

The Psychology of Weather (C1)

A – Before you start

Answer the questions with a partner.

1. What kind of weather do you prefer? Why?
2. Do you believe that a country's climate can influence the character of its inhabitants?
3. If so, in what way?

B – Listen and answer

Read these statements. Then listen (without reading) and write T (true) or F (false).

1. Trevor Harley is Professor of Psychology at Edinburgh University.
2. He became interested in the weather when he finished his degree course.
3. He has observed higher temperatures and lower rainfall in Dundee in recent years.
4. He claims that each type of weather has its own psychological effect on people.
5. Exposure to sunshine improves your mental health but not your physical health.
6. Harley denies that the climate of a country affects the personality of its inhabitants.
7. He dislikes windy weather.
8. Windy weather was appreciated in Britain more in the past than it is at present.

C – Read and answer

Read the article and answer the questions.

1. Why is it difficult to relate precise meteorological conditions to people's moods?
2. How does Trevor Harley differentiate between the terms "climate" and "weather"? Why?
3. What are the physiological effects of extreme weather described by Harley?
4. How does sunshine affect the brain?
5. What reasons does Harley give for a higher incidence of rioting during hot weather?
6. What other negative occurrences are connected to hot weather?
7. What example does Harley give of the effects the climate can have on a country's economy?
8. What weather conditions gave rise to smog in Britain's industrial cities in the 1940s and 1950s?

D – Learn it! Use it!

Complete these sentences with words from the glossary. (You may have to adapt the expression in some way; e.g. change the verb tense, or change from singular to plural.)

1. The investigators had all the available facts but they _____ the wrong conclusions!
2. The local supermarket is giving out _____ of a new brand of breakfast cereal.
3. Our manager's clever but she's very moody. Some people can't _____ working with her.
4. People with broken _____ are a common sight on flights back home from ski resorts.
5. The traffic jam on the motorway was _____ an accident involving two lorries.
6. When it's very hot, I go and sit by the lake. There's usually a light _____ there.

E – Ready for the C1 ADVANCED English Test? (Reading and Use of English, Part 4)

Complete the second sentence so that it has a similar meaning to the first sentence, using the word given. Do not change the word given. Use between 3 and 6 words including the word given.

Example: There is general agreement that our mood can change with the weather.

AFFECT Most people would agree that the weather can affect our mood.

1. People can be made to feel gloomy and even depressed by dark clouds.

ON Dark clouds can _____ and even depression.

2. Harley began monitoring Dundee weather 27 years ago.

MONITORING Harley _____ 27 years.

3. It doesn't always happen that people are happier when it's sunny.

CASE It _____ that people are happier when it's sunny.

4. As it gets hotter, violent crimes become more likely.

MORE The _____ violent crimes become.

5. Sometimes people can't do anything because it's too hot.

BE Sometimes people are just too hot _____ anything.

6. The sort of weather that Harley dislikes most is wind.

LEAST Wind _____ sort of weather.

F – Write about it

Write about an event or situation in your country that was caused by extreme weather. Mention:

- *when/where it happened;*
- *what it was caused by;*
- *how long it lasted;*
- *what the effects were.*

Answers

B – Listen and answer

1. F – He is Professor of Psychology at the University of Dundee. 2. F – He became interested in it in his youth. 3. F – He has observed higher temperatures and higher rainfall. 4. T 5. F – It can also improve aspects of your physical health. 6. F – He thinks it does affect the personality of its inhabitants. 7. T 8. T

C – Read and answer

1. Because individual responses to the weather can vary greatly. 2. He defines climate as the conditions you expect and weather as the conditions you get. He makes this distinction because he claims it's necessary to observe the weather for thirty years in order to gauge the climate. 3. They are heat stroke or heat stress in summer and hypothermia and broken limbs in winter. 4. It has an effect on the chemical serotonin, which is a neurotransmitter in the brain. It also stimulates the pineal gland that produces melatonin, a hormone that is involved in regulating our sleep-wake cycle. 5. He says that in hot weather people drink more alcohol. Hot weather also makes people angrier. 6. In hot weather, violent crimes like murder, robbery, rape and assault are more frequent. 7. He gives the example of the UK, where the abundance of water contributed to making the Industrial Revolution possible. 8. The conditions were fog combined with smoke in areas with high pressure and little wind.

D – Learn it! Use it!

1. drew 2. samples 3. bear 4. limbs 5. due to 6. breeze

E – Ready for the C1 ADVANCED English Test?

1. bring on gloom 2. has been monitoring Dundee weather for 3. isn't always the case
4. hotter it gets, the more likely 5. to be able to do 6. is Harley's least favourite