

Disaster in the gulf

Level

Intermediate and above

Tasks

Matching a set of words with their definitions
 Matching headings with the correct paragraphs
 Reading an article about the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico
 Deciding if words are verbs, nouns or both
 Discussing questions arising from the article

How to use the lesson

1 Tell students the lesson is about the BP oil spill disaster in the Gulf of Mexico. Issue the worksheet and let students match the words with their definitions. Do a quick check on the answer.

Answers:

(1) - (c) (2) - (a) (3) - (d) (4) - (b)

2 Students match the correct heading to the correct paragraph. They can work in pairs to check their answer.

Answers:

(a) - (3) (b) - (4) (c) - (1) (d) - (2)

3 Students read the complete article. Ask the students to summarise the events (i.e. *explosion / workers killed / leak / attempts to stop oil pouring out*) and to tell you why BP was criticised (e.g. *maybe put money above safety / first estimates of volume of oil leaking were too low*). You may wish to look at any useful vocabulary at this point: e.g. *foresee, stem, cap, habitats, dividends, haul*.

4 Ask students to decide if the words are nouns (N), verbs (V) or both (B).

Answers:

Nouns: *explosion / barrel / equipment*

Verbs: *plummet / invest / pour /*

Both: *leak / range / spill / fund / estimate / blame / drill / sign / risk*

5 Divide students into small groups to discuss the questions. Students report back on their discussion to the whole class. Encourage questions and discussion. Finally, give language feedback on any major language errors you notice.

Related websites

Send your students to these websites, or just take a look yourself.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/interactive/2010/may/20/deepwater-horizon-gulf-oil-spill-gulf>

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/in_depth/americas/2010/oil_disaster/default.stm

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/us_and_canada/10317116.stm

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bp_oil_spill