TEXTS FOR SUMMARY PRACTICE

TEXT 1

Rain will bring much-needed relief to California fires, but also new dangers

For the first time since the so-called Camp Fire started its deadly rampage 11 days ago, rain will stifle some of the flames.

It will help suppress an inferno that has already killed at least 79 people. It will also finally improve the heavily polluted and unhealthy air smothering Northern California.

However, with more than 151,000 acres of scorched earth, there's little vegetation to soak up the rain. That means the region is now at risk of mudslides, which could be especially dangerous for firefighters battling the inferno.

Since the Camp Fire broke out November 8, it has destroyed more than 11,700 homes and set fire to an area the size of Chicago. Even worse: fire officials predict the blaze might not be fully contained until November 30.

Almost 1,000 people are unaccounted for. That number keeps fluctuating, as many residents have been located. That is raw data authorities are collecting from phone calls, emails and the 911 system.

While fires keep raging across the state, wildfire evacuees face the threat of flooding. The heavy rain forecast for Northern California could force evacuees who escaped the Camp Fire to flee once again. So organizers are trying to help evacuees relocate.

And in the days since wildfires forced them from their homes, evacuees have been helped by total strangers. "Even the people who are affected by the fire directly, they're helping. They're donating", said a volunteer.

The causes of the wildfires remain under investigation.

(Adapted from an article by Holly Yan, CNN, 20 November 2018; https://edition.cnn.com)
TEXT 2

Theresa May: Getting rid of me as leader won't make Brexit any easier

British Prime Minister Theresa May defended her Brexit plan saying getting rid of her as leader won't make the process of leaving the European Union "any easier."

May was speaking at the end of a tumultuous week in which she presented her draft agreement on how the UK would leave the EU, a deal that sparked multiple resignations from her government.

"These negotiations have been tough right from the start, but they were always going to get more difficult towards the end," she said. She defended her deal as "what's right for the people of this country" and "the national interest."

May denied she had thought about quitting and reiterated that the UK will leave the EU on March 29, 2019. At least 21 Conservative Members of Parliament have publicly submitted letters of no-confidence in May and demanded that she step aside. A total of 48 letters are needed to trigger a party leadership election that could overthrow her government.

While former Brexit secretary Dominic Raab said May had allowed the UK to be bullied by the EU, Jeremy Corbyn, the Labour Party Leader, said that a second Brexit referendum is "an option for the future." He added that if May's Brexit agreement comes to Parliament in its current state the Labour Party would vote against it. The Labour leader, who voted against Brexit during the 2016 referendum, also admitted that he wasn't sure how he'd vote if there was a second referendum.

(Adapted from an article by Bianca Britton, CNN, 18 November 2018; https://edition.cnn.com)
Spain threatens Brexit deal over Gibraltar status

British Prime Minister Theresa May’s efforts to pass a Brexit deal have suffered a further setback after Spain threatened to veto her proposed agreement over the handling of Gibraltar.

Madrid has objected to part of the deal that covers future trade and security relations between the UK and the European Union. It insists arrangements relating to Gibraltar, a small British territory on the southern tip of Spain, should be discussed separately.

Spain has long claimed sovereignty over Gibraltar, which has been a British territory since 1713. But Gibraltarians, who voted almost unanimously to remain in the European Union in the 2016 referendum, are fiercely loyal to Britain and have resisted Spanish claims.

The draft Brexit deal must be agreed at an EU summit on November 25. Spain cannot itself block the deal, which can be approved if 20 of the remaining 27 EU nations agree. An EU official told CNN that it was likely the issue would be ironed out before the EU Council meets at the weekend. "I am confident this will be solved before Sunday," the official told CNN.

But Madrid's objections will frustrate May's efforts to see the deal through the EU smoothly before it returns to the UK Parliament for a final vote.

Spain wants negotiations over future arrangements for Gibraltar to be conducted separately from wider trade and security discussions. Gibraltar’s Chief Minister Fabian Picardo said that the Spanish government's position "does little to build mutual confidence and trust going forward."

"The language of vetoes and exclusions should be the language of the past," he added.

(Adapted from an article by Rob Picheta, CNN, 20 November 2018; https://edition.cnn.com)
Text 4

What we don't get about the far right

“There are old demons which are coming back to the surface,” French President Emmanuel Macron warned during a speech marking the 100th anniversary of the end of World War I, reminding us that the ethnic nationalism that sparked devastating global wars in the 20th century remains a threat of potentially monstrous proportions.

Many saw this cautionary statement as a rebuke to US President Donald Trump, who has recently declared himself a nationalist. But Macron's remarks foregrounded the larger issue of our dangerous misunderstanding of the dynamics of far-right violent groups.

Academic studies in 2012 and in 2017 show these groups have attacked and killed as many or more Americans than any other terrorist movements in recent years. Yet the FBI considers them a secondary threat to Muslim terrorism.

Deprioritizing far-right violence ignores the international reach of militant white supremacist groups, and obscures the greater threat posed when governments embrace exclusionary nationalism, which mobilizes popular support by stigmatizing groups of “others” — often identified by race, religion or ethnicity — as national enemies.

American far-right militants continue to communicate and network with like-minded groups abroad, just as they always have. We can expect these cross-border associations and the persistent levels of violence coming from these groups to continue.

What Macron warned about, however, is the exponentially deadlier outcomes that are produced when government leaders support this hatred and violence and leverage it to gain power.

These trends are troubling, and Macron's bold speech should be a wakeup call to start taking far-right violence more seriously — in order to avoid another century of brutal conflict.

(Adapted from an article by Mike German, CNN, 20 November 2018; https://edition.cnn.com)
Majority say migrants in caravan should be given the opportunity to enter the country

Stoking fear about a migrant caravan was a top pre-election talking point of President Donald Trump's, but most Americans think migrants who reach the US border should be given the opportunity to enter the country if they meet certain requirements, according to a new poll by Monmouth University.

A plurality (39%) said that the caravan poses no real threat to the US and 29% said it's a major threat. Only a quarter think it's a minor threat. Republicans are more likely to think of the migrants traveling to the border as a threat (54%), whereas only 28% of independents and 11% of Democrats agree.

7-in-10 said that illegal immigration is a very or somewhat serious problem in the US, a number that has stayed relatively stable since January. But slightly more now said that illegal immigration is "very serious" compared to in the past (49% now compared to the 45% in January and 43% in September 2017).

Right before midterms, President Trump began hitting the caravan hard as an election issue, but he has been quiet on the subject since Election Day. Migrants from the group have begun arriving at the border, but the legal process for their entry could take weeks.

One piece of rhetoric pushed by the President was suggestion it's possible the caravan included a number of terrorists in addition to those seeking asylum. A quarter of Americans in the new poll believed him and said the caravan does include terrorists. Another 22% thought that it doesn't include any terrorists. Monmouth poll also gave respondents the option to be slightly unsure. Only 13% said they aren't sure but they think it's more likely there are terrorists and 28% said they're unsure but it's more likely there are not. So including those who aren't positive, 38% think the caravan could or definitely does include terrorists and half said it probably or definitely doesn't.

(Adapted from an article by Grace Sparks, CNN, 19 November 2018; https://edition.cnn.com)