

# WHAT <sup>IN THE</sup> WORLD?

LEVEL 2 (GRADES 8 AND UP)

## Disappearing Tuvalu

**Free  
Sample**

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Article	page 5
Questions	page 7
Infographics	page 10
Map	page 13
Quiz	page 15

**SAMPLE EDITION**  
2025/2026: ISSUE 2

## WHAT IN THE WORLD?

Level 2, 2025/2026: Issue 2

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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

## FOREIGN WORKER PROGRAM UNDER FIRE



The youth unemployment rate in Canada hit 14.6 percent in July—double the national unemployment figure of 7.1 percent. That means nearly one in seven young Canadians looking for work couldn't find a job. So what's going on? Some politicians and critics blame Canada's Temporary Foreign Worker . . .

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NATIONAL

## NEW PROJECTS COULD DEFINE CANADA'S FUTURE



Canada is about to build big. On September 11, Prime Minister Mark Carney announced five huge projects that Ottawa says will create jobs and prepare the country for the future. According to Mr. Carney, Canada must "act decisively to build a stronger, more competitive, and prosperous economy for . . .

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INTERNATIONAL

## DRONES OVER POLAND RAISE TENSIONS



It was a shocking international incident. On September 9, over one dozen Russian drones violated Polish airspace, a provocation and test that seemed much like a threat. Poland responded swiftly. It sent F-16 jets to intercept them—and it didn't do so alone. Supported by Dutch, Italian, and German aircraft . . .

*Subscribe to read the full article.* [1 \(888\) 240-2246](tel:18882402246)

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- S. Giffin, Dartmouth, NS





INTERNATIONAL

# A PACIFIC PARADISE IS SINKING

—HOW CLIMATE CHANGE IS FORCING AN ENTIRE NATION TO RELOCATE

## BEFORE READING

1. Write "Tuvalu" on the board. Tell students that this is the name of a tropical island nation. Have them guess where it is located. (*South Pacific Ocean about halfway between Australia and Hawaii.*)
2. Tell students that they are going to experience a virtual tour of Tuvalu that has no narration but does share some information about the nation throughout the video. Provide a shared sheet of paper for small groups and encourage them to jot down words and ideas that come to mind as they take the tour: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ey8Uhis0T2o> [4:51]
3. Debrief ideas after showing the video.
4. Ask students to identify ONE idea that they found interesting and to formulate a question that they may like to have answered while reading the article.
5. Finally, invite students to set a purpose for reading the article, perhaps using the question they identified in this activity, referring to the resource page **Setting A Purpose Before Reading** as needed.

Tuvalu Funafuti Atoll 24 July 2025



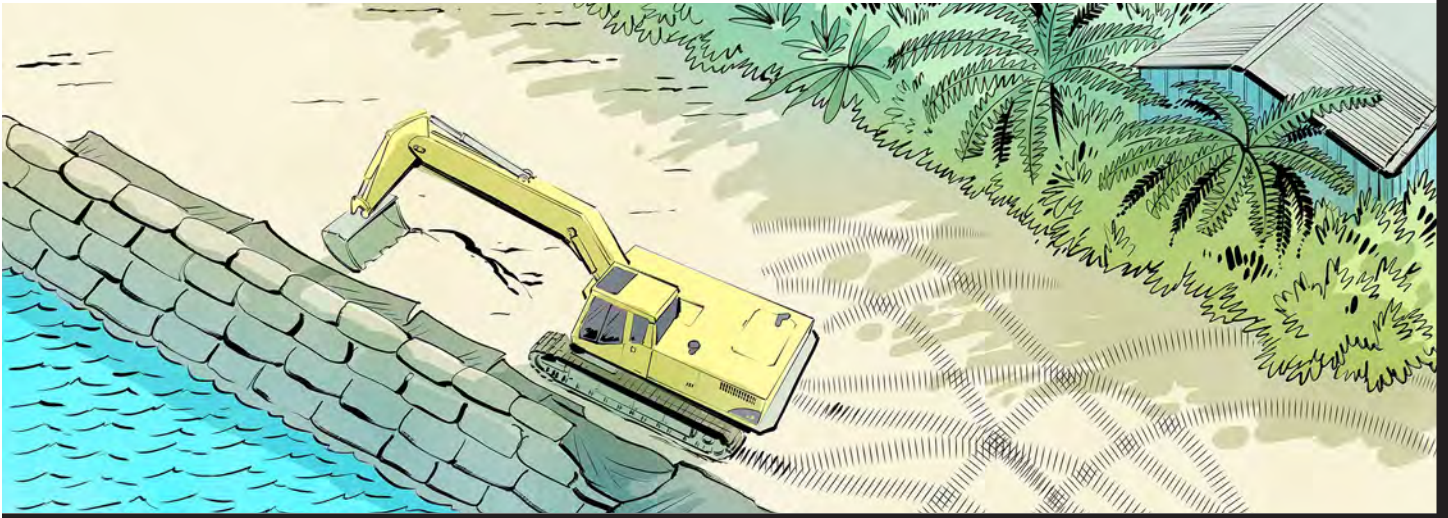
[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Tuvalu\\_Funafuti\\_Atoll\\_from\\_the\\_Airplane.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Tuvalu_Funafuti_Atoll_from_the_Airplane.jpg)



INTERNATIONAL

# A PACIFIC PARADISE IS SINKING

—HOW CLIMATE CHANGE IS FORCING AN ENTIRE NATION TO RELOCATE



Imagine you had to leave the only country you've ever known and loved because the ocean was swallowing your home. How would you feel? That's the situation facing the inhabitants of Tuvalu, a nation of 11,000 people situated halfway between Australia and Hawaii.

This summer, more than 80 percent of Tuvalu's population applied for special "climate visas" that would allow them to move to Australia. The reason? As soon as 2050, all of Tuvalu may be under water.

## THE BEAUTY OF TUVALU

Tuvalu may be the first country to **succumb** to rising sea levels due to climate change and it probably won't be the last. But its loss would be a heartbreak.

The island nation is a tiny jewel. At just 26 square kilometres—about one-quarter the size of Disney World—it is made up of turquoise lagoons, swaying palm trees and coral **atolls** that glow in the tropical sun. Its crystal-clear waters, white sandy beaches, and vibrant marine life make

it one of the most unspoiled and breathtaking places in the Pacific.

The country consists of nine islands and atolls. Tuvalu means "eight standing together" in Polynesian—the official language along with English. The name refers to the eight populated atolls and speaks to how connected the people feel to one another.

## THE OCEAN'S SCARY RISE

Yet that connection may soon be lost as Tuvaluans scatter to safer places. On average, Tuvalu is now only two metres above sea level—just 4.5 metres at its highest point. A NASA study showed that in 2023, the sea level around Tuvalu had risen 15 centimetres more than the 30-year average. If this trend continues, most of Tuvalu's land and infrastructure will be below its high-tide level by 2050.

Tuvalu already struggles with saltwater contamination. Seawater seeps into the country's drinking water wells. The ocean contaminates crops and trees.

Rising waters also make Tuvalu more vulnerable to the storm surges

extreme weather can cause. So climate change is literally hitting home.

## A WARMING PLANET

That's not surprising. Earth's average surface temperature in 2024 was the hottest on record, NASA scientists report. Compared to the mid-19th century, 2024 was warmer by about 1.47 degrees Celsius.

Why look so far back? That's because since the 1800s, humans have been the main drivers of climate change, study after study has shown. The Industrial Revolution began at the end of the 19th century. That's when humans began burning fossil fuels like coal, oil, and gas on a large scale.

We've seen the results of climate change for years now. These include droughts, increased wildfires, melting polar ice, rising sea levels and larger, more frequent storms.

## THE FALEPILI AGREEMENT

So faced with rising sea levels, Tuvalu is in the unenviable position of planning the first migration of an entire country. In 2023, Tuvalu and Australia signed the Falepili Union

## DEFINITIONS

**ATOLL:** an island or reef that surrounds a lagoon. An atoll is shaped like a ring.

**SUCCUMB:** to give way in the face of an overwhelming force



treaty. It's the first agreement of its kind.

"For the first time there is a country that has committed legally to recognize the future statehood and sovereignty of Tuvalu despite the **detrimental** impact of climate changed-induced sea level rise," said Tuvaluan Prime Minister Feleti Teo.

As part of the agreement, 280 Tuvaluans per year can settle in Australia as permanent residents. They can travel freely in and out of the country, and will have the same health, education, housing, and employment rights that Australians enjoy. They can also return to Tuvalu if conditions improve.

The relocation program is being called a 'climate visa.' Australia's Foreign Affairs Minister, Penny Wong, said the program lets Tuvaluans settle "with dignity as climate impacts worsen."

The Falepili program, combined with other migration pathways to Australia and New Zealand, could see up to four percent of Tuvalu's population migrate each year.

## MIXED REACTIONS

The first round of applications opened in June in the form of a lottery. It cost \$25 Australian (about \$22 Canadian) to enter the draw. Including family members, 8750 people vied for the 280 spots.

Not everyone supports the program.

"I'm sure, given the 'choice', most Tuvaluans would prefer their homeland to remain above sea level and to prosper where their ancestors did," wrote Enele Sopoaga, Leader of the Opposition in Tuvalu. He pointed out that Australia's fossil fuel exports contribute to the same climate change impacts that threaten Tuvalu.

## FLEEING CLIMATE CHANGE

Tuvalu is not the only country where climate change has forced relocation. Other island nations are also vulnerable to flooding. One example is the Maldives **archipelago** in the Indian Ocean. Most of its 1200 islands are less than 1.2 metres above sea level.

And climate change has already impacted certain regions. In 2023, Cyclone Freddy—the longest-lasting tropical cyclone recorded—soaked southern Malawi, displacing 650,000 people. Other countries were affected by the severe storm as well.

In 2024, about 1200 members of the Indigenous Guna community relocated from an island off the coast of Panama to the mainland. The cause? Rising sea levels were slowly sinking the island. Also in 2024, 300 people from Newtok, Alaska, had to relocate because the village was on melting permafrost.

The Lower 48 U.S. States have also been affected. Around 2.5 million Americans in 1.4 million homes live in areas at risk of a severe coastal flooding. Mexico and the Caribbean are caught in the climate-change crossfire, as well, with the Gulf of Mexico rising three times faster than the global average. And in Canada, wildfires have forced tens of thousands from their homes. Bottom line? By 2070, over three billion people could be living outside of humanity's 'climate niche'—the specific range of temperatures in which human beings thrive.

But for some, the opportunity is economic. On a small island nation like Tuvalu, basic supplies need to be brought in by plane or boat. The cost of living is high.

Metia Lotoala runs a lodge in Tuvalu. "I have a business," he said. "I can work here and feed my family and live a comfortable life. But... most people have no way to make money. Most work you can find pays \$5 per hour."

## A GLIMMER OF HOPE

All the same, Tuvaluans are not passively waiting for their homeland to disappear. The Tuvalu Coastal Adaptation Project (TCAP) is working on solutions. That includes building land that will be above sea level and act as a buffer.

There's also hope that NASA is wrong. Paul Kench, a coastal geomorphologist at the National University of Singapore, has been studying Tuvalu. He says that the atoll islands are always transforming themselves. They gain landmass in some areas while

other areas erode. His work, however, focuses only on landmass—not habitability.

## A NATION ONLINE ONLY?

No one can be sure what the future holds for Tuvalu. There has even been an effort to preserve it digitally.

"Our land, our ocean, our culture are the most precious assets of our people—and to keep them safe from harm, no matter what happens in the physical world, we'll move them to the cloud," said Tuvalu's minister for foreign affairs, Simon Kofe.

The Digital Nation is creating a virtual copy of the islands. It is also trying to preserve the nation's heritage. Tuvaluans are submitting stories, photos, and even dances.

In 2023, Tuvalu's government declared that the state would continue to exist despite the threat to its physical future.

So in one form or another, it seems Tuvalu is determined to survive. ★

## DEFINITIONS

**ARCHIPELAGO:** a group of islands clustered together in a body of water, like an ocean, sea, or lake

**DETRIMENTAL:** harmful or causing damage:



INTERNATIONAL

# A PACIFIC PARADISE IS SINKING

—HOW CLIMATE CHANGE IS FORCING AN ENTIRE NATION TO RELOCATE

## COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Where is Tuvalu located? What is the population of this country?

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2. List at least three other important geographical and cultural facts about this small country.

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3. What is the average height of the country above sea level?

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4. What did a NASA study show happened in 2023? What is expected to occur by 2050?

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5. What agreement did Tuvalu sign with Australia regarding its population? When did this happen?

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6. List two important details of the agreement.

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7. How many residents of Tuvalu applied for the “climate visa” recently?

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8. Explain why Tuvalu may not disappear below the waves.

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INTERNATIONAL

# A PACIFIC PARADISE IS SINKING

—HOW CLIMATE CHANGE IS FORCING AN ENTIRE NATION TO RELOCATE

## QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER THOUGHT

1. At the 2023 COP, an annual UN Convention on Climate Change, Simon Kofe, Tuvalu's minister for foreign affairs, grabbed the attention of the world and other COP attendees. Mr. Kofe delivered a 23-second video message to the conference, while standing knee-deep in the waters surrounding Tuvalu, to highlight the rising sea level threat to his country.

As you see it, what is the responsibility of large nations whose carbon emissions are negatively impacting the living conditions in smaller countries who contribute little to climate change? Explain.

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2. Tuvalu's minister for foreign affairs, Simon Kofe, said: *“Our land, our ocean, our culture are the most precious assets of our people —and to keep them safe from harm, no matter what happens in the physical world, we’ll move them to the cloud.”*

How might this work? Give specific examples to explain your thinking.

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3. Imagine you had to leave the only country or region you've ever known and loved because the conditions created by climate change were making it unsafe or impossible to stay.

How would you feel? What priorities would you set for yourself and your family? Give examples to support your ideas.

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INTERNATIONAL

# A PACIFIC PARADISE IS SINKING

—HOW CLIMATE CHANGE IS FORCING AN ENTIRE NATION TO RELOCATE

## QUESTIONS FOR ONLINE EXPLORATION

*Note:* The links below are listed at [www.lesplan.com/links](http://www.lesplan.com/links) for easy access.

1. Learn more about the uncertain future for the nation of Tuvalu:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IN4VXwSTNwo> [7:02]

What questions do you have?

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2. Discover how Tuvalu began its planning to relocate as a country:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aKdU7PxyKkc> [7:00]

What do you wonder?

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3. Learn about the Falepili Union Treaty struck between Tuvalu and Australia to allow Tuvaluans to migrate to Australia on a climate visa: <https://www.dfat.gov.au/geo/tuvalu/australia-tuvalu-falepili-union-treaty>

What did you learn?

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4. How do you capture and document a country? Explore these creative ideas to ensure that if Tuvalu loses its physical location, its citizens can continue to function as a nation:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IWEdkWnVkJo> [7:46]

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=InTVdhufUUw> [10:40]

What questions do you have? Explain.

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5. Watch this documentary made by 24-year-old Tuvaluan Grace Malie in her role as a youth delegate to COP28 in Dubai in 2023. In it, Tuvaluans share their feelings about leaving their homeland:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H-ar5drhjzU> [21:12]

What stood out to you in this documentary? Explain.

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6. Explore how some Tuvaluans who are living in Australia, are trying to preserve their culture, traditions and language:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tMRWhta1aLQ> [5:40]

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INTERNATIONAL

# A PACIFIC PARADISE IS SINKING

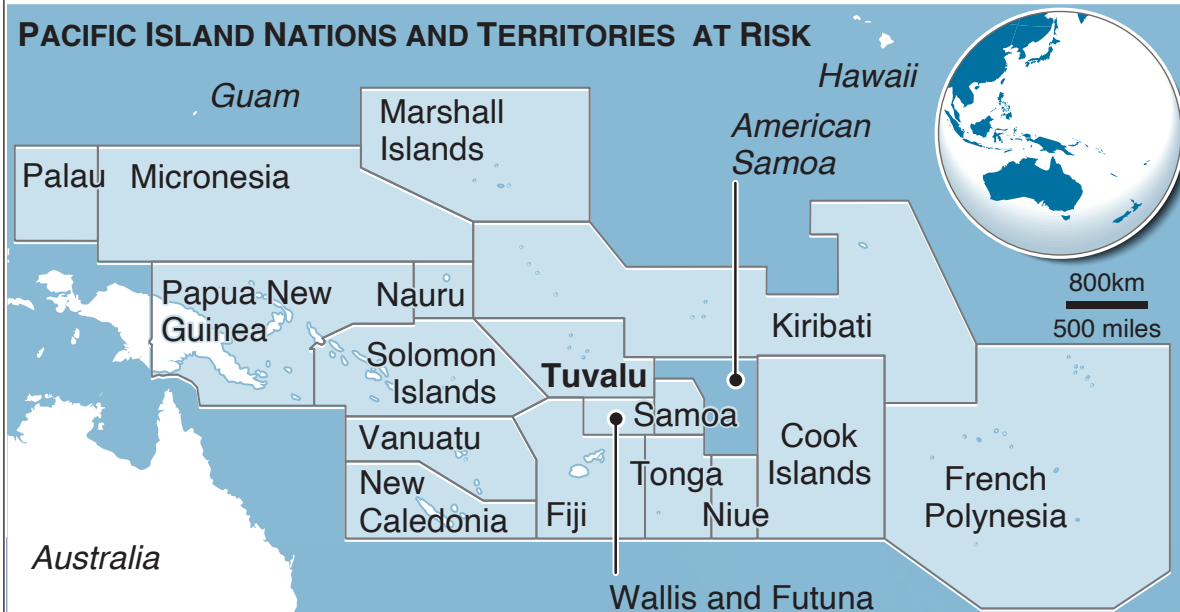
—HOW CLIMATE CHANGE IS FORCING AN ENTIRE NATION TO RELOCATE

## INFOGRAPHIC

### Tuvalu citizens try to escape rising sea levels

A third of Tuvalu's 10,000 citizens have applied for Australian "climate visas" – two of the island nation's nine coral atolls are already submerged and the archipelago could be uninhabitable within 80 years

#### PACIFIC ISLAND NATIONS AND TERRITORIES AT RISK



#### Tuvalu projected days' flooding per year\*

300 days

50th percentile

Likely

Very likely

200 days

100 days

0.1m

0.2m

0.3m

0.4m

0.5m

0.6m

0.7m

2022-37

2035-56

2045-70

2057-84

2066-97

2074-2100

2081-2100+

\*Local sea level rise at 3.0°C global warming, 0.5m flood threshold

Sources: France 24, NASA

Picture: Getty Images

© GRAPHIC NEWS

The "climate visa" has been hailed as an important response to migration driven by climate-change but has also raised fears that nations at risk could suffer a brain drain, where skilled professionals and talented young people abandon their homelands and seek opportunities elsewhere. 3,125 out of a total population of 10,643 people (according to 2022 census) applied for the random ballot within four days of it opening.



INTERNATIONAL

# A PACIFIC PARADISE IS SINKING

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## INFOGRAPHIC

### Australia offers lifeline to Tuvalu

Australia has offered the island nation of Tuvalu a lifeline to help residents escape rising seas and increasing storms brought about by climate change

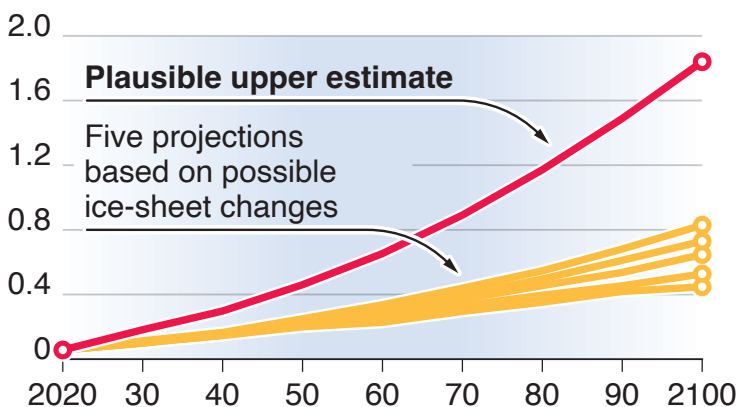


Australian Prime Minister **Anthony Albanese** (right) is offering to relocate **280** Tuvaluans to Australia every year (at which rate, it would take 40 years for Tuvalu's entire population to migrate)



FUNAFUTI  
ATOLL

#### PROJECTED TUVALU SEA LEVEL RISES (m)



#### TUVALU

Polynesian archipelago  
(3 reef islands, 6 coral  
atolls, 100+ islets)

Prime Minister: **Kausea  
Natano** (above)

Largest habitation:  
**Funafuti Atoll**

Capital: **Fongafale**

Population: **11,000**

GDP: **\$55m (2021 est.)**

Area: **26km<sup>2</sup>**

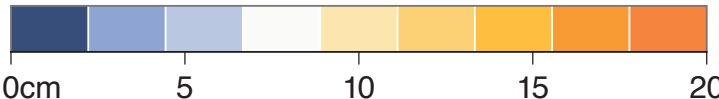
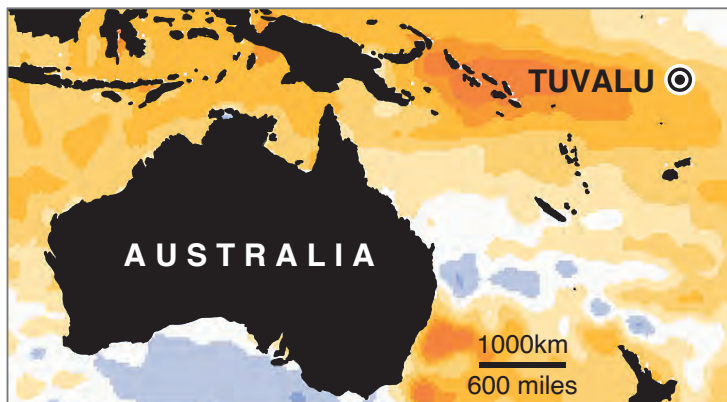
Highest elevation: **4.5m**

Sources: AP, NASA, Zenodo, CIA World Factbook

Pictures: NASA, Getty

© GRAPHIC NEWS

#### SEA LEVEL RISE SINCE 1993



Australia is offering residents of the island nation of Tuvalu a lifeline to help them escape from rising seas and increased storms brought about by climate change.

Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese has introduced an initial plan to allow up to 280 Tuvaluans to migrate to Australia each year.

With a population of 11,000 inhabitants, Tuvalu, and its low-lying atolls, is particularly vulnerable to global warming.

In June 2023, NASA's Sea Level Change Team said that much of Tuvalu's land and critical infrastructure would sit below the level of the current high tide by 2050, and that by the end of the century, Tuvalu would experience more than 100 days of flooding per year.

If all Tuvaluans decide to take up Australia's offer, and if the cap remains unchanged, it will take 40 years for Tuvalu's entire population to relocate to Australia.

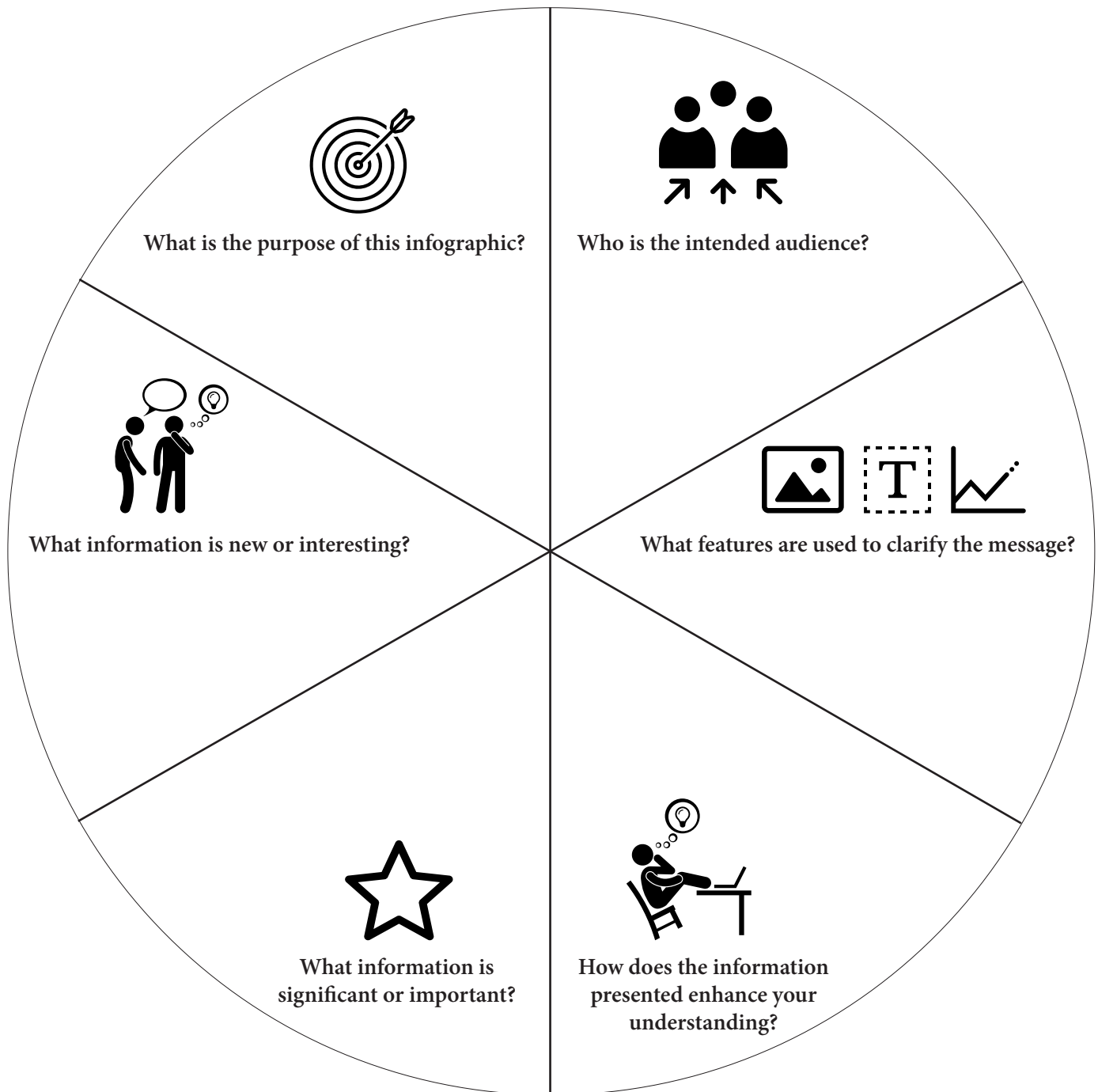


INTERNATIONAL

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## ANALYZING AN INFOGRAPHIC



What questions do you still have about the topic presented?

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# MAP ASSIGNMENT WESTERN OCEANIA

Complete this map assignment to better understand the article *A Pacific Paradise Is Sinking*.

## 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 following countries in CAPITAL letters and shade each as indicated:

Papua New Guinea (green)	Solomon Islands (red)
Vanuatu (yellow)	Fiji (orange)

**Part B** Locate and label the French territory of New Caledonia in CAPITAL letters and shade it pink.

**Part C** Locate and label the capital of each country and territory above and underline each city name.

**Part D** In the expanded frame, locate and label the nine islands that make up Tuvalu.

**Part E** Locate and label the capital of Tuvalu and underline.

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

Australia (yellow)	Indonesia (orange)
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**Part G** Locate and label the following cities:

Brisbane	Gold Coast
Toowoomba	Townsville
Cairns	

**Part H** Locate and label the following and shade all salt water dark blue:

Coral Sea	Solomon Sea
Bismarck Sea	Torres Strait
Gulf of Carpentaria	Pacific Ocean

**Part I** Locate and label the island of New Guinea.

**Part J** Locate and label the Cape York Peninsula.

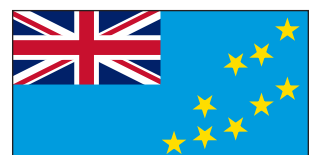
**Part K** Locate and label the Great Barrier Reef.

**Part L** Draw and label the Tropic of Capricorn (23° S).

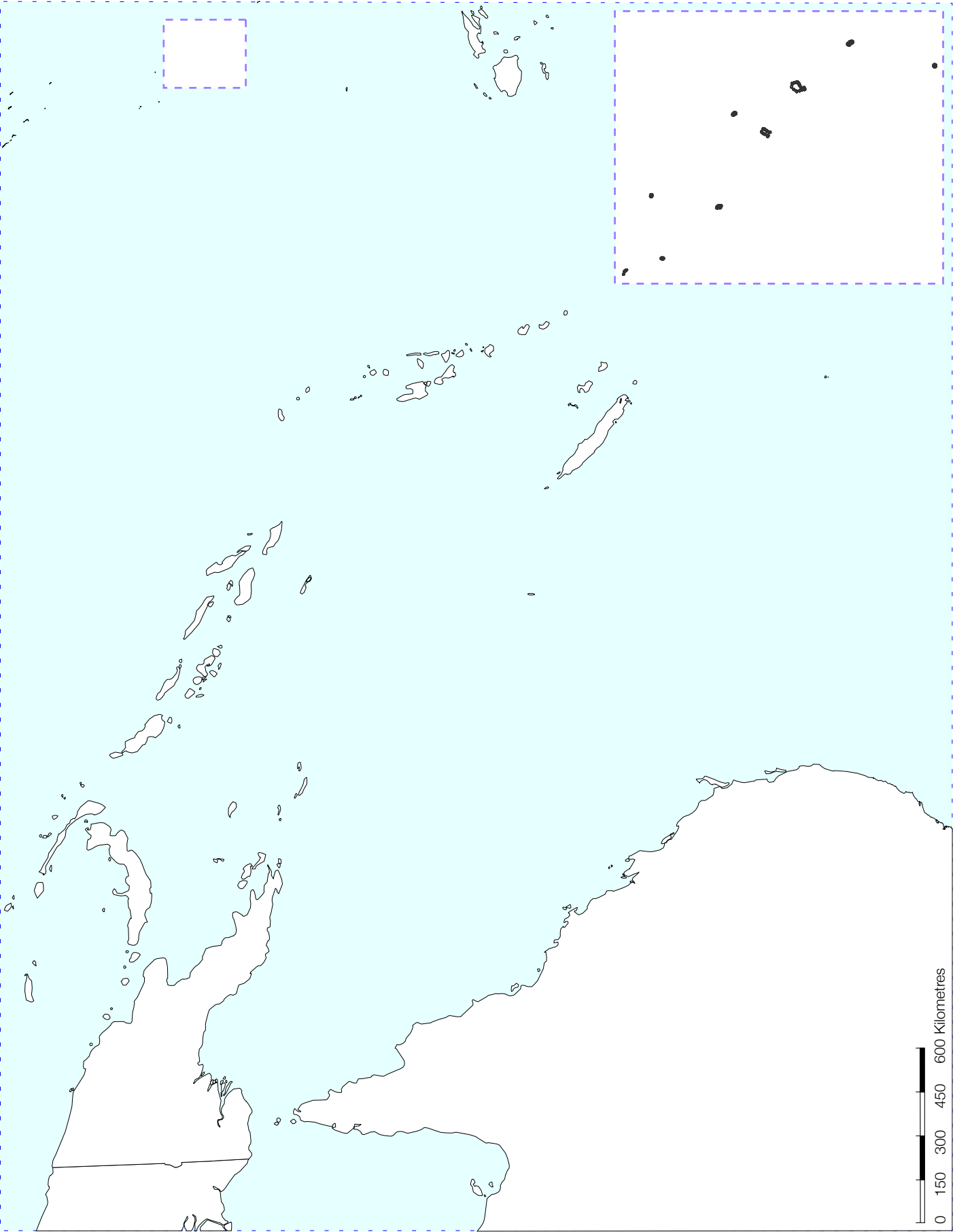
**Part M** Complete your map with a frame, title and compass. ★



Australia



Tuvalu





# A PACIFIC PARADISE IS SINKING

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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. What is the population of Tuvalu?

- a) 5000
- c) 57,000
- e) 450,000

- b) 11,000
- d) 105,000

\_\_\_\_\_ 2. An island or reef that surrounds a lagoon is called a(n):

- a) shoal
- c) lagoon
- e) atoll

- b) peninsula
- d) bank

\_\_\_\_\_ 3. A NASA study predicts that all of Tuvalu will be below the high-tide level by:

- a) 2030
- c) 2050
- e) 2100

- b) 2045
- d) 2080

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 total area of Tuvalu is 26 square kilometres.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ 5. **True or False?** A group of islands clustered together is called an archipelago.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ 6. **True or False?** Tuvalu means “Eight standing together” in Polynesian.

\_\_\_\_\_

C. Fill in the blanks to complete each sentence.

7. Tuvalu is made up of \_\_\_\_\_ islands and atolls.

8. Tuvalu and \_\_\_\_\_ signed the Falepili Union treaty.

9. Over 80 percent of the residents of Tuvalu applied for a “climate \_\_\_\_\_.”

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 the Falepili Union treaty? Give reasons to explain your answer.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



# 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.



**ASSESSMENT RUBRIC**

This rubric may be helpful in providing students with formative, strength-based feedback and/or assessing students' responses holistically.

	<b>Emerging</b>	<b>Developing</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>Extending</b>
<b>Supports thinking</b>	Answers or reflections are brief and include obvious facts/details/evidence.	Answers or reflections are general and supported with some relevant facts/details/evidence.	Answers or reflections are clearly supported with specific, relevant facts/details/evidence.	Answers or reflections are insightful and supported with specific, relevant facts/details/evidence.
<b>Shows understanding</b>	Responses show a basic understanding of the text, topic, issue or message.	Responses are thoughtful and show a general understanding of the text, topic, issue or message.	Responses are thoughtful and show a complete understanding of the text, topic, issue or message.	Responses are insightful and show a deep understanding of the text, topic, issue or message. May synthesize ideas or explain the 'so what'.
<b>Thinks critically</b>	Makes straightforward connections or inferences. Focuses on retelling.	Makes logical connections to self (T:S) and/or background knowledge (T:S). Inferences are logical.	Makes meaningful connections to self. Considers ideas between texts (T:T). Inferences are plausible.	Makes powerful connections that go between texts and/or beyond the text (T:W). Inferences are plausible and insightful.

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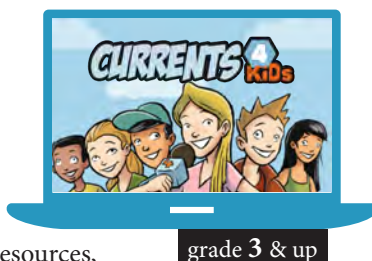
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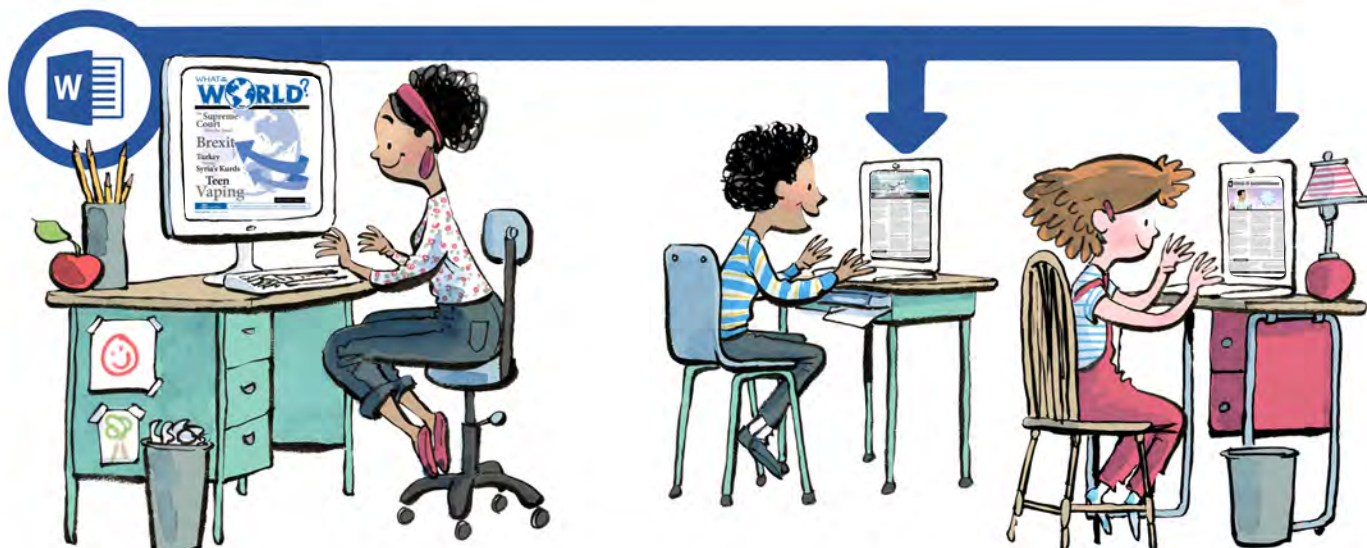
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## Did you know...

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- You can easily upload the Word file to **Google Docs** and share it with students or other teachers.
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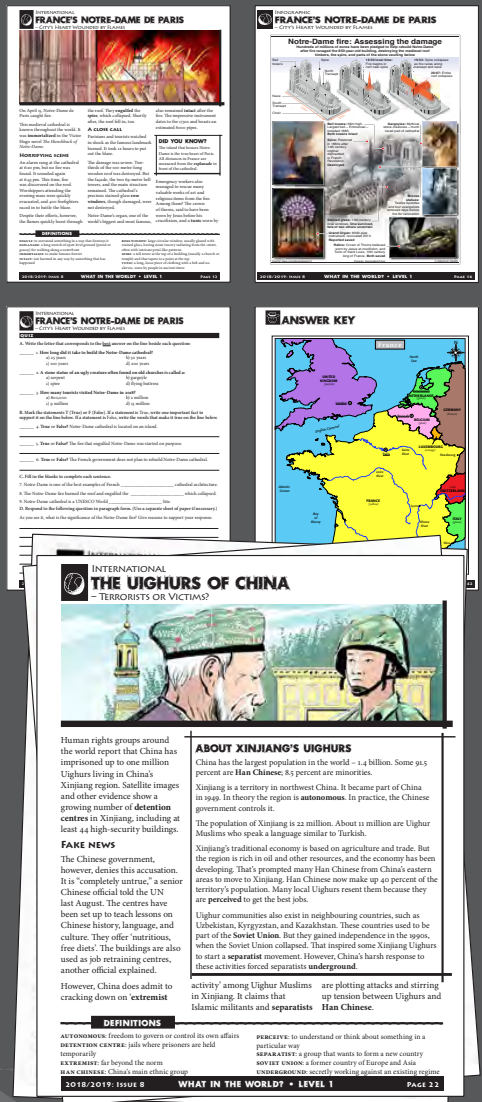
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