

Never mind the weather

Everyone knows that bad weather can depress you, but what about its effects on company profits? It's difficult to sell ice-cream when it's cold, or attract customers to a ski resort when there's no snow. So what precautions can these businesses take?

Companies often have insurance against negative changes in interest or foreign exchange rates. Insuring against bad weather is simply another form of risk management. In the USA, the market for this type of insurance is worth an estimated \$9 billion a year.

Agriculture, energy and leisure are just three examples of industries that depend on the weather. The number of visitors to a theme park like Disneyland falls in a wet summer, and a mild winter reduces the demand for heating and affects the energy sector.

One advantage of this type of insurance is that it is easy to measure the weather. You can specify temperature, hours of sunshine, wind speed or inches of rainfall. For example, the London wine bar chain, Corney and Barrow, have a deal with Speedwell Weather Derivatives. The open-air terraces are an important attraction for customers in the summer months. Obviously this depends on dry, sunny weather. They receive a payout for every Thursday and Friday (the peak drinking time in London's business district) when the temperature does not rise above 24 degrees Centigrade.

Commercial airfields have problems when there is a lot of wind. They can take out insurance against the average wind speed exceeding a certain level. That way they receive compensation for loss of revenue on days when high winds stop them flying.

In some countries there is a problem with this type of insurance. The climate is very changeable and weather information isn't very reliable. This makes it more difficult to assess the risks. On the other hand, it gives people something to talk about.



Ex. 1 Match these verbs from the text with their meaning:

1. to attract	• mierzyć
2. to depend	• oddziaływać
3. to fall	• oszacować
4. to reduce	• otrzymać
5. to affect	• przyciągać
6. to measure	• spadać
7. to specify	• sprecyzować
8. to receive	• wzrastać
9. to rise	• zależeć
10. to assess	• zmniejszać

Ex. 2 Find in the text words which mean:

1. zyski firmy
2. środki zapobiegawcze
3. ubezpieczenie
4. kurs wymiany walut
5. zarządzanie ryzykiem
6. popyt
7. sector energetyczny
8. pewien poziom
9. odszkodowanie
10. przychód

Ex. 3 Match the words to form correct collocations:

- | | |
|---------------|----------|
| 1. commercial | changes |
| 2. negative | chain |
| 3. ski | park |
| 4. theme | resort |
| 5. wine bar | airfield |

I know English idioms!

This lesson's topic is weather and its influence on business. The English language has a good number of weather-related idioms. Let's study a few of them:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------|
| ○ a storm in a tea-cup | burza w szklance wody |
| ○ to shower sb with (gifts) | zasypać (prezentami) |
| ○ to feel under the weather | czuć się nie najlepiej |
| ○ not to have the foggiest idea | nie mieć bladego pojęcia |
| ○ to flood the market | zalać rynek |

Phrasals, phrasals...

Speaking of weather, we mustn't forget that English also has some phrasal verbs connected with this topic. One of them is here:

Angry like never before she stormed out of the room without a word.

Everybody understood that "to storm out" means more or less "wybiec, gwałtownie wyjść".

Have you ever happened to storm out of the meeting room? ☺

Grammar corner...

This lesson's reading text starts like this: "Everyone knows that..." which can be understood as: "Każdy wie, że..." or "Wszyscy wiedzą, że..." but we have to remember that in English "everyone" is a singular noun and so it must take a singular verb ("knows").

How would you say this in English then:

1. Wszyscy tego chcą.
2. Każdy jest zajęty.
3. Każdy ma swoje problemy.
4. Wszyscy są zadowoleni.

GLOSSARY	
to depress sb	wpędzić kogoś w depresję
company profits	zyski firmy
to attract	przyciągnąć
customer	klient
ski resort	ośrodek narciarski
precaution	środek zapobiegawczy
insurance	ubezpieczenie
interest	odsetki
foreign exchange	wymiana walut
rate	stopa, kurs
risk management	zarządzanie ryzykiem
market	rynek
to be worth	być wartym
estimated	oszacowany, szacunkowy
agriculture	rolnictwo
leisure	czas wolny
industry	branża
to depend on	zależać od
visitor	odwiedzający
theme park	park tematyczny
to fall	spadać
to reduce	zmniejszać
demand	popyt
to affect	oddziaływać
advantage	korzyść
to measure	mierzyć
to specify	sprecyzować
inch	cal
chain	sieć
deal	umowa
obviously	oczywiście
to receive	otrzymywać
payout	tu: odszkodowanie
peak	szczytowy
to rise	wzrastać
airfield	lotnisko
average	średni
exceeding	przekraczający
certain	pewien
level	poziom
compensation	odszkodowanie
loss	strata
revenue	przychód
changeable	zmienny
reliable	wiarygodny
to assess	oszacować

ANSWER KEY:

Ex.1

1. to attract	przyciągać
2. to depend	zależać
3. to fall	spadać
4. to reduce	zmniejszać
5. to affect	oddziaływać
6. to measure	mierzyć
7. to specify	sprecyzować
8. to receive	otrzymać
9. to rise	wzrastać
10. to assess	oszacować

Ex. 2

1. company profits
2. precautions
3. insurance
4. foreign exchange rates
5. risk management
6. demand
7. energy sector
8. certain level
9. payout / compensation
10. revenue

Ex. 3

1. commercial airfield
2. negative changes
3. ski resort
4. theme park
5. wine bar chain

Grammar corner

1. Everyone wants it/that.
2. Everyone is busy.
3. Everyone has their (!) own problems.
4. Everyone is satisfied.