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FUNCTIONS AND STRUCTURES	1. Ask about the weather 2. Talk about the weather 3. Conversation Starter: Small talk
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Warm-Up

Beginners: show weather pictures (see end of document) and introduce vocabulary.

Post-beginners: start with warm up questions/brainstorming exercises.

1. What's the weather like today? What was the weather like yesterday?
2. Write down as many weather words as you can.
3. What kind of weather do you like? Why?
4. What's the name of the current season?
5. What is the typical weather of this season?

Higher level students: start with warm-up questions/brainstorming exercises.

1. Write down as many weather words as you can
2. What's the weather like today? What was the weather like yesterday?
3. What do you think of Sydney's weather recently?
4. Have you ever experienced flooding? When and where?
5. What kind of weather do you like? Why?
6. Do you watch weather forecasts on TV? How well can you understand?
7. What is the weather like in your home country now?
8. Which season do you enjoy most in Sydney? How different are the seasons in your home country to those in Sydney?

Beginners

Vocabulary

nouns: weather, sun, cloud, wind, rain, snow

Adjectives: sunny, cloudy, windy, rainy, snowy, warm, hot, cool, cold, mild

Verbs: shine, blow, rain

Post-beginners

Ask your student to read the weather report and introduce any new vocabulary

The sun has been up for about an hour now and that's helping the **temperature** to increase after a cold night. It's up 2 **degrees** this hour to 15. Under a clear sky, there's a little **breeze** from the southwest at 5 miles an hour. **Sunshine, mild** temperatures are **forecast** for today. The high should be around 17 degrees with northwest winds. Yesterday's high was 15 degrees. Tonight increasing **cloud**, a low of 7 to 9. Tomorrow mostly **cloudy** with a high of 15. It's now 5 minutes past 11 o'clock.

Vocabulary

nouns: forecast, temperature, Celsius/Fahrenheit, breeze, sunshine, drizzle, fog, shower, snowflake, raindrop, storm, thunder, lightning

adjectives: bright, breezy, drizzly, showery, stormy, snowy, damp, dry, foggy, wet (temperature-related): cool, chilly, cold, freezing, warm, mild, hot, scorching

Confusing Words: *weather* – *whether*

Exercise: A poem about the weather

_____ the _____ be fine

Or _____ the _____ be not

_____ the _____ be cold

Or _____ the _____ be hot

We'll _____ the _____

Whatever the _____

_____ we like it or not.

Exercise: Complete the sentences below with the best answer.

1) It's been snowing all day, and it's _____ outside.

- a) scorching b) freezing c) warm

2) It's really terrible to drive in the _____ morning because I cannot see more than 100 meters in front of me.

- a) foggy b) stormy c) drizzly

3) There is a high chance of _____, so you ought to take your umbrella to work today.

- a) rain b) thunder c) breeze

FUNCTIONS	STRUCTURES
To ask about weather	<p>What's like today? What will the weather be like tomorrow? What was like yesterday?</p>
To talk about weather	<p>It's Tomorrow will be sunny/cloudy/windy Yesterday it was It's raining/snowing/pouring It's cool/chilly/cold/freezing/warm/mild/hot/scorching</p> <p>Conversation Starter* Nice/beautiful day today, isn't it? What a lovely day! What awful weather! It looks like it's going to rain. We couldn't ask for a nicer day, could we? Can you believe all of this rain we've been having?</p>

Conversation Starter: Weather is probably the most popular conversation starter for small talk. People with different relationships use small talk. The most common type of people to use small talk are those who do not know each other at all. There are different reasons why people use small talk. The first and most obvious is to break an uncomfortable silence or to start a conversation. Another reason, however, is simply to fill time. That is why it is so common to make small talk when people are waiting for something, eg at a bus stop, at a doctor's waiting room, or at parties. The talk is usually revolved on certain "safe" topics such as weather, current events/news.

Sample Dialogues

- A: Hi. Lovely day, isn't it?
B: Yes, beautiful. Good day for a picnic.
A: Yes, but I'm afraid I have to work.
B: Oh well, never mind. Let's hope it stays like this for the weekend.
A: Yes, let's hope so.
- A: Hi Jane. Terrible weather, isn't it?
B: Yes awful! I hope it clears up for the weekend
A: Yes, let's hope so. We're going to a barbecue on Saturday afternoon. It won't be much fun if it's raining.
B: No, that's right. Well, I'd better go. I have to get to the bank before it closes.
A: Ok, Jane. See you later.
B: Yes. Bye Judy.

Conversation Topics:

- Ask the student to talk about the weather in Sydney and in his/her home country.
- Role play: small talk between two strangers at a bus stop
- How does weather affect your life, eg clothing, food and daily activities? Write a list of these things under each weather condition (see table below).

HOT

COLD

WINDY

RAINY

Clothing:

Food:

Activities:

Writing Practice

Complete the following paragraph for one set of weather conditions using the vocabulary from the table above and the writing frame below:

In _____ weather I can _____, _____, and _____.
I wear _____, _____, and _____.
I like to eat _____ and _____. I _____ weather, I cannot _____.

Grammar: Countable & Uncountable Nouns

A noun can be countable or uncountable. Countable nouns are things that we can count.

1) Countable nouns can be singular or plural: My dog is playing / My dogs are hungry.

2) We can use the indefinite article a/an or a number with countable nouns:

a before consonants, **an** before vowels:

i.e.

a dog / two dogs

an umbrella / four umbrellas

a bird / three birds

an egg / 5 eggs

3) When a countable noun is singular, we must use a word like a/the/my/this with it:

- I want an orange. (not I want orange.)
- Where is my bottle? (not Where is bottle?)

When a countable noun is plural, we can use it alone:

- I like oranges.
- Bottles can break.

4) Uncountable nouns are substances, concepts etc that we cannot divide into separate elements. We cannot count them, eg we cannot count 'milk'. We can count bottles of milk or litres of milk, but we cannot count 'milk' itself.

5) What is a countable noun in the student's language may be an uncountable noun in English. It may therefore be a good idea to try to learn **uncountable** nouns in groups of the same subject area.

Travel: information, travel, traffic, accommodation, money, equipment, luggage, petrol.

Clothes: pyjamas, jeans, trousers, shorts, tights, underwear, pants.

Note: All the uncountable nouns associated with clothes are plural uncountables. They cannot be used in the singular form or with numbers. We cannot say *a short* or *two shorts*. Instead we have to say *a pair of shorts* / *two pairs of shorts*.

Household Items: furniture, bedding, flooring, washing-up liquid, washing powder

Weather: weather, lightning, thunder, rain, snow, wind, sunshine

Materials and Resources: cotton, wool, fabric, leather, plastic, wood, stone, concrete, oil, gas, coal

Food: sugar, salt, pepper, rice, pasta, spaghetti, flour, butter, bread, soup, wine, juice

Professional Endeavour: work, research, knowledge, intelligence, training, progress, stamina, patience, determination, commitment, reliability, loyalty

6) We usually treat uncountable nouns as singular. We use a singular verb.

- This news is very important.
- Your luggage looks heavy.

7) We do not use *a/an* with uncountable nouns. We cannot say "an information" or "a music". But we can say a something of...

eg a piece of news/a bottle of water. Below are some of the most common associated with weather:

wind --- a gust of wind	rain --- a shower / a drop of rain
lightning --- a flash of lightning	thunder --- a clap / a rumble of thunder
frost --- a touch of frost	fog --- a patch of fog
snow --- a flake of snow	sunshine --- a burst of sunshine

Quantifiers with countable and uncountable nouns

Only with uncountable nouns	With uncountable and countable nouns	Only with countable nouns
How much? a little a bit (of) a great deal of a large amount of	no/none not any some (any) a lot of plenty of lots of	How many? a few a number (of) several a large number of a great number of

eg --- Did you have *much* snow last winter?

--- There was quite **a bit** (of snow) higher up in the hills, but down here in the valley we didn't get **much**.

How **much** money have you got?

How **many** cigarettes have you smoked?

I spent **a large amount** of time working on this project

A large number of people were reported missing in the flood.

There is no time to finish it now.

There are no squirrels in this park.

Note: 1) much and many are used in negative and question forms.

There's **not much** sugar in the cupboard.

There **weren't many** people at the concert.

2) These quantifiers can also be used with too, (not) so, and (not) as.

There were **too many** people at the concert - we couldn't see the band.

There's **not as many** people here today.

There's **not so much** work to do this week.

Exercise 1: Complete the sentences with *many/much*.

- 1) How _____ people live in your city?
- 2) How _____ does this book cost?
- 3) How _____ rice is there?
- 4) How _____ apples are there in the basket?
- 5) How _____ petrol do we need?
- 6) How _____ luggage have you got?

Exercise 2: Do we use *a, an* or *some* with these words?

_____ book	_____ wine	_____ furniture
_____ cassette	_____ music	_____ rain
_____ food	_____ wind	_____ banana

Exercise 3: Use a singular or plural verb in the following sentences.

- 1) Milk _____ (be) healthy.
- 2) Grape juice _____ (taste) good.
- 3) Grapes _____ (be) delicious.
- 4) Rome _____ (be) a beautiful city.
- 5) English _____ (be) difficult to learn.
- 6) There _____ (be) a lot of rain recently.
- 7) Thunder _____ (be) frightening.

Higher-level Students

More words & expressions

Exercise 1 Below are some advanced weather words. See if your student can guess the meaning of the italicized words and expressions in the sentences by the context. Then match the words with the meanings provided in the table below:

1. The skiers were warned about a possible **avalanche**.
2. The airplane couldn't take off because of the **blizzard**.
3. They're saying there's going to be a **cold spell**. We need to take more clothes.
4. Forest fires are a serious danger during a **drought**.
5. The **flood** was so bad, our basement was full of water.
6. There are a few **flakes** but the snow isn't sticking to the roads.
7. There was so much **hail** that some of the trailer homes were destroyed.
8. Bring lots of water and wear a hat to avoid **heat stroke** in this weather.
9. During the **heat-wave** we cooled our beds down with ice packs.
10. Half of the buildings on the island were flattened by the **hurricane**.
11. The **meteorologist** predicted that the cold spell would be over by now.
12. The sky is **overcast** this morning, but the sun is supposed to come out by late afternoon.
13. It was **scorching**, so the whole family slept in the cool basement.
14. All-weather tyres are best if you have to drive in **sleet**.
15. The **tornado** picked up everything in its path, including animals and cars.

Match the word with the correct meaning

Words	Meaning
1. avalanche	Extremely hot temperature
2. blizzard	A long period with no rainfall
3. cold spell	A flu-like condition one can acquire after spending too long in the sun
4. heat stroke	Extremely hot weather that is much higher than average—usually lasts a short time
5. heat-wave	Rain that freezes as it falls
6. drought	Violently spinning windstorm
7. flood	A storm with lots of snow and wind
8. flakes	No sun is visible
9. hail	Small pieces of ice that fall during a storm
10. sleet	A dangerous slide of snow down a mountain
11. hurricane	A period of colder than average weather
12. meteorologist	Overflow of rain water
13. overcast	light snowfall
14. scorching	A tropical storm with very strong wind and rain
15. tornado/cyclone	A person who studies weather patterns

Idioms from the weather

A lot of English idioms are concerned with the weather. Each example below contains an idiom related to the weather. Can you guess the meaning of each idiom from the context? See the definitions in the table below.

1. John is **a fair-weather friend**. He was nice to me when I had a good job and a lot of money, but ever since I lost my job, he has stopped seeing me.
2. I've been feeling **under the weather** lately and have lost my appetite.
3. It's going to be **chilly** today. You'd better **rug up**!
4. I can't go to the party on Saturday because I'm **snowed under** with work.
5. Be realistic! We don't have **a snowball's chance** of winning that contract!
6. She has musical talent so learning to play the piano is **a breeze** for her.
7. Sorry we can't come out tonight, we're saving our pennies **for a rainy day**.
8. I don't really want to go to the cinema today. Can we **take a rain check** on it?
9. That politician is **full of hot air**. He makes a lot of promises but never keeps them.
10. They're **blowing hot and cold** over this issue. It's impossible to know what they want.
11. I don't want the boss to **get wind of** the fact that I've applied for another job
12. I tried to **put the wind up** him by telling him he'd fail his exams if he didn't study.
13. I'm going to **see which way the wind blows** before asking her for about a pay rise.
14. What's u with him today? He has **a face like thunder**!
15. You'll **steal her thunder** if you wear this dress tonight.
16. Don't worry about those two arguing. It's just **a storm in a teacup**.
17. it's going to get very busy on Thursday. Today and tomorrow are just the **lull before the storm**.
18. This recession is quite serious and it's becoming difficult to **weather the storm**.

Idiom	Definition
1. a fair-weather friend	someone who is only around when things are going well but doesn't help when a friend is in trouble
2. under the weather	sick
3. chilly	cold weather
4. rug-up	Wear lots of clothes, keep warm
5. snowed under	very busy
6. a snowball's chance	very little chance
7. a breeze	easy
8. to save something for a rainy day	to be prepared for possible problems in the future, usually by saving money, or save something for a rainy day (literally)
9. take a rain check	postpone something
10. full of hot air	talking a lot but never doing what one says
11. blow hot and cold	to keep changing attitude
12. get the wind of	to find out about something
13. put the wind up somebody	to frighten somebody
14. see which way the wind blows	to analyze a situation before doing something
15. a face like thunder	looking very angry
16. steal one's thunder	to do what someone else was going to do and get all the praise
17. a storm in a teacup	a lot of fuss over something small
18. the lull before the storm	a quiet time before a busy or difficult time
19. weather the storm	to survive a difficult situation

Exercise: Complete the sentences with an appropriate idiom:

- 1). A: John promised to paint the house for me last Saturday, but he didn't show up.
B: Don't believe in what he says! John is _____.
- 2). Janet is always there when I need her. She's definitely not a _____.
- 3). Don't spend all your money. Save some _____.
- 4). A: Why didn't you go to work yesterday?
B: I was feeling a bit _____.
- 5). A: Are you going to the concert tonight?
B: I wish I could, but I have to work overtime. I'm _____.
- 6). Hanna is gifted at learning languages. Only after six months in Toronto, she can speak quite fluent English. Learning English was _____ for her.
- 7). I'm sorry I won't be able to make dinner tomorrow, can we _____.
- 8). It is really quiet at work at the moment but I think it might be the _____.

Reading Comprehension

Find a news article about weather. i.e. the bushfires in Victoria in early 2008 or anything more recent from Australia or around the world (The Daily Telegraph usually uses simpler language so this would be a good place to start). Read the article to your student and then ask them to read it aloud. Take note of any pronunciation difficulties they are having. Ask your student to tell you what they think the story is about, in as much detail as they can. Ask the student to read the article again and underline any new vocabulary. Go through these words with them and review any pronunciation points.

