

# The village swallowed by a glacier

[theday.co.uk/the-village-swallowed-by-a-glacier-4](https://theday.co.uk/the-village-swallowed-by-a-glacier-4) 3 June 2025



**How Blatten was flattened:** The village is now almost completely covered by dirt, ice and rock that is dozens of metres thick and two kilometres long.

**Is Mother Nature cruel? A Swiss town has been wiped out by an avalanche in just 40 seconds.**

## What's happening?

In May, 300 people lived in the quiet village of Blatten in Switzerland. Now their lives have been changed forever.

Scientists noticed that a **glacier** above the village had become unstable. They told residents to leave.

Days later, the glacier came crashing down from the mountain. The town's homes, church and hotel were all reduced to rubble.

## Find out more

The villagers have not given up hope of rebuilding. But **experts** warn that the worst could be yet to come. Scientists say that the risk of **avalanches** has become greater as glaciers melt due to **global warming**.

For some, the disaster highlights the natural cruelty of Mother Nature. Humans have always faced threats posed by disease, **predators**, poisonous

plants, natural disasters and more. To quote British adventurer Bear Grylls, nature is "**brutal**, tough and unforgiving."

But others see nature as a miracle that provides us with everything we need. Many threats that we call "natural" are actually human-made: floods, forest fires, mudslides, **droughts** and heatwaves have all become more likely as a result of global warming.

## Is Mother Nature cruel?

### Some say

Yes! From droughts to volcanic eruptions, history is full of examples of disasters that have caused great suffering. Life on Earth is a question of survival.

### Others think

No! Of all the trillions of planets in the **universe**, Earth is the only one we know of that supports life. Nature is a miracle, and we need to protect it.

## Six steps to discovery

### Some people say

"Nature is not cruel, only pitilessly indifferent."

#### 1. Connect

**How do you feel about this story?** - What would it feel like to lose the places you grew up in?

**Richard Dawkins (1941 – ), British evolutionary biologist**

*What do you think?*

**2. Wonder**

**What questions do you have?** - For example:  
Had other avalanches happened in the area before?  
What will the community do now?

**3. Investigate**

**What are the facts?** - How common are avalanches? What is the most destructive avalanche in history, and how much damage did it cause?

**4. Construct**

**What is your point of view?** - You are the mayor of a town in a mountainous area. What do you do to prepare for the risk of avalanches? What do you advise local residents?

**5. Express**

**What do others believe?** - Should people live in areas at risk due to climate change? Discuss as a class.

**6. Reflect**

**What might happen next?** - Imagine that you are told by a government official that your local community is in danger and that you need to leave immediately. Write a story about what you would do next. What would you take with you? And where would you go?

**Glossary**

**Glacier** - A mass of very slowly moving snow and ice. Experts believe that at their fullest extent, during the Ice Age, glaciers covered 30% of the Earth's surface.

**Experts** - Someone who knows a lot about a particular subject.

**Avalanches** - When snow, ice or rocks falls rapidly down a mountainside.

**Global warming** - The Earth is getting hotter due to climate change.

**Predators** - Animals that prey on and eat other animals.

**Brutal** - Cruel, violent, and completely without feelings.

**Droughts** - A time when there is not enough water and the ground is very dry.

**Universe** - Everything. Including all of time and space and its contents.