

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

Ready-to-use ESL/EFL Lessons by Sean Banville

**"1,000 IDEAS & ACTIVITIES FOR LANGUAGE TEACHERS"**  
**The Breaking News English.com Resource Book**  
<http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/book.html>

## **U.N. pessimism at Rio+20 Earth Summit**

**21st June, 2012**

[http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/1206/120621-rio20\\_earth\\_summit.html](http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/1206/120621-rio20_earth_summit.html)

### **Contents**

The Article	2
Warm-ups	3
Before Reading / Listening	4
While Reading / Listening	5
Listening Gap Fill	6
After Reading / Listening	7
Student Survey	8
Discussion	9
Language Work	10
Writing	11
Homework	12
Answers	13

### **Follow Sean Banville on**

**Twitter**



[twitter.com/SeanBanville](https://twitter.com/SeanBanville)

**Facebook**



[www.facebook.com/pages/BreakingNewsEnglish/155625444452176](https://www.facebook.com/pages/BreakingNewsEnglish/155625444452176)

**Google +**



[plus.google.com/110990608764591804698/posts](https://plus.google.com/110990608764591804698/posts)

# THE ARTICLE

From [http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1206/120621-rio20\\_earth\\_summit.html](http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1206/120621-rio20_earth_summit.html)

As Brazil's president welcomed world leaders to the Rio+20 Earth Summit, the U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-moon cast doubts on the three-day event. A pre-summit draft document that is to serve as a blueprint for Earth's sustainability has been criticised as being too weak by the U.N. chief. He said in the opening meeting: "Let me be frank. Our efforts have not lived up to the measure of the challenge...Nature does not wait...Nature does not negotiate with human beings." Rio+20 is so named because it has been 20 years since the last Earth Summit, which did lead to historic environmental decisions and promises, although not all were kept. Unlike Rio+20, the 1992 event was the result of years of discussion.

Many of the delegates who attended the opening on Wednesday said three days was far too short to sort out the Earth's most important problems. Some lamented the absence of leaders like the USA's Barack Obama and Germany's Angela Merkel, saying their nonattendance sends out a message they aren't overly worried about sustainability. World leaders are perhaps more concerned with their re-election prospects and their country's current economic problems than the future of the planet. Ban Ki-moon told the assembly: "Rio+20 is not an end, but a beginning. It is time for all of us to think globally and long-term....The world is waiting to see if our words will translate into action, as we know they must."

# WARM-UPS

**1. OUR EARTH:** Walk around the class and talk to other students about our Earth. Change partners often. Sit with your first 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.

*welcomed / leaders / Earth Summit / cast doubt / blueprint / sustainability / promise / delegates / absence / not overly worried / re-election / economic problems / globally*

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

**3. EARTH SUMMIT:** Complete this table with your partner(s). Change partners and share what you wrote. Change and share again.

Issues	Problems	Your solutions
Pollution		
Water		
Global Warming		
Poverty / hunger		
Biodiversity		
Sustainability		

**4. SUCCESS:** Students A **strongly** believe the Rio+20 Earth Summit will be a huge success; Students B **strongly** believe otherwise. Change partners again and talk about your conversations.

**5. PROBLEMS:** Rank these global problems and share your rankings with your partner. Put the biggest at the top. Change partners and share your rankings again.

- overconsumption
- overpopulation
- poverty
- pollution
- global warming
- decreasing biodiversity
- lack of water
- lethargy among world leaders

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

# BEFORE READING / LISTENING

From [http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1206/120621-rio20\\_earth\\_summit.html](http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1206/120621-rio20_earth_summit.html)

## 1. TRUE / FALSE:

Read the headline. Guess if a-h below are true (T) or false (F).

- a. Brazil's leader expressed grave concern about the summit's success. T / F
- b. The U.N. chief cast doubts on how effective the summit will be. T / F
- c. Ban Ki-moon said human beings do not wait for nature. T / F
- d. Not all of the promises from the 1992 Rio Earth Summit were kept. T / F
- e. All of the summit attendees said three days was more than enough. T / F
- f. The leaders of Germany and the USA are not attending the summit. T / F
- g. The article says Obama said economic problems were most important. T / F
- h. Ban Ki-moon said the world is waiting for actions come from Rio. T / F

## 2. SYNONYM MATCH:

Match the following synonyms from the article.

- |               |                     |
|---------------|---------------------|
| 1. welcomed   | a. rough outline    |
| 2. doubts     | b. possibilities    |
| 3. draft      | c. representatives  |
| 4. blueprint  | d. uncertainty      |
| 5. frank      | e. complained about |
| 6. delegates  | f. plan             |
| 7. lamented   | g. honest           |
| 8. prospects  | h. change           |
| 9. problems   | i. greeted          |
| 10. translate | j. headaches        |

## 3. PHRASE MATCH:

(Sometimes more than one choice is possible.)

- |  |                               |
|--|-------------------------------|
| 1. Ban Ki-moon cast                            | a. for Earth's sustainability |
| 2. serve as a blueprint                        | b. environmental decisions    |
| 3. Let me                                      | c. attended                   |
| 4. lead to historic                            | d. worried                    |
| 5. the result of                               | e. doubts on the 3-day event  |
| 6. Many of the delegates who                   | f. too short                  |
| 7. three days was far                          | g. into action                |
| 8. Some lamented the absence                   | h. years of discussion        |
| 9. aren't overly                               | i. of leaders                 |
| 10. waiting to see if our words will translate | j. be frank                   |

# WHILE READING / LISTENING

From [http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1206/120621-rio20\\_earth\\_summit.html](http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1206/120621-rio20_earth_summit.html)

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

As Brazil's president (1) \_\_\_\_\_ world leaders to the Rio+20 Earth Summit, the U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-moon (2) \_\_\_\_\_ doubts on the three-day event. A pre-summit draft document that is to (3) \_\_\_\_\_ as a blueprint for Earth's sustainability has been criticised as (4) \_\_\_\_\_ too weak by the U.N chief. He said in the opening meeting: "Let me be frank. Our efforts have not (5) \_\_\_\_\_ up to the measure of the challenge...Nature does not wait...Nature does not negotiate with human (6) \_\_\_\_\_." Rio+20 is so named because it has been 20 years since the last Earth Summit, which did lead to historic environmental decisions and promises, although not all were (7) \_\_\_\_\_. Unlike Rio+20, the 1992 event was the (8) \_\_\_\_\_ of years of discussion.

*being*  
*serve*  
*welcomed*  
*result*  
*cast*  
*beings*  
*kept*  
*lived*

Many of the delegates who (9) \_\_\_\_\_ the opening on Wednesday said three days was far too short to (10) \_\_\_\_\_ out the Earth's most important problems. Some lamented the (11) \_\_\_\_\_ of leaders like the USA's Barack Obama and Germany's Angela Merkel, saying their nonattendance sends out a message they aren't (12) \_\_\_\_\_ worried about sustainability. World leaders are perhaps more concerned with their re-election (13) \_\_\_\_\_ and their country's (14) \_\_\_\_\_ economic problems than the future of the planet. Ban Ki-moon told the assembly: "Rio+20 is not an end, but a beginning. It is time for all of us to think (15) \_\_\_\_\_ and long-term....The world is waiting to see if our words will (16) \_\_\_\_\_ into action, as we know they must."

*absence*  
*globally*  
*overly*  
*translate*  
*attended*  
*prospects*  
*sort*  
*current*

## LISTENING – Listen and fill in the gaps

From [http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1206/120621-rio20\\_earth\\_summit.html](http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1206/120621-rio20_earth_summit.html)

As Brazil's president welcomed world leaders to the Rio+20 Earth Summit, the U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-moon \_\_\_\_\_ three-day event. A pre-summit draft document that is to \_\_\_\_\_ for Earth's sustainability has been \_\_\_\_\_ too weak by the U.N chief. He said in the opening meeting: "Let me be frank. Our efforts have \_\_\_\_\_ the measure of the challenge....Nature does not wait....Nature does not negotiate with human beings." Rio+20 \_\_\_\_\_ it has been 20 years since the last Earth Summit, which did lead to historic environmental decisions and promises, although \_\_\_\_\_. Unlike Rio+20, the 1992 event was the result of years of discussion.

\_\_\_\_\_ who attended the opening on Wednesday said three days was far too \_\_\_\_\_ the Earth's most important problems. Some lamented the absence of leaders like the USA's Barack Obama and Germany's Angela Merkel, saying their nonattendance sends out a message \_\_\_\_\_ worried about sustainability. World leaders are perhaps more concerned with their \_\_\_\_\_ and their country's current economic problems than the future of the planet. Ban Ki-moon told the assembly: "Rio+20 is not an end, but a beginning. It is \_\_\_\_\_ think globally and long-term....The world is waiting to see if our words will \_\_\_\_\_, as we know they must."

# AFTER READING / LISTENING

From [http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1206/120621-rio20\\_earth\\_summit.html](http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1206/120621-rio20_earth_summit.html)

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

world	leader

- 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>• welcomed</li><li>• cast</li><li>• serve</li><li>• efforts</li><li>• 20</li><li>• result</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• short</li><li>• absence</li><li>• message</li><li>• worried</li><li>• current</li><li>• translate</li></ul>
---	---

# OUR EARTH SURVEY

From [http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1206/120621-rio20\\_earth\\_summit.html](http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1206/120621-rio20_earth_summit.html)

Write five GOOD questions about our Earth 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 _____	STUDENT 2 _____	STUDENT 3 _____
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.



# OUR EARTH 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 'sustainability'?
- c) How much and how often do you worry about the Earth's future?
- d) What do you do every day to help the Earth?
- e) Do you think the Rio+20 summit will be successful?
- f) What does "successful" mean in terms of the Rio+20 summit?
- g) Is three days enough?
- h) Do you think world leaders get tired of environmental problems?
- i) What promises would you like to see in the summit document?
- j) Why do countries break their promises on the environment?

*U.N. pessimism at Rio+20 Earth Summit – 21st June, 2012*  
More free lessons at [www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com](http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com)

---

# OUR EARTH DISCUSSION

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

- a) Did you like reading this article?
- b) How is your country on green issues?
- c) What countries do you think need to do more for the environment?
- d) What should schools be teaching kids about sustainability?
- e) What message does the nonattendance of Barack Obama and Angela Merkel give?
- f) Do you think world leaders worry more about their economy than the Earth?
- g) Is Rio+20 really a "beginning," as Ban Ki-moon said?
- h) What would your message be for the Rio+20 Earth Summit delegates?
- i) How interested are you in the Earth Summit?
- j) What questions would you like to ask U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-moon?

# LANGUAGE – MULTIPLE CHOICE

From [http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1206/120621-rio20\\_earth\\_summit.html](http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1206/120621-rio20_earth_summit.html)

As Brazil's president (1) \_\_\_\_\_ world leaders to the Rio+20 Earth Summit, the U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-moon (2) \_\_\_\_\_ doubts on the three-day event. A pre-summit draft document that is to serve as a blueprint for Earth's sustainability has been criticised (3) \_\_\_\_\_ being too weak by the U.N chief. He said in the opening meeting: "Let me be (4) \_\_\_\_\_. Our efforts have not lived up to the measure of the challenge...Nature does not wait...Nature does not negotiate with human beings." Rio+20 is (5) \_\_\_\_\_ named because it has been 20 years since the last Earth Summit, which did lead to historic environmental decisions and promises, although not all were (6) \_\_\_\_\_. Unlike Rio+20, the 1992 event was the result of years of discussion.

Many of the delegates who attended the opening on Wednesday said three days was (7) \_\_\_\_\_ too short to sort (8) \_\_\_\_\_ the Earth's most important problems. Some lamented the absence of leaders like the USA's Barack Obama and Germany's Angela Merkel, saying their nonattendance sends out a message they aren't (9) \_\_\_\_\_ worried about sustainability. World leaders are perhaps more concerned (10) \_\_\_\_\_ their re-election prospects and their country's current economic problems than the future of the planet. Ban Ki-moon told the assembly: "Rio+20 is not an end, but a beginning. It is time for all of us to think globally and long-(11) \_\_\_\_\_ ....The world is waiting to see if our words will translate (12) \_\_\_\_\_ action, as we know they must."

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

- |     |              |             |                |               |
|-----|--------------|-------------|----------------|---------------|
| 1.  | (a) welcomed | (b) welcome | (c) welcome in | (d) welcoming |
| 2.  | (a) past     | (b) last    | (c) cast       | (d) fast      |
| 3.  | (a) is       | (b) as      | (c) has        | (d) was       |
| 4.  | (a) frank    | (b) blank   | (c) stank      | (d) thank     |
| 5.  | (a) this     | (b) be      | (c) so         | (d) called    |
| 6.  | (a) kept     | (b) keeping | (c) keep       | (d) keeps     |
| 7.  | (a) very     | (b) so      | (c) lot        | (d) far       |
| 8.  | (a) in       | (b) out     | (c) up         | (d) by        |
| 9.  | (a) over     | (b) overt   | (c) overly     | (d) overdoing |
| 10. | (a) with     | (b) from    | (c) while      | (d) this      |
| 11. | (a) time     | (b) term    | (c) timely     | (d) terms     |
| 12. | (a) up       | (b) that    | (c) an         | (d) into      |



# 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 Rio+20 Earth Summit. Share what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

**3. OUR EARTH:** Make a poster about our Earth and its problems. Show your work to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all have similar things?

**4. RIO+20 EARTH SUMMIT:** Write a magazine article about the Rio+20 Earth Summit. Include imaginary interviews with your country's leader and an environmentalist.

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 the U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-moon. Ask him three questions about the Rio+20 Earth Summit. Give him three things that must be addressed. Read your letter to your partner(s) in your next lesson. Your partner(s) will answer your questions.

# ANSWERS

## TRUE / FALSE:

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

## SYNONYM MATCH:

- |               |                     |
|---------------|---------------------|
| 1. welcomed   | a. greeted          |
| 2. doubts     | b. uncertainty      |
| 3. draft      | c. rough outline    |
| 4. blueprint  | d. plan             |
| 5. frank      | e. honest           |
| 6. delegates  | f. representatives  |
| 7. lamented   | g. complained about |
| 8. prospects  | h. possibilities    |
| 9. problems   | i. headaches        |
| 10. translate | j. change           |

## PHRASE MATCH:

- |  |                               |
|--|-------------------------------|
| 1. Ban Ki-moon cast                            | a. doubts on the 3-day event  |
| 2. serve as a blueprint                        | b. for Earth's sustainability |
| 3. Let me                                      | c. be frank                   |
| 4. lead to historic                            | d. environmental decisions    |
| 5. the result of                               | e. years of discussion        |
| 6. Many of the delegates who                   | f. attended                   |
| 7. three days was far                          | g. too short                  |
| 8. Some lamented the absence                   | h. of leaders                 |
| 9. aren't overly                               | i. worried                    |
| 10. waiting to see if our words will translate | j. into action                |

## GAP FILL:

### U.N. pessimism at Rio+20 Earth Summit

As Brazil's president (1) **welcomed** world leaders to the Rio+20 Earth Summit, the U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-moon (2) **cast** doubts on the three-day event. A pre-summit draft document that is to (3) **serve** as a blueprint for Earth's sustainability has been criticised as (4) **being** too weak by the U.N chief. He said in the opening meeting: "Let me be frank. Our efforts have not (5) **lived** up to the measure of the challenge....Nature does not wait....Nature does not negotiate with human (6) **beings**." Rio+20 is so named because it has been 20 years since the last Earth Summit, which did lead to historic environmental decisions and promises, although not all were (7) **kept**. Unlike Rio+20, the 1992 event was the (8) **result** of years of discussion.

Many of the delegates who (9) **attended** the opening on Wednesday said three days was far too short to (10) **sort** out the Earth's most important problems. Some lamented the (11) **absence** of leaders like the USA's Barack Obama and Germany's Angela Merkel, saying their nonattendance sends out a message they aren't (12) **overly** worried about sustainability. World leaders are perhaps more concerned with their re-election (13) **prospects** and their country's (14) **current** economic problems than the future of the planet. Ban Ki-moon told the assembly: "Rio+20 is not an end, but a beginning. It is time for all of us to think (15) **globally** and long-term....The world is waiting to see if our words will (16) **translate** into action, as we know they must."

## 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