

2020 – The year of fires and a pandemic

Elementary

1 Warmer

Match the disasters with the years when they happened.

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---------|
| 1. the Great Fire of London | a. 2010 |
| 2. the Indian Ocean tsunami | b. 1883 |
| 3. Krakatoa volcanic eruption | c. 1666 |
| 4. Haiti earthquake | d. 2004 |

2 Key words

Fill the gaps in the sentences with these key words from the text.

spread mining rainforest greenhouse gases volunteer put out

1. A _____ is forest in a tropical region of the world where it rains a lot. (para 3)
2. _____ are gases such as carbon dioxide, which make the earth warmer. (para 3)
3. _____ is the process of getting coal or metal from under the ground. (para 3)
4. If fires _____, they get bigger and cover a larger area. (para 5)
5. A _____ is someone who offers to do something and does not receive any pay for it. (para 5)
6. If people _____ a fire, they stop it burning. (para 5)

3 Find the information

Find the following information in the text as quickly as possible.

1. When did the Australian fires start burning?
2. How many homes did they destroy?
3. How many square kilometres of rainforest have the Brazilian fires destroyed in 2020?
4. Apart from Russia, where were there other wildfires in the Arctic region?
5. How high is Mount Kilimanjaro?
6. Where is it?

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3 November, 2020

- 1 Since the beginning of 2020, the coronavirus pandemic has been the main story in the newspapers and on the TV news. But before the pandemic started, another story was in the news around the world. In Australia, the worst fires in the country's history started in June, 2019, in the middle of the Australian winter, and burned until the end of May, 2020.
- 2 The fires, known in Australia as bushfires, burnt 186,000 square kilometres of forests and destroyed nearly 6,000 buildings, including nearly 3,000 homes. 34 people died during the Australian fires.
- 3 In Brazil, there are forest fires every year, but in 2019, they were worse than ever before. The Amazon rainforest helps to prevent greenhouse gases reaching the atmosphere, but each year, people burn large areas of the forest to make room for farming, mining and other things. So far in 2020, the fires have destroyed more than 13,000 square kilometres of the rainforest and many fires are still burning.
- 4 It is not only South America that has had forest fires during the last year. In California and other states on the west coast of the USA, wildfires destroyed nearly 32,000 square kilometres of forest. Serious fires in Siberia in the east of Russia destroyed over 25,000 square kilometres of forest, and there were wildfires in other parts of the Arctic, including Alaska and Canada.
- 5 There was also a serious fire in Africa. In the middle of October, 2020, a large fire started burning on Mount Kilimanjaro. It is the highest mountain in Africa at 5,895 metres. It is on the border between Tanzania and Kenya. With strong winds and dry weather, the fire spread very quickly, and hundreds of firefighters and volunteers worked hard to put the fire out. Many people will probably remember 2020 as the year of fires and a pandemic.

4 Comprehension check

Match the beginnings and endings to make statements about the text.

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. The bushfires in Australia burned ... | a. ... were destroyed in California and other American states. |
| 2. The bushfires destroyed nearly 6,000 buildings, and ... | b. ... spread very quickly because of strong winds and dry weather. |
| 3. To make room for farming and mining, ... | c. ... thirty-four people died in the fires. |
| 4. Nearly 32,000 square kilometres of forest ... | d. ... through the Australian summer until May, 2020. |
| 5. The fire on Mount Kilimanjaro ... | e. ... the year of fires and a pandemic. |
| 6. Many people will probably remember 2020 as ... | f. ... people burn large areas of the Brazilian rainforest every year. |

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5 Chunks

Rearrange the words to make phrases from the text.

1. the 2020 of beginning since
2. Australian the in middle winter of the
3. eighty one thousand and hundred six
4. ever worse before than
5. USA west on the of coast the
6. 2020 so in far

6 Compound words

Match the words in the left-hand column with the words in the right-hand column to make words from the text.

- | | |
|-----------|------------|
| 1. rain | a. fire |
| 2. fire | b. house |
| 3. wild | c. paper |
| 4. corona | d. forest |
| 5. green | e. virus |
| 6. news | f. fighter |

7 Prepositions

Complete the phrases from the text using these prepositions.

between around until on in for

1. _____ the end of May
2. _____ the middle of October
3. _____ the border _____ Tanzania and Kenya
4. to make room _____ farming
5. in the news _____ the world

8 Discussion

- Have you seen the fires on the news?
- Are there any forest fires in your country?
- Which is more serious for the world – the coronavirus pandemic or global warming caused by greenhouse gases? Why?