

NEWS LESSON

Greenland Opens Its Doors

BEFORE YOU READ

1 Warm up

Talk about these questions with a partner.

1. What do you know about Greenland?
2. Would you like to visit a very cold place? Why or why not?
3. What can a country do to get more tourists?

2 Key words

These words are in the article. Write the letter of the meaning (A to H) in each box.

1	**iceberg**	☐	A	needed something to live or work well
2	**passengers**	☐	B	the land, water and air around us
3	**depended**	☐	C	something difficult that you must deal with
4	**economy**	☐	D	a person who studies something to find new facts
5	**environment**	☐	E	a worried feeling between people who disagree
6	**researcher**	☐	F	all the money, work and trade of a country
7	**tension**	☐	G	a very big piece of ice floating in the sea
8	**challenge**	☐	H	people who travel in a plane or boat but do not drive it

3 Read

Read the article and underline the key words from task 2. The paragraphs are numbered.

Greenland has built three new airports and more people are visiting. Not everyone who lives there thinks this is simple good news.

1 Greenland is the biggest island in the world, and one of the quietest places. Only about 56,000 people live there, and almost 80% of the land is covered in ice. There are no roads between the towns, so people travel by boat or plane. It has always been a remote place, and for many visitors getting there was too much trouble.

2 That is changing. Greenland has opened three new airports: in the capital, Nuuk, in 2024, in Qaqortoq in April 2026, and in Ilulissat. On 29 October 2026 the first direct flight from Copenhagen landed in Ilulissat, a town of about 5,000 people which is famous for its huge icebergs. The flight took four and a half hours, and the prime minister was one of the passengers. Visitors can also fly there directly from Iceland.

3 Why does Greenland want more visitors? Tourism brings in money and jobs. The Guardian reports that nearly 180,000 visitors came in 2025, more than three times the number of people who live there. The country has long depended on fishing, and it does not want all its eggs in one basket. Its leaders also hope to become independent from Denmark one day, and they say that needs a strong economy.

4 Still, tourism is small. In 2024 it made up 4.9% of the economy, and about 1,800 people worked in it. Those figures come from Greenland's first official tourism accounts, published by Visit Greenland, the organisation that promotes tourism there.

5 Not everyone is happy. In parts of Spain, Italy and Portugal, local people have protested about too many tourists, and some people in Greenland worry about the same thing. A former regional mayor asked how many visitors Ilulissat can take in before its environment, its people and its services are overwhelmed. A researcher says some American travellers were put off by political tension over the island, and the land itself is fragile.

6 So tourism is a mixed blessing. It can create work and income, but it can also change a quiet community. Greenland's challenge is to make sure local people feel the benefit, and that a place far off the beaten track stays special.

Sources: The Guardian, Ibiza on ice: why is Greenland suddenly throwing open its doors to tourists?; The Associated Press (via KSAT), Greenland opens new international airport to lure tourists as it eyes future independence. Picture: AI illustration.

4 True, false or not given

Circle **T** (true), **F** (false) or **NG** (the article does not say).

1. Greenland has no roads between its towns. T F NG
2. Ilulissat is the capital of Greenland. T F NG
3. Tourism made up 4.9% of Greenland's economy in 2024. T F NG
4. The text says how much a flight to Ilulissat costs. T F NG
5. Nobody in Greenland worries about too many tourists. T F NG

5 Vocabulary

Complete the sentences with words from the box. Two words are not needed.

arranged	covered	income	official	promotes	protested	welcomed

1. Hundreds of residents _____ outside the town hall against the plan.
2. Many families in the village depend on fishing for their _____ .
3. The council has an office that _____ the town to tourists.
4. In winter, the whole hill is _____ in snow.
5. The government has published the _____ number of visitors for last year.

6 Verb forms

Write the correct form of the verb in brackets.

1. Only about 56,000 people _____ there. (LIVE)
2. Greenland _____ three new airports so far. (OPEN)
3. The first direct flight from Copenhagen _____ in Ilulissat on 29 October 2026. (LAND)
4. Nearly 180,000 visitors _____ to Greenland in 2025. (COME)
5. The flight _____ four and a half hours. (TAKE)

7 Language focus: linking words

Complete the sentences with words from the box. Two words are not needed. Linking words join ideas. Use so for a result, because for a reason, but and however for a difference, and or for a choice.

because	but	however	or	so	unless	until

1. There are no roads between the towns, _____ people travel by boat or plane.
2. Leaders want more visitors _____ tourism brings money and jobs.
3. Fishing is important in Greenland. _____ , the country wants other kinds of work too.
4. Greenland is a huge island, _____ only about 56,000 people live there.
5. Visitors can fly to Ilulissat from Copenhagen _____ from Iceland.

SPEAK

8 Talk about it

Discuss in pairs or small groups. Give reasons for your answers.

1. Why does Greenland want more visitors?
2. Would you like to visit Greenland now that flying there is easier? Why or why not?
3. Is there a place near you that gets too many tourists? What problems does it have?

9 Role-play: a new airport for a quiet town

Work in pairs. Read your card, then have the conversation. Swap roles and do it again.

Student A · a resident

A new airport has opened near your quiet town. You like the jobs, but you worry about crowds and damage to the land. Ask the tourism manager at least two questions and say what you want.

Student B · the tourism manager

You want more visitors because they bring money and work. Explain the benefits. Listen to the resident's worries and suggest a compromise.

Useful phrases

I'm worried that the town won't cope.

That's a fair point, but we need the jobs.

How many visitors can the town take?

What if we set a limit?

I'd be happy if local people got a share.

We're not against tourists, we just want a say.

Afterwards, tell the class: did you reach an agreement, and who gave up more?

ANSWER KEY

2 Key words

1 G · 2 H · 3 A · 4 F · 5 B · 6 D · 7 E · 8 C

4 True, false or not given

1 T · 2 F · 3 T · 4 NG · 5 F

5 Vocabulary

1 protested · 2 income · 3 promotes · 4 covered · 5 official

6 Verb forms

1 live · 2 has opened · 3 landed · 4 came · 5 took

7 Language focus

1 so · 2 because · 3 However · 4 but · 5 or

This lesson is free. If it saved you time, you can support johnplusnews at **ko-fi.com/johnplusenglish**