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## **Warmer weather causes headaches**

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11th March, 2009

# THE ARTICLE

Scientists in the USA have found a strong link between headaches and warmer weather. For many years people have believed that sudden increases in temperatures cause headaches. Doctors at a medical centre in Boston now say they know it's true. Researchers did a study on 7,054 patients who went to hospital because of a headache. Their research showed that the main cause of the patients' headaches was a change in the weather. A rise in temperature in the previous 24 hours was the biggest trigger. The research team said the chances of getting a bad headache increased by 7.5 percent with every five-degree Celsius rise in the temperature. The second biggest cause was a fall in air pressure, which happens especially after thunderstorms.

Lead researcher Dr. Kenneth J. Mukamal of Harvard Medical School gave a simple explanation of his research. He said: "In the summer, you may think that ice cream sets off your migraine. But it wasn't the ice cream, it was the temperature increase on that very hot day that led you to eat the ice cream." Dr. Mukamal added: "Our results are consistent with the idea that severe headaches can be triggered by external factors. These findings tell us that the environment around us does affect our health." One doctor said to avoid headaches, we should stay away from things like coffee and wine when the weather suddenly gets hotter. Bad headaches and migraines affect millions. Around 18 percent of women and six percent of men suffer from them.

# WARM-UPS

**1. WEATHER:** Walk around the class and talk to other students about the weather. Change partners often. After you finish, sit with your partner(s) and share your findings.

**2. CHAT:** In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words from the article are most interesting and which are most boring.

*scientists / headaches / warm weather / temperatures / air pressure / thunderstorms / researchers / explanations / ice cream / environment / coffee / wine*

Have a chat about the topics you liked. Change topics and partners frequently.

**3. HEADACHES:** What things give you a headache? Complete the table. Talk about what you wrote with your partner(s). Change partners and share what you found out.

| Things     | The kind of headache | How to make it go away |
|------------|----------------------|------------------------|
| Money      |                      |                        |
| Your boss  |                      |                        |
| English    |                      |                        |
| Smells     |                      |                        |
| Daily life |                      |                        |
| Alcohol    |                      |                        |

**4. TEMPERATURES:** Students A **strongly** believe temperature affects our health; Students B **strongly** believe temperature has no affect on our health at all. Change partners again and talk about your conversations.

**5. WEATHER ME:** How does the weather affect your feeling? Rank the following. 10 = a lot, 1 = not at all. Change partners and talk about your ranking.

\_\_\_\_\_ freezing cold

\_\_\_\_\_ pouring rain

\_\_\_\_\_ howling wind

\_\_\_\_\_ morning mist

\_\_\_\_\_ baking heat

\_\_\_\_\_ gentle breeze

\_\_\_\_\_ monster storm

\_\_\_\_\_ T-shirt weather

**6. ICE CREAM:** Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word 'ice cream'. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

# BEFORE READING / LISTENING

**1. TRUE / FALSE:** Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- |  |       |
|--|-------|
| a. Scientists believe a rise in temperature can give people a headache.  | T / F |
| b. Scientists said the main cause in headaches is stress.                | T / F |
| c. Seven point five percent of people get headaches when it's 5 degrees. | T / F |
| d. There is often a drop in air pressure after thunderstorms.            | T / F |
| e. A researcher says ice cream gives people headaches.                   | T / F |
| f. The researcher said the environment around us affects our health      | T / F |
| g. A doctor said we should avoid coffee when the temperature rises.      | T / F |
| h. Men get headaches three times more than women do.                     | T / F |

**2. SYNONYM MATCH:** Match the following synonyms from the article:

- |                |                   |
|----------------|-------------------|
| 1. link        | a. unexpected     |
| 2. sudden      | b. hit            |
| 3. main        | c. start          |
| 4. trigger     | d. triggers       |
| 5. fall        | e. leading        |
| 6. explanation | f. elements       |
| 7. sets off    | g. drop           |
| 8. factors     | h. statement      |
| 9. avoid       | i. connection     |
| 10. affect     | j. keep away from |

**3. PHRASE MATCH:** Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one. combination is possible):

- |  |                                |
|--|--------------------------------|
| 1. a strong link between headaches       | a. pressure                    |
| 2. sudden increases                      | b. like coffee                 |
| 3. A rise in temperature in              | c. and warmer weather          |
| 4. the chances of getting a bad headache | d. off your migraine           |
| 5. a fall in air                         | e. explanation of his research |
| 6. a simple                              | f. in temperatures             |
| 7. you may think that ice cream sets     | g. men suffer from them        |
| 8. severe headaches can be triggered     | h. increased by 7.5 percent    |
| 9. we should stay away from things       | i. by external factors         |
| 10. six percent of                       | j. the previous 24 hours       |

# WHILE READING / LISTENING

**GAP FILL:** Put the words into the gaps in the text.

Scientists in the USA have found a \_\_\_\_\_ link between headaches and warmer weather. For many years people have believed that sudden \_\_\_\_\_ in temperatures cause headaches. Doctors at a medical centre in Boston now say they know it's \_\_\_\_\_. Researchers did a study on 7,054 patients who went to hospital because of a headache. Their research showed that the main \_\_\_\_\_ of the patients' headaches was a change in the weather. A rise in temperature in the \_\_\_\_\_ 24 hours was the biggest trigger. The research team said the chances of getting a \_\_\_\_\_ headache increased by 7.5 percent with every five-\_\_\_\_\_ Celsius rise in the temperature. The second biggest cause was a fall in air \_\_\_\_\_, which happens especially after thunderstorms.

*degree*  
*increases*  
*cause*  
*strong*  
*bad*  
*true*  
*pressure*  
*previous*

Lead researcher Dr. Kenneth J. Mukamal of Harvard Medical School gave a \_\_\_\_\_ explanation of his research. He said: "In the summer, you may think that ice cream \_\_\_\_\_ off your migraine. But it wasn't the ice cream, it was the temperature \_\_\_\_\_ on that very hot day that led you to eat the ice cream." Dr. Mukamal added: "Our results are consistent with the \_\_\_\_\_ that severe headaches can be triggered by external factors. These findings tell us that the environment around us does \_\_\_\_\_ our health." One doctor said to avoid headaches, we should \_\_\_\_\_ away from things like coffee and wine when the weather \_\_\_\_\_ gets hotter. Bad headaches and migraines affect millions. Around 18 percent of women and six percent of men \_\_\_\_\_ from them.

*sets*  
*simple*  
*suffer*  
*stay*  
*increase*  
*suddenly*  
*idea*  
*affect*

## **LISTENING:** Listen and fill in the spaces.

Scientists in the USA have found \_\_\_\_\_ between headaches and warmer weather. For many years people have believed that \_\_\_\_\_ temperatures cause headaches. Doctors at a medical centre in Boston now say they know it's true. Researchers \_\_\_\_\_ 7,054 patients who went to hospital because of a headache. Their research showed that \_\_\_\_\_ the patients' headaches was a change in the weather. A rise in temperature in the previous 24 hours was the biggest trigger. The research team said the \_\_\_\_\_ a bad headache increased by 7.5 percent with every five-degree Celsius rise in the temperature. The second biggest cause \_\_\_\_\_ air pressure, which happens especially after thunderstorms.

Lead researcher Dr. Kenneth J. Mukamal of Harvard Medical School gave a simple explanation \_\_\_\_\_. He said: "In the summer, you may think that ice cream \_\_\_\_\_ migraine. But it wasn't the ice cream, it was the temperature increase on that very hot day \_\_\_\_\_ eat the ice cream." Dr. Mukamal added: "Our results are consistent with the idea that severe headaches can \_\_\_\_\_ external factors. These findings tell us that the environment around us does affect our health." One doctor said to avoid headaches, we should \_\_\_\_\_ things like coffee and wine when the weather suddenly gets hotter. Bad headaches and migraines affect millions. Around 18 percent of women and six percent of men \_\_\_\_\_.

## AFTER READING / LISTENING

**1. WORD SEARCH:** Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words '**strong**' and '**link**'.

|               |             |
|---------------|-------------|
| <b>strong</b> | <b>link</b> |
|---------------|-------------|

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

**2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS:** Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

**3. GAP FILL:** In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

**4. VOCABULARY:** Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

**5. TEST EACH OTHER:** Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall how they were used in the text:

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• strong</li><li>• sudden</li><li>• true</li><li>• main</li><li>• previous</li><li>• air</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• simple</li><li>• summer</li><li>• idea</li><li>• avoid</li><li>• suddenly</li><li>• suffer</li></ul> |
|--|--|

# STUDENT WEATHER SURVEY

Write five GOOD questions about the weather in the table. Do this in pairs. Each student must write the questions on his / her own paper.

When you have finished, interview other students. Write down their answers.

|      | STUDENT 1<br>_____ | STUDENT 2<br>_____ | STUDENT 3<br>_____ |
|------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Q.1. |                    |                    |                    |
| Q.2. |                    |                    |                    |
| Q.3. |                    |                    |                    |
| Q.4. |                    |                    |                    |
| Q.5. |                    |                    |                    |

- Now return to your original partner and share and talk about what you found out. Change partners often.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

## DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a) What did you think when you read the headline?
- b) What springs to mind when you hear the word 'headache'?
- c) Do you think changes in the weather can give you a headache?
- d) What usually gives you a headache?
- e) What's the best thing to take for a headache?
- f) How does the weather change your feeling?
- g) Can you remember the biggest headache you ever had?
- h) Do you think people living in hot countries get more headaches than those in cold countries?
- i) Do you think the weather has affected your health, positively or negatively?
- j) What country has the best weather? Do you think people are healthier there?

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## DISCUSSION

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a) Did you like reading this article?
- b) Do you think weather forecasts should carry headache warnings?
- c) What do you think of Dr. Mukamal's simple explanation?
- d) What other external factors do you think can trigger headaches?
- e) Do you think people get more headaches today than 100 years ago?
- f) What do you think is the best way of avoiding headaches?
- g) Why do women get more headaches than men?
- h) Does the type of job you do affect the chances of getting a headache?
- i) Does studying English give you a headache?
- j) What questions would you like to ask Dr. Kenneth J. Mukamal?

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# LANGUAGE

Scientists in the USA have found a strong (1) \_\_\_\_ between headaches and warmer weather. For many years people have believed that (2) \_\_\_\_ increases in temperatures cause headaches. Doctors at a medical centre in Boston now say they know it's (3) \_\_\_\_\_. Researchers did a study on 7,054 patients who went to hospital because of a headache. Their research showed that the main cause (4) \_\_\_\_ the patients' headaches was a change in the weather. A rise in temperature in the (5) \_\_\_\_ 24 hours was the biggest trigger. The research team said the chances of getting a bad headache increased by 7.5 percent with (6) \_\_\_\_ five-degree Celsius rise in the temperature. The second biggest cause was a fall in air pressure, which happens especially after thunderstorms.

Lead researcher Dr. Kenneth J. Mukamal of Harvard Medical School (7) \_\_\_\_ a simple explanation of his research. He said: "In the summer, you may think that ice cream sets (8) \_\_\_\_ your migraine. But it wasn't the ice cream, it was the temperature increase on that very hot day that led you to eat the ice cream." Dr. Mukamal added: "Our results are consistent (9) \_\_\_\_ the idea that severe headaches can be triggered by external factors. These findings tell us that the environment around us (10) \_\_\_\_ affect our health." One doctor said to avoid headaches, we should stay away from things (11) \_\_\_\_ coffee and wine when the weather suddenly gets hotter. Bad headaches and migraines affect millions. Around 18 percent of women and six percent of men (12) \_\_\_\_ from them.

## Put the correct words from the table below in the above article.

- |     |               |                  |              |                |
|-----|---------------|------------------|--------------|----------------|
| 1.  | (a) link      | (b) links        | (c) linking  | (d) linked     |
| 2.  | (a) suddenly  | (b) sudden death | (c) sudden   | (d) suddenness |
| 3.  | (a) truly     | (b) true         | (c) truthful | (d) truthfully |
| 4.  | (a) from      | (b) by           | (c) at       | (d) of         |
| 5.  | (a) precious  | (b) perilous     | (c) previous | (d) prevails   |
| 6.  | (a) every     | (b) even         | (c) ever     | (d) evens      |
| 7.  | (a) did       | (b) took         | (c) said     | (d) gave       |
| 8.  | (a) in        | (b) off          | (c) of       | (d) on         |
| 9.  | (a) for       | (b) by           | (c) with     | (d) of         |
| 10. | (a) does      | (b) do           | (c) done     | (d) doing      |
| 11. | (a) similar   | (b) like         | (c) as       | (d) same       |
| 12. | (a) suffering | (b) suffers      | (c) sufferer | (d) suffer     |



# HOMework

**1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION:** Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

**2. INTERNET:** Search the Internet and find out more about the weather and headaches. Share what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

**3. WEATHER:** Make a poster about different kinds of weather. How does each make you feel? Show your work to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all have similar things?

**4. HEADACHE:** Write a magazine article about headaches. Include imaginary interviews with different people who get headaches from different things.

Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Write down any new words and expressions you hear from your partner(s).

**5. LETTER:** Write a letter to Dr. Kenneth J. Mukamal. Ask him three questions about his research. Give him three ideas on what he should research next. Read your letter to your partner(s) in your next lesson. Your partner(s) will answer your questions.

# ANSWERS

## TRUE / FALSE:

- a. T      b. F      c. F      d. T      e. F      f. T      g. T      h. F

## SYNONYM MATCH:

- |                |                   |
|----------------|-------------------|
| 1. link        | a. connection     |
| 2. sudden      | b. unexpected     |
| 3. main        | c. leading        |
| 4. trigger     | d. start          |
| 5. fall        | e. drop           |
| 6. explanation | f. statement      |
| 7. sets off    | g. triggers       |
| 8. factors     | h. elements       |
| 9. avoid       | i. keep away from |
| 10. affect     | j. hit            |

## PHRASE MATCH:

- |  |                                |
|--|--------------------------------|
| 1. a strong link between headaches       | a. and warmer weather          |
| 2. sudden increases                      | b. in temperatures             |
| 3. A rise in temperature in              | c. the previous 24 hours       |
| 4. the chances of getting a bad headache | d. increased by 7.5 percent    |
| 5. a fall in air                         | e. pressure                    |
| 6. a simple                              | f. explanation of his research |
| 7. you may think that ice cream sets     | g. off your migraine           |
| 8. severe headaches can be triggered     | h. by external factors         |
| 9. we should stay away from things       | i. like coffee                 |
| 10. six percent of                       | j. men suffer from them        |

## GAP FILL:

### Warmer weather causes headaches

Scientists in the USA have found a **strong** link between headaches and warmer weather. For many years people have believed that sudden **increases** in temperatures cause headaches. Doctors at a medical centre in Boston now say they know it's **true**. Researchers did a study on 7,054 patients who went to hospital because of a headache. Their research showed that the main **cause** of the patients' headaches was a change in the weather. A rise in temperature in the **previous** 24 hours was the biggest trigger. The research team said the chances of getting a **bad** headache increased by 7.5 percent with every five-**degree** Celsius rise in the temperature. The second biggest cause was a fall in air **pressure**, which happens especially after thunderstorms.

Lead researcher Dr. Kenneth J. Mukamal of Harvard Medical School gave a **simple** explanation of his research. He said: "In the summer, you may think that ice cream **sets** off your migraine. But it wasn't the ice cream, it was the temperature **increase** on that very hot day that led you to eat the ice cream." Dr. Mukamal added: "Our results are consistent with the **idea** that severe headaches can be triggered by external factors. These findings tell us that the environment around us does **affect** our health." One doctor said to avoid headaches, we should **stay** away from things like coffee and wine when the weather **suddenly** gets hotter. Bad headaches and migraines affect millions. Around 18 percent of women and six percent of men **suffer** from them.

## LANGUAGE WORK

- 1 - a    2 - c    3 - b    4 - d    5 - c    6 - a    7 - d    8 - b    9 - c    10 - a    11 - b    12 - d