

# THE ARTICLE

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2107/210721-europe-floods.html>

Germany's leader has expressed her fears about climate change after visiting the devastation caused by the severe flooding in Europe. Chancellor Angela Merkel said she was horrified by the destruction across swathes of her country. She visited some of the hardest-hit areas in Germany and listened to accounts of the disaster from local residents. She told reporters: "It's shocking. I can pretty much say that the German language does not have words to describe the destruction that has been wreaked." Ms Merkel said the world had to escalate its efforts to tackle the climate crisis. She said: "We must hurry. We have to be faster in the fight against climate change."

Torrential rains caused many of Europe's major rivers to swell and overflow last week. Many burst their banks and caused flash floods in adjacent towns and villages. The floodwaters washed away houses, roads and bridges across Germany, Belgium, Luxembourg, Switzerland and the Netherlands. The death toll stands at 190, with many more people missing. Towns are now covered in debris. The floods reshaped many parts of towns beyond recognition, which Ms Merkel described as being "surreal". Armin Laschet, the premier of the flood-stricken state of North-Rhine Westphalia, said the clean-up operation would take "years". He questioned Germany's preparedness for floods and the effectiveness of flood defences.

Sources: <https://news.yahoo.com/merkel-visit-flood-zone-western-051016535.html>  
<https://www.politico.eu/article/merkel-pledges-stronger-post-flood-focus-on-climate-protection/>  
<https://www.swissinfo.ch/eng/reuters/-it-s-terrifying---merkel-shaken-as-flood-deaths-rise-to-188-in-europe/46796240>

# VOCABULARY MATCHING

## Paragraph 1

- |                |                                                                         |
|----------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. expressed   | a. Increased rapidly                                                    |
| 2. devastation | b. Great destruction or damage.                                         |
| 3. severe      | c. A broad area of something.                                           |
| 4. swathes     | d. Made a thought or feeling known in words or by gestures and conduct. |
| 5. wreaked     | e. Make determined efforts to deal with a problem or difficult task.    |
| 6. escalate    | f. Of something bad or undesirable; very great; intense.                |
| 7. tackle      | g. Caused a large amount of damage or harm.                             |

## Paragraph 2

- |               |                                                                                                          |
|---------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 8. torrential | h. Next to or adjoining something else.                                                                  |
| 9. swell      | i. Break open or apart suddenly and violently, especially as a result of an impact or internal pressure. |
| 10. burst     | j. Scattered pieces of rubbish or remains.                                                               |
| 11. adjacent  | k. Of rain falling rapidly and in huge quantities.                                                       |
| 12. toll      | l. Become larger or rounder in size, typically as a result of a build-up of water or liquid.             |
| 13. debris    | m. Bizarre and unlike anything we normally imagine.                                                      |
| 14. surreal   | n. The number of deaths or casualties arising from a natural disaster, conflict, accident, etc.          |

# BEFORE READING / LISTENING

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2107/210721-europe-floods.html>

**1. TRUE / FALSE:** Read the headline. Guess if a-h below are true (T) or false (F).

1. Germany's leader was devastated by the recent floods in Europe. **T / F**
2. Ms Merkel was horrified at the destruction across swathes of Germany. **T / F**
3. Ms Merkel said German did not have the words to describe the damage. **T / F**
4. Ms Merkel said the world had to tackle escalators. **T / F**
5. Many of Europe's major rivers became swollen and their banks burst. **T / F**
6. The article says over 190 people are still missing in the floods. **T / F**
7. Ms Merkel said what she saw in flooded towns was surreal. **T / F**
8. A state premier said it would take decades for towns to recover. **T / F**

**2. SYNONYM MATCH:** (The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- |                         |                |
|-------------------------|----------------|
| 1. <b>expressed</b>     | a. adjoining   |
| 2. <b>devastation</b>   | b. shocked     |
| 3. <b>horrified</b>     | c. increase    |
| 4. <b>residents</b>     | d. readiness   |
| 5. <b>escalate</b>      | e. destruction |
| 6. <b>torrential</b>    | f. unreal      |
| 7. <b>adjacent</b>      | g. conveyed    |
| 8. <b>surreal</b>       | h. affected    |
| 9. <b>stricken</b>      | i. relentless  |
| 10. <b>preparedness</b> | j. citizens    |

**3. PHRASE MATCH:** (Sometimes more than one choice is possible.)

- |                                          |                       |
|------------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. expressed her                         | a. rains              |
| 2. devastation caused by the severe      | b. by the destruction |
| 3. she was horrified                     | c. toll               |
| 4. I can pretty                          | d. its efforts        |
| 5. the world had to escalate             | e. for floods         |
| 6. torrential                            | f. fears              |
| 7. flash                                 | g. as being "surreal" |
| 8. death                                 | h. floods             |
| 9. which Ms Merkel described             | i. flooding           |
| 10. He questioned Germany's preparedness | j. much say that      |

# MULTIPLE CHOICE - QUIZ

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2107/210721-europe-floods.html>

- 1) How did Angela Merkel feel about the flooding in Europe?
  - a) in two minds
  - b) sad
  - c) horrified
  - d) miserable
- 2) Whose accounts of the disaster did Ms Merkel listen to?
  - a) local residents
  - b) journalists
  - c) rescuers
  - d) emergency workers
- 3) What did Ms Merkel say lacked words to describe the destruction?
  - a) the Internet
  - b) the German language
  - c) newspapers
  - d) humans
- 4) What did Ms Merkel say the world had to escalate?
  - a) laws
  - b) change
  - c) education
  - d) its efforts
- 5) What did Ms Merkel say the world had to do in the climate change fight?
  - a) fight harder
  - b) use electric cars
  - c) hurry
  - d) win
- 6) What does the article say caused rivers to swell and overflow?
  - a) poor flood defences
  - b) torrential rains
  - c) human activity
  - d) strong winds
- 7) What does the article say washed away roads and bridges?
  - a) raging torrents
  - b) gushing water
  - c) white water
  - d) floodwaters
- 8) What are many towns now covered in?
  - a) plastic
  - b) debris
  - c) water
  - d) sludge
- 9) How did Ms Merkel describe reshaped towns as being?
  - a) sad
  - b) surreal
  - c) unrealistic
  - d) tragic
- 10) How long did a state premier say it would take to clean up the damage?
  - a) years
  - b) months
  - c) decades
  - d) a century

# FLOODS DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

1. What did you think when you read the headline?
2. What images are in your mind when you hear the word 'flood'?
3. What do you know about the floods in Europe?
4. How worried are you about climate change?
5. What do you do to help stop global warming?
6. How has the climate been changing in your country?
7. Have you experienced any severe weather events?
8. What would you do in a flood?
9. What damage do floods cause?
10. What advice do you have for those affected by the floods?

*Germany's Merkel warns floods highlight climate dangers – 21st July, 2021*  
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# FLOODS DISCUSSION

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

11. Did you like reading this article? Why/not?
12. What do you think of when you hear the word 'danger'?
13. What do you think about what you read?
14. What is the heaviest rain you have experienced?
15. How can the world help people hit hard by the floods?
16. What is the most surreal thing you've seen in your town?
17. How can flood defences be made more effective?
18. Will humans ever be able to protect against the power of nature?
19. How prepared are you for emergencies?
20. What questions would you like to ask Angela Merkel?