Oxford

English
An international approach

2

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We all know that in some parts of the world, people do not have enough to eat. In some countries, people are dying from lack of food. Look at the map on the following page. Identify the parts of the world where people are suffering from lack of food, and the parts where people have plenty to eat. Can you think of reasons why some parts of the world are better off than others?

**Toolkit**

There are many words in English that can be used to describe the amount of things. How many words and phrases can you think of that mean ‘a lot’, or ‘a little’? Add these words and phrases to your word pool. Here are some examples from the text:

A lot: *abundance, plenty of, much, many*
A little: *lack of, little, few*
Discuss the meaning of the following words.

- to forage
- edible
- to ruin
- idealistic
- to lift
- to threaten
- mass starvation
- to eat away at

Make your own word pool of any other unfamiliar words.

Newspaper report

Ethiopia is on a part of the continent known as the Horn of Africa, and is bordered by Somalia which is on Africa’s east coast. It is coloured dark red on the World Hunger Map. In the newspaper report on page 46, the journalist describes the situation there.

A child has his arm measured in Save the Children’s Tulla Health Centre in southern Ethiopia.
Alem Tesfu dreamed that her daughter Ager would one day finish her education at the village school and start work as a nurse. But that was two years ago, before the rains failed and the price of maize tripled. ‘We used to pray to God that Ager would study hard so she could serve her community,’ Mrs Tesfu said. ‘Now our animals are all dead and we eat only one meal a day. We just pray that we will not starve.’

Ager now spends her days foraging for edible weeds, while her schoolbooks hang in a plastic bag in the family’s hut. This year, villages across Africa have similar stories to tell of dreams ruined by hunger. Global food and fuel prices have been rising and children have been taken out of school and put to work by desperate parents.

Until two years ago, Ethiopia had been a shining example for the rest of Africa. More than nine out of ten children of primary school age were in education, and the country had at last a future which looked bright. The future is no longer bright. Price rises of 250–300 per cent have threatened to ruin many of its hard-won achievements. Rising prices have come to Ethiopia at the same time as the return of the droughts that caused the notorious famine of 1984.

In Mrs Tesfu’s district of Kosoamba in the Ethiopian highlands, hunger has already had serious effects. The local school director is idealistic. He gave up city life to teach here, hoping to bring the benefits of education to one of Ethiopia’s most backward areas. Now he finds his class-rooms are half-empty. ‘We are trying to educate a new generation of Ethiopians. We are trying to lift these communities out of their poverty. If the children are too weak or too poor to come to school, we will not succeed.’

So far mass starvation has been held at bay in Ethiopia’s highlands, although the government admits that 4.6 million people are at risk countrywide. Aid agencies believe the number is closer to 10 million and fear that the famine could soon become much worse. The fear eats away at the residents of Kosoamba. They dread what could happen if next February the rains don’t come for the third year in a row.
**Looking closely**

1. Find the words in the text which mean the same as:
   - multiplied threefold
   - achieved through enormous effort
   - famous for something bad
   - undeveloped
   - prevented for the time being.

2. How do you think the school director feels about the situation in his school?

3. Explain the reasons why the people in Kosoamba ‘dread’ next year.

4. If a loaf of bread cost 25 cents two years ago, how much does it cost now?

5. How many more people do the aid agencies think are at risk than the government states?

**Comprehension**

1. In what ways have Ager’s dreams been ‘ruined by hunger’?

2. Explain how Ethiopia had been ‘a shining example to the rest of Africa’. Why is the country’s future no longer so bright?

3. Which two factors mentioned in the third paragraph have made life so desperate for the local people?

4. By what percentage has the price of maize increased?

5. What percentage of primary school age children were attending school until two years ago?

**Toolkit**

In a report such as this one on Ethiopia, the information describes causes and effects. Use this sentence as an example:

*Price rises of 250–300 percent have threatened to ruin many of its hard-won achievements.*

Note how the first half of the sentence describes a cause of the problems in Ethiopia, while the second half describes the effect of this cause on the country. Look for other examples of the way cause and effect are linked in sentences.

**GLOSSARY**

A *factor* is something which contributes to, or influences the outcome of, something. For example, an important *factor* to consider in sending emergency aid to people is the state of the roads in the country to which the aid will be sent.

**Talking point**

1. Sometimes news reports in newspapers are full of facts which are difficult or dull to read. How does the writer show more directly how people’s lives have been affected?

2. Identify the people in this news report whose experiences and opinions are recorded in direct speech. Write down who they are and what they say.

3. Discuss how this report gives the *who*, *where*, *what*, *when* of the story.

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**Who gives food aid?**

On this page are logos from some international aid organizations and charities which help people all over the world. The charities help people who are victims of war, drought and other natural disasters as well as sickness and homelessness.

In your group, choose one of these organizations to research. Divide your research up into the following areas, so that each person reports on a specific area in answer to the following questions:

- Where is the charity based? How many offices does it have? How many people does it employ worldwide? Write short biographies on 2–3 individuals and their roles within the organization.
- How is the organization financed? How does it raise money? How much money does it need? Give examples of the contributions raised by individual donor countries.
- How does the charity distribute aid? Give examples of how transport and distribution problems affect its programmes.
- What recent aid relief has the organization provided? Give some examples of recent focus countries and campaigns.

When you have completed your research, discuss and share your findings with the group. Take notes on what others have to report.

**Writing Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

Use the information which you and your group have researched to write about how your chosen organization contributes to relieving world hunger. You may use the topic questions above as your headings so that they resemble Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs). For example, if you chose the charity Oxfam, your first two headings could be:

*How does Oxfam relieve hunger?*
*Where is Oxfam based?*

If you can, include pictures and logos.
Illustrating scenarios and writing speech bubbles

Below are six scenarios, or scenes. In each one people are experiencing situations which are part of the problem of people having too little to eat.

1. A farmer looks out on a dry empty field.
2. A teacher looks at the empty places in the class room.
3. A group of young men sit by the roadside waiting for a day’s work.
4. A woman looks at market stalls but she cannot afford the high prices.
5. A young child sits beside two thin cows.
6. A woman with a baby looks at the ruins of her house.

Choose three of the scenes and illustrate them. You can:

- draw your own illustration
- use a cut-out picture
- create a collage of cut-out pictures or materials.

Create speech or thought bubbles for your characters. What do you think the people would be saying? How do you think they are feeling? Consider each case carefully to create believable responses to the situation.

Remember to leave enough space in your illustration, so that you can fit the words in!

Talking point

Use what you have read in this unit, and what you have researched to discuss the following issues:

1. If food exists in abundance why do you think so many people go hungry?
2. What factors contribute to hunger and famine?
3. Can you suggest any ways of how hunger could be prevented?
4. What kind of aid is given to hungry people?
5. What could you do?

Toolkit

In English, we use question words to ask certain types of questions. We often refer to them as wh words because they include the letters ‘w’ and ‘h’.

Useful wh words are: when (time), where (place), who (person), why (reason), how (manner), what (object/idea/action).
Feeding the imagination

Being deprived of food means being unable to focus on education or other areas of life that would contribute to the development of the community. Lack of food can lead to all sorts of unfortunate consequences (outcomes). Read the extracts on the following pages to further explore ideas of cause and effect.

A rhyme
There is an old European rhyme that shows how small losses lead to big losses. For the want of a horseshoe nail, a whole kingdom is lost, as it prevents the horse and rider going into battle to defend his country.

For the want of a horseshoe nail
For want of a nail, the shoe was lost;
For want of the shoe, the horse was lost;
For want of the horse, the rider was lost;
For want of the rider, the battle was lost;
For want of the battle, the kingdom was lost;
And all for the want of a horseshoe nail.

A horseshoe nail on a blacksmith’s anvil.
Description

From *The Clay Marble* by Minfong Ho

When did you last appreciate a good meal because you were really, really hungry? In the following paragraph twelve-year-old Dara and her family have fled from the war in Cambodia in the early 1980s and have reached a refugee camp on the Thai-Cambodian border. In this extract, Dara and her family are eating rice. The description is short, but the words make it vivid.

**What a Wonderful Thing**

The fragrance of the long-grained rice was powerful. Steamy and sweet and warm, it wafted up to me. I had not seen such a generous mound of white rice for a long, long time.

I lifted a spoonful of rice and ate it. I thought about what a wonderful thing it is to eat rice. First you let the smell drift up in lazy spirals, sweet and elusive; then you look at the colour of it, softer and whiter than the surrounding steam. Carefully you put a spoonful in your mouth, and feel each grain separate on your tongue, firm and warm. Then you taste it – the rich yet delicate sweetness of it. How different it was from the gritty red rice we’d been rationed to the last three years, gruel so bland and watery that it slipped right down your throat before you could even taste it. No, this was real rice, whole moist grains I could chew and savour.

Minfong Ho