



Teachers' notes on Shishmaref

We have chosen Shishmaref as a starting point because it offers a dramatic real-life example of climate change consequences for a particular place.

Climate change can sometimes seem abstract and intangible. We wanted to start at a human scale, engaging children's interest and empathy. For that same reason we have homed in on the particular experiences of twin boys resident in the town. We have striven to be authentic: all of this section has been created through communication with the Tokeinna family. Other sections look at examples in detail.

> [Introduction](#) > [What's Going On?](#) > [Changing Places](#)

As well as their personal account, we offer an edited news account from the BBC, which helps put the story in context. Looking at climate change in the news is one of the themes which recurs in these materials, and this news story may serve as an exemplar text for learners' own work later on.

We also offer some onward links, which further establish the context and reality of what is going on. We imagine these will be of particular use to learners wishing to look at Shishmaref as a geographical locality.

Shishmaref is at the North-West tip of the American continent, in the Bering Straits region and within the Arctic Circle. While polar regions are experiencing particularly acute early effects from global warming, it is important to establish with learners that they are not the only places to experience consequences of climate change, and that these consequences may be quite different elsewhere [eg flooding in the UK Midlands, increased desertification in Northern China].

More advanced learners might be invited to consider the idea that the effects of climate change happen in combination with other factors [eg land use, physical geography].

All learners should be invited to consider the possibility that some of these changes may not be unstoppable or irreversible, and at the very least there are things which can be done to help people adapt to what is happening.

From this introductory section, we invite learners to consider some more general questions about climate change. > [Questions and task](#)