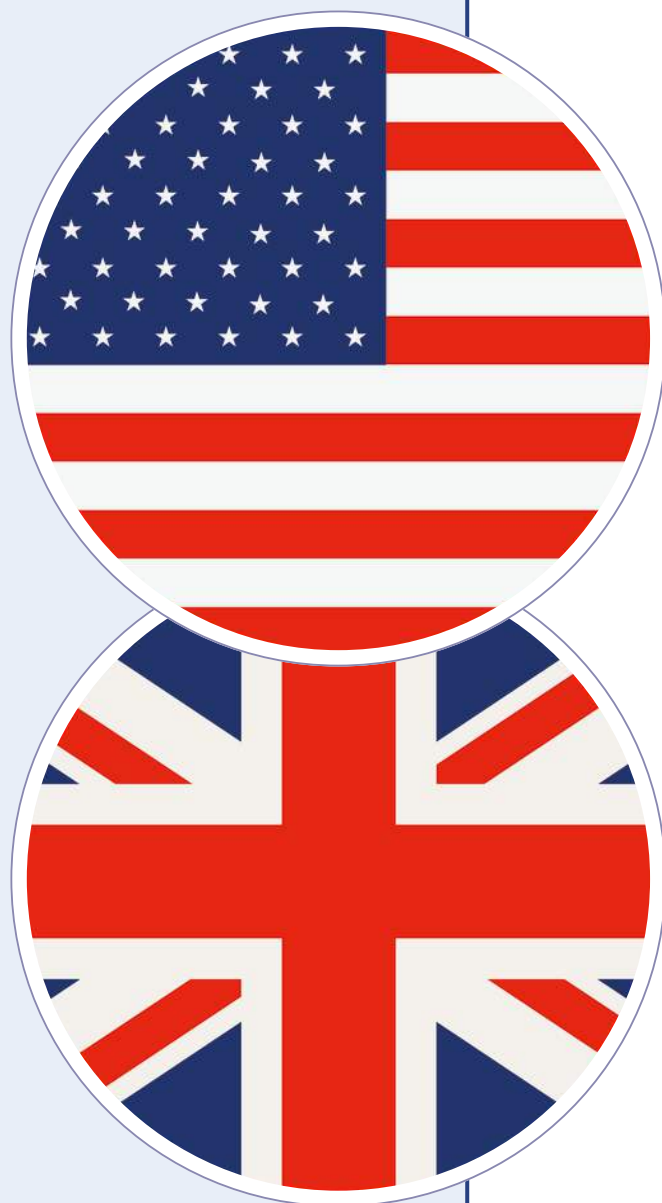


Englisch betrifft uns

EBU on the Web 2020/8

Topical texts in
English lessons

- *Comprehension*
- *Analysis*
- *Creative writing*
- *Background information*



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The Topic

Boris Johnson's plan: Clean Power for All Homes in the UK

- Complaints about the wet and windy weather are often the topic of conversation for the British and for tourists as well. But the obviously dodgy climate does have one benefit. As the windiest country in Europe Britain is a perfect place to generate renewable electricity from wind. Onshore and offshore wind offers the most cost-effective choice for new electricity as it is cheaper than gas, coal and nuclear energy. Wind power generation has grown fairly rapidly in the past decade and the UK is now the sixth largest wind power producer in the world after China, the USA, Germany, India and Spain. Prime Minister Boris Johnson apparently had still more ambitious plans when he announced his "Build Back Greener" plan in October. According to his project he intends to make Britain world leader in low-cost clean power. He wants every home in the UK to be powered with offshore wind energy within the next decade.
- The newspaper article from *The Guardian* explains the details of Johnson's plan and presents some reactions to it.

Ties to obligatory topics

Issues of the environment, forms of clean energy, political issues related to British society

Background information – further links

<https://www.statista.com/topics/4924/wind-energy-industry-in-the-united-kingdom-uk/>

The section of the *Statista* website presents facts and figures about the wind energy industry in the UK.

https://www.cartoonstock.com/directory/w/wind_energy.asp

The archive of *Cartoonstock* offers a variety of cartoons dealing with wind energy.

The Text

“Boris Johnson to unveil plan to power all UK homes with wind by 2030”
(Jessica Elgot, Fiona Harvey, Jillian Ambrose, *The Guardian* 5 October 2020)

The Link (URL)

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2020/oct/05/boris-johnson-to-unveil-plan-to-power-all-uk-homes-with-wind-by-2030>

Annotations

to accelerate – if a process accelerates or if something accelerates it, it happens faster than usual or sooner than you expect

bn – written abbreviation for ‘billions’ (*Milliarde*)

David Cameron – British Prime Minister from May 11, 2010 to July 13, 2016

catalyst – *here*: something or someone that causes an important change or event to happen

Drake – Francis Drake: (1540–96) an English sailor who fought against the Spanish and was the first Englishman to sail around the world

drive – *here*: an effort to achieve something

grassroots – the ordinary people in an organization, rather than the leaders

GW – gigawatt

gust – a sudden strong blast of wind

to harvest – to benefit or profit from

Humber – Humberside: an area of north-eastern England around the River Humber

hydrogen – *Wasserstoff*

incentive – something that encourages you to work harder, start a new activity etc.

to insulate – to cover or protect something with a material that stops electricity, sound, heat etc. from getting in or out

kettle – a container used for boiling and pouring water

nascent – coming into existence or starting to develop

Nelson – Lord Nelson (1758–1805): an English admiral who became famous for winning a number of sea battles against the French in the 1790s

net – *here*: the net amount is the final amount that remains after all the other amounts have been taken away

offshore – in or under the sea and not far from the coast;
onshore – on the land

to have/be in the pipeline – if a plan, idea, or event is in the pipeline, it is being prepared and it will happen or be completed soon

to pledge – to make a formal, usually public, promise that you will do something

plug-in – able to be connected to the electricity supply, or to another piece of electrical equipment

to puff – *here*: to blow

Raleigh – Walter Raleigh: (1552–1618) an English explorer, politician and soldier

to replicate – if you replicate someone’s work, a scientific study etc., you do it again, or try to get the same result again

to schedule – to plan that something will happen at a particular time

smart grid – an electrical grid which includes a variety of operation and energy measures

to sneer – to smile or speak in a very unkind way that shows you have no respect for someone or something

supply chain – the series of organizations that are involved in passing products from manufacturers to the public

tacit – tacit agreement, approval, support etc. is given without anything actually being said

to tackle – to try to deal with a difficult problem

Teesside – an area in northeast England around the place where the River Tees enters the North Sea

tentative – not definite or certain, because you may want to change things

thinktank – a committee of people with special experience or knowledge in a particular area which is established by a government to produce ideas and advice on something

to unveil – to show or tell people about a new product or plan for the first time

to vow – to make a serious promise

Assignments

Pre-reading assignment

1. The British Prime Minister Boris Johnson has promised "to power every home in the UK with off-shore wind energy within a decade". Do you think he will be able to keep his promise?

Analyzing the newspaper article Comprehension

2. Explain the details of Boris Johnson's "Build Back Greener" plan. Take the following aspects into account: Johnson's aims, the preconditions of the plan, the measures that he is going to take, problems that might affect the realization of the plan.
3. What reactions to Johnson's plan are presented in the article?

Analysis

4. The text includes three quotations from the planned speech to be held by the Prime Minister (cf. paragraphs 4, 10/11 and 13). Read them carefully and analyze the language he uses. What is the effect?

Post-reading assignments

5. Boris Johnson has just unveiled an ambitious plan to promote the production and use of wind energy in the United Kingdom. Consider and discuss the possibilities that he and his government will realize these plans and also the obstacles he may be confronted with.

6. Imagine you have a friend in the UK and you have exchanged emails about Boris Johnson's "Build Back Greener" plan. Your friend has asked you about the use of wind energy in Germany. You have found the following information and want to write an answer. Read the text below and summarize the main aspects in the English language.

So viel Windstrom wie nie zuvor

Zwar stockt der Ausbau der Windenergie in Deutschland, doch die Stromerzeugung mit Wind erreicht Rekordwerte. Grund ist laut Energiekonzernen das windreiche Jahr 2019. Der Bedarf der deutschen Haushalte ließe sich schon jetzt damit decken.

In Deutschland ist noch nie so viel Strom mit Windkraft erzeugt worden wie in diesem Jahr. Bis zum Wochenende hatten die Windräder an Land und auf See nach Berechnungen des Energiekonzerns Eon fast 108.000 Gigawattstunden Strom produziert. Das seien etwa 15 Prozent mehr als zum gleichen Zeitpunkt des vergangenen Jahres und fast genauso viel wie im gesamten vergangenen Jahr. Mit der bereits in diesem Jahr erzeugten Menge an Windenergie ließe sich Eon zufolge der Stromverbrauch aller deutschen Haushalte für ein komplettes Jahr decken.

Grund für den Rekord sei das bisher ungewöhnlich windreiche Jahr 2019. Intensive Tiefdruckgebiete hätten im Frühjahr und im Herbst für überdurchschnittlich viel Windstrom gesorgt. Ende November hätten zudem Ausläufer des ehemaligen Tropensturms „Sebastien“ die Windräder besonders kräftig angetrieben.

<https://www.tagesschau.de/wirtschaft/windenergie-119.html> (30.11.2019)

Suggested Solutions

1. Individual answers

2. The details of Boris Johnson's "Build Back Greener" plan:

Aims: creating new jobs, investing in a clean energy future ("green growth"), making Britain the world leader in low-cost clean energy, powering every home in the UK with offshore wind within ten years, keeping the UK one of the leading countries in the sector of clean energy

Conditions: the UK's offshore wind resources ("a place of almost limitless resource"), windfarms can be built in deep waters where winds are strongest, which will boost the capacity

Measures: investment into industries, innovation and infrastructure, which will create new jobs; investing £ 160m in the next generation of turbines, including floating windmills

Problems: there are planning regulations imposed by the former PM David Cameron, i.e. only a few onshore turbines have been built in the last five years; the topic of wind power is controversial in the Conservative Party

3. Reactions to Johnson's plan:

Campaigners criticize the target of net zero by 2050 as being under-ambitious

Green campaigners welcome the plan but demand incentives for electric vehicles and other low-carbon infrastructure

Green Alliance shows a positive reaction and appreciates the following aspects: creating jobs, the UK's leading role in tackling climate change, protecting nature

Greenpeace UK states that the plan requires action to overcome the barriers the offshore wind industry faces

Interestingly enough no reactions from within the Conservative Party are presented here.

4. Boris Johnson's language:

Paragraph 4: The personal pronoun 'we' at the beginning of the paragraph > emphasis that it is not just Johnson's decision, but that a number of other individuals are involved; **enumeration** of appliances in the household that will be powered by clean energy + **pars pro toto** > the appliances represent complete homes and households, with the help of the three examples the people can better understand how they will be affected by Johnson's plan; **colloquial language**: "the whole lot of them" > Johnson identi-

fies with the average citizen; "juice", again **colloquial language**, stands for electricity/power; **alliteration**: "the breezes that blow" > visualizing and underlining the favourable conditions around the British coasts

Paragraphs 10/11: use of **superlatives**: "deepest waters", "the biggest in the world" > illustrating the wind capacity; "to harvest the gusts" **metaphor** meaning to gain the benefits from the strong winds; **enumeration** of various regions of the United Kingdom > areas that tend to feel neglected here feel that they will play an important role in the future; **comparison**: Saudi Arabia – UK > the common feature is the "place of limitless resource", whereas Saudi Arabia's 'limitless resource' refers to oil, which produces carbon emissions (-), the UK's 'limitless resource' refers to clean wind energy (+)

Paragraph 13: "to sneer at" > a word that suggests scorn or contempt and refers to some people's attitude towards wind power; "to pull the skin off a rice pudding": the saying/image suggests that something is not powerful; "Drake", "Raleigh", "Nelson": personalities / discoverers in British history with outstanding achievements (at the time of sailing ships) > Johnson uses them to show how they achieved success with wind power and appeals to the citizens' patriotism

5. In this section of the BBC website (<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-54421489>) Boris Johnson's 'Build Back Greener' plan is presented as well as a number of reactions and comments, e.g.: "We currently have 15% of our power from wind, provided by 8886 turbines, to have 100% we'd need just under 60,000 turbines, that's a heck of a jump.", "160 million won't get him planning permission let alone build the wind farms.", "What happens when the wind doesn't blow, say on a cold clear December day? The UK needs energy storage too. Tidal power would be more reliable."

6. The following aspects should be mentioned:

- At the moment (November 30, 2019) the expansion of wind energy in Germany is stagnating.
- However, according to energy groups/concerns the production of wind energy has never been so high, reason: 2019 has so far been a particularly windy year.
- With the energy produced from wind power up to the end of November 2019 the energy requirements of all German households for the complete year can be met.