

Climate change: Ade on the frontline

Drought in Queensland, Australia

Video summary	Before watching	While watching
Ade Adepitan visits Queensland, where drought has had a devastating effect on the landscape. Australia is a rich, prosperous country but it has suffered from drought for several years. In 2019, Australia's hottest and driest year on record, nearly 60% of the country was at risk of fire. Ade meets sheep farmer Geoff Elliot, who would normally have up to 8,000 sheep, but with hardly any rain, he could only afford to keep 1,000. Download/print a transcript of the video.	Locate Queensland in Australia on a map and ask students what they think the weather and climate would be like there. Ask them to write their predictions down. Introduce key terms such as: Drought: a prolonged period of abnormally low rainfall. Barren: land that is dry, has little or no vegetation, and is poor for growing plants. Prosperous: an area that is successful and thriving. Ask students how they think climate change might affect Australia. Do they think the effects are similar to the UK?	You may wish to stop at relevant points during this short film to pose questions and check understanding, or wait until the end. Useful questions might include: • What do we mean by 'drought'? • What are the factors involved? • What are the long-term impacts of drought? You may want students to take on an empathic approach by understanding the situation better from the farmer's point of view. For example, the farmer being interviewed says: 'This has gone beyond a drought. This is a disaster.' • What do you think he means? • How serious is this problem and what is the worst that might happen? • How is the farmer feeling when he talks about this disaster? You might discuss the seriousness of this issue with the devastating figures such as '60% of the entire country being at risk of fire' and considering the recent records of extreme weather. The farmer calls this drought a 'silent killer'. What do you think he means? Are students surprised that this devastating drought happened/is happening in a rich country?
After watching		
Establish locational context. Use maps to locate the state of Queensland, Australia and identify areas historically most affected by drought. You might annotate maps with relevant data from meteorological and news reports to help 'tell the story' about drought and its impacts. Establish what a drought is and how climate hazards like this are influenced by human-induced climate change. Identify other factors that may be involved - for example, older students may be making links between droughts and El Niño events. KS3 students might watch the film again but this time look out for and collect numerical statistics given in the film and, working in pairs, perhaps use this to create an infographic alongside a map that explains some of the key features and impacts of this drought. Further research could be used to develop this.		

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After watching (continued)

You could ask students to identify the impacts of this climatic hazard in terms of economic, environmental, and social aspects and examine how they are linked. When enquiring about economic aspects, students could consider not just the financial decline for farmers but for other people looped into the supply chain. What are the impacts on other workers and on job security? How does this influence the price and availability of food for consumers?

In considering environmental impacts, students could consider the health of the soil and loss of biodiversity. When considering social impacts, students could explain how climatic hazards such as this can harm people's well-being in hidden ways as well as ways that can be measured: mental health and physical health can both be affected by the trauma of drought. This enquiry could be developed into a case study about the impact of climate change in a higher income country.

You could ask students what advice they might offer, following their research, as to how mitigation and adaptation might feature in a response to this hazard? This short film is suitable for teaching KS3 and KS4 students. It can be used alongside the other Ade Adepitan films about climate change or watched on its own. All the films build on students' understanding of climate change issues and enable them to make global connections.

This film supports the KS3 geography curriculum by investigating our changing climate and how human and physical processes interact to influence and change landscapes and environments.

At KS4, the film supports understanding about the impacts of rapid climate change on environments and people's lives. The film develops understanding about the economic, social and environmental consequences of climatic hazards (AQA) for example and changes caused to the natural environment. It also raises questions about land use and water scarcity.

This clip could be used to support the delivery of geography to KS3 and KS4 students. Specifically, this topic appears in OCR, Edexcel, AQA, WJEC KS4/GCSE in England and Wales, CCEA GCSE in Northern Ireland and SQA National 4/5 in Scotland.

Where next?

Drought occurs in many regions across the world and the impacts can be devastating.

Research a drought in another area of the world such as California, Ethiopia or India. What were the social, economic and environmental impacts of the drought? How do they compare to the drought in Queensland, Australia?

How can the impacts of a drought be reduced? Research water conservation and supply methods to investigate what is being done and how this differs around the world.

Links

Characteristics and types of drought:
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/zt9ncwx/revision/1>

Hazardous impacts of droughts:
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/ztvwmnb/revision/2>

Extreme weather in the UK:
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/zwwf9q>

The impacts of drought in Australia:
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/zp9bxsg/revision/3>