label the following countries in North America in CAPITAL letters and shade each as indicated:

Canada (pink) United States (yellow) Mexico (orange)

Part D Locate and label the U.S. states of Hawaii and Alaska.

Part E Locate and label the following countries in South America in CAPITAL letters and shade each as indicated:

Peru (red) Chile (yellow) Argentina (purple)

Part F Locate and label the following countries in Asia in CAPITAL letters and shade each as indicated:

Philippines (green) Malaysia (purple) China (pink)
Japan (purple) Russia (red)

Part G Locate and label the following countries in Oceania in CAPITAL letters and shade each as indicated:

Australia (yellow) New Zealand (green) Papua New Guinea (red)

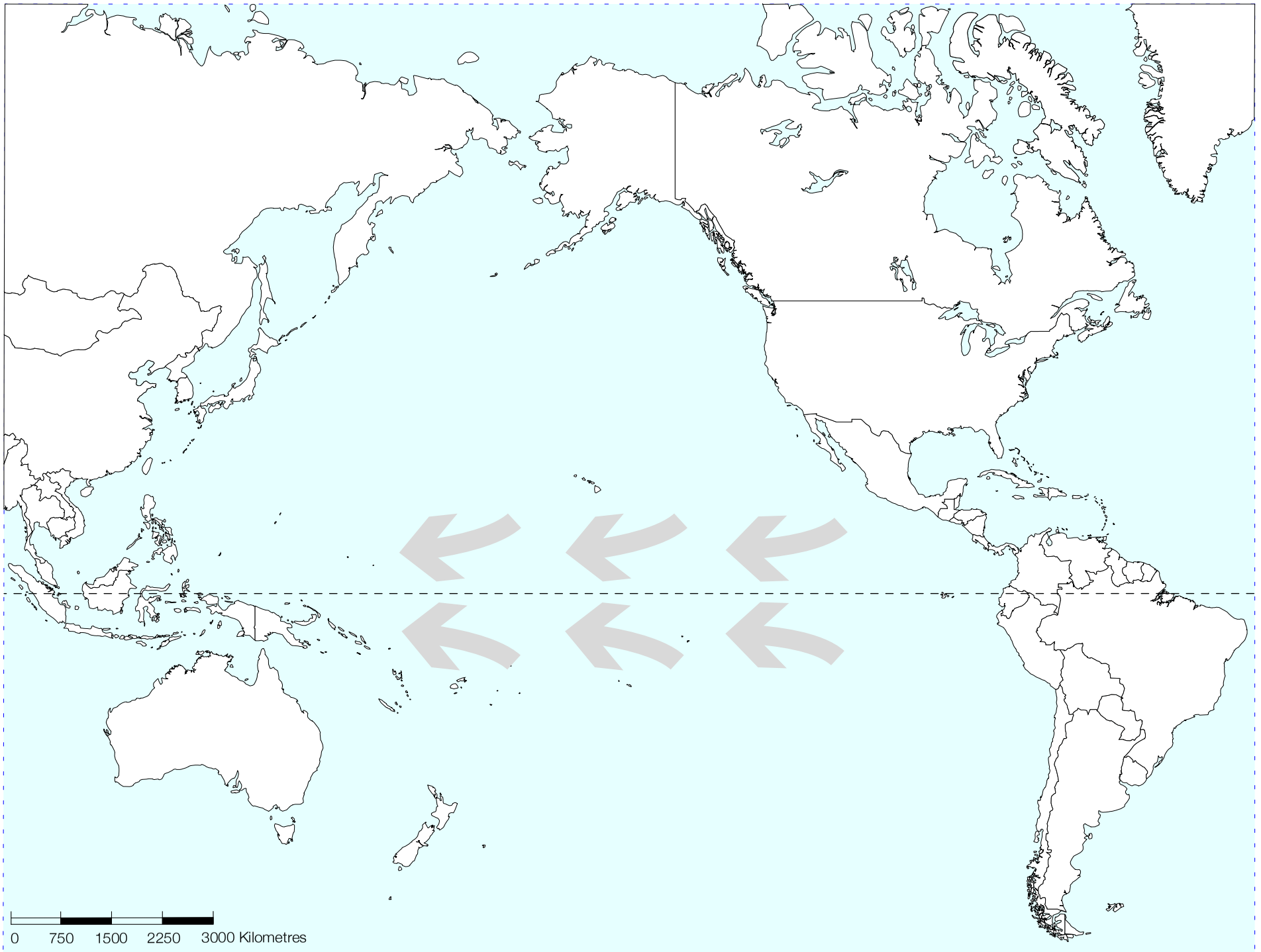
Part H Shade all remaining territory grey.

Part I Locate and label the Trade Winds.

Part J Locate and label the following and shade all ocean water dark blue:

South Pacific Ocean North Pacific Ocean Bering Sea
Philippine Sea Tasman Sea Atlantic Ocean

Part K Complete your map with a frame, title and compass. ★


0 750 1500 2250 3000 Kilometres

THE LARGEST EL NIÑO EVER?

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PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

A. Write the letter that corresponds to the best answer on the line beside each question:

_____ 1. **Where are the trade winds located?**
a) north of the polar jet stream
b) close to the south pole
c) near the equator
d) in the Sahara Desert

_____ 2. **The counterpart of an El Niño's is a:**
a) monsoon
b) jet stream
c) hurricane
d) La Niña

_____ 3. **WMO = World _____ Association**
a) Meteorological
b) Maritime
c) Marine
d) Monsoon

B. Mark the statements T (True) or F (False). If a statement is True, write one important fact to support it on the line below. If a statement is False, write the words that make it true on the line below.

_____ 4. **True** or **False?** The trade winds push warm water from Asia to Africa.

_____

_____ 5. **True** or **False?** Most scientists agree that El Niño is caused by global warming.

_____

_____ 6. **True** or **False?** Most of Canada will likely experience a mild winter this year.

_____

C. Fill in the blanks to complete each sentence.

7. El Niño means _____ _____ in Spanish. (2)

8. NOAA = U.S. National _____ and Atmospheric Administration.

9. A _____ is when heavy rain lasts for several months in some tropical regions.

D. Respond to the following question in paragraph form. ***(Use a separate sheet of paper if necessary.)***

10. As you see it, what is the significance of this story?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Resource page for Students

SETTING A PURPOSE BEFORE READING

There are a number of reasons we read, and setting a purpose for reading – knowing WHY we are reading – helps us to focus on important information and to better understand and remember what we read. It also helps us decide HOW we will read the text.

We don't read all texts for the same purposes or in the same way. For example, we read an instruction manual for a new Blu-ray player for a different reason than we read a book or a website. How we will read it – the strategies we use – will also differ. We are more likely to skim to find the information we need in a manual. Once we find what we need, we might read the instructions carefully to figure out what to do. Then, we stop reading, put the manual down, and carry out the steps. We may have to reread if we get confused or forget what to do.

This is a very different approach than the one we would use to read a book. When we read a book, we usually read cover-to-cover. We read carefully so we don't miss any details because we want to understand the whole story. Sometimes we make connections or create images in our minds as we read to help us better understand what we are reading. Depending on its length, we may put the book down before we finish reading it but we will start reading where we left off.

Good readers are flexible and responsive. This means that they match their reading strategies to their purpose for reading. What types of text do you read? Why do you read them? What strategies do you use to read each of these texts? The chart below is a summary of the main purposes for reading and what each entails.

Purpose for reading	What it looks like
For enjoyment	Usually student-selected. Allows students to choose a variety of genres and forms. Allows students to pursue what interests them while developing reading skills.
To experience something new	Students make connections between their personal experiences and those of people around the world.
To learn more about themselves and others	Students reflect on what they've read and express opinions and perspectives. Students develop a sense of their personal values and make sense of the world around them.
To gain information	Students use the features of informational texts to gather, analyse and apply what they've learned.
To understand issues	Students develop a sense of perspective. Students pose questions, acknowledge other points of view, critique the opinions presented and support opinions with evidence.
To appreciate writing	Students respond to text in ways other than written answers to apply what they've learned in new contexts.
To appreciate use of media to communicate	Students respond to a variety of media formats (e.g., infographics, political cartoons, videos, etc.) and react to how the format supports the meaning of the message.

* Chart adapted from: A Guide to Effective Literacy Instruction, Grades 4-6, p. 11.

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Product details: 8 issues. 38 pages. Available in English and in French for grades 3 and up (1 reading level).

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Currents4Kids.com



- ✓ **Online** and interactive
- ✓ Weekly
- ✓ Auto-graded quizzes
- ✓ Reader responses
- ✓ Links to relevant articles, resources, maps, photos and videos
- ✓ Extension activities

Product details: 40 issues.
One subscription allows all teachers and students access from any device. Available in English and in French.
Grades 3 and up (1 reading level).
Focus on high-interest stories suitable for younger students.

News4Youth.com



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- ✓ Weekly
- ✓ Auto-graded quizzes
- ✓ Reader responses
- ✓ Links to relevant articles, resources, maps, photos and videos
- ✓ Extension activities

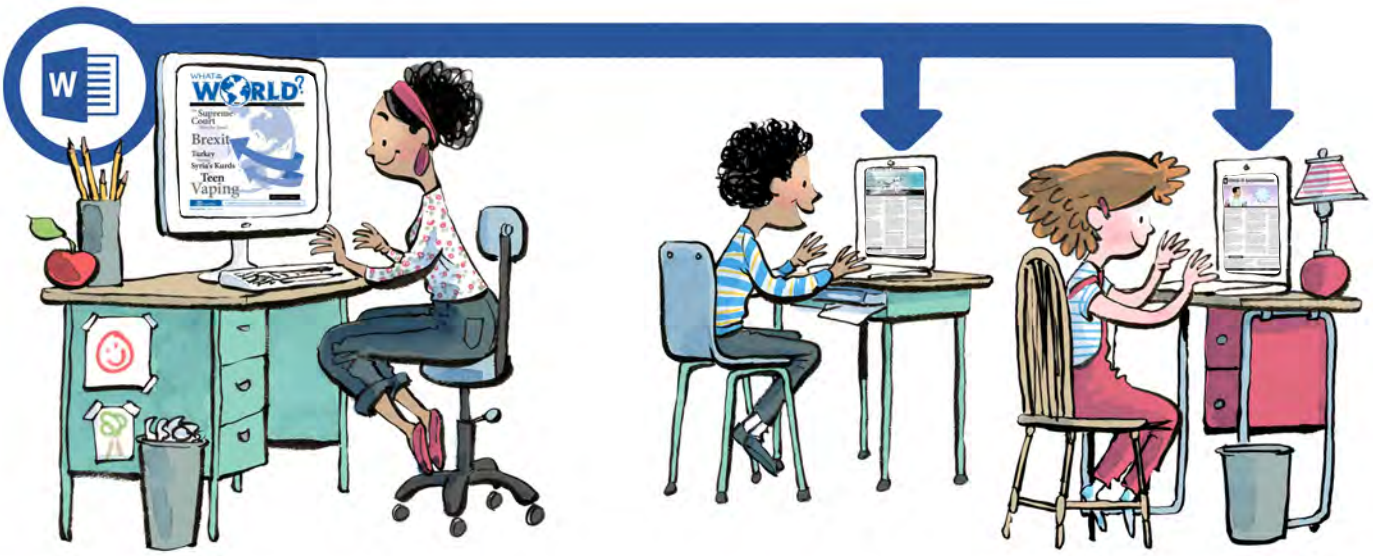
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Students Can Work In Word/Google Docs...



Did you know...

. . . that each issue of ***What In The World?*** includes a **PDF** file (**complete document**) and a **Word** file (**articles and questions only**).

Students can complete assignments directly in the **Word** file. Teachers can email the file to students or post it on the Internet. The **Word** file also allows teachers to:

- easily modify and format content including changing **fonts** and text sizes
- create a **PDF** document and use **Adobe Reader's** 'Read Out Loud Mode'
- save paper and copying costs and help protect the environment
- promote and encourage students' computer skills

Data in the Word file

There are **three** ways to access data from a **Word** file:

1) Select the data you wish to **Copy** and then **Paste** it into any word processing program. Use **Select All** to copy the entire document.

2) Import the entire **Word** file into **LibreOffice** (or another similar program) and then save as a new file.

3) Create a new file in a different format. Use the **Word Save As** command to choose: 1) plain text, 2) rich text format (RTF), 3) Web page (.htm), 4) PDF, etc.

Google Docs and LibreOffice

- You can easily upload the **Word** file to **Google Docs** and share it with students or other teachers.
- You can translate a **Google Docs** file into another language *(see Tools>Translate document)* but you will need to edit the document to suit your requirements. **Google Docs** can translate into over 100 languages including Spanish, Mandarin, and German.
- **LibreOffice** is a free alternate to **Microsoft Office** and offers the same functionality. It's easy to install and use. See: www.libreoffice.org

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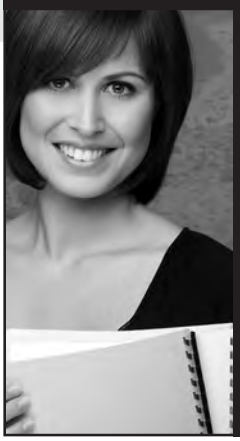
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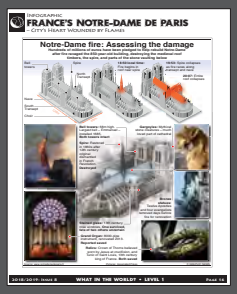
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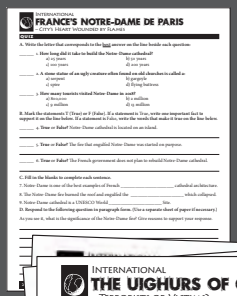
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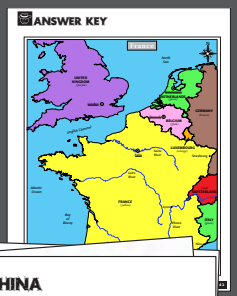
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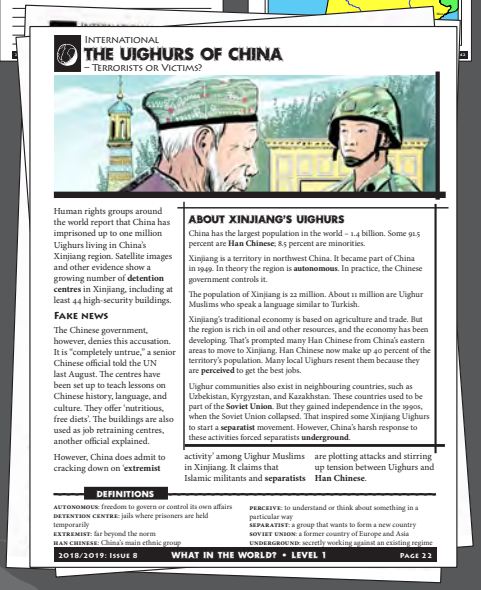
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