What Is News of Disasters?

Disasters can be grouped into two categories:

1. Man-made accidents such as car crashes, train and plane crashes, air piracy, shipwrecks, fires, and the collapse of buildings or other structures.

2. Natural disasters such as floods, flash floods, storms, thunderstorms, rainstorms, snowstorms, avalanches, forest fires, drought, hurricanes, tornadoes, tremors, monsoons, earthquakes, aftershocks, volcanic eruptions, and starvation.

Car Crashes

Related vocabulary:

- to crash: to collide head-on with
- to crush: to death
- to smash into
- to fail to overtake a car
- to avoid: an on-coming car/ an approaching car
- to be slightly/ seriously injured
- to flee the scene: slippery road
- to be killed instantly: to be killed on the spot
- to be trapped in the wreckage

- to skid off the road
- to ram into
- to injure
- to avoid
- an on-coming car/ an approaching car
- to be slightly/ seriously injured
- to flee the scene: slippery road
- to be killed instantly: to be killed on the spot
- to be trapped in the wreckage

- to swerve
- to tailgate
- to wound
- to bump into
- a drunkard
- collision
- a drunken man
Example:

*11 killed in truck collision*

Eleven workers travelling home in a truck to vote in a village election were killed in a head-on collision with another truck, police said yesterday.

Twelve were injured in the accident in Danchang District of Suphan Buri on Sunday night, AP reports.

5 Ws and H:

who: Eleven workers.

What: They were killed in a truck.

A truck collided head-on with another.

Where: In Danchang District, Suphan Buri Province.

When: Yesterday

why: going to a village election.

How: It was a head-on collision.

Floods

Related vocabulary:

torrential rain thunderstorm tropical storm
typhoon widespread shower downpour
rainfall to inundate to recede
to stand on rooftops to be marooned to rescue
to drain water out to make effort to drain water out
to submerge to perch on rooftops to drown
to claim to kill to sweep away
flood-affected/stricken area flood victims
flooded area rescue team relief operation
knee-deep level waist-deep level the flood
ankle-deep floodwater roads cut off flat-bottom boat
electricity poles/lines cattle perished in
flood makes people homeless/stand on rooftops
donations of food, medical supplies and blankets
ad-hoc committee the death toll/calamity rises to...

flood control center the worst-hit district of...
The meteorological Department

Example:

_Floodwaters claim 35 in Bangladesh_

_Associated Press_

_Dhaka--_ Nearly two million people _have been marooned_ in Bangladesh, with floodwaters _inundating_ new areas and _killing_ at least 35 people in northern parts of the country, _officials_ and news reports said yesterday.
Nearly two million have been marooned. Floodwater killed 35 people and made almost two million of them homeless. In the northern parts of Bangladesh. Yesterday or a few days ago. Because of the floodwaters. Floods inundated many areas in the northern parts of Bangladesh. The news was reported by officials and Associate Press.

Plane Crashes

Related vocabulary:

to crash \hspace{1cm} to nose down \hspace{1cm} to plough into
to plunge into \hspace{1cm} to burst into flame \hspace{1cm} to slam into
to disintegrate into pieces \hspace{1cm} to land
to land on its fuselage \hspace{1cm} to take off

bad weather \hspace{1cm} poor visibility \hspace{1cm} lightning

mid-air explosion \hspace{1cm} engine trouble \hspace{1cm} pilot error

pilot \hspace{1cm} co-pilot \hspace{1cm} cabin crew

crash site \hspace{1cm} victim (s) \hspace{1cm} survivor (s)
charred bodies the ill-fated plane \hspace{1cm} casualty/ casualties
death toll
Example:

*No survivors from air crash in Laos*

Hanoi-- Vietnam’s official news agency confirmed that its top general and everyone else aboard were killed when a Lao military jet crashed near the plain of Jars in Laos on May 25.

5 *Ws* and *H*:

- **Who:** Vietnam’s top general and other military men.
- **What:** A Laos military jet crashed killing one Vietnamese top general and other military men.
- **Where:** Near the plain of Jars in Laos.
- **When:** On May 25.
- **why:** It was a plane crash in mid air.
- **How:** The plane crashed ploughing into the plain.

**Fires**

Related vocabulary:

- to blaze
- to burst into flames
- to gust
- to gut
- to raze
- to engulf in flames
- to spread
- to choke
- to suffocate
- to extinguish
- to control the tire
- to rage
- to escape through the fire exits/emergency doors
- to put out
- panic
- to suffer a third degree burn
- to hit
- to bring the fire under control
- fire alarm
- holocaust
- fireman
- firefighter
- tire extinguisher
Example:

Fire razes garment factory

A fire caused by electric short circuit yesterday blazed a textile factory at Nong Kham resulting in strong fumes and massive clouds demolishing the factory, killing at least two workers and injuring many people, police reported.

5 Ws and H:

**who:** Two workers and many people.

**What:** A fire killed two workers and injured many people

**Where:** In a garment factory at Nong Khaem.

**When:** Yesterday.

**Why:** There was an electric short circuit.

**How:** The short circuit caused a fire to blaze. The strong flames and massive clouds choked and charred two workers and many were injured.
# Activities:

## Exercise 1

Fill in the following blanks with the words given below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>smashing</th>
<th>exploded</th>
<th>crash</th>
<th>crashed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>killed</td>
<td>killing</td>
<td>skidded</td>
<td>fire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>injured</td>
<td>struck/hit</td>
<td>were burned</td>
<td>gutted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>perched</td>
<td>ripped</td>
<td>submerged</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. A Laotian helicopter on a joint mission with Thai authorities yesterday ................. in Bor Kluua district, ............... six men.

2. A container of chemical substances belonging to a gas company in Mab Ta Pud Industrial Estate ............... yesterday morning.

3. More tropical forests ................. around the world in 1997 than at any other time in recorded history, a report said yesterday.

4. Blaze caused by a cigarette butt ............... a French consulate late last night.

5. Thousands of marooned people remained ............... on rooftops.

6. Floodwaters ................. the Lad Prao and Bangkapi areas.

7. The haze from Indonesian forest ................. blanketed Southeast Asia.


10. A tornado .................. through a small South Dakota town early yesterday.

11. A bomb ................ two and ................ one in Colombia yesterday.

12. A Toyota car ................ the road before ................ into a barricade blocking in front.

Exercise 2

Arrange the following information into the correct order by writing 1,2,3, . . . . in the space provided.

Beijing-- Two minor earthquakes bumped Beijing within minutes of each other last night, but caused no casualties or damage to buildings, China’s State Seismological Bureau reported.

The quakes were centered in the city’s southwestern district of Fengtai and were felt by some people in the western part of the Chinese capital. The seismology bureau said. -Associated Press.

Two tremors hit Beijing.

The first of the pair of preliminary magnitude 3.1 quakes struck at 7.37 p.m. (6:37 p.m. Bangkok time) and the second five minutes later, the official Xinhua Agency reported.
Exercise 3

Use the following information to write a good lead. Develop the news focal point. Do not exceed 35 words.

**Who:** Thousands of people in India.

**What:** Almost 3,000 of them died. Thousands of them were hospitalized.

The death toll of people, 2,919, nationally reported, was the worst figure ever recorded in Indian history.

**Where:** In Orissa and Andhra, the eastern and southern states of India respectively.

**When:** In summer

**Why:** People died because of the worst heat wave. The temperature in summer was 51 degrees Celsius. It was the worst and hottest weather ever to hit Orissa and Andhra.

**How:** There was a heat wave. The weather was very hot. There was no rain and the temperature kept going up.

**Source of news:** A news agency in India, Indian weather authorities and Indian rescue team reported to Agence France-Presse.

(Adapted from The Nation, Friday, June 12, 1998)
Indian heat wave toll 3,000

**Exercise 4**

Identify the following headlines by indicating the number of words and type of accidents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Headlines</th>
<th>Number of words</th>
<th>Type of business</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Japanese rescue train crashes</td>
<td>..................</td>
<td>..........................................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. 11 killed in plane crash</td>
<td>..................</td>
<td>..........................................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Record fires reported</td>
<td>..................</td>
<td>..........................................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Two tremors hit Beijing</td>
<td>..................</td>
<td>..........................................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Five dead, 150 injured as twister hits S Dakota</td>
<td>...............</td>
<td>..........................................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Bomb mars Colombia polls</td>
<td>..................</td>
<td>..........................................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Chemical container blast causes skin irritation</td>
<td>................</td>
<td>..........................................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Six hurt as copter crashes</td>
<td>..................</td>
<td>..........................................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. 15 more piers ‘unsafe’</td>
<td>..................</td>
<td>..........................................................</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
10. Floodwaters likely to hit Bangkok

11. Diana dies in car crash

12. Blaze guts French consulate

13. Floods leave 17 dead in Vietnam