

# Chernobyl

## Pre-Reading

### A. Warm-Up Questions

1. What do you know about the Chernobyl nuclear disaster?
2. Do you know when and where this terrible accident took place?
3. How many people do you think have died as a result of this accident?
4. Do you think that any people are still in danger as a result of this accident?
5. Do you think anything positive may have happened as a result of this disaster?



### B. Vocabulary Preview

Match the words on the left with the correct meanings on the right.

- |                     |   |
|---------------------|---|
| ___ 1. disaster     | a) to get better  |
| ___ 2. poisonous    | b) in danger  |
| ___ 3. release      | c) a person who continues to live                           |
| ___ 4. explode      | d) a terrible event or accident                             |
| ___ 5. resident     | e) greatly  |
| ___ 6. relocate     | f) to blow up   |
| ___ 7. due to       | g) to help to make something happen                         |
| ___ 8. estimate     | h) causing sickness or death                                |
| ___ 9. at risk      | i) a person who is hurt or killed in an accident, war, etc. |
| ___ 10. contribute  | j) to let go  |
| ___ 11. anniversary | k) to move  |
| ___ 12. victim      | l) a person who lives in a particular place                 |
| ___ 13. survivor    | m) to give an approximate number                            |
| ___ 14. improve     | n) the yearly return of the date of an event                |
| ___ 15. vastly      | o) because of   |

## Reading

1. On April 26, 1986, the worst nuclear accident in history took place at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant near Pripyat, Ukraine.
2. A large cloud of **poisonous** radioactive elements was **released** into the air when one of the plant's nuclear reactors **exploded** and started a huge fire. The plant was only two miles (about 3.22 kilometers) away from Pripyat, and its 45,000 **residents** were evacuated within 24 hours, never to return. Another 85,000 people living within 18 miles (about 29 kilometers) of Chernobyl were **relocated** in the next month. Over the years, as many as 350,000 people have left their homes **due to** high radiation levels. Today, it is a ghost town that is being taken over by surrounding forests.
3. The wind carried the radioactive cloud over large parts of Europe, as far away as Scandinavia and England. Over 55,000 square miles (about 142,449 square kilometers) were contaminated, but 70% of the radiation settled on nearby Belarus, which has since suffered hundreds of billions of dollars in damage.
4. Some scientists **estimate** that more than 200,000 people have died since 1986 as a result of the accident, and another 100,000 deaths from cancer may occur in the coming years. Others think that these numbers are much smaller.
5. Over five million people still live in contaminated areas, and their health may be **at risk** from eating contaminated food, such as fish from the rivers, mushrooms and berries from the forests, and meat or milk from cattle and sheep that graze on the land. Several European countries will not accept food products grown in these areas. Many workers have moved away, and life is difficult for those left behind. Some even believe that the accident **contributed** to the collapse of the Soviet Union.
6. April 26, 2006, marked the 20th **anniversary** of the **disaster**. Ceremonies were held in Ukraine to remember its **victims** and to bring attention to **survivors** who continue to be affected by it. In 2010, workers from 27 countries began building a new structure over the damaged reactor to prevent further contamination.
7. One positive outcome of this disaster is that the safety of nuclear power plants has **vastly improved**. Many nations now have strict safeguards and codes in place to prevent similar accidents. Unfortunately, a similar accident occurred in Japan in 2011 after an earthquake triggered a tsunami. Has the Fukushima nuclear disaster brought about even more safety regulations?

***The Exclusion Zone:***  
*Experts estimate that it will take over 300 years before this disaster site is inhabitable again.*

# Comprehension

## A. True or False?

Read the statements below.

If the statement is true, write T beside the sentence.

If it is false, write F and correct the information.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. The Chernobyl nuclear accident occurred in Russia.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Over 100,000 people in the area were relocated after the accident.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. The Chernobyl disaster was the worst nuclear accident in history.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Over 70% of the radiation fell on Scandinavia and England.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. No one knows for sure how many people died as a result of the accident.

## B. Ask and Answer

Practice asking and answering the following questions with your partner.

Then write your answers in complete sentences in your notebook.

1. What happened at the Chernobyl nuclear plant on April 26, 1986?
2. What has happened to the town of Pripyat since the accident?
3. How large an area was affected by the accident?
4. Why has Belarus suffered so much since the accident?
5. Why are the people who live in contaminated areas still suffering today?
6. Why were ceremonies held in Ukraine to mark the 20th anniversary of the disaster?
7. What is one positive outcome of this terrible disaster?

## Vocabulary Review

Choose the word or phrase with the closest meaning to the underlined word or phrase in the following sentences.

1. The worst nuclear accident in history took place at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant.
  - a) farm
  - b) factory
  - c) building
2. The 45,000 residents of Pripyat were evacuated, never to return.
  - a) killed
  - b) vacationing in another country
  - c) removed from a place of danger
3. Today, Pripyat is a ghost town that is being taken over by surrounding forests.
  - a) a place filled with dead people
  - b) an empty town
  - c) a scary town
4. Over 55,000 square miles were contaminated by radiation.
  - a) emptied out
  - b) made dirty
  - c) exploded
5. Some people believe that the accident contributed to the collapse of the Soviet Union.
  - a) fall
  - b) war
  - c) health
6. About 70% of the radiation settled on Belarus.
  - a) came to rest
  - b) lived nearby
  - c) exploded
7. One positive outcome of the accident is that the safety of nuclear power plants has vastly improved since the accident.
  - a) explosion
  - b) damage
  - c) result

## Discussion

1. Do you think that the Chernobyl accident may have contributed to the fall of the Soviet Union? If so, explain why.
2. Do you think that nuclear power is safe? Would you feel comfortable living near a nuclear power plant?
3. What are the advantages and disadvantages of nuclear power?
4. What does the Chernobyl disaster have to do with Japan?