



The Mini Page

Issue 35, 2022

Founded by Betty Debnam

Next Week:
Congress returns to work

What Is Drought?



photo by James Marvin Phelps

Through the summer and early fall, you may hear about drought and wildfires in the news. This week, The Mini Page explores more about what drought means and how it affects people and animals.

What is drought?

Drought (DROWT) can mean different things in different places. In some parts of the country, it can mean dry, cracked, dusty soil. But drought can also refer to a region that gets **precipitation** (pre-sip-i-TAY-shun), but not as much as usual, over a season or more.

Climate refers to the weather over a long period of time in a certain area. When climate changes, even very slowly, an area may get more or less rain and snow, more severe storms, such as tornadoes and blizzards, or dryer conditions than normal.

Water and weather

Water in lakes, streams and the ocean **evaporates**, or becomes a gas, and moves up into clouds. The clouds are carried around the Earth by the **jet stream**. But the jet stream doesn't always go in the same direction or pattern.

If the jet stream gets blocked over a certain area, that part of the world may get less rain

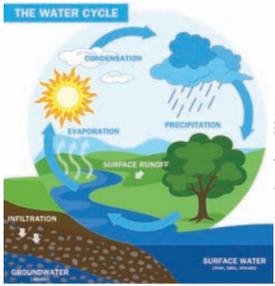


image courtesy American Water

and snow for a long period of time.

Drought's effects

Water is essential to all life — humans, animals and plants. Farmers use water to help grow crops; water can help generate electricity; rivers and lakes are important for moving merchandise from one area of the country to another. And of course, we drink water.

A lack of water can mean a shortage of wheat or corn to feed people and animals. This can make the cost of products made with grains go up. For instance, your box of cereal costs more when the cost of wheat or corn is higher.



image courtesy Crane Station

Ranchers may have to spend more to make sure their cattle have enough water. Power companies might have to rely on other sources of energy to make electricity.

Other effects

Wild animals that are suffering from a lack of water are more likely to get diseases.

Fish and wildlife who rely on wetlands, reservoirs or other bodies of water might die.

Dried-out soil can erode, or be blown or washed away, when a rainstorm finally arrives.



photo by KMG-Morris
If ponds and creeks dry up, herons can't find food to eat.



Photo courtesy Elizabeth Wu, NPS

Firefighters wrap the base of the General Sherman Tree in Sequoia National Park to protect it from fire burning into old cavities or fire scars.

Wildfires

One of the most dramatic and destructive effects of drought is wildfires. In early July, firefighters were trying desperately to save some of northern California's giant sequoia trees. At the same time, nine other states had active wildfires, with 4.8 million acres burned already this year.



California had its driest January, February and March this year, officials said. Regions throughout the whole state are suffering from extreme drought, shown in the dark red colors.

image courtesy California Drought Action

Resources



On the Web:

- bit.ly/MPdrought

At the library:

- "All About Heat Waves and Droughts" by Steve Tomecek
- "Droughts" by Megan Gendell

Try 'n' Find

Words that remind us of drought are hidden in this puzzle. Some words are hidden backward or diagonally, and some letters are used twice. See if you can find:



- ACRES, ANIMALS,
- CALIFORNIA, CLIMATE,
- DROUGHT, DRY,
- EVAPORATE, JET
- STREAM, PLANTS,
- PRECIPITATION, RAIN,
- REGION, SEASON,
- SEQUOIA, SNOW, WATER,
- WEATHER, WILDFIRE.

R A G J S N O S A E S D G B Z
E I W E S T N A L P S E R C A
H N A T Q E T A M I L C I Y N
T R T S W N L E R I F D L I W
A O E T A I O U Q E S Z A E Q
E F R R S L A M I N A R T R J
W I C E N N E V A P O R A T E
I L P A O T X D R O U G H T N
V A X M W R E G I O N Y H N F
M C N O I T A T I P I C E R P

Cook's Corner

Corn Casserole

You'll need:

- 5 tablespoons butter
- 4 (15.25-ounce) cans whole-kernel corn, drained
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 1/2 cup all-purpose flour

- 2 tablespoons cornmeal
- 4 eggs
- 1 1/2 cups reduced-fat milk
- 1/2 teaspoon salt



* You'll need an adult's help with this recipe.

What to do:

1. Melt butter in microwave (approximately 30 seconds).
2. Combine melted butter, 1 can of corn, sugar, flour, cornmeal, eggs, milk and salt in a blender. Process until mixture is smooth.
3. Transfer to a bowl; stir in remaining 3 cans of corn.
4. Coat a 9-by-13-inch baking dish with cooking spray.
5. Pour mixture into pan; bake at 350 degrees for 35 minutes until set. Serves 12.

7 Little Words for Kids

Use the letters in the boxes to make a word with the same meaning as the clue. The numbers in parentheses represent the number of letters in the solution. Each letter combination can be used only once, but all letter combinations will be necessary to complete the puzzle.



1. clothes fastener with teeth (6) _____
2. prize (5) _____
3. piece of lumber (5) _____
4. go on (8) _____
5. not one person (6) _____
6. number of eggs in a carton (5) _____
7. correct (6) _____

ARD	PER	OP	UE
CON	NOB	ER	ARD
PR	EN	ZIP	DOZ
AW	TIN	ODY	BO

Answers: zipper, award, board, continue, nobody, dozen, proper.

Mini Jokes



Danny: What is best when it's out?
Dawn: A wildfire!

Eco Note



Changes in the size and strength of the prevailing high-pressure system over the Atlantic have brought parts of Spain and Portugal their driest climate in over a thousand years. This expansion of the high-pressure system came as the western U.S. also developed a worsening "megadrought" that threatens cities such as Los Angeles, Phoenix and Las Vegas with critical water shortages. The vast high-pressure area controls where and when rain falls across Western Europe.

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For later:

Look in your newspaper for articles about wildfires.

Teachers: Follow and interact with The Mini Page on Facebook!



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