

ESL news for February 27th, 2017.

Story One Famine in Africa

The Secretary-General of the United Nations, Antonio Guterres, is asking for financial aid to help 20 million people in Yemen, South Sudan, Somalia and Nigeria who are on the edge of starvation. The UN has said it needs 4.4 billion dollars to help stop the famine, but so far, the UN has only received 90 million dollars. The food crises in these countries are man-made and are a result of decades of conflict and war. The UN is calling on the international community to help by putting political pressure on the leaders of these African countries and funding humanitarian aid. The aid organization UNICEF has said that 1.4 million children are at risk of death from acute malnutrition across the four countries. The Secretary-General said that the catastrophe could be stopped if the international community acts now. In each of the four countries, committed people are ready to help, but what they need are resources and money. The UN is warning that time is running out.

Story Two Is there life on other planets?

Scientists have found 7 planets orbiting a star in a solar system that is 40 light years away from us. A few of the planets are very much like earth and scientists believe they could hold life. Although 40 light years doesn't sound far, it would take us millions of years to reach them. They are the closest planets to us which are the most similar to earth. The astronomers now have to research the atmosphere of each planet to find out what kind of gases they contain, and to find out if the planets have water. The planets are orbiting a star that has grown slowly and will still be around for a trillion years after our sun dies. Astronomers have named the solar system Trappist 1. They believe that after life in our solar system has gone, life may still exist in some of those planets. Astronomers are very excited by the discovery.

Story Three

Refugees walk into Canada

Dozens of asylum seekers are illegally walking across the Canada-US border. They are leaving the USA because of President Donald Trump's anti-immigration policies and the travel ban he has placed on people from Muslim countries. The illegal border crossings are very dangerous for them in winter because they are walking through freezing cold temperatures and snow. They are crossing unguarded borders, mostly into Quebec and Manitoba. Men and women and even families with small children are walking in the freezing weather, badly dressed for the winter conditions, and with many carrying their belongings in suitcases and plastic bags. If Canadian border guards find the asylum seekers they are arrested and checked for a criminal background. Often, the border guards are waiting across the border for them. Even though they know they will be arrested, once they have crossed into Canada, these desperate people who are fleeing have a right to ask for protection from the Canadian government.

Story Four

Justin Trudeau and the EU

Right after meeting President Donald Trump in the USA, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau flew to Strasbourg, France to meet with EU leaders. He was in Europe to promote trade between Canada and the EU. European lawmakers stood up and applauded Justin Trudeau after his speech which emphasised the benefits of CETA (Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement). It was the first time a Canadian prime minister has spoken before the European Parliament, and Trudeau took the opportunity to praise the trade agreement. The Canadian government feels that Canada has got a good deal from the agreement, as Canada now has trade access to 500 million people in the EU. Once the trade deal is in place, 98% of the trade tariffs will be lifted. Canadian farmers and auto workers are not happy with the trade agreement because they feel it will create foreign competition. But the Canadian government says that pork and beef producers should welcome the new market of 500 million people. The EU will be Canada's second largest trading partner after the USA, and is the world's largest economy. The deal will be highly beneficial to all Canadians.