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**"1,000 IDEAS & ACTIVITIES FOR LANGUAGE TEACHERS"**

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## **BP apologies not stopping oil spill**

[http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/1006/100604-bp\\_apology.html](http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/1006/100604-bp_apology.html)

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# THE ARTICLE

From [http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1006/100604-bp\\_apology.html](http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1006/100604-bp_apology.html)

BP is facing increasing criticism over the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. The latest public relations gaffe came from the company's CEO Tony Hayward. He generated a lot of anger among Americans when he complained about how the crisis was affecting him personally. He told reporters that he "would like his life back". Many people thought this was a selfish comment from a millionaire businessman. Eleven oil workers died and 17 were injured in the explosion that started the leak on April 20th. Hayward posted an apology on BP's Facebook page. He wrote: "I made a hurtful and thoughtless comment...I apologize, especially to the families of the 11 men who lost their lives in this tragic accident."

Meanwhile, oil continues to gush from the broken pipe. Experts say between 12,000–100,000 barrels a day are spilling into the sea, which is 1,900,000–16,000,000 litres. It is now the worst oil spill in U.S. history. It will result in enormous damage to the Gulf of Mexico's fishing industry, tourism, marine species, wildlife and environment. Hayward's apologies continue in the form of national TV ads. He says: "The Gulf spill is a tragedy that never should have happened...BP has taken full responsibility for cleaning up the spill in the Gulf. We've helped organize the largest environmental response in this country's history....And our cleanup efforts will not come at any cost to taxpayers."

# WARM-UPS

**1. THE OIL SPILL:** Walk around the class and talk to other students about the oil spill. 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.

*criticism / public relations / gaffes / anger / selfish comments / explosions / accidents / gushing oil / enormous damage / fishing / tourism / tragedy / cleanups / taxpayers*

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

**3. APOLOGIES:** Who have you apologized to? Complete this table. Tell your partner(s) what you wrote. Change partners and share what you heard.

Apology to...	Why?	What did they say?
a teacher		
a parent		
a neighbour		
a train passenger		
a best friend		
another student		

**4. CLEANUP:** Students A **strongly** believe the cleanup will be a success; Students B **strongly** believe the opposite. Change partners again and talk about your conversations.

**5. WHO'S RESPONSIBLE?:** Rank these according to who's most responsible for the oil spill and share your rankings with your partner. Change partners and share your rankings again.

- BP's CEO
- All of us for using so much oil
- Whoever allowed the oil rig to drill
- The oil rig operations manager
- The makers of the oil rig
- No one
- President Obama
- The safety inspectors

**6. OIL:** Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word 'oil'. 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/1006/100604-bp\\_apology.html](http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1006/100604-bp_apology.html)

**1. TRUE / FALSE:** Read the headline. Guess if a-h below are true (T) or false (F).

- |   |       |
|---|-------|
| a. BP's CEO made a big public relations mistake.                      | T / F |
| b. The CEO suggested the oil crisis was badly affecting his life.     | T / F |
| c. The CEO apologized on his personal Facebook page.                  | T / F |
| d. He made a special apology to the cleanup workers.                  | T / F |
| e. Over 1,900,000 litres of oil are gushing into the Gulf of Mexico.  | T / F |
| f. It is the second largest oil spill in U.S. history.                | T / F |
| g. BP's CEO has appeared in a televised ad apologizing to Americans.  | T / F |
| h. He said taxpayers would have to pay for some of the cleanup costs. | T / F |

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

- |                |                 |
|----------------|-----------------|
| 1. facing      | a. sea          |
| 2. gaffe       | b. created      |
| 3. generated   | c. pour         |
| 4. explosion   | d. reply        |
| 5. thoughtless | e. blast        |
| 6. gush        | f. experiencing |
| 7. marine      | g. huge         |
| 8. full        | h. selfish      |
| 9. response    | i. mistake      |
| 10. enormous   | j. complete     |

**3. PHRASE MATCH:** (Sometimes more than one choice is possible.)

- |                                      |                            |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. BP is facing                      | a. have happened           |
| 2. The latest public relations       | b. millionaire businessman |
| 3. He generated a lot of anger       | c. the broken pipe         |
| 4. a selfish comment from a          | d. their lives             |
| 5. the 11 men who lost               | e. gaffe                   |
| 6. oil continues to gush from        | f. barrels                 |
| 7. 12,000–100,000                    | g. increasing criticism    |
| 8. a tragedy that never should       | h. any cost to taxpayers   |
| 9. the largest environmental         | i. among Americans         |
| 10. cleanup efforts will not come at | j. response                |

# WHILE READING / LISTENING

From [http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1006/100604-bp\\_apology.html](http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1006/100604-bp_apology.html)

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

BP is facing increasing criticism \_\_\_\_\_ the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. The latest public relations \_\_\_\_\_ came from the company's CEO Tony Hayward. He \_\_\_\_\_ a lot of anger among Americans when he complained about how the crisis was affecting him \_\_\_\_\_. He told reporters that he "would like his life back". Many people thought this was a selfish \_\_\_\_\_ from a millionaire businessman. Eleven oil workers died and 17 were injured in the \_\_\_\_\_ that started the leak on April 20th. Hayward posted an apology on BP's Facebook page. He wrote: "I made a \_\_\_\_\_ and thoughtless comment....I apologize, especially to the families of the 11 men who lost their lives in this \_\_\_\_\_ accident."

*generated*  
*explosion*  
*over*  
*tragic*  
*gaffe*  
*personally*  
*hurtful*  
*comment*

Meanwhile, oil continues to \_\_\_\_\_ from the broken pipe. Experts say between 12,000-100,000 \_\_\_\_\_ a day are spilling into the sea, which is 1,900,000-16,000,000 litres. It is now the worst oil spill in U.S. \_\_\_\_\_. It will result in enormous damage to the Gulf of Mexico's fishing industry, tourism, marine \_\_\_\_\_, wildlife and environment. Hayward's apologies continue in the \_\_\_\_\_ of national TV ads. He says: "The Gulf spill is a tragedy that never should have happened...BP has taken \_\_\_\_\_ responsibility for cleaning up the spill in the Gulf. We've helped organize the largest environmental \_\_\_\_\_ in this country's history....And our cleanup efforts will not come at any \_\_\_\_\_ to taxpayers."

*species*  
*full*  
*barrels*  
*cost*  
*response*  
*gush*  
*history*  
*form*

BP apologies not stopping oil spill – 4th June, 2010

## LISTENING – Listen and fill in the gaps

From [http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1006/100604-bp\\_apology.html](http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1006/100604-bp_apology.html)

BP is facing \_\_\_\_\_ the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. The latest public relations gaffe came from the company's CEO Tony Hayward. He generated \_\_\_\_\_ Americans when he complained about how \_\_\_\_\_ him personally. He told reporters that he "would like his life back". Many people thought this was a selfish comment from a millionaire businessman. Eleven oil workers died and 17 were \_\_\_\_\_ that started the leak on April 20th. Hayward posted an apology on BP's Facebook page. He wrote: "I made a \_\_\_\_\_ comment...I apologize, especially to the families of the 11 \_\_\_\_\_ in this tragic accident."

Meanwhile, oil continues \_\_\_\_\_ pipe. Experts say between 12,000–100,000 barrels a day are spilling into the sea, which is 1,900,000–16,000,000 litres. It is now the worst oil spill in U.S. history. It \_\_\_\_\_ damage to the Gulf of Mexico's fishing industry, tourism, \_\_\_\_\_ and environment. Hayward's apologies continue \_\_\_\_\_ TV ads. He says: "The Gulf spill is a tragedy that never should have happened...BP has taken full responsibility \_\_\_\_\_ spill in the Gulf. We've helped organize the largest environmental response in this country's history....And our cleanup efforts will \_\_\_\_\_ to taxpayers."

BP apologies not stopping oil spill – 4th June, 2010

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# AFTER READING / LISTENING

From [http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1006/100604-bp\\_apology.html](http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1006/100604-bp_apology.html)

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

<b>oil</b>	<b>spill</b>
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- 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>• facing</li><li>• latest</li><li>• crisis</li><li>• 17</li><li>• posted</li><li>• tragic</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 12,000</li><li>• worst</li><li>• result</li><li>• form</li><li>• full</li><li>• cost</li></ul>
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# STUDENT THE OIL SPILL SURVEY

From [http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1006/100604-bp\\_apology.html](http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1006/100604-bp_apology.html)

Write five GOOD questions about the oil spill 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.

# THE OIL SPILL 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 phrase 'oil spill'?
- c) Have you been following this story?
- d) Who is to blame for the oil spill?
- e) Who do you feel sorry for most?
- f) What do you think of BP's CEO and his PR gaffe?
- g) Do you think he should resign?
- h) What do you think of his comment that he wants his life back?
- i) Do you think the Facebook apology is enough?
- j) What's the most selfish comment you've heard recently?

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# THE OIL SPILL DISCUSSION

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

- a) Did you like reading this article?
- b) What damage is all that oil doing?
- c) Do you think offshore drilling should be banned?
- d) Is President Obama doing enough?
- e) What three adjectives describe this story and why?
- f) How long do you think the court case will last?
- g) How should BP or the U.S. government help the families affected by the oil spill?
- h) Why hasn't the oil leak been stopped?
- i) Do you think taxpayers will have to pay?
- j) What questions would you like to ask BP CEO Tony Hayward?

# LANGUAGE – MULTIPLE CHOICE

From [http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1006/100604-bp\\_apology.html](http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1006/100604-bp_apology.html)

BP is facing (1) \_\_\_\_ criticism over the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. The latest public relations (2) \_\_\_\_ came from the company's CEO Tony Hayward. He generated a lot of anger among Americans when he complained about how the crisis was affecting (3) \_\_\_\_ personally. He told reporters that he "would like his life back". Many people thought this was a selfish comment from a millionaire businessman. Eleven oil workers died and 17 were injured in the explosion that started the (4) \_\_\_\_ on April 20th. Hayward posted an apology on BP's Facebook page. He wrote: "I made a (5) \_\_\_\_ and thoughtless comment....I apologize, especially to the families of the 11 men who (6) \_\_\_\_ their lives in this tragic accident."

Meanwhile, oil continues to (7) \_\_\_\_ from the broken pipe. Experts say between 12,000–100,000 barrels a day are spilling into the sea, which is 1,900,000–16,000,000 litres. It is now the worst oil spill in U.S. history. It will result (8) \_\_\_\_ enormous damage to the Gulf of Mexico's fishing industry, tourism, marine species, wildlife and environment. Hayward's apologies continue in the (9) \_\_\_\_ of national TV ads. He says: "The Gulf spill is a tragedy that never should have happened...BP has (10) \_\_\_\_ full responsibility for cleaning up the spill in the Gulf. We've helped organize the largest environmental (11) \_\_\_\_ in this country's history....And our cleanup efforts will not (12) \_\_\_\_ at any cost to taxpayers."

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

- |     |                    |                |                  |                 |
|-----|--------------------|----------------|------------------|-----------------|
| 1.  | (a) increase       | (b) increases  | (c) increasingly | (d) increasing  |
| 2.  | (a) gaffe          | (b) guffaw     | (c) gopher       | (d) graph       |
| 3.  | (a) them           | (b) him        | (c) he           | (d) his         |
| 4.  | (a) beak           | (b) teak       | (c) leak         | (d) weak        |
| 5.  | (a) hurt           | (b) hurting    | (c) hurtful      | (d) hurts       |
| 6.  | (a) cut            | (b) lost       | (c) met          | (d) stole       |
| 7.  | (a) crush          | (b) lush       | (c) hush         | (d) gush        |
| 8.  | (a) in             | (b) on         | (c) at           | (d) to          |
| 9.  | (a) frame          | (b) form       | (c) from         | (d) fame        |
| 10. | (a) done           | (b) came       | (c) written      | (d) taken       |
| 11. | (a) responsibility | (b) responsive | (c) response     | (d) responsible |
| 12. | (a) come           | (b) go         | (c) do           | (d) have        |

BP apologies not stopping oil spill – 4th June, 2010



# 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 BP CEO Tony Hayward. Share what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

**3. THE OIL SPILL:** Make a poster about the oil spill. Show your work to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all have similar things?

**4. BP CEO:** Write a magazine article about the oil spill. Include imaginary interviews with a BP CEO Tony Hayward and a local fisherman who can no longer fish because of the oil.

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 BP CEO Tony Hayward. Ask him three questions about the oil spill. Give him three ideas on what to do to repair BP's image. Read your letter to your partner(s) in your next lesson. Your partner(s) will answer your questions.

# ANSWERS

## TRUE / FALSE:

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

## SYNONYM MATCH:

- |                |                 |
|----------------|-----------------|
| 1. facing      | a. experiencing |
| 2. gaffe       | b. mistake      |
| 3. generated   | c. created      |
| 4. explosion   | d. blast        |
| 5. thoughtless | e. selfish      |
| 6. gush        | f. pour         |
| 7. marine      | g. sea          |
| 8. full        | h. complete     |
| 9. response    | i. reply        |
| 10. enormous   | j. huge         |

## PHRASE MATCH:

- |                                      |                            |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. BP is facing                      | a. increasing criticism    |
| 2. The latest public relations       | b. gaffe                   |
| 3. He generated a lot of anger       | c. among Americans         |
| 4. a selfish comment from a          | d. millionaire businessman |
| 5. the 11 men who lost               | e. their lives             |
| 6. oil continues to gush from        | f. the broken pipe         |
| 7. 12,000–100,000                    | g. barrels                 |
| 8. a tragedy that never should       | h. have happened           |
| 9. the largest environmental         | i. response                |
| 10. cleanup efforts will not come at | j. any cost to taxpayers   |

## GAP FILL:

### BP apologies not stopping oil spill

BP is facing increasing criticism **over** the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. The latest public relations **gaffe** came from the company's CEO Tony Hayward. He **generated** a lot of anger among Americans when he complained about how the crisis was affecting him **personally**. He told reporters that he "would like his life back". Many people thought this was a selfish **comment** from a millionaire businessman. Eleven oil workers died and 17 were injured in the **explosion** that started the leak on April 20th. Hayward posted an apology on BP's Facebook page. He wrote: "I made a **hurtful** and thoughtless comment....I apologize, especially to the families of the 11 men who lost their lives in this **tragic** accident."

Meanwhile, oil continues to **gush** from the broken pipe. Experts say between 12,000–100,000 **barrels** a day are spilling into the sea, which is 1,900,000–16,000,000 litres. It is now the worst oil spill in U.S. **history**. It will result in enormous damage to the Gulf of Mexico's fishing industry, tourism, marine **species**, wildlife and environment. Hayward's apologies continue in the **form** of national TV ads. He says: "The Gulf spill is a tragedy that never should have happened..BP has taken **full** responsibility for cleaning up the spill in the Gulf. We've helped organize the largest environmental **response** in this country's history....And our cleanup efforts will not come at any **cost** to taxpayers."

## LANGUAGE WORK

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