

Name ..... Class ..... Date .....

### Polar winters in the USA

Every winter we hear that temperatures in some US states go below zero. There is nothing really special about that. What is exceptional is that on 6<sup>th</sup> January 2014, the temperature dropped below freezing in all 50 US states, with cutting winds and blizzards making it dangerous to be outside.

Florida, a state that has a reputation as a warm winter escape, experienced unusually low temperatures. At some point on that Tuesday, at least one location in each of the 50 US states recorded temperatures below freezing, with the highest point on Mauna Kea, Hawaii, recording a temperature of  $-6^{\circ}\text{C}$ , which until then was unheard of.

The reason for this was an Arctic low pressure system that brought with it polar conditions with very low temperatures, dangerous winds and snowstorms. In some northern areas of the USA, temperatures reached as low as  $-30^{\circ}\text{C}$ .

The National Weather Service prepares for this extreme weather every year, but on this particular occasion it predicted the risk of frostbite and hypothermia for anyone who was outdoors, even for very short periods of time. Special measures were taken to give a place to sleep for those who were without a home.



### 1 65 Read and listen to the text. Are the sentences *T* (True) or *F* (False)? Correct the false sentences.

- 1 It is uncommon to get low temperatures in winter in the USA.  
*F. It is not unusual to get temperatures below zero in winter in the USA.*
- 2 Every state in the USA had temperatures below zero on 6<sup>th</sup> January.  
*T*
- 3 The low pressure system was responsible for storms and winds.  
*T*
- 4 The National Weather Service predicts this weather every year.  
*F. The National Weather Service prepares for extreme weather every year.*

### 2 Answers the questions.

- 1 What were the most dangerous aspects of the polar weather?  
*The cutting winds and blizzards made it dangerous to be outside.*
- 2 What is Florida famous for?  
*It is famous for being a warm place to go on holiday in winter.*
- 3 Why were special measures taken for the homeless?  
*Special measures were taken so that they wouldn't have to sleep outside as there was a risk of frostbite and hypothermia.*

### 3 Work with a partner. Answer the questions.

Do you get extreme weather in your country? What are normal winter conditions where you live? Explain how weather can change your normal life.

**Students' own answers**