Natural Hazards
Weather Hazards in the UK

read   quiz

The Big Picture

natural hazards   *tectonic hazards*

Natural Hazards

weather hazards*   *climate change*
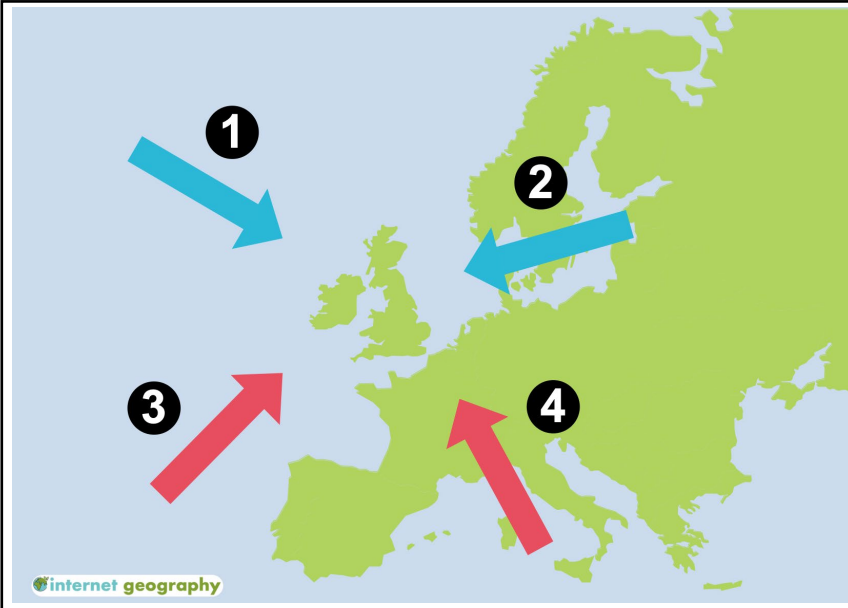
Extreme Weather

Extreme weather is when the weather is especially severe or out of season. It is different from the usual weather pattern. Most parts of the UK are at risk from several types of extreme weather. Different air masses that affect the UK bring a variety of weather.

1 Polar Maritime – Cold, moist air brings low temperatures and rainfall.

2 Polar Continental – Cold air brings snow in winter. Warm air in summer.

3 Tropical maritime – Storms from the Atlantic bring heavy rain and strong winds.

4 Tropical continental – Hot and sunny weather from the south can lead to heatwaves and drought.

Storm Events

The UK regularly experiences depressions, areas of low pressure, which bring strong winds and heavy rain, particularly to the west and north of the country. Impacts can include:
- Flood and wind damage to property
- Trees being uprooted
- Power supplies disrupted
- Deaths and injuries

Flooding

Floods are typically caused by heavy rainfall or storm waves. Torrential rainfall can cause flash flooding. Prolonged rainfall also leads to flooding. Impacts can include
- Damage to property, businesses and possessions
- Landslides
- Deaths and injuries

Droughts and Heatwaves

Droughts and heatwaves are long periods with little or no rainfall. In the UK a drought is when there are 15 or more days with less than 0.2mm of rain on any one day. Impacts include:
- Crop failure
- Water supplies are restricted due to low reservoirs
- Elderly people become vulnerable to heat exhaustion
- Roads can melt and railway lines buckle

Extremes of Cold Weather

Cold conditions occur if depressions, associated with tropical maritime air masses, are not passing over the UK in winter. Possible impacts include:
- Crop failure and livestock deaths
- Transport infrastructure closed e.g. roads, rail and airports
- Injuries caused by people falling
- Businesses and schools close