Germany's Merkel warns floods highlight climate dangers

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Germany's leader has expressed her fears about climate change after visiting the devastation caused by the severe flooding in Europe. Chancellor Angela Merkel said she was horrified by the destruction across swathes of her country. She visited some of the hardest-hit areas in Germany and listened to accounts of the disaster from local residents. She told reporters: "It's shocking. I can pretty much say that the German language does not have words to describe the destruction that has been wreaked." Ms Merkel said the world had to escalate its efforts to tackle the climate crisis. She said: "We must hurry. We have to be faster in the fight against climate change."

Torrential rains caused many of Europe's major rivers to swell and overflow last week. Many burst their banks and caused flash floods in adjacent towns and villages. The floodwaters washed away houses, roads and bridges across Germany, Belgium, Luxembourg, Switzerland and the Netherlands. The death toll stands at 190, with many more people missing. Towns are now covered in debris. The floods reshaped many parts of towns beyond recognition, which Ms Merkel described as being "surreal". Armin Laschet, the premier of the flood-stricken state of North-Rhine Westphalia, said the clean-up operation would take "years". He questioned Germany's preparedness for floods and the effectiveness of flood defences.

Sources: yahoo.com / *politico.eu* / *swissinfo.ch*

Writing

Climate change is not high on the to-do list of most governments. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

leader / fears / climate change / destruction / swathes / disaster / language / crisis / torrential rain / rivers / floodwaters / bridges / debris / surreal / clean-up / surreal

True / False

1) Germany's leader was devastated by the recent floods in Europe. T / F

2) Ms Merkel was horrified at the destruction across swathes of Germany. T / F

3) Ms Merkel said German did not have the words to describe the damage. T / F

4) Ms Merkel said the world had to tackle escalators. T / F

5) Many of Europe's major rivers became swollen and their banks burst. T / F

6) The article says over 190 people are still missing in the floods. T / F

7) Ms Merkel said what she saw in flooded towns was surreal. T / F

8) A state premier said it would take decades for towns to recover. T / F

Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

1. **expressed**	a.	adjoining
2. **devastation**	b.	shocked
3. **horrified**	c.	increase
4. **residents**	d.	readiness
5. **escalate**	e.	destruction
6. **torrential**	f.	unreal
7. **adjacent**	g.	conveyed
8. **surreal**	h.	affected
9. **stricken**	i.	relentless
10. **preparedness**	j.	citizens

Discussion – Student A

a) What do you think about what you read?

b) What is the heaviest rain you have experienced?

c) How can the world help people hit hard by the floods?

d) What is the most surreal thing you've seen in your town?

e) How can flood defences be made more effective?

f) Will humans ever be able to protect against the power of nature?

g) How prepared are you for emergencies?

h) What questions would you like to ask Angela Merkel?

Phrase Match

1. expressed her
2. devastation caused by the severe
3. she was horrified
4. I can pretty
5. the world had to escalate
6. torrential
7. flash
8. death
9. which Ms Merkel described
10. He questioned Germany's preparedness

a. rains
b. by the destruction
c. toll
d. its efforts
e. for floods
f. fears
g. as being "surreal"
h. floods
i. flooding
j. much say that

Discussion – Student B

a) What do you know about the floods in Europe?
b) How worried are you about climate change?
c) What do you do to help stop global warming?
d) How has the climate been changing in your country?
e) Have you experienced any severe weather events?
f) What would you do in a flood?
g) What damage do floods cause?
h) What advice do you have for those affected by the floods?

Spelling

1. Germany's leader has exressdep her fears
2. visiting the atsvoatndei
3. ereves flooding
4. across aewstsh of her country
5. the destruction that has been kwerdea
6. latecsae its efforts
7. troneatirl rains
8. flash floods in ndeactja towns
9. beyond neonrotiicg
10. described as being aesulrr
11. the flood-sreitkcn state
12. Germany's rsepaesnerdp for floods

Role Play

Role A – Walk More
You think to walk more is the best thing to prevent climate change. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the least useful of these (and why): eat less meat, buy used goods or use LED lights.

Role B – Eat Less Meat
You think to eat less meat is the best thing to prevent climate change. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the least useful of these (and why): walk more, buy used goods or use LED lights.

Role C – Buy Used Goods
You think to buy used goods is the best thing to prevent climate change. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the least useful of these (and why): eat less meat, walk more or use LED lights.

Role D – Use LED Lights
You think to use LED lights is the best thing to prevent climate change. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the least useful of these (and why): eat less meat, buy used goods or walk more.

Speaking – Climate Change

Rank these with your partner. Put the best things to do to help prevent climate change at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- Recycle more
- Use LED lights
- Electric cars
- Buy used goods
- Walk more
- Turn off lights
- Eat less meat
- Fly less

Answers – Synonym Match

1. g	2. e	3. b	4. j	5. c
6. i	7. a	8. f	9. h	10. d

Answers – True False

1 F	2 T	3 T	4 F	5 T	6 F	7 T	8 F

Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.