

# www.**Breaking News English**.com

Ready-to-use ESL / EFL Lessons

## **The Breaking News English.com Resource Book**

“1,000 Ideas & Activities For Language Teachers”

<http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/book.html>

## **Water supply returns to Chinese city**

URL: [http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/0511/051128-harbin\\_water-e.html](http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/0511/051128-harbin_water-e.html)

### **Contents**

The Article	2
Warm-ups	3
Before Reading / Listening	4
While Reading / Listening	5
Listening Gap Fill	6
After Reading	7
Discussion	8
Speaking	9
Homework	10
Answers	11

**28 November, 2005**

## **THE ARTICLE**

### **Water supply returns to Chinese city**

Authorities have reconnected water in Harbin, the city in northeast China that has been without water for four days. The water supply was shut down on Nov. 22 because of a huge chemical spill into a nearby river. More than 100 tons of benzene, a colorless and toxic chemical, spilled into the river. The chemical can cause cancer, blood disorders and liver and kidney damage. According to China's Xinhua news agency, the water pumps were turned on at 6 pm local time on Nov. 27. Local people no longer have to wait in freezing weather for water.

A Harbin government official, Zhang Zujoi, showed the 3.8 million people of his city that the water was now safe to drink. He took a few sips of boiled water that had come from a local resident's house. Mr. Zujoi promised four days ago that he would be first to taste the water when the supply returned. Mr. Zujoi said: "I took the first drink to ...reassure the public." However, he advised people not to drink the water unboiled until the water pipes were fully flushed. Meanwhile, the 50-kilometre-long toxic slick is moving toward Siberia. It will endanger the Russian city of Khabarovsk in about two weeks.

## WARM-UPS

**1. WATER SEARCH:** Walk around the class and ask other students for information on water. Find out as much information as you can. After you have finished, sit with your partner(s) and share your information. What were you happy about learning? What surprised you most about water?

**2. TAKE FOR GRANTED:** In pairs / groups, talk about the things below that we take for granted. What would you do if these things suddenly disappeared? What problems would this cause?

- Water
- The ability to speak English
- The hair on your head
- Toilets
- The Internet
- Friends
- Teeth
- Watches and clocks

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

*Running water / chemical spills / China / rivers / toxic chemicals / news agencies / waiting in line / freezing weather / the environment / water pipes / Siberia*

Have a chat about the topics you liked. For more conversation, change topics and partners frequently.

**4. NOT ME:** If the water in your city was unsafe but is now OK, would you be the first to drink it to show the public it was safe? Which of the following would you do or not do?

- Drink the water in Harbin
- Work for a week in Baghdad
- Eat chicken in Vietnam
- Fly in a prototype rocket
- Be a guinea pig for a new drug
- Train to be a lion tamer
- Use a mobile phone amid brain tumor scares
- Be a stuntman / stuntwoman

**5. ENVIRONMENT OPINIONS:** Do you agree with these opinions on the environment? Discuss them with your partner(s).

- a. The Earth will eventually die because of pollution.
- b. World governments need to put the environment first and economies second.
- c. A badly polluted river is another nail in the coffin for the Earth.
- d. World leaders will only take necessary action after it is too late.
- e. George W. Bush's policies damage the environment.
- f. The UN should have powers to force countries to reduce pollution.
- g. New technology will help clean up the environment and protect the Earth forever.
- h. Poisoned fish from toxic rivers will one day make all fish dangerous to eat.
- i. UN observers should inspect China's pollution.

**6. WATER:** Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word "water". 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. People in a Chinese city have their water supply back.                  | T / F |
| b. A nuclear accident poisoned the city's river for four days.             | T / F |
| c. A million tons of a poisonous chemical spilled into a river.            | T / F |
| d. People stood in line for water in freezing weather conditions.          | T / F |
| e. The city has a very small population.                                   | T / F |
| f. China's President Hu Jintao drank the city's water to show it was safe. | T / F |
| g. The city's people can now drink the water without boiling it.           | T / F |
| h. A long toxic slick is moving toward a city in Siberia.                  | T / F |

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

- |              |               |
|--------------|---------------|
| a. huge      | totally       |
| b. toxic     | poisonous     |
| c. disorders | sub-zero      |
| d. wait      | drinks        |
| e. freezing  | OK            |
| f. safe      | enormous      |
| g. sips      | threaten      |
| h. advised   | stand in line |
| i. fully     | urged         |
| j. endanger  | illnesses     |

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

- |                                      |                                |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| a. Authorities have reconnected      | to taste the water             |
| b. The water                         | spill into a nearby river      |
| c. a huge chemical                   | cancer                         |
| d. The chemical can cause            | of boiled water                |
| e. people no longer have to wait     | reassure the public            |
| f. took a few sips                   | water in Harbin                |
| g. he would be first                 | is moving toward Siberia       |
| h. I took the first drink to         | the Russian city of Khabarovsk |
| i. the 50-kilometre-long toxic slick | supply was shut down           |
| j. It will endanger                  | in freezing weather            |

## **WHILE READING / LISTENING**

**WHOOPS:** Four of the eight words in bold in each paragraph are mistakes. With your partner(s), identify them and agree on replacement words.

### **Water supply returns to Chinese city**

Authorities have **reconnected** water in Harbin, the city in northeast China that has been **without** water for four days. The water supply was shut **up** on Nov. 22 because of a huge chemical spill into a **nearly** river. More than 100 tons of benzene, a **colorless** and toxic chemical, spilled into the river. The chemical can cause cancer, blood disorders and liver and kidney **damage**. According to China's Xinhua news agency, the water **pumping** were turned on at 6 pm local time on Nov. 27. Local people no longer have to wait in freezing **climate** for water.

A Harbin government official, Zhang Zujoi, **showered** the 3.8 million people of his city that the water was now **unsafe** to drink. He took a few **sips** of boiled water that had come from a **local** resident's house. Mr. Zujoi promised four days ago that he would be first to taste the water when the supply returned. Mr. Zujoi said: "I took the first drink to ...reassure the **private**." However, he advised people not to **eat** the water unboiled until the water pipes were fully flushed. Meanwhile, the 50-kilometre-long toxic **slick** is moving toward Siberia. It will **endanger** the Russian city of Khabarovsk in about two weeks.

## **LISTENING**

Listen and fill in the spaces.

### **Water supply returns to Chinese city**

Authorities have \_\_\_\_\_ water in Harbin, the city in northeast China that has been without water for four days. The water supply was \_\_\_\_\_ down on Nov. 22 because of a huge chemical \_\_\_\_\_ into a nearby river. More than 100 tons of benzene, a colorless and toxic chemical, spilled into the river. The chemical can \_\_\_\_\_ cancer, blood disorders and liver and kidney damage. According to China's Xinhua news agency, the water \_\_\_\_\_ were turned on at 6 pm local time on Nov. 27. Local people no longer have to \_\_\_\_\_ in freezing weather for water.

A Harbin government official, Zhang Zujoi, \_\_\_\_\_ the 3.8 million people of his city that the water was now safe to drink. He took a few \_\_\_\_\_ of boiled water that had come from a local resident's house. Mr. Zujoi promised four days ago that he would be first to \_\_\_\_\_ the water when the supply returned. Mr. Zujoi said: "I took the first drink to ...reassure the \_\_\_\_\_." However, he advised people not to drink the water unboiled until the water pipes were \_\_\_\_\_ flushed. Meanwhile, the 50-kilometre-long toxic slick is moving \_\_\_\_\_ Siberia. It will endanger the Russian city of Khabarovsk in about two weeks.

## AFTER READING / LISTENING

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

- 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. WHOOPS:** 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. STUDENT "CHEMICAL SPILL" SURVEY:** In pairs / groups, write down questions about chemical spills and other manmade disasters.

- Ask other classmates your questions and note down their answers.
- Go back to your original partner / group and compare your findings.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

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

- |               |            |
|---------------|------------|
| • authorities | • official |
| • shut        | • sips     |
| • nearby      | • taste    |
| • cause       | • reassure |
| • pumps       | • pipes    |
| • freezing    | • Siberia  |

## DISCUSSION

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

- a. Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- b. How do you feel when you hear news of environmental disasters?
- c. Who do you think is to blame for this chemical spill?
- d. What do you think should happen to the people responsible for the spill?
- e. Are the rivers in your country clean or polluted?
- f. Do you think your government does enough to protect the natural environment in your country?
- g. What problems would it cause if you had no water for a week?
- h. Are you happy about drinking the tap water in your country?
- i. Which countries do you think are the world's worst polluters?
- j. What do you think should be done about these countries?

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

- a. Did you like reading this article?
- b. What do you think about what you read?
- c. Have you been following this news?
- d. Do you trust what your government says about things like water safety or disaster preparedness?
- e. Have you ever been without something important for a long time?
- f. If you were the government official, would you have drunk the water in Harbin to show people it is safe?
- g. Do your government leader's words reassure you?
- h. For how much longer do you think the Earth can survive manmade disasters?
- i. How do you think Russians feel that their water supply will be poisoned by a chemical spill in China?
- j. Did you like this discussion?

**AFTER DISCUSSION:** Join another partner / group and tell them what you talked about.

- a. What was the most interesting thing you heard?
- b. Was there a question you didn't like?
- c. Was there something you totally disagreed with?
- d. What did you like talking about?
- e. Which was the most difficult question?



## SPEAKING

**BEING WITHOUT:** Could you survive without everyday in life? In pairs / groups, discuss the possible things you could do to survive without the necessities below for one week:

NECESSITIES	SURVIVAL TECHNIQUES
Running water	
Electricity	
Clothes	
Teeth	
The Internet	
Mobile phone	
Sleep	
Other _____	

- Change partners and compare and share your ideas.
- Decide on the best technique for surviving without each of the necessities.
- Return to your original partner(s) and discuss the ideas you talked about with your previous partner.
- Talk about how would you cope / feel if you had to survive using the techniques you decided on.

## **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 more information on the toxic slick moving towards Russia. What are Russian authorities doing to prepare for it? How is it affecting Chinese-Russian relations? Share your findings with your class in the next lesson. Did you all find out similar things?

**3. DISASTER:** Make a poster giving information on any environmental disaster that has affected the world. Include a section on what we can do to prevent such a disaster from happening again. Show your posters to your classmates in your next lesson. Did you all think of similar things?

**4. WATERLESS:** You have been without running water now for over a week. Write your diary / journal entry for day eight of being without water. Have you found any good ways to survive? How do you feel? Show what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all write about similar things?

## ANSWERS

### TRUE / FALSE:

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

### SYNONYM MATCH:

a. huge	enormous
b. toxic	poisonous
c. disorders	illnesses
d. wait	stand in line
e. freezing	sub-zero
f. safe	OK
g. sips	drinks
h. advised	urged
i. fully	totally
j. endanger	threaten

### PHRASE MATCH:

a. Authorities have reconnected	water in Harbin
b. The water	supply was shut down
c. a huge chemical	spill into a nearby river
d. The chemical can cause	cancer
e. people no longer have to wait	in freezing weather
f. took a few sips	of boiled water
g. he would be first	to taste the water
h. I took the first drink to	reassure the public
i. the 50-kilometre-long toxic slick	is moving toward Siberia
j. It will endanger	the Russian city of Khabarovsk

### WHOOPS:

#### Water supply returns to Chinese city

Authorities have reconnected water in Harbin, the city in northeast China that has been without water for four days. The water supply was shut **down** on Nov. 22 because of a huge chemical spill into a **nearby** river. More than 100 tons of benzene, a colorless and toxic chemical, spilled into the river. The chemical can cause cancer, blood disorders and liver and kidney damage. According to China's Xinhua news agency, the water **pumps** were turned on at 6 pm local time on Nov. 27. Local people no longer have to wait in freezing **weather** for water.

A Harbin government official, Zhang Zujoi, **showed** the 3.8 million people of his city that the water was now **safe** to drink. He took a few sips of boiled water that had come from a local resident's house. Mr. Zujoi promised four days ago that he would be first to taste the water when the supply returned. Mr. Zujoi said: "I took the first drink to ...reassure the **public**." However, he advised people not to **drink** the water unboiled until the water pipes were fully flushed. Meanwhile, the 50-kilometre-long toxic slick is moving toward Siberia. It will endanger the Russian city of Khabarovsk in about two weeks.