

Horn of Africa Famine: Background (Grades 7 & 8)

Where is the Horn of Africa?

The [Horn of Africa](#)¹ is a horn-shaped peninsula in East Africa situated west of the Indian Ocean and south of the Gulf of Aden. The region consists of four countries: Djibouti, Somalia, Ethiopia, and Eritrea, although some definitions also include Kenya, Uganda and Sudan. The estimated population of this region is about 90.2 million people with over 80 % of people relying on agriculture as their main source of food and income. The countries with the most people affected by the current drought are Ethiopia (4.8 million), Kenya (3.7 million), Djibouti (165,000) and Somalia (3.7 million). The [Food and Agriculture Organization \(FAO\)](#)² estimates more than 12 million people are famine-affected and in need of emergency assistance. This statistic has increased 38 % since March 2011 and continues to grow as the area of drought spreads farther into southern Somalia and Puntland.



Why is the Horn of Africa crisis happening?

The Horn of Africa has a long history of drought-related famine and conflict. Since 1980, 42 droughts have been reported in the region, including the Ethiopia famine of 1984 where the death toll was estimated at 1 million. 47 million people have experienced drought in this region in the last decade. The current drought in the Horn of Africa is the worst in 60 years. The FAO reports that this area has experienced two poor rainy seasons in a row causing failed crops and the death of livestock. While environmental factors have contributed to the crisis, this only touches the surface of the problem. Other factors include:

1.Weak and corrupt governments	5.High fuel and food prices
2.History of conflict & violence by militant groups	6.Blocked access to humanitarian aid
3.Weak market and banking systems	7.Climate change
4.Migration of people	8.Neglect of the international community

¹ <http://maps.nationalgeographic.com/maps>

² <http://www.fao.org/crisis/horn-africa/home/en/>

Reading and Ranking Activity (Grades 7 & 8)

Students will

- Skim read printed text for information
- Engage in group consensus-making
- Understand and think critically about factors contributing to the Horn of Africa famine

Materials

- Access to computers for online articles, videos and maps
- Copies of Africa Map (Reproducible Master) for each student
- Copies of articles, *Horn of Africa Famine: Background* and World Vision [News Release](#) (optional)
- Chart paper (optional)
- Atlases, online maps or globes
- Glossary of Terms (see *Horn of Africa: On the Road* lesson)

Time: Two 60 minute lessons.

Instructions

1. Prior knowledge: Ask students what they know about the continent of Africa and what they have heard about the Horn of Africa famine. Have students individually complete the Africa Map, referring to [online interactive maps](#), classroom supplied maps and the *Horn of Africa Famine: Background*.

For fun, test students' knowledge of the 54 countries in Africa using the [Sporcle](#) online quiz at <http://www.sporcle.com/games/g/africa>

Introduce the situation in the Horn of Africa by showing the [Horn of Africa Drought Crisis](#) slideshow at <http://www.youtube.com/user/WorldVisionCanada#p/u/2/3zDNG3AA0-0>

Optional Media Literacy Activity: Present the slideshow first without the soundtrack, then with volume turned on. Discuss how absence or presence of a soundtrack affects the viewer's response to the scenes and information depicted.

2. Ask students to individually skim read a few selected news articles from around the globe (listed below) and watch the videos. Instruct them to record facts or statements that support the eight factors listed on the *Horn of Africa Famine: Background* sheet. Allow 30 to 40 minutes for individual work.
3. Working in groups of 3 or 4, ask students to rank the eight factors listed in the *Horn of Africa Famine: Background* from highest to lowest according to which ones they think are

most significant in contributing to the Horn of Africa famine. (NOTE: there are no right or wrong answers but their choices must be backed up by readings)

4. Survey the groups to determine the top three factors each one has chosen. Groups must supply one persuasive fact or quotation from the articles to support each of their three choices. Record choices and supporting arguments for each group on the board or chart paper.
5. Tally the group responses to determine the top three choices for the whole class.

News Articles:

1. Somalia's economy ravaged by a weak government (The Sunday Times, Sep 2008)
<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/africa/article4727562.ece>
2. High food prices in drought-affected Horn of Africa (UN News Centre, Aug 2011)
<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=39271&Cr=Horn+of+Africa&Cr1>
3. Lingering Al Shabaab influence obstructs Somali famine relief (Voice of America, Aug 2011) <http://www.voanews.com/english/news/africa/Lingering-al-Shabab-Influence-Obstructs-Somali-Famine-Relief-127891688.html4>
4. Somalia (New York Times, Sep 2011)
<http://topics.nytimes.com/top/news/international/countriesandterritories/somalia/index.html>
5. Horn of Africa: From one drought to another (the Guardian, July 2011)
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2011/jul/07/horn-of-africa-drought>
6. US urges action on Horn of Africa famine (AFP, Aug 2011)
<http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5gWVkyYmwIZGd2Jr-3vp5rKF1blTbg?docId=CNG.0dcc70d787af82f2b283aeb2af9d940e.b31>
7. UN: One-third of Somalis now displaced (Voice of America, Sep 2011)
<http://www.voanews.com/english/news/africa/east/UN-One-Third-of-Somalis-Now-Displaced-129883783.html>
8. Somalian famine could kill 750,000 in months (CBC News, Sep 2011)
<http://www.cbc.ca/news/world/story/2011/09/05/somalia-famine-spreads.html>
9. Money transfers lifeline for Somalia famine (CBC News, Sep 2011)
<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/story/2011/09/13/ottawa-somali-money-transfer.html>

Videos:

1. What is World Vision doing in Somalia (World Vision, Aug 2011)
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uN-6bLQlxZo>
2. Somalia's children under attack (Amnesty International, July 2011)
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LY1iWWxd6yg&feature=related>
3. World Vision Horn of Africa Response (World Vision, Sep 2011)
<http://www.youtube.com/user/WorldVisionCanada>
4. Horn of Africa crisis: combating cholera in Somalia (UNICEF, Aug 2011)
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wwT9rdtG5bM&feature=related>
5. World Vision talks to Somali woman at transit camp near Ethiopia (World Vision, Aug 2011)
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4ZYhReMUOQQ&feature=related>

Further Discussion:

- a) What are the immediate needs of people in the refugee camps? How are these needs being met?
- b) What is the difference between an Internally Displaced Person and a refugee?
- c) How are children affected by this crisis? What unique dangers do they face?
- d) Of the top three factors chosen by the class as contributing to the Horn of Africa crisis, which ones are getting the most media coverage? Which of the other five factors does the public need to know more about? Why?

Follow Up Activity: Writing a News Release

Working in pairs, students create a short news release about the Horn of Africa crisis to be presented to the class or read over the PA during school announcements. Ask them to consider what they want their peers to know and how they want them to respond. Provide the following [news release](#) from World Vision (July 24, 2011) as an example.



Photo: Mike Weickert, World Vision Canada

Reproducible Master: Africa Map

Instructions: using online maps, atlases or globes, label the 54 countries in the continent of Africa plus the surrounding bodies of water. Add capital cities for each country. Identify the countries making up the Horn of Africa using a colour of your choice. Test your knowledge with the Sporcle on line quiz at <http://www.sporcle.com/games/g/africa>



www.theodora.com/maps

Answer Key: Africa Map

