

32 The weather

A Cold weather

In Scandinavia, the **chilly** (1) days of autumn soon change to the cold days of winter. The first **frosts** (2) arrive and the roads become icy. Rain becomes **sleet** (3) and then snow, at first turning to **slush** (4) in the streets, but soon **settling** (5), with severe **blizzards** (6) and **snowdrifts** (7) in the far north. Freezing weather often continues in the far north until May or even June, when the ground starts to **thaw** (8) and the ice **melts** (9) again.

(1) cold, but not very (2) thin white coat of ice on everything (3) rain and snow mixed (4) dirty, brownish, half-snow, half-water (5) staying as a white covering (6) snow blown by high winds (7) deep banks of snow against walls, etc. (8) change from hard, frozen state to normal (9) change from solid to liquid under heat

B Warm/hot weather

close /kləʊs/ [warm and uncomfortable] **stifling** [hot, uncomfortable, you can hardly breathe] **humid** [hot and damp, makes you sweat a lot] **scorching** [very hot, often used in positive contexts] **boiling** [very hot, often used in negative contexts] **mild** [warm at a time when it is normally cold] *Note also:* We had a **heatwave** last month. [very hot, dry period]

C Wet weather

This wet weather scale gets stronger from left to right.

damp → drizzle → pour down / downpour → torrential rain → flood

Autumn in London is usually **chilly** and **damp** with rain and **drizzle**.

It was absolutely **pouring down**. *or* There was a real **downpour**.

In the Tropics there is usually **torrential rain** most days, and the roads often get **flooded**.
or There are **floods** on the roads.

This rain won't last long; it's only a **shower**. [short duration]

The **storm** damaged several houses. [high winds and rain together]

We got very wet in the **thunderstorm**. [thunder and heavy rain]

Hailstones were battering the roof of our car. [small balls of ice falling from the sky].

Note also **hail** (uncountable).

The sky's a bit **overcast**; I think it's going to rain. [very cloudy]

We had a **drought** /draʊt/ last summer. It didn't rain for six weeks.

D Mist and fog

Nouns and adjectives: **haze/hazy** [light mist, usually caused by heat] **mist/misty** [light fog, often on the sea, or caused by drizzle] **fog/foggy** [quite thick, associated with cold weather] **smog** [mixture of fog and pollution (smoke + fog)]

E Wind

There was a gentle **breeze** on the beach, just enough to cool us.

There's a good **wind** today; fancy going sailing?

It's a very **blustery** day; the umbrella will just blow away.

There's been a **gale** warning; it would be crazy to go sailing.

People boarded up their windows when they heard there was a **hurricane** on the way.

Exercises

32.1 Match each word with a word from the box.

1 thunder 2 torrential 3 down 4 heat 5 hail 6 snow 7 gale

stones	drift	storm	warning	rain	wave	pour
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32.2 Fill the gaps with words from the left-hand page.

My first experience of real winter weather was when I went to Northern Canada. I was used to the sort of snow that falls in London, which quickly turns into brown (1) with all the people walking on it. In fact, most of the time I was in London, it didn't really snow properly, it was mostly (2). Apart from that, British winters meant a bit of white (3) on my garden and occasionally having to drive very carefully on icy roads early in the morning. I had never experienced the (4) and (5) that can paralyse a whole city in less than an hour and close roads completely. However, when the earth finally (6) and all the snow (7) away in spring, everything comes to life again and looks more beautiful than ever.

32.3 What kinds of weather do you think caused the following to happen? Write a sentence which could go *before* each of these.

- 1 We had to sit in the shade every afternoon.
- 2 The sweat was pouring out of us.
- 3 I can hardly breathe; I wish it would rain to cool us down.
- 4 Cars were skidding out of control.
- 5 Even the postman had to use a boat to get around.
- 6 They had to close the airport; the snow was a metre deep.
- 7 We were able to sit in the garden in the middle of winter.
- 8 The earth became rock-hard and a lot of plants died.
- 9 It blew the newspaper clean out of my hands.
- 10 A row of big trees had been uprooted like matchsticks.
- 11 I could hardly see my hand in front of my face.

32.4 What types of weather are bad and good for doing these things?

Example: Skiing *bad:* mild weather which makes the snow melt; *good:* cold, clear days

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|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1 Planting flowers in a garden | 4 A day of sightseeing in a big city |
| 2 Having an evening barbecue | 5 Camping out in a tent |
| 3 Going out in a small sailing boat | 6 Looking at ships through binoculars |

32.5 This chart shows anyone who wants to visit the West of Ireland what weather to expect at different times of the year. Make a similar chart for your country or home region.

<i>Dec-Mar</i>	<i>April-June</i>	<i>July-Aug</i>	<i>Sep-Nov</i>
coldest months; usually quite wet; snow on high ground	generally cool, often wet and windy but improving	warmest months; bright with showers; cool sea breezes	often mild becoming cold; mist and fog