

## CHERNOBYL: THE WORST NUCLEAR DISASTER IN HISTORY

### Vocabulary

- **catastrophe** = disaster; event that kills many people or destroys large areas and buildings
- **cesium** = a soft silver white metal; splitting a cesium atom produces a radioactive element
- **check** = control
- **claim** = to say that something is true
- **clean-up** = to get rid of unwanted material or waste
- **contaminate** = to make material dirty or dangerous by putting chemicals or poisons into it
- **decade** = a period of ten years
- **deserted** = empty; with nothing or nobody in it
- **disaster** = catastrophe, tragedy
- **dome** = round building
- **environmental** = about the world around us
- **evacuate** = to send people away from a dangerous place to somewhere where it is safe
- **even though** = while
- **finance** = get money to build
- **half life** = the number of years it takes radioactive material to lose half of its radioactivity
- **level** = amount
- **pollute** = to make something dirty so that you cannot use it any more
- **power plant , power station** = building that produces electricity
- **radiation** = form of energy that comes from nuclear reactors; in large amounts it is very harmful to your body and can kill you
- **release** = to set free
- **sarcophagus** = in old times it was a stone box used to keep dead bodies: here: a building that does not let anything escape from it
- **shelter** = cover, protection
- **site** = location
- **store** = save, keep

On April 26, 1986 the world's worst nuclear catastrophe happened in the Ukraine. A nuclear reactor at the Chernobyl power plant exploded. The radiation that escaped in Chernobyl was four hundred times the amount that was released by the atomic bomb that was dropped over Hiroshima at the end of World War II. About 100,000 people had to leave their homes immediately after the explosion.

Neighboring villages had to be evacuated and up to today nobody has been allowed to live within 30 km of the plant. Pripyat, founded in 1970 to house the workers of the power plant, has become a ghost town. Before the disaster 50,000 people lived in modern apartment buildings. Today it is completely deserted with cars still parked on the streets. Radiation levels are still so high that nobody will be able to live here for the next one to two hundred years.

An area of about 150000 square kilometers was contaminated by radioactive cesium, which has a half life of 30 years. Most of the nuclear fallout came down on Belarus, Russia and the Ukraine itself.

Even though Chernobyl does not produce electricity anymore about 4,000 workers still work at the nuclear power plant. They can only stay for two weeks at a time because of the high radiation.

25 years after the disaster the cleanup of Chernobyl is still going on. There is still almost 200 tons of radioactive material stored in the sarcophagus, which was built in only six months after the explosion in 1986. Today it is slowly breaking apart and cracks are letting radioactive material escape.

The Ukrainian government has promised to build a new shelter that will replace the old sarcophagus. This cover is expected to last for over a century but it is still not clear where the Ukrainians will get 800 million Euros to finance such a huge dome.

Debate is still continuing on how many people died in the Chernobyl disaster. 31 people were killed as a direct result of the accident. 30 more died of radiation sickness due to the blast. Thousands of cases of cancer have been detected in people who were children at that time.

The population in the area is still in danger. Greenpeace claims that thousands of Ukrainians are eating food that is contaminated by the nuclear blast although Ukrainian food ministry officials say that food is regularly checked. The environmental organization says milk, mushrooms and berries in the whole region will stay polluted for many decades to come.

Today, more and more tourists are coming to northern Ukraine. Tour guides in Pripyat show westerners the homes that they lived in before the explosion. Buses take them to the nuclear power station but stop a few hundred yards from the disaster site where they can spend 15 minutes on taking pictures.

**Exercise 1. Read the sentences and mark which of them True or False**

1. The world's worst nuclear catastrophe happened in the Ukraine on April 24, 1986.	True False
2. This catastrophe occurred due to explosion of the nuclear reactor at the Chernobyl power plant.	True False
3. Neighbouring villages had to be evacuated but later people came back to their homes.	True False
4. Pripyat was founded in 1970 to house the workers of the plant, and now it is a ghost town.	True False
5. Radiation levels are not so high anymore.	True False
6. An area of about 150 000 square kilometers was contaminated by radioactive celsium.	True False
7. 4,000 workers still work at the plant but they can stay there for one week at a time due to high radiation.	True False
8. The Ukrainians need to build a new shelter to replace the old sarcophagus but they need 8—million euros to finance such a huge dome.	True False
9. The food produced in the Ukraine is not safe to buy and eat.	True False
10. Pripyat and the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone are a famous destination for the westerners.	True False

## Exercise 2. Find the English equivalents in the text

1. Радиация, которая ускользнула в Чернобыле	
2. В 400 раз больше	
3. До сегодняшнего дня	
4. Совершенно пустой	
5. Была заражена радиоактивным цезием	
6. С периодом полураспада 30 лет	
7. Почти 200 тонн радиоактивного материала хранится в саркофаге	
8. Ожидается, что это укрытие еще прослужит около века	
9. Лучевая болезнь в результате взрыва	
10. Гринпис утверждает, что украинцы едят зараженную еду	

## Exercise 3. Fill in the blanks

On April 26, 1986 the world's \_\_\_\_\_ nuclear \_\_\_\_\_ happened in the Ukraine. A nuclear reactor at the Chernobyl power plant exploded. The radiation that \_\_\_\_\_ in Chernobyl was four hundred times \_\_\_\_\_ that was released by the atomic bomb that was dropped over Hiroshima at the end of World War II. About 100,000 people had to leave their homes immediately after the explosion.

\_\_\_\_\_ villages had to be \_\_\_\_\_ and up to today nobody has been allowed to \_\_\_\_\_ 30 km of the plant. Pripyat, founded in 1970 to \_\_\_\_\_ the workers of the power plant, has become a \_\_\_\_\_. Before the disaster 50,000 people lived in modern apartment buildings. Today it is completely \_\_\_\_\_ with cars still parked on the streets. \_\_\_\_\_ are still so high that nobody will be able to live here for the next one to two hundred years.

An area of about 150000 square kilometers was \_\_\_\_\_ by radioactive \_\_\_\_\_, which has a \_\_\_\_\_ of 30 years. Most of the nuclear fallout came down on Belarus, Russia and the Ukraine itself.

Even though Chernobyl does not produce electricity anymore about 4,000 workers still work at the nuclear power plant. They can only stay for two weeks \_\_\_\_\_ because of the high radiation.

25 years after the disaster the cleanup of Chernobyl is still going on. There is still almost 200 tons of radioactive material \_\_\_\_\_ in the \_\_\_\_\_, which was built in only

six months after the explosion in 1986. Today it is slowly breaking \_\_\_\_\_ and cracks are letting radioactive material \_\_\_\_\_.

The Ukrainian government has promised to build a new shelter that will replace the old sarcophagus. This cover is \_\_\_\_\_ for over a century but it is still not clear where the Ukrainians will get 800 million Euros to \_\_\_\_\_ such a huge \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_ is still continuing on how many people died in the Chernobyl disaster. 31 people were killed as a direct result of the accident. 30 more died of \_\_\_\_\_ due to the \_\_\_\_\_. Thousands of cases of cancer have been detected in people who were children at that time.

The population in the area is still in danger. Greenpeace \_\_\_\_\_ that thousands of Ukrainians are eating food that is contaminated \_\_\_\_\_ although Ukrainian food ministry officials say that food is regularly checked. The environmental organization says milk, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ in the whole region will stay polluted for many decades to come.

Today, more and more tourists are coming to northern Ukraine. Tour guides in Pripyat show \_\_\_\_\_ the homes that they lived in before the explosion. Buses take them to the nuclear power station but stop a few hundred yards from the \_\_\_\_\_ where they can spend 15 minutes on taking pictures.

#### **Exercise 4. Paraphrase the following sentences**

1. The radiation that set free \_\_\_\_\_ in Chernobyl exceed the one on Hiroshima.
2. Today nobody lives in Chernobyl.
3. The Ukrainian government has promised to build a new cover \_\_\_\_\_ that will replace the old sarcophagus.
4. The Ukrainian government needs a lot of money to build the dome.

#### **Exercise 5. Make up questions (of different type) to the text**

