

Teacher Notes: The Winds of Change Compass

Pupils can work through this individually or in groups

They need to read through and as they go, use the compass to make notes on winds from different directions, using the two colours

The idea is to show the **complex** and **unpredictable** nature of change to the climate, so use this idea to help pupils to work through the sometimes contradictory stories.

Retain the focus on the fact that whether uncertain or contradictory, the weather has changed, causing **instability**, and this makes people more vulnerable. How it makes them more vulnerable will be explored in the next section.

You could get pupils to compare their compasses when they have finished, and/or draw together with a class discussion of what they have identified

The Changing Climate: Human Stories



Task: The Winds of Change Compass

Read the stories from different people about how the wind and rain is changing. When you are reading, complete the **winds of change climate compass** to show the impact on people of rain and wind when it comes from different directions in the compass.

You will need two colours

Use **one colour** for wind and rain, which is **desirable**, or is what they expect

Use **another colour** for wind and rain, which is **not desirable**, and unexpected

What do you see? How could you *summarise* how things are changing? Are they more or less predictable? Are they for the better or worse?

The Human Stories



Max Munyariwa stands amongst the remains of his house, destroyed during a storm in March 2009 in Bvumwe, Thyolo District, Southern Malawi,. The rainy season in is becoming unpredictable and more intense, destroying homes and causing severe problems for farmers.

“My house was destroyed last month (early march (2009). It’s the first time it’s happen in three years. There was a very strong wind that night and fog. My house had a grass roof so it was just blown off and the house fell down.

"Wind and rain here is not a new thing. The wind starts coming from November to January. The strongest wind usually blows from southeast to northwest and normally it comes during the rainy season. But the wind now blows in different directs. It’s changing. I’ve noticed that the wind and rain here is getting more severe. It’s causing us problems in two ways: it destroys our houses and our crops. When the maize has reached maturity, if it is waterlogged it falls over and rots.

“It’s impossible to overcome this wind. When it comes it blows in all different directions. It used to be the Southeast to Northeast wind that caused all the problems but we knew when it was coming – it was the same every year - and we knew how to prepare. This was the worst storm we have had for three years. I have nothing left.”



Enless Nakhuba, 65, Thomasi village, Thvolo

Asked what changes to the climate she has seen her lifetime, Enless Nakhuba, 65, from Thomasi village in Thyolo, immediately says:

“The air circulation is different from in the past. It has affected our crop production and even the houses where we live. Heavy winds blow away our houses. These heavy winds come from different directions at the same time”.

Her neighbour Peter Chapasi, aged 76, agrees. He says:

“If the pressure of air comes from the south or the north we experience good rains but if from the east or west they are bad. In the past we got very good winds from the north and by 10 October people were doing the planting and we got high yields. But at this time we don’t have winds from the right direction, they come from all directions now, resulting in bad yields. We expect rains and they don’t come, or we get heavy rains which only destroy and don’t help our crop production”.

The “deadliest” wind, the villagers here agree, is the east wind.



Peter Chapasi, 76, Thomasi village, Thvolo

Wilson Chaphale, 86, from Bruce village in Balaka, says:

“The rains for this area used to come from the south or the north and that meant better harvests, but when the rains come from the west those rains are not so good. I have noticed that the rains no longer have a particular pattern. Sometimes they come early when people have not prepared, sometimes they end too soon and maize wilts, sometimes we experience very, very heavy rains that last for up to four days, which washes away all the nutrients”.

In northern Malawi people have noticed similar changes.

In Mzimba district Peter Shonga, 59, says:

“Previously the rain used to come from here [pointing at the north] or here [pointing at the south] and we would know that such rain was good for our crops. These days it comes from all directions, often heavy and destructive and goes away before the crops are ready.”



Peter Shonga, 59, from the Mzimba district

In Ntchenachena, Rumphi, Estere Mhango says:

“Originally the first rains would come from the west and when that happens we would know that we would harvest enough. Such rain would occasionally stop for a few days and continue evenly throughout. When the rains came from the east, they would be heavy and tend to destroy a lot of property. These days this pattern is no longer predictable and rains come from all the directions.”

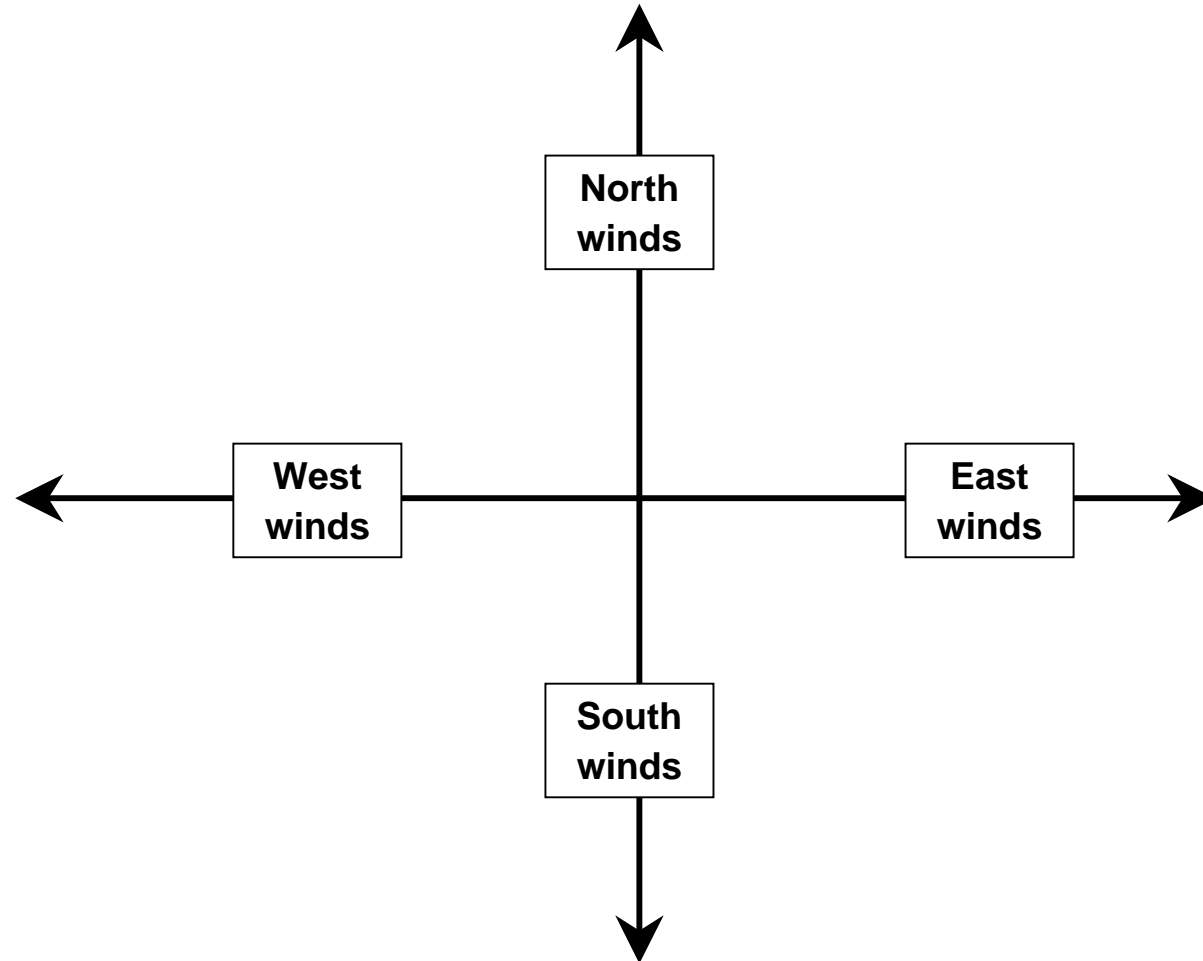
Gray Munthali, Deputy Director of the Malawi Meteorological Service, says strong winds are indeed causing increasing damage to property, and he observes that whereas previous incidences of winds blowing roofs off normally occurred at the beginning of the rainy season, “of late winds blow off roofs even in the middle of the season”. However he thinks the more devastating impacts witnessed to the fact that the number of trees has decreased, because trees act as windbreaks.

It is difficult to use the experiences of different people to generalise, and the climate in Malawi has always been erratic and there are few long term weather monitoring stations. However if what people on the ground saying is the case, it shows the weather is already changing in the way scientific models predict, giving more erratic and intense wind and rainfall.

Winds of Change Compass

As you read the stories, make notes in the different directions using your colours

Then complete the summary box as to what it tells you...



Summary of changes