

## 2.8 What is happening to the rain in Spain?

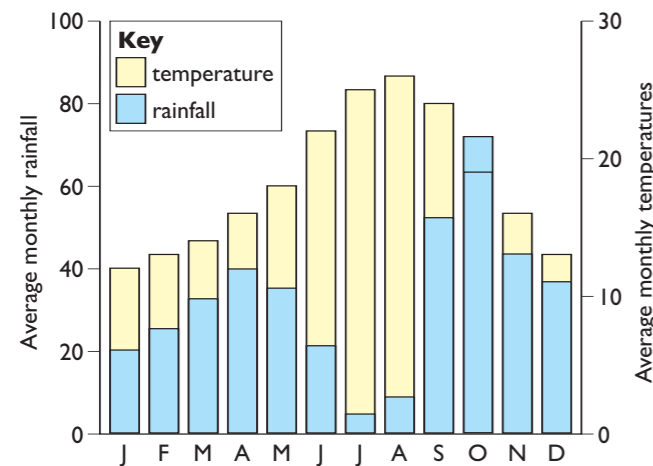
*In this case study you will find out why droughts are happening more frequently in Spain, and suggest how people can adapt to the problem.*

Every year, more of us go to Spain for our holidays than anywhere else in the world. The main reason we go is for the sunny weather. Millions of British holidaymakers head for beaches along the Mediterranean coast, which, in summer, is the sunniest part of Spain (photo A).

There is a problem. All these tourists use a lot of water and, in Spain's dry climate, there isn't much to go around. What makes it worse is that Spain's climate seems to be getting hotter and drier. 2005 was the driest year in Spain since records began. There is even a suggestion that parts of Spain could turn into a desert!



**A** Alicante, a Mediterranean resort



**B** Climate in Alicante

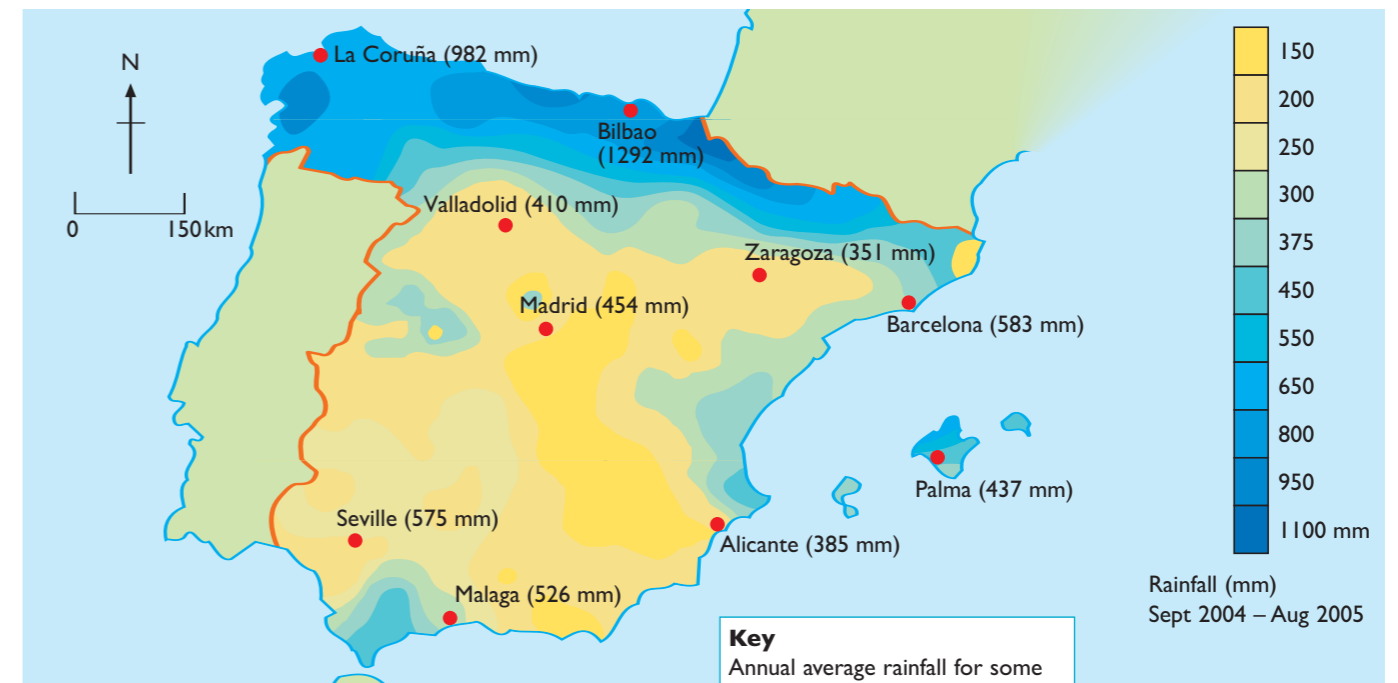
### Activities

1 Look at graph B.

- a) Write two sentences to describe the climate in Alicante. Write one sentence to describe the summer and one to describe the winter. Use these words in your sentences.

hot wet dry mild

- b) When do most holidaymakers go to the Mediterranean? Why?



**C** Spain's driest year September 2004 – August 2005

A **drought** is a prolonged shortage of water. What people mean by drought depends on where they live. In Britain we talk about a drought when we get a hosepipe ban after a few weeks of low rainfall! In parts of Africa a drought can last for years and cause widespread famine.

As the world gets warmer, patterns of rainfall are changing. Floods and droughts are happening more frequently.

2 Look at map C.

- a) What is the annual average rainfall for Alicante? Roughly, how much rain fell there in the year 2004–5?
- b) Now, look at the other cities on the map. For each city, give the annual average rainfall and say whether it was wetter or drier than normal in 2004–5.
- c) Which parts of Spain were worst affected by the drought in 2004–5?

3 Read article D.

- a) List all the effects of the drought in Spain.
- b) If you were the government minister responsible for water in Spain, what would you do to save water?

13 June 2005

### DROUGHT IN SPAIN

Spain is suffering one of the worst droughts on record. After an unusually dry winter and spring, temperatures have begun to soar into the 30s as summer arrives. Across the country reservoirs are half empty, water is being rationed, farm crops and livestock are dying for lack of water and there is a growing risk of forest fires.

Perhaps the biggest threat is to the tourist industry. Spain attracts more than 50 million foreign visitors every year. Most of them arrive between June and September.

Eastern Spain is worst affected by the drought. Especially hard-hit are the tourist centres around the Costa Brava (near Barcelona) and the Costa Blanca (near Alicante). Swimming pools remain empty, golf clubs have been told not to use sprinklers and fountains are dry. Tourism is Spain's biggest money earner. The worry is that tourists will be put off by reports of water shortages.

**D** News report of Spanish drought in 2005