

36 years ago, the worst nuclear **disaster** in history happened at the **power plant** at Chernobyl in the **former Soviet Union**. A **failed** safety test **caused** the nuclear reactor in Block 4 to become **unstable**. As a result, a **chain reaction** caused the **core** to explode. Fire spread out over the **entire compound**. Two people were killed in the explosion, over 30 workers **officially** died of **radiation sickness**. It is not known how many people died in the months and years that followed.

The Soviet **authorities** hid the truth about the explosion and did not warn other countries. A nuclear cloud **spread** across Europe for more than a week. Almost half a million people had to leave their homes.

The accident led to a worldwide debate on the safety of **nuclear energy**. It may have also been one of the **causes** of the **collapse** of the Soviet Union a few years later.

After the clean-up, the remaining reactors at Chernobyl continued to produce electricity for some years before the whole power station was **shut down** by Ukrainian **authorities** in 2000. A **sarcophagus** was built around Block 4 to **prevent radioactivity** from escaping. In 2017 a new steel structure was built to **ensure** more safety. The whole site is expected to be completely **decommissioned** by 2065.

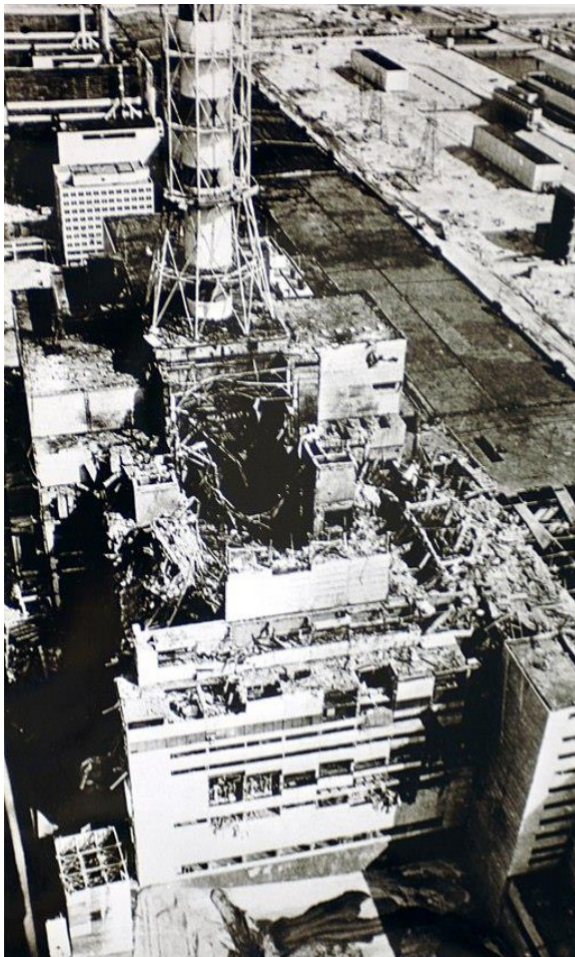
Today, the area is still **affected** by radiation. Even though there is a 30 km **exclusion zone** a special kind of tourism has **emerged**. People from all over the world are coming to see the **remains** of the catastrophe and observe the **wildlife** in the region. The Ukrainian **government** is planning to use the area as a site for **nuclear waste**.

## Words

- **affected** = here: there is still dangerous radiation
- **authorities** = the people who are in control of a certain part of a region
- **caused** = led to
- **causes** = reasons
- **chain reaction** = event that produces more and more energy in an uncontrolled way
- **collapse** = breakdown, if something does not exist anymore
- **compound** = a set of buildings
- **core** = the central part of a nuclear reactor
- **decommission** = to stop using the power plant and tear it down
- **disaster** = a sudden event that causes a lot of damage and kills people
- **emerge** = come up, appear
- **entire** = whole
- **exclusion zone** = area that people are not allowed to enter because it is dangerous
- **failed** = something that did not work
- **former** = earlier, once
- **government** = the people who rule a country
- **nuclear energy** = the energy you create when you split atoms
- **nuclear waste** = leftover material from nuclear reactors
- **officially** = as said by the government
- **power plant** = one or more buildings that produce electricity
- **prevent** = stop
- **radiation sickness** = illness that is caused when your body gets too much radiation
- **radioactivity** = the sending out of radiation when an atom is split
- **remains** = what is left
- **sarcophagus** = here: a structure that is put over the reactor so that dangerous radiation cannot escape
- **shut down** = to close something
- **Soviet Union** = the largest communist country that existed between 1917 and 1991
- **spread** = travel, move across
- **unstable** = something that may suddenly change and become worse
- **wildlife** = the animals that live naturally there

**Answer the following questions.**

1. What caused the Chernobyl disaster? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. How many people were killed in the explosion? \_\_\_\_\_
3. How did Soviet authorities deal with the disaster? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. What did the disaster lead to? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. When was the Chernobyl power station shut down? \_\_\_\_\_
6. What function does a sarcophagus have? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. What replaced the sarcophagus in 2017? \_\_\_\_\_
8. Why are tourists coming to Chernobyl? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. How is the Ukrainian government planning to use the disaster area? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Reactor 4 months after the disaster**

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Complete the text by filling in the correct words from the box below.

35 years ago, the worst nuclear (1) \_\_\_\_\_ in history happened at the power plant at Chernobyl in the former Soviet Union. A failed (2) \_\_\_\_\_ test caused the nuclear reactor in Block 4 to become unstable. As a result, a chain reaction (3) \_\_\_\_\_ the core to explode. Fire spread out over the (4) \_\_\_\_\_ compound. Two people were killed in the explosion, over 30 workers officially died of radiation (5) \_\_\_\_\_. It is not known how many people died in the months and years that followed.

The Soviet authorities hid the (6) \_\_\_\_\_ about the explosion and did not warn other countries. A nuclear cloud spread across Europe for more than a week. Almost half a million people had to leave their homes.

The accident led to a worldwide (7) \_\_\_\_\_ on the safety of nuclear energy. It may have also been one of the causes of the (8) \_\_\_\_\_ of the Soviet Union a few years later.

After the clean-up the remaining reactors at Chernobyl (9) \_\_\_\_\_ to produce electricity for some years before the whole power station was shut down by Ukrainian (10) \_\_\_\_\_ in 2000. A sarcophagus was built around Block 4 to (11) \_\_\_\_\_ radioactivity from escaping. In 2017 a new steel structure was built to (12) \_\_\_\_\_ more safety. The whole site is expected to be completely decommissioned by 2065.

Today, the area is still affected by radiation. Even though there is a 30 km exclusion zone a special kind of tourism has (13) \_\_\_\_\_. People from all over the world are coming to see the remains of the catastrophe and observe the wildlife in the region. The Ukrainian government is planning to use the area as a site for nuclear (14) \_\_\_\_\_.

1	misfortune	ruin	disaster	event
2	danger	guard	protection	safety
3	caused	made	led	affected
4	entire	complete	total	all
5	condition	infection	sickness	virus
6	fact	truth	honesty	event
7	examination	agreement	argument	debate
8	failure	ruin	collapse	resign
9	continued	lasted	restarted	stayed
10	agencies	organisations	specialists	authorities
11	avoid	defend	prevent	guard
12	assure	ensure	sure	surely
13	emerged	occurred	happened	come
14	waste	dump	leftovers	garbage