

Will the world end on Friday?

19th December, 2012



Many people have been preparing for months for the end of the world. There have been stories on the Internet for the past decade that the world will end on December 21. This is the day of the "Mayan Apocalypse," when a Mayan calendar predicts

the end of us all. However, many other people do not believe the world will end in a day or two. The Chinese government has recently arrested 93 people for spreading doomsday rumours on the Internet. Meanwhile, in Russia, Chechnya leader Ramzan Kadyrov sensibly advised people not to buy Armageddon candles. He wrote on his website: "Does no one realise that once the end of the world comes, candles won't help them?"

So what might happen on Friday? The Internet is full of stories about giant tsunamis and asteroids that will finish us. More common stories are that the black hole at the centre of the galaxy will swallow the Earth, or that a planet called "Nibiru" will hit us. NASA says Nibiru was meant to destroy us in May 2003, but when nothing happened, "the doomsday date was moved forward to December 2012". NASA adds: "If Nibiru was real...astronomers would have been tracking it for at least the past decade, and it would be visible by now to the naked eye." English teachers worldwide have told their students they cannot use the apocalypse as an excuse not to do homework.

Sources: *The Guardian* / *NASA* / *Wikipedia*

Writing

If the world was going to end in a few days, many things would still continue normally and many people would not panic. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

preparing / the past decade / the Mayan Apocalypse / calendar / doomsday / candles / Friday / tsunamis / asteroids / NASA / astronomers / English teachers / homework

True / False

- People have been getting ready for the end of the world. T / F
- This latest apocalypse prediction is based on a Mayan calendar. T / F
- China's government has 93 online writers on the apocalypse. T / F
- A Russian leader advised people that candles would not be so useful. T / F
- There are very few online stories of tsunamis or asteroids hitting us. T / F
- A common story is the Earth will swallow a black hole in the galaxy. T / F
- One apocalypse story about the world ending in 2003 did not happen. T / F
- Teachers told students to not do homework in case the world ends. T / F

Synonym Match

- | | |
|--------------|------------------|
| 1. preparing | a. kill |
| 2. decade | b. popular |
| 3. predicts | c. 10 years |
| 4. spreading | d. reason |
| 5. realise | e. passing on |
| 6. common | f. getting ready |
| 7. swallow | g. in sight |
| 8. destroy | h. forecasts |
| 9. visible | i. eat |
| 10. excuse | j. understand |

Discussion – Student A

- What do you know about black holes?
- What do you think of the story that the planet Nibiru will hit us?
- What other dates about the end of the world do you know about?
- How might the world end?
- Are you interested in astronomy?
- Is the apocalypse story a good excuse to not do homework?
- What's your best excuse to not do homework?
- What questions would you like to ask an "end of the world" expert?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|--|-----------------------------|
| 1. people have been preparing | a. tsunamis and asteroids |
| 2. end in a day | b. forward |
| 3. The Chinese government has recently | c. candles won't help |
| 4. spreading | d. to do homework |
| 5. once the end of the world comes, | e. for months for the end |
| 6. stories about giant | f. doomsday rumours |
| 7. the black hole at | g. to the naked eye |
| 8. the doomsday date was moved | h. or two |
| 9. it would be visible by now | i. the centre of the galaxy |
| 10. an excuse not | j. arrested 93 people |

Discussion – Student B

- What springs to mind when you hear the word 'apocalypse'?
- What do you think of "end of the world" stories?
- Do you like "end of the world" movies?
- What do you think of Nostradamus and other such prophecies?
- What did you hear about the world ending on Friday?
- What would you do if the world was going to end next week?
- Why do you think people believe these stories?
- How useful would candles be if the world was going to end?

Spelling

- people have been iajprprnre for months
- a Mayan enadlarc
- doomsday ormuurs (UK) / mrurso (USA)
- Kadyrov sensibly evdaisd people
- Does no one irlazee (USA) / selirae (UK)
- lcendsa won't help them
- giant tsunamis and sdsorait
- at the rtenec (UK) / ectner (USA) of
- awslwol the Earth
- the doomsday date was moved frdoawr
- it would be sbeiliv
- an euexcs not to do homework

Answers – Synonym Match

1. f	2. c	3. h	4. e	5. j
6. b	7. i	8. a	9. g	10. d

Role Play

Student A - You did not do Friday's homework because you believed stories of the apocalypse your teacher told you. Now you are in trouble. It's not fair. Tell the others three reasons why. You are angry with your teacher for telling you about the apocalypse. You hate Student B - he/she thinks he/she is perfect.

Teacher - Student A did not do his homework... for the tenth time this month. He/She always uses any excuse he/she can think of. You mentioned the apocalypse in your class. The student was asleep (again) when you said the apocalypse would not happen. You want the student punished.

Student A's Parent - Your child is a perfect student. Tell the others three reasons why. If he/she is in trouble at school, it's the teacher's fault. The teacher gives too much homework. You think it is wrong for teachers to teach things like the apocalypse in class. Tell the others three reasons why.

Student B - You think your teacher is the best ever. His/Her classes are always fun and everyone learns a lot - except Student A. Tell the others three reasons why. Your teacher clearly explained the apocalypse could never happen. Student A was asleep - again. He's/She's a very bad student.

Speaking – Asteroid Attack

An asteroid will damage the Earth next week. What are the best things to buy to prepare? Put the best at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- | | |
|--------------------|----------------------------|
| • bottles of water | • pre-paid telephone cards |
| • a shovel | • a battery-powered radio |
| • a torch | • a kerosene heater |
| • an iPad | • chocolate biscuits |

Answers – True False

a	T	b	T	c	F	d	T	e	F	f	F	g	T	h	F
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.