

Edinburgh goes Breughel

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Activities

1. Pre-listening

(NB. These notes are aimed at teachers)

Reference Points:

Pieter Breughel (the elder) 1525 - 1569. Flemish painter, well known for rustic and peasant scenes. Painted the 'Hunters in the Snow' (1565)

'thirty inches of snow' = circa 76 cm

'salted and gritted' refers to putting salt and sand or gravel onto ice to melt it.

'tenements' refer to buildings built for habitation which share a common entrance. In Scotland the term 'tenement' does not have the pejorative connotation that it carries elsewhere.

'double decker' - reference to a two level bus.

'Lothian' - the county in which Edinburgh resides.

'Dark at four' - the northern latitude of Edinburgh means that night arrives early in December and January.

'gets a grip' - this is a play on words. In this sense it suggests that the ice becomes very fierce and dangerous, but the effect of the ice will, of course, mean that pedestrians and vehicles will have no grip at all, and fall over!

'A & E' - Accident and Emergency - hospital unit for emergency medical care.

'outskirts' - the suburbs of the city

'Arthur's Seat' - the highest hill of a piece of wild countryside to be found in the middle of Edinburgh

'The Meadows' - a large park in the city.

'Risk to life and limb' - clichéd reference to danger likely to hurt an individual.

'War against Weather' - making use (and fun?) of popular media language such as 'War on Terror' and 'War on Drugs'.

'Light filled days and snow tumbled darkness' - poetic references; perhaps 'tumbled' refers to falling snow, or to snow already fallen.



Student Activities

Before the students listen to the piece, get them to have a look at the following activities:

ACTIVITY 1

Which of the following words, which all appear in the text, describe a natural phenomenon, which are made by people and which describe movement of some kind? (Some may fit more than one category, but you'll have to be able to say why.)

avalanches
glaze of ice
ice rinks
icicles
igloos
sledging
slide
slithering
snow
snowing
snowmen
sub-zero temperatures

Natural phenomenon	Made by people	Describe movement



ACTIVITY 2

Refer to Activity 1 and decide why the author, in the text you will soon hear, makes the following comments.

"Families, with a day off work and school...."

"The cancelled bread deliveries"

"Empty shelves in supermarkets"

"A & E is a busy, busy place" (*A & E = Accident and Emergency Hospital facilities*)

"Snow smothered cars are like soft furnishings"



KEY TO PRE LISTENING ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITY 1

Natural phenomenon	Made by people	Describe movement
avalanches glaze of ice (ice rinks) icicles snow snowing sub-zero temperatures	(avalanches) (glaze of ice) ice rinks igloos snowmen	(avalanches) sledging slide slithering (snowing)

Words in (brackets) indicate alternative places that these words might be placed. For example, an avalanche might be caused by human activity (loud noise, for example) and clearly an avalanche moves.

ACTIVITY 2

(These are the most likely explanations. However, allow any explanation that appears possible, as long as they include reference to cold weather).

"Families, with a day off work and school...." *Snow has caused businesses and schools to close.*

"The cancelled bread deliveries" *Deliveries from the bakers have been compromised by poor road conditions*

"Empty shelves in supermarkets" *As with the bread, shops are unable to receive deliveries of goods because of blocked or impassable roads.*

"A & E is a busy, busy place" (A & E = Accident and Emergency Hospital facilities) *(Due to ice, many people have fallen over and injured themselves).*

"Snow smothered cars are like soft furnishings" *(A thick layer of snow on top of a car might make it look like a cushion or a pillow).*



2. Post-Listening Activities

Ask students to recall the following pictures from the flash movie and place them into the context, and to put them in the order in which they occurred. (A power point version of these slides is available).

A follow up activity (quite a large project) would be to get the students to create their own slide shower or flash movie of pictures about a bad weather event (real or imagined) in their home town. The accompanying sound track could be a spoken description or music, but if the latter then the students would be required to talk about the piece to their colleagues in a prepared introduction.

ACTIVITY 3





David Hume 1711 - 1776



KEY TO POST LISTENING ACTIVITY



Edinburgh is like a Breughel painting.



Avalanches from roofs and pavements like skating rinks are dangerous hazards.



Night falls at four in the afternoon, and then the dangers increase.



The city is like theme park, with cars covered in snow looking like 'soft furnishings'.



Everyone seems good natured in spite of the difficulties, and people are helping each other.



David Hume 1711-1776

Eighteenth century Scottish philosopher, Hume, thought that people were, by nature, kind and benevolent creatures. The speaker hopes that this will continue.

