

Droughts



A drought is a period of time _____ an area or region experiences below-normal precipitation. The lack of adequate precipitation, _____ rain or snow, can cause reduced soil moisture or groundwater, diminished stream flow, crop damage, and a general water shortage. Droughts are _____ second-most costly weather events after hurricanes.

Unlike with sudden weather events _____ as hurricanes, tornadoes, and thunderstorms, it is often difficult to pinpoint when a drought has started or when it _____ ended. The initial effects of a drought may _____ difficult to identify right away, so it may _____ weeks or months to determine that a drought has started. The end of a drought is hard to identify for the same reason. A drought may _____ for weeks, months, or even years. Sometimes, drought conditions can exist _____ a decade or more in a region. The longer a drought lasts, the greater the harmful effects it has _____ people.

Droughts affect people in several ways. Access to clean drinking water is essential _____ all life, and sources of water may dwindle during a drought. Without the presence _____ water, people must bring in enough water _____ elsewhere to survive. Water is also needed for crops _____ grow. When not enough precipitation falls to naturally water crops, they must be watered _____ irrigation. Irrigation is possible only when _____ is enough water in nearby rivers, lakes, or streams, or from groundwater. During a drought, these water sources are diminished and may even dry up, preventing crops from being irrigated and causing _____ to die off.

One person studying these problems is Alexandra Cousteau, a National Geographic Emerging Explorer _____ latest initiative is Blue Legacy. She started Blue Legacy to raise awareness that we live on a water planet and must _____ care of it. Cousteau, the granddaughter of the famed ocean explorer Jacques Cousteau, believes that water will be a crucial issue in this century. She predicts that water problems such as drought, storms, floods, and degraded water quality _____ create "water refugees:" people migrating in search of water. Cousteau stresses that we must do all we _____ to protect Earth's valuable freshwater resources.

A. Complete the article with the missing words.

B. Number these statements according to the order in which they are discussed.

- a. It is hard to mark the beginning and end of a drought.
- b. Droughts not only affect people but also crops.
- c. A drought occurs when it doesn't rain or snow over a period of time.
- d. People affected by a drought need to find water sources in other places.
- e. It is important to become aware of the importance of water in our lives.
- f. Croplands can't be irrigated if the water sources nearby decline.
- g. Droughts result in serious economic damage.
- h. A drought may last for a long period of time.