

Weather

A

Talking about the weather

It's great here. Have had unbroken **sunshine**¹ ever since we arrived. We're having a wonderful time – though in the middle of the day it's just too **scorching hot**² to do anything but lie on the beach **soaking up the sunshine**³. This is the life!

Anna

It's been pouring with rain all day. In fact I've never seen such **torrential rain**⁴! It's **freezing cold** in the tent – we all got soaked to the skin⁵. Every half hour we look out of the tent hoping for a **break in the clouds**. In vain! We're going to a hotel next year!

It **rained heavily** all day yesterday but it's dry at the moment. There's **thick cloud**, though, and it certainly looks like **rain**⁶. Quite a **strong wind** is blowing too! Am glad we brought warm clothes!

- ¹ only sunshine, no clouds in the sky
- ² extremely hot
- ³ enjoying the sunshine

- ⁴ heavy rain
- ⁵ very wet
- ⁶ looks as if it is going to rain

B

Weather conditions

collocation	example	comment
weather deteriorates [opposite: improves]	The weather is likely to deteriorate later on today.	Deteriorate is quite formal – the weather is getting worse is more informal.
thick/dense fog patches of fog/mist a blanket of fog [literary] fog/mist comes down [opposite: lifts]	There is thick fog on the motorway. There are patches of fog on the east coast but these should lift by midday.	Patches of fog/mist are small areas of fog/mist, whereas a blanket of fog/mist is thicker and more extensive.
strong sun [opposite: weak]	Avoid going on the beach at midday when the sun is strongest .	
heavy rain (NOT strong rain) driving rain	Road conditions are difficult because of the driving rain .	driving rain = rain falling fast and heavily
heavy/fresh/crip/thick/ driving snow	The snow is lovely and crisp this morning.	crisp snow = snow that is fresh and hard
hard frost	There will be a hard frost tonight.	opposite of a hard frost = a light frost (NOT a soft frost)
high/strong/light/biting winds the wind picks up [opposite: dies down] the wind blows/whistles	The wind was light this morning but it's picking up now and will be very strong by the evening. The wind was whistling through the trees.	biting winds = very cold winds If the wind picks up, it gets stronger.

C

Extreme weather

FREAK¹ STORMS DEVASTATE SW

Yesterday **freak** weather conditions **hit**² the south-west of England. **Gale-force winds**³ caused a lot of damage to property. A number of buildings were destroyed, roofs were **torn off** and fences were **blown down**. Several rivers **burst their banks**⁴.

- ¹ very unusual or unexpected
- ² struck, badly affected
- ³ extremely strong winds
- ⁴ rivers flooded

Exercises

13.1 Look at A and B opposite and complete these weather collocations.

- | | |
|--------------------|----------------------|
| 1 crisp | 5 a hard |
| 2 patches of | 6 torrential |
| 3 strong | 7 unbroken |
| 4 a biting | 8 a blanket of |

13.2 Look at A and B opposite. Change the underlined words so that each sentence has the opposite meaning.

- 1 There was a light wind yesterday.
- 2 The wind picked up in the evening.
- 3 The weather is likely to improve tomorrow.
- 4 It was scorching hot here yesterday.
- 5 There may be some light rain later on today.
- 6 The mist came down at about midday.

13.3 Replace the underlined words in this letter with collocations from the opposite page.

I wish I'd worn a warmer jacket. There's a very cold wind. At least it's not raining heavily today. I got extremely wet yesterday. I wish I was sunbathing on a Mediterranean beach.

13.4 Answer these questions about the collocations on the opposite page.

- 1 What might make a river burst its banks?
- 2 What can you probably see if someone says, 'It looks like rain'?
- 3 What kind of wind is a freak wind?
- 4 Is it harder to drive if there's dense fog or if there are patches of fog?
- 5 What kind of weather conditions have you got if the rain is described as driving rain?
- 6 If we talk about severe weather conditions *hitting* or *striking* an area, what kind of image is created?
- 7 What, apart from wind, can blow or whistle?
- 8 Which of these verbs suggests most destruction and which least?
The storm *destroyed* / *damaged* / *devastated* the town.

13.5 Look up these words in your dictionary. Note down two more collocations for each one.

wind



rain



snow



FOLLOW UP

Either listen to the weather forecast on an English language TV or radio channel or go to the website www.bbc.co.uk/weather. (You can enter the name of your own country to get information about the weather there.)
Make a note of any other useful weather collocations that you find.