

A New and Unusual Form of Flood Warning

Difficulty:



Date of release:

Tuesday 15th November 2011

Discussion activities to be done after completing this EA lesson

Today's report was about a disaster threatening a capital city. Which city? What type of disaster?

Extension discussion topics

A. Talking about and going over the specific topic / idea / issue in listening text

Introduction = What is the new form of flood warning? What is special about it? Why did its creators think it was necessary?

1. What do we learn in the report about the official flood warnings given in Thailand?
 - The public has been "swamped with mixed messages" with officials of the national government and the capital site government often contradicting each other, and alternating between overly optimistic and overly pessimistic scenarios.
 - The Prime Minister has also contradicted herself in the space of several days.
 - There is confusion with "academics saying this, the media saying another thing and people on the street saying something completely different".
2. What is so RooSuFlood? What is its aim? Who created it?
 - It is an animated series for television.
 - It contains "public service announcements designed to educate while keeping the audience entertained."
 - Its aim is to "cut through the confusion" and "calm down a worried public".
 - It was created by a group of young animators who got together.
 - It uses volunteer animators, including students and recent graduates.
3. Can you remember the tips given in the report for people who are flooded out and have to evacuate their homes?
 - Pack a life jacket.
 - Plug your toilets with sandbags. (Why? To prevent dirty water from the sewers invading your house).
 - Carry a large stick. (Why? In case you meet a crocodile while evacuating!)

At the time you do this exercise, what is the situation with the floods in Bangkok?

B. Expanding on (one of) the topics / ideas / issues in listening text

Topic = Natural disasters involving water.

1. Have you ever experienced a flood at first hand? Have there ever been floods in your country? Describe what happened.
2. Choose a major flood that has occurred in recent years, research it and present the fruits of your research to a partner, your class or your teacher. In your presentation try to cover the following points: duration, extent of damage, consequences for the population, immediate cause, government responsibility, recovery and present situation. Some possibilities:
 - New Orleans 2005 (Hurricane Katrina).
 - Indian Ocean Earthquake and Tsunami 2004.
 - Tsunami in Japan, March 2011.
 - ...

C. Extending discussion of (one of) the topics / ideas / issues in listening text

Topic = Is RooSuFlood an appropriate response?

1. From what you heard in the report, what do you think about the role played by government and officials in the warnings which have been given about the floods?
2. From what you heard in the report, do you think RooSuFlood is an appropriate response? Is an animated series a good way of giving public service announcements? Or will it simply add to the confusion?
3. Ideally (and if Internet access allows), watch the episode of RooSuFlood given in the following link (it's in Thai but you can follow the English subtitles) and discuss the following points:
 - Usefulness of the information given.
 - Entertainment value. (is it funny? enjoyable?)
 - Quality of the animation.
 - Density of information given.
 - Simplicity / complexity of the information given.

Here is the link: [RooSuFlood](#)

Audioscript

Thailand's devastating floods caught many people unprepared, leaving hundreds dead and tens of thousands homeless.

As authorities struggle to fend off waters closing in on the Thai capital, Bangkok, ordinary people are being swamped with mixed messages. Officials with the national government and the capital city government have often contradicted each other in assessing the threat to Bangkok.

Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra has struggled with a consistent message.

(...)

Last week, she said if there is no more water coming in, it might not get seriously flooded in Bangkok. Several days later, she had starkly different advice.

(...)

She says in Bangkok, people might have to adjust to using boats instead of cars.

As officials alternate between overly optimistic and overly pessimistic scenarios, the public is left wondering what to do.

(...)

To cut through the confusion, and calm down a worried public, a group of young animators got together to create RooSuFlood. "Know and Fight Flood" is an animated series of public service announcements designed to educate while keeping the audience entertained.

Subtitles in English also help foreigners wanting to know more about the situation, says Thawatchai Saengthamchai, one of the series' creators.

(...)

He says there is a flood of information with academics saying this, the media saying that, the government saying another thing and people on the street saying something completely different. He says the air is full of confused voices without anything to organize the information.

(...)

To illustrate the magnitude of the crisis, RooSuFlood depicts Bangkok's encroaching floodwaters as 50 million blue whales. The animated series shows the whales trying to make their way out to sea through Bangkok's Chao Phraya River and crisscrossing canals only to spill out onto the streets and into people's homes.

Several students and recent graduates sit in front of their computers in a modern, glass-walled gray building. Volunteer animator Sipparpad Krongraksa was flooded out of his house and, for now, he not only works at the office but also lives here.

(...)

He says normally he would be sitting around in his room watching TV, but he feels that there are a lot of people who are in trouble and RooSuFlood allows him to be more useful to society.

(...)

As floodwaters slowly spread in to central Bangkok, the series turned to dealing with getting flooded and evacuating safely. Among the tips for leaving your home: pack a life jacket, plug your toilets with sandbags, and carry a large stick if you should be unlucky enough to meet a crocodile while evacuating.

Daniel Scharf, VOA News, Bangkok.