

Geography in the News

February 2025

The Wildfires of California

Geography in the News aims to stimulate discussion about the relevance of geography to our lives and its importance in helping us to make sense of the world around us. We have selected a relevant news article with links to our GCSE and A level specifications and suggested questions you can discuss with your class.



Article: This issue relates to an article 'Why wildfires are becoming faster and more furious', written by science and technology journalist Chris Baraniuk for the BBC.

Introduction

This article explores the recent devastating wildfires in Los Angeles, California and examines why they could be set to increase in both frequency and intensity.

[Click here to access the article](#)

Discussion prompts

- Give one environmental and one human impact of the wildfires.
- Give one natural and one human cause of wildfires.
- Explain how the Santa Ana winds contributed to the wildfires.
- Explain how increased precipitation in California in 2022 and 2023 contributed to the wildfires.
- Explain why climate change could make wildfires in places like California more frequent and more explosive.
- Suggest how authorities in California could prepare for wildfires in the future.

Specification links

GCSE Geography A

- 2.3b Negative effects that climate change is having on the environment and people (changing patterns of crop yield, rising sea levels and retreating glaciers).
- 2.8: The impacts of, and responses to drought vary depending on a country's level of development

GCSE Geography B

- 1.3b Evidence for how human activity is causing climate change (sea level rise and warming oceans, global temperature rise, declining Arctic ice, increased extreme weather events) and the possible consequences for people.

A level Geography

- 5.4 Deficits within the hydrological cycle result from physical processes but can have significant impacts.
- 5.6 Climate change may have significant impacts on the hydrological cycle globally and locally.