

'End of the world' floods sweep Spain

[theday.co.uk/end-of-the-world-floods-sweep-spain-4](https://www.theday.co.uk/end-of-the-world-floods-sweep-spain-4) 1 November 2024



Desperate: A major rescue effort is underway to find the large numbers of people still missing in flood-hit eastern Spain, and forecasters are warning that more torrential rain is on the way for some of the worst-hit areas.

Is this a warning to us all? A year's worth of rain fell in a matter of hours in eastern and southern Spain, causing some of the deadliest flooding in decades. Almost 160 people have been reported dead so far.

What's happening?

Flash flooding in southern and eastern Spain has caused **apocalyptic** scenes of chaos and destruction. Survivors clung to roofs, balconies and bridges after the region saw its heaviest rainfall in 28 years, causing rivers to burst their banks and flood entire towns.

With more than 150 people dead from the floods as we went to press, experts say that they expect the number of deaths to rise as dozens remain missing.

These are Spain's worst floods in at least three decades. Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez said: "The whole of Spain weeps with you... we won't abandon you."

Find out more

But authorities are also under scrutiny, as people say that disaster relief officials were too slow to act on warnings of destructive weather, so they were unable to take the necessary steps to protect themselves.

Scientists warn that although climate change is not the only factor causing extreme weather events, it makes them more frequent and more intense.

Throughout history, floods have been a symbol of choice for the end of humanity as we know it. In the *Book of Genesis*, God sees the **depravity** and violence of the Earth and decides to destroy his creations with a great flood.

Is this a warning to us all?

Some say

Yes! Huge floods such as these are the environment's way of warning us that we are destroying the planet without a second thought for the impact this is having on people's lives.

Others think

No! This is a huge tragedy, but the reality is that extreme weather events will happen regardless of climate change.

Six steps to discovery

Some people say

"No individual rain drop ever considers itself responsible for the flood."

John Ruskin (1819 – 1900), English writer, art historian and art critic

What do you think?

1. Connect

How do you feel about this story? - What other extreme weather events can you think of in recent years? Have you experienced any extreme weather?

2. Wonder

What questions do you have? - For example: How can increased temperatures increase the likelihood of flooding? What specific weather event caused these floods?

3. Investigate

What are the facts? - When extreme weather events happen, scientists have to study them extensively to work out whether they are the result of the climate crisis. Look at data for extreme weather events over the past 30 years. Are there more or fewer?

4. Construct

What is your point of view? - Imagine that you are holding an emergency meeting of climate specialists from around the world to discuss how to tackle extreme weather events. Make a list of recommendations.

5. Express

What do others believe? - In small groups, pretend that you are analysts investigating the Spanish authorities' response to the recent flash floods. Use your findings to write a report advising other countries prone to extreme weather events on the appropriate response. Share your report with the rest of the class.

6. Reflect

What might happen next? - It is 2040, and half of the Earth is underwater. There are billions of climate refugees and all of the world's remaining governments are in crisis. Write a short story or play about what it feels like to live in this new world.

Glossary

Apocalyptic - Referring to the end of the world, or the collapse of civilisation.

Depravity - Moral corruption.