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Level 1B

Greece Overspends



Getty Images

People argue with police during a protest in Athens, Greece, on May 26, 2010.

by L. Salzberg

On Saturday, May 29th, a large protest was scheduled to take place in Greece. The Greek people are angry at the way their government is handling its economic problems.

Greece's government has been spending too much money. It has spent more than it has received from taxes. To keep the country running, the government had to borrow large amounts of money. Now, it does not have enough to repay its **loans**. As a result, the Greek government is in

danger of **bankruptcy**.

How Did This Happen?

Greece's spending problems have been going on for years. The government has been paying its workers more than it could afford. In addition, the government spends money that it does not need to. For example, it pays a committee to manage a lake known as Lake Kopais. It does so even though this lake has been dry for about 70 years. Experts estimate that Greece pays about 10,000

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Greece's government has spent too much money.

loans > sums of money lent out that have to be repaid

bankruptcy > unable to repay money that was borrowed



bonuses > amounts paid to workers, often as rewards for extra work or effort

evaders > people who avoid their responsibilities

retire > stop working, usually because of age

pensions > amounts of money paid regularly to people who have retired, or to their families



Getty Images

Tourism brings much-needed money into Greece. Visitors come to see historic landmarks such as this one, called the Parthenon. This important structure is about 2,500 years old, and is getting a fix-up. However, a protest on May 25, 2010 halted work at this site.

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people to “work” on committees like these.

Bonuses are another drain on the government’s money. Government workers are paid for two extra months each year. They are paid a bonus every spring, summer, and winter. In addition, government workers receive bonuses for certain on-the-job skills, like knowing a second language or using a computer. Park workers receive a bonus for working outdoors. Some people even receive a bonus for getting to work on time!

Another problem is that many Greek citizens do not pay the taxes that they owe the government. Now the government has begun to crack down on these people. “People are angry,” a tax official said. “They have to know those **evaders** are being punished.”

Rescuing the Greek Economy

In an attempt to rescue the nation’s economy, new laws have been passed. These laws raise taxes and cut government workers’ pay. Another law requires government workers to **retire** later. For example, women used to be allowed to retire at age 60. Now they will not be allowed to retire before they are 65 years old. This will help the government save money because it will have fewer **pensions** to pay. Another law calls for government workers to receive reduced pensions.

Unfortunately, these efforts have not been enough to save Greece’s economy. The country still needs a huge amount of money to repay its loans. On May 2nd, some European nations announced that they will “bail out” Greece. They plan to give the country about 150 billion

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dollars to save it from bankruptcy.

However, the bailout has some conditions attached. To receive the money, Greece must cut its spending even more. It also had to raise taxes on fuel, cigarettes, and other products.

Reactions in Greece

Many Greek citizens are angry about the government's new **policies**. Government workers do not want their pay cut. Retired people do not want their pensions reduced. Nobody wants to pay higher taxes.

Citizens have been taking to the streets in protest. On May 5th, three people were killed when the protesters became violent. However, many people realize that the government must take action. "I think we need to address our economic problems, but the **measures** are not fair," 19-year-old Glykeria Antonaki told reporters.

Despite the protests, Finance Minister George Papaconstantinou (say: pa-pa-kahn-STAHN-tee-noo) insists that the policies will not be changed. "We will not take a single step backwards," he vowed. ▲



1. List three facts about Greece you learn from the map.

2. On which continent is Greece located? Why do you think European countries are helping Greece?

Greece is a country located in southeastern Europe. Also known as the Hellenic Republic, Greece is a democratic nation with a **parliamentary** style of government.

Greece is a member of the European Union. It is also a good friend of the United States. Greece is a strong trade partner and is helping the United States fight terror.

Greece's mountain ranges, more than 1,400 islands, and miles of coastline make it a popular vacation spot. Visitors commonly flock to Greece's many historical **landmarks** and museums. This year, however, the recent protests have kept many tourists away.



Greek Finance Minister
George Papaconstantinou

policies > plans of action

measures > steps toward a goal

parliamentary > form of government whose leaders are chosen by members of parliament

landmarks > well-known, often historically important, places

Review Questions*

1. Why is the Greek government in danger of bankruptcy?

2. What have the Greek government and other nations done to solve Greece's spending problem?

3. Do you think Greek citizens are right to be angry? Explain your answer.

4. What do you think are some ways that people can manage money carefully?

* Raphael (1986)

Why are scientists studying tornadoes?

funnel > tube shaped like an upside-down cone



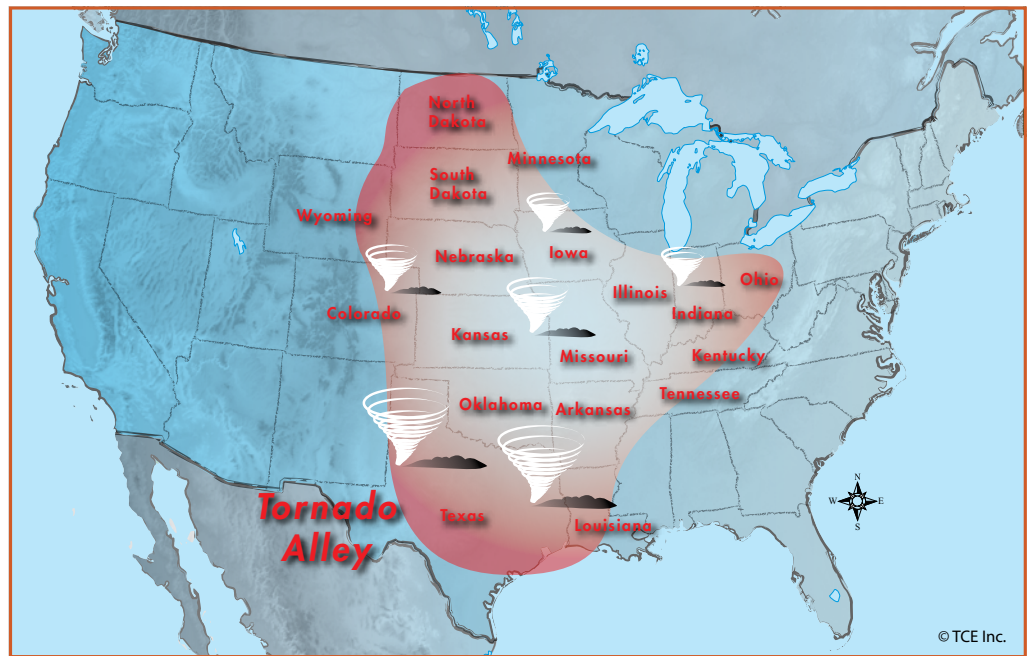
NSF/NOAA

VORTEX2 scientists are sending up a weather balloon.



NSF/NOAA

VORTEX2 researchers use Doppler radar mounted on a truck to study a tornado.



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The Return of VORTEX2

by Jeffrey Dinsmore

In parts of the United States, spring is the height of tornado season. This year there have been fewer tornadoes than usual. Most people would consider that a good thing. However, one group is disappointed by the lack of storms: storm chasers.

Storm chasers are people who follow tornadoes. They drive as close as they can to the **funnel**-shaped cloud formations. They collect information about them. The information helps us understand more about tornadoes.

Last year, a group of storm chasers got together for an important project called VORTEX2. They spent six weeks searching for tornadoes. This year, VORTEX2 is back ... and it is bigger and better.

About Tornadoes

A tornado is an extremely violent storm, a rapidly swirling funnel of wind. With wind speeds that can reach 300 miles per hour (mph), tornadoes can greatly

damage an entire neighborhood within seconds. They can be up to one mile wide and may remain on the ground for more than 50 miles. Tornadoes develop during thunderstorms. A thunderstorm forms when the air is cold in the sky and warm on the ground. If the wind is moving in a clockwise direction, a tornado may result.

The United States has more tornadoes than any other country. They occur most frequently in March, April, and May. During these months, the changing temperatures may create the right conditions for tornadoes.

Most tornadoes occur in an area known as "Tornado Alley." This is a region that stretches from Texas to North Dakota. In this part of the nation, warm, wet air from the South meets cold, dry air from the North. Because the ground in Tornado Alley is mostly flat, winds do not encounter natural barriers, like mountains. This allows the winds to move quickly over great distances.

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When the fast-moving winds **collide**, tornadoes can develop.

The Mission of VORTEX2

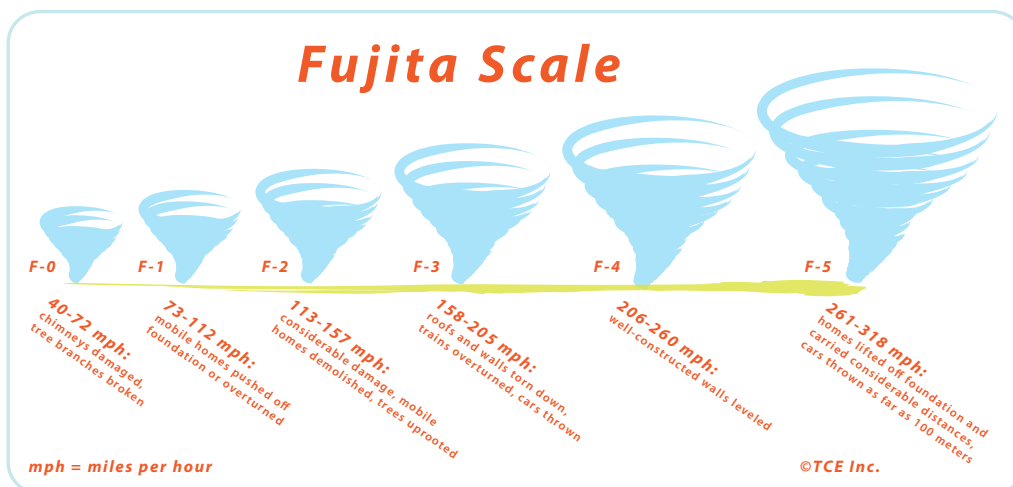
On May 6th, this year's VORTEX2 program began in the heart of Tornado Alley. About 100 scientists and students are part of VORTEX2. This is the largest group of storm chasers ever **assembled**.

The team members drive vehicles that are outfitted with weather-tracking equipment. They wait for thunderstorms to form and listen for reports of tornadoes. As soon as they hear of a tornado, they drive toward it. They use equipment like cameras, high-tech weather balloons, and Doppler radar to capture every detail of tornadoes they may sight. Other tools, including unmanned aircraft and lasers that measure raindrops, help the scientists fulfill their mission.

"We're throwing everything but the kitchen sink at it," said Joshua Wurman, who has chased 141 tornadoes over 14

years. "We'll have a whole **potpourri** of instruments surrounding the storm, all measuring different things in different ways."

The VORTEX2 researchers hope to learn more about how tornadoes form. They also want to find out how long tornadoes usually stay on the ground. Most importantly, the scientists want to be able to forecast tornadoes with greater **accuracy**. Today, the average warning time for a tornado is 13 minutes. VORTEX2 would like to see this warning time increase. Longer warning times would make it easier for people to get to safety, where they can wait for the storm to pass. "Ultimately we'd like to get to the point where we can put sufficient data into our models so we know when a tornado will happen," said Stephan P. Nelson of the National Science Foundation (NSF). "Then you can get **first responders** to be better prepared — police, fire, medical personnel, even power companies. Now, that's not even remotely possible."



The Fujita Scale shows the strength of a tornado. A storm is ranked based on its wind speed and the damage it caused. Look at the Fujita Scale. What is likely to happen during a tornado that measures F-3 on this scale?

collide > crash

assembled > gathered in a group

potpourri > collection of mixed objects

accuracy > exactness

first responders > emergency workers

Review Questions



1. Where is "Tornado Alley"? Why do most tornadoes form in this area?



2. What equipment are VORTEX2 scientists using, and what do they hope to accomplish?



3. Would you want to be a storm chaser? Explain your answer.



Imagine that you are a VORTEX2 storm chaser. After a long day with the team, you sit down to write a diary entry. Describe your day. Where did you go? What did you see? What did you feel? What did you learn?



America celebrates Asian-Americans.

proclamation > official announcement

contributions > things that are given to others

diverse > having many varieties

plantations > large farms, often in tropical areas



Many words we use every day originated in Asian-Pacific languages. For example: *ketchup* is a word from Malaysia; *futon*, *karate*, and *tsunami* are Japanese; *typhoon* and *wok* are Chinese; and *pajamas* is a Hindi word from India.

Asian-Pacific Heritage



Getty Images

President Obama greets people after speaking at an Asian-Pacific Heritage Month celebration on May 24, 2010 in the East Room of the White House.

by Shirley Granahan

Every May since 1992, people across America celebrate Asian-Pacific American Heritage Month. Schools, museums, and other places plan special events. The president issues a **proclamation**. This year, President Obama said: "For centuries, America's story has been tied to the Pacific. Generations of brave men and women have crossed this vast ocean, seeking better lives and opportunities. ... We celebrate the ... **contributions** these **diverse** peoples have made to our Nation."

Who Are Asian-Pacific Americans?

Asian-Pacific Americans include Asians and Pacific Islanders living in the United States. Asia is the world's largest continent, with more people

living there than anywhere else. Some Asian countries are India, China, Japan, Vietnam, Cambodia, South Korea, and the Philippines. People who came to America from Asia, or whose families did, are called Asian-Americans.

The Pacific is the largest ocean in the world. It contains thousands of islands. Some of them are New Guinea, Fiji, Guam, New Zealand, the Philippines, and Hawaii. People from the Pacific Islands are called Pacific Islanders.

"I am a proud American," says Hawaii Senator Daniel Inouye (say: ee-NO-way). "My grandparents came from Japan and worked in the **plantations** of Hawaii." Inouye is one of two Asian-Americans in the U.S. Senate.

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A few other well-known Asian-Pacific Americans include:

- Piyush "Bobby" Jindal, governor of Louisiana
- Amy Tan, award-winning author
- Jerry Yang, businessman and co-founder of Yahoo!

Why Celebrate in May?

Asian-Pacific Heritage Month marks two important dates in U.S. history. On May 7, 1843, the first Japanese immigrants arrived on American shores. And on May 10, 1869, the **transcontinental** railroad was completed. More than half of the workers who built the railroad were Chinese immigrants.

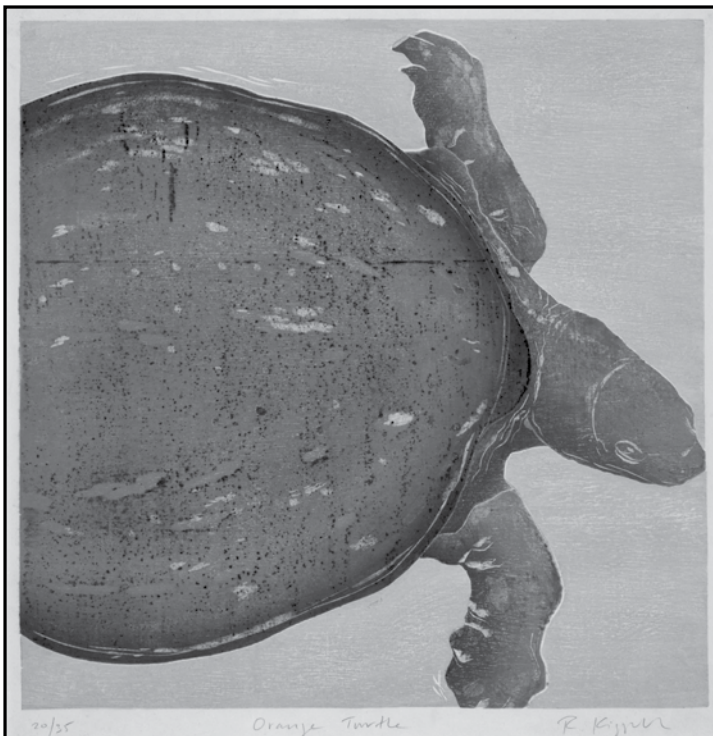
In 1862, two train companies, the Central Pacific and the Union Pacific, set out

to build the transcontinental railroad. Thousands of Central Pacific railway workers laid train tracks east from California. Union Pacific railway workers laid tracks west from Nebraska. Workers connected the two sets of tracks at Promontory Point, Utah. Thanks to these Chinese immigrants, people could now travel by train from the Atlantic to the Pacific Coasts.

Asian Influences in America

Asian-Pacific countries gave us silk, sushi, curry, and Chinese noodles. They introduced us to woodblock printing and the paper-folding art of origami. The Japanese taught us to shape bonsai trees and create peaceful sand gardens.

Look around you. What do you see that had its **origin** in Asia or the Pacific Islands? ▲



Ralph Kiggell

"Orange Turtle" by artist Ralph Kiggell is a modern Japanese print, created with woodblock. The woodblock process began in Asia.

transcontinental >
across a continent

origin > beginning

Take It Home



Talk to a family member about what it means for the United States to be "a nation of immigrants." How does immigration make the United States unique compared to other countries?

Review Questions



1. When was Asian-Pacific Heritage Month first celebrated?



2. Why do you think people from so many different countries come to the United States?



3. Which Asian country would you most like to visit? Why?



What side of a bird has the most feathers?

Answer: The outside!

— R. Goldberger, Grade 5

What does a moose get when it lifts weights?

Answer: Moosels!

— A. Mandelbaum, Grade 4

Why did the kids eat their homework?

It was a piece of cake!

Answer: The teacher said

— R. Rutstein, Grade 4

Make us laugh! Send your jokes to:

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The word **vacation** comes from the Latin word **vacare**. **Vacare** means "to be free from duty," or "at leisure." Enjoy your vacation!



Reuters



Veterinarians in Louisiana bathe a brown pelican. The bird's feathers were covered in oil. Much wildlife has been affected by the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. The spill began on April 20, 2010, and has yet to be contained.

The Current Word Search

W	H	F	A	V	E	A	G	R	E	A	T	T	M	R
T	A	L	I	F	E	G	U	A	H	D	A	R	E	N
O	S	T	U	R	E	M	R	M	H	E	O	M	O	E
W	W	P	E	N	E	E	D	C	W	T	M	I	N	T
E	I	A	A	R	M	W	A	S	S	U	T	F	O	V
L	W	S	V	M	M	E	O	R	S	A	O	H	A	C
N	I	E	I	E	B	E	E	R	C	M	E	P	I	N
C	F	W	M	H	S	D	L	A	K	D	E	N	Z	P
F	S	W	L	L	N	Y	V	O	A	S	C	A	J	N
T	Z	F	Z	U	R	L	O	N	N	I	B	P	A	Q
M	G	G	H	Y	Y	V	O	W	P	G	U	E	H	T
D	L	T	S	M	C	M	V	A	U	Y	C	Y	V	Z
U	N	T	Y	H	E	W	Q	X	K	O	X	Q	G	O
F	N	V	N	L	I	I	C	A	I	B	F	D	E	R
A	J	Z	P	D	R	E	U	N	A	Y	N	Q	B	Z

ants	sand
beach	summer
fan	sweat
fireworks	swimmer
hot	thunderstorm
lemonade	towel
lifeguard	vacation
ocean	watermelon
picnic	waves

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