WXImpactBench: A Disruptive Weather Impact Understanding Benchmark for Evaluating Large Language Models

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Abstract

Climate change adaptation requires the understanding of disruptive weather impacts on society, where large language models (LLMs) might be applicable. However, their effectiveness is under-explored due to the difficulty of high-quality corpus collection and the lack of available benchmarks. The climate-related events stored in regional newspapers record how communities adapted and recovered from disasters. However, the processing of the original corpus is non-trivial. In this study, we first develop a disruptive weather impact dataset with a four-stage well-crafted construction pipeline. Then, we propose WXIMPACTBENCH, the first benchmark for evaluating the capacity of LLMs on disruptive weather impacts. The benchmark involves two evaluation tasks, multi-label classification and ranking-based question answering. Extensive experiments on evaluating a set of LLMs provide first-hand analysis of the challenges in developing disruptive weather impact understanding and climate change adaptation systems. The constructed dataset and the code for the evaluation framework are available in this anonymous link to help society protect against vulnerabilities from disasters.

1 Introduction

Climate change adaptation (Karl and Easterling, 1999), referring to actions that help reduce societal vulnerability to climate change, demands a sophisticated understanding of the disruptive weather impacts on society (e.g., the perspective of economy and policy) (Carleton and Hsiang, 2016). Societal reactions to past disruptive weather events are stored in reliable historical sources (Cerveny et al., 2007). Among them, historical newspapers provide irreplaceable information, recording not just meteorological conditions (Gregory and Williams, 1981; Brunet and Jones, 2011), but crucially, how societies adapted and recovered from disasters (Norris et al., 2008; Handmer et al., 2012). In addition, historical newspapers usually report regional disruptive weather impacts with local experiences, which is valuable to understanding long-term climate patterns and social effects (Ogilvie, 2010) but are often absent in official meteorological records (Batlló et al., 2024).

Climate-Related Terms	
Blizzard	**Flood**
Meteorological Meanings	
By *"severe nowstorm" sense*: "five American cowboys lost their lives in the ***blizzard*** which raged in his section during the first fifteen days of November...."	**By *"overflowing water body" sense*:** "An elderly woman drowned in ***flood*** waters, and 30,000 people in Outback areas remained isolated as heavy rain continued..."
Alternative: Ambiguous or Metaphorical Usage	
As sports team name: "one minute remaining in regulation play to give Montreal a 1-1 draw with the Toronto ***Blizzard*** in the lone Canadian Soccer League game..."	**Metaphorical sense:** "People ***flood*** the venue to watch the Jockey Club race..."

Figure 1: Climate-related polysemy examples in different narratives.

Understanding complex patterns in disruptive weather events is important for society with forecasts, societal responses, and public policy (Pielke Jr and Carbone, 2002). The challenge of identifying impacts and responses often lies in climate-related text processing, which contains period-specific narratives and domain-specific linguistic phenomena. For example, disambiguation and taxonomy polysemy can occur in newspaper articles, where climate-related terms frequently appear in diverse linguistic contexts beyond their meteorological meanings. Figure 1 shows that the term "blizzard" can refer to a severe snowstorm or the name of the sports team (e.g., "Toronto Blizzard"). Similarly, the term "flood" can describe an overflowing body of water or can be used metaphorically (e.g., "flood the venue"). This polysemy occurs commonly in newspapers and thus requires the system to distinguish the literal weather-related meanings and alternate usages (Nazeer et al., 2024).

Another challenge lies in extracting information from the original paper content. Although it is commonly achieved by optical character recognition (OCR) (Thomas et al., 2024), errors remain due to mixed content formats, and complex narrative structures (Nazeer et al., 2024). These errors can negatively affect the extracted text for disruptive weather impact analysis, which renders the texts difficult to serve as a high-quality corpus.

Existing studies on climate-related language processing focus on extracting climate patterns (Alaparthi and Mishra, 2020), wildfire resilience (Xie et al., 2024) and analyzing extreme weather events (Mallick et al., 2024a). Intuitively, LLMs (Törnberg, 2023; Yang et al., 2024) offer a powerful alternative for understanding disruptive weather impacts. However, their effectiveness is unexplored (Boros et al., 2024) due to the lack of a corresponding benchmark. The resources used in previous studies cannot comprehensively evaluate the ability of LLMs for weather impacts. This is because i) compared to informative reports in newspapers, previously used meteorological records do not contain long-term and detailed regional information (Pevtsov et al., 2019); and ii) the previous meteorological records are easily obtained and have been available for a long while. Thus they might be already included in the pre-training of LLMs and should not be included in benchmark build-up to avoid potential bias (Ferrara, 2023). To develop a system that assesses the impact of disruptive weather on society, the first step is to establish a domain benchmark for the evaluation protocol.

In this study, we design a four-stage data construction pipeline that begins with a disruptive weather impact dataset in which we correct OCR errors in digitalized newspaper article extraction. We extract a sample of articles from two time periods, which cover linguistic and social changes across different eras and increase linguistic complexity due to the different descriptions of weather events in different times (Campbell, 2013). Historical newspapers often employed more descriptive and elaborate narratives compared to modern reporting styles (Bingham, 2010). These narratives frequently included outdated terminology, spelling variations, and evolving writing conventions (Campbell, 2013). The articles are selected by topic modeling, including six impact categories (infrastructural, political, financial, ecological, agricultural, and human health), which are informed by previous studies (Imran et al., 2016a) and align with modern disaster impact assessment frameworks (Silva et al., 2022).

With our constructed dataset, we develop a benchmark, WXIMPACTBENCH, to investigate the capacity of LLMs to understand disruptive weather impacts with two tasks: i) multi-label classification and ii) ranking-based question-answering. The multi-label classification task employs the previous six impact categories as labels for each article whose ground-truth is annotated by human labor. The question and the candidate pools for the ranking-based question-answering task are constructed based on the context and annotation of the multi-label classification task. This can facilitate any future development of retrieval-augmented generation (RAG) systems in the climate-related domain (Zhao et al., 2024). Extensive experiments on evaluating a set of off-the-shelf LLMs provide first-hand analysis of their capacity to understand disruptive weather impacts and reveal the challenges in developing climate change adaptation systems to help society protect against vulnerabilities from disasters.

Our contributions are summarized as follows: (1) We construct a high-quality disruptive weather impact dataset from digitalized newspaper articles in the climate-related domain with a four-stage pipeline. (2) We propose WXIMPACTBENCH with two typical tasks for evaluating the capacity of LLMs on disruptive weather impact understanding, which is the first benchmark to facilitate the development of such domain-specific systems. (3) We conduct extensive experiments on benchmarking a set of LLMs, providing first-hand analysis of challenges in disruptive weather impact understanding and climate change adaptation.

2 Related Work

2.1 Climate Impact Analysis and Database

Climate impact analysis (Thulke et al., 2024) aims to help society make correct decisions about climate-related challenges affecting communities, e.g., understanding the weather impacts on society. Existing studies aim to validate the quality of historical weather data (Sieber et al., 2022) or extract climate patterns via name entities recognition tasks (Mallick et al., 2024b; Xie et al., 2024). Their used corpus is sourced from structured climate science materials, however, usually with daily loss (Batlló et al., 2024), due to the deterioration of storage media (paper, microfiche/microfilm, mag-

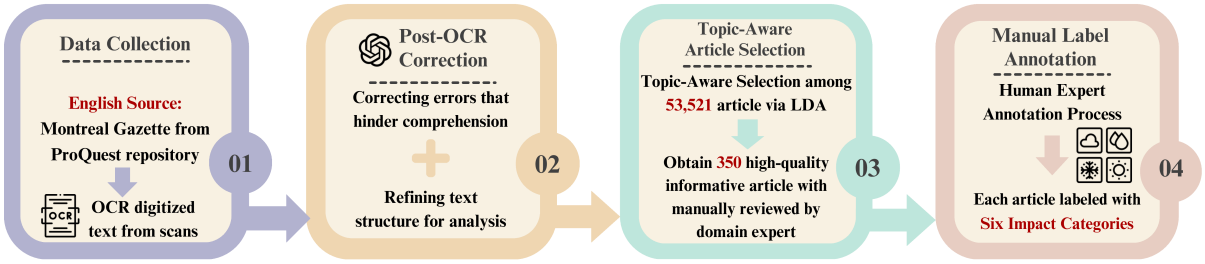

Figure 2: **Data Construction Pipeline** consists of four main stages: (1) Corpus collection from historical newspapers across two periods. (2) Post-OCR correction for high-quality extraction. (3) Article selection with defined categorization using LDA topic modeling and expert curation. (4) Annotation framework conducted by domain experts with a six-category impact classification scheme for understanding disruptive weather impacts.

netic tape) (Pevtsov et al., 2019). Compared to structured climate-related scientific databases, historical newspapers can offer a better alternative due to their rich climate records (Vargas-Solar et al., 2021), although they remain largely untapped (Krishnan and Anoop, 2023). The scarcity of high-quality climate-related and nuanced textual data results in the lack of standard benchmarks which limits understanding of weather impacts. We address these issues in this paper.

2.2 Climate Text Processing and Benchmark

Extracting and processing historical climate articles in newspapers is challenging due to their non-digital formats, such as scanned images or physical archives. OCR enables their conversion into machine-readable text (Baird, 2004), facilitating large-scale digitization, retrieval, and analysis. Like digital libraries (Singh et al., 2012), OCR enhances accessibility, supporting research on climate trends and societal responses. Although neural OCR correction models (Drobac and Lindén, 2020) improve the quality of the extracted text, the degraded print quality, inconsistent terminology, and irregular column layouts (Binmakhashen and Mahmoud, 2019) cause potential errors, which negatively impact the text understanding and the usage for designing downstream tasks (Bingham, 2010; Spathis and Kawsar, 2024).

Thus, the lack of high-quality resources constrains the development of comprehensive benchmarks for weather impacts. Developing a benchmark for understanding weather impacts is important, although the fragmented, incomplete, or dispersed disparate sources of weather events increase the difficulty of annotation (Lamb, 2002; Campbell, 2013). Although previous studies (Rasp et al., 2020, 2024) attempt to develop evaluation frameworks for physics-based weather forecasting models, they focus on data-driven weather modeling rather than weather impact understanding. In this paper, we propose the first disruptive weather impact benchmark to fill in current and historical blanks.

3 WXImpactBench: Disruptive Weather Impact Benchmark

Our WXIMPACTBENCH benchmark aims to evaluate to what extent existing LLMs can understand disruptive weather impacts, which also shows the evolution of vulnerability and resilience strategies from society across various periods. It involves two main stages: i) dataset construction; and ii) task definition and evaluation.

3.1 Dataset Construction

The construction of the dataset aims to obtain high-quality text samples. The pipeline overview is presented in Figure 2, which consists of four stages: data collection, post-OCR correction, topic-aware article selection, and manual label annotation.

Data Collection. The data is obtained through collaboration with a proprietary archive institution covering two temporal periods. The original data stored as digitalized text is obtained through OCR (Cheriet et al., 2007), which contains substantial noise due to historical newspaper layouts, including uneven printing, varying font styles (Sulaiman et al., 2019), complex multicolumn structures (Binmakhashen and Mahmoud, 2019), and overlapping text elements (e.g., advertisements) (Verhoef et al., 2015). Thus, post-OCR correction is necessary to ensure the corpus is high-quality (Chiron et al., 2017; Traub et al., 2015).

Post-OCR Correction. The goal of post-OCR correction is to correct errors that could significantly impact human comprehension or downstream task analysis, e.g., correct the inaccurate works split and remove unnecessary characters (O'Hara, 2013).

Initial OCR-Digitized Text

' ', 't 1', ' v MK ' A 0. P. R. 2NGIINE IN THE DIT0H. ' I ', "Th'- snow storm, which was a LL day on Mondy hover' ing overhead, began to set in at dusk, and it gradually increased in Severity, COntInuIng until abt six o-"clock yesterday morning. The storm was the w0rst for many wrintrs, and to find a preedent for it severity IT "1 is said we h' ve to go back to the eventful year ...

After Post-OCR Correction

A C. P. R. ENGINE IN THE DITCH. The snow storm, which was all day on Monday hovering overhead, began to set in about dusk, and it gradually increased in severity, continuing until about six o'clock yesterday morning. The storm was the worst for many winters, and to find a precedent for it in severity it is said we have to go back to the eventful year ...

Figure 3: Example of the text obtained from initial OCR and after our post-OCR correction.

For example, given the source image of a digital newspaper article (An example is provided in Appendix A.1), the text obtained by initial OCR and post-OCR correct is shown in Figure 3. The post-OCR correction is achieved by deploying GPT-4o with customized prompts (Zhang et al., 2024). Our specific prompts for correction are provided in Appendix A.2.

Topic-Aware Article Selection. After the post-OCR correction, we obtain 53,521 weather events-related articles. We aim to obtain informative samples across historical and modern periods based on weather categories. This is achieved by conducting topic modeling on the article collection, where we categorize them via Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA) (Blei et al., 2003) to obtain the topic words - representing the primary weather event categories. The details of the categories are provided in Appendix B.1. Selected articles with informative weather content are manually reviewed by three domain experts, which result in 350 high-quality samples. This process ensures the selected articles are topic-aware, which is highly related to specific disruptive weather events.

Manual Label Annotation. Having selected article samples, the next step is to assign the annotation for each of them based on the label space. Six vulnerability-related disruptive weather impacts are defined as the labeling categories, including Infrastructural, Political, Financial, Ecological, Agricultural, and Human Health. Annotation is conducted by three domain annotators following our guidelines (provided in Appendix B.2.2). According to the guidelines, the annotators should assign binary labels to indicate the presence or absence of direct descriptions of specific impacts within each article. Unlike previous study (Imran et al., 2016a), however, each sample might correspond to more than one impact.

3.2 Task Definition and Evaluation

After finalizing the data construction, we design the evaluation framework for our benchmark WXIMPACTBENCH. The overview is shown in Figure 4, which contains two tasks, multi-label classification and ranking-based question-answering, to evaluate the capacity of LLMs to understand disruptive weather impacts.

3.2.1 Multi-Label Text Classification

With the annotated weather impact category for each selected article, the intuitive evaluation task is multi-label classification, which aims to test the ability of LLMs to distinguish the disruptive weather impact for each given article. The previous classification tasks in disaster-related natural language processing (Purohit et al., 2013; Imran et al., 2016b) usually focus on modern crisis communications with structured text. Different from them, our constructed samples require the models to understand the linguistic shifts between historical and modern texts and address inconsistent styles of narratives across various periods. Specifically, given an article sample x_t corresponding to six ground-truth impacts $\mathcal{Y}_t = \{y_t^i\}_{i=1}^6$ with binary labels $y_t^i \in \{0, 1\}$, the evaluated model $\mathcal{M}$ is required to maximize the probability of the predicated impact $\hat{\mathcal{Y}}_t = \{\hat{y}_t^i\}_{i=1}^6$ towards ground-truth. The objective function $\mathcal{L}$ for the given sample x_t of multi-label classification task is formulated as

$$\mathcal{L}(\hat{\mathcal{Y}}_t, \mathcal{Y}_t) = -\sum_{i=1}^{6} y_i \log \hat{y}_i, \quad \hat{y}_i = \mathcal{M}(x_t)$$

3.2.2 Ranking-based Question Answering

Question-answering (QA) requires the LLMs to reply to the given question based on their parametric-knowledge. We formulate the ranking-based QA task by prompting the models to identify the likelihood of each article containing the correct answer from a candidate pool. This setting could also facilitate RAG systems development in domain, where we left the answer span extraction/generation in future studies.

To construct an evaluation protocol, the first step is to obtain suitable questions pair with each annotated samples in the multi-label classification task, since the question set is unavailable. Thus, we generate pseudo questions q_t for each article $(x_t, \mathcal{Y}_t)$

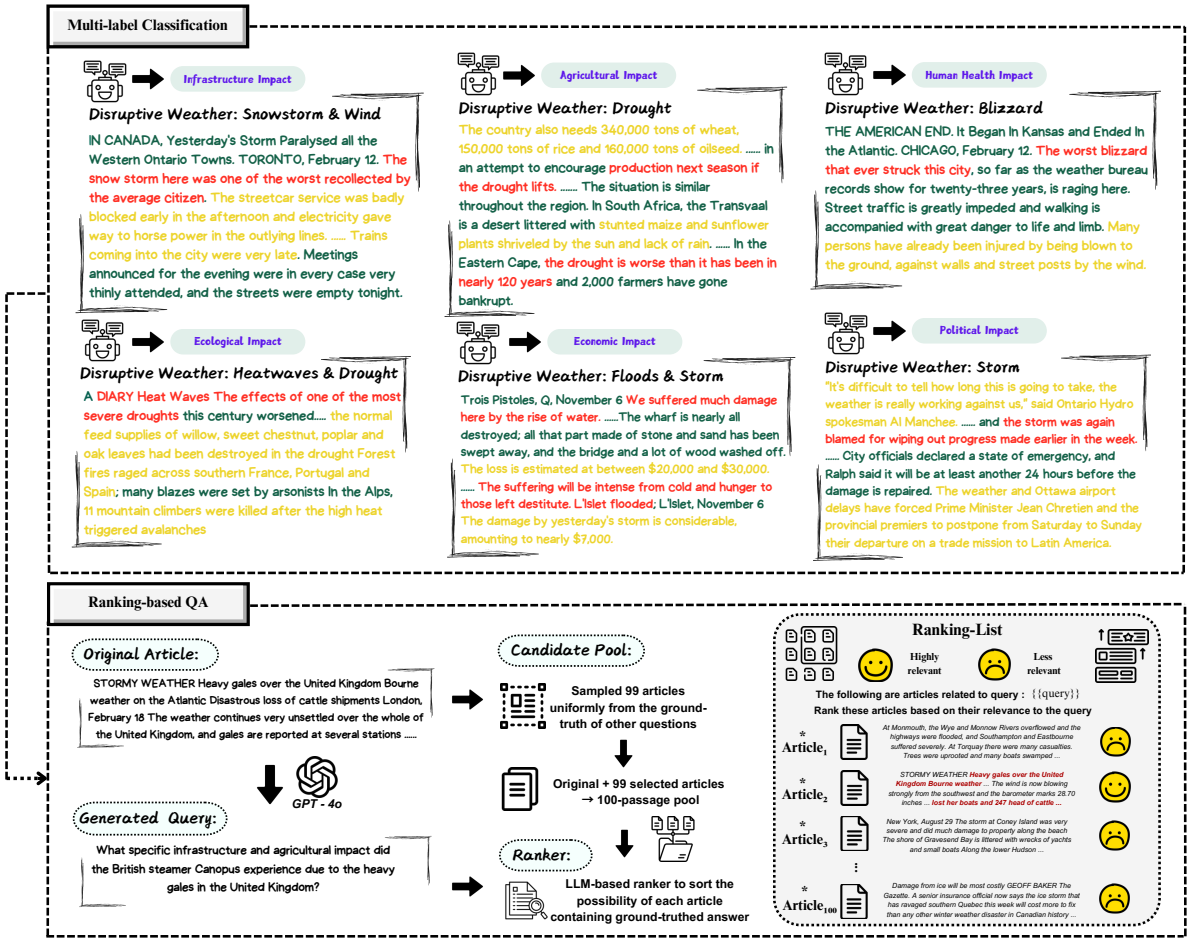

Figure 4: The overview of the benchmark framework with two tasks. Six disruptive weather impacts are used as labeling space in the classification task, where the Red texts represent **disruptive weather events** *(e.g., snowstorm, drought, and blizzard)*, Yellow texts highlight **impact descriptions** *(e.g., damage assessments, resource needs)*, and Green texts refer to **narrative descriptions** *(e.g., geographical locations)*.

based on its annotated category via a generative LLM $\mathcal{G}$ which is formulated as $q_t = \mathcal{G}(x_t, \mathcal{Y}_t)$. The annotated categories $\mathcal{Y}_t$, which are the societal impacts brought by the disruptive weather event, will become part of the prompt to ensure the generated question targets one of the specific impact categories (see Figure 4).

As a result, we have QA pair (q_t, x_t) for each sample. The next step is to construct the candidate pool for ranking. The size of the pool $\mathcal{X}_t$ for each question q_t is 100, which contains the ground-truth x_t and other 99 counterexamples $\mathcal{X}_t^-$ that are randomly sampled from the ground-truth of other questions. With the constructed QA pairs and corresponding candidate pools, the evaluated model $\mathcal{M}$ is required to rank the ground-truth based on the relevant scores produced by a matching function $\mathcal{S}$. The task objective can be formulated as

$$\text{RankingList } \phi(q_t) \leftarrow \underset{\mathcal{S}(q_t, x_t)}{\arg\max}\ \mathcal{M}(q_t, \mathcal{X}_t, \mathcal{S})$$

where $\{x_t, \mathcal{X}_t^-\} \subseteq \mathcal{X}_t$ and the output ranking list $\phi(q_t)$ is evaluated by ranking metrics.

4 Experimental Setup

4.1 Evaluation Metrics and Settings

For multi-label classification task, we use F1-score, accuracy, and row-wise accuracy as evaluation metrics. The evaluation via F1-score and accuracy are averaged across the six impact categories, historical and modern articles, and the effect of different context lengths. Compared to the common F1-score and accuracy, the row-wise accuracy is a strict metric that requires more accurate output as the model should correctly classify all six impact labels for a given article, defined as

$$\text{Row-wise Acc.} = \frac{1}{N} \sum_{i=1}^{N} \prod_{j=1}^{6} \mathcal{I}\left(\hat{y}_i^j = y_i^j\right)$$

where N is the number of samples, $\hat{y}_i^j$ denotes the predicted label for the j-th category in the i-th sample, y_i^j is the corresponding ground-truth

label, and $\mathcal{I}(\cdot)$ is the indicator function. The evaluation goal is to investigate the models' ability to distinguish various disruptive weather impacts under different settings, e.g., different periods.For the long-context impact evaluation, we create an alternate version (mixed context), whose sample length is split into segments with approximately 250 tokens from the original one (long-context version) following (Levy et al., 2024). Our segmentation ensures each split chunk includes at least one positive label within the disruptive weather impact categories. Eventually, we contain 350 and 1,386 samples for the original and mixed context version datasets, respectively. The detailed statistics of the datasets are provided in Appendix D.

For ranking-based QA task, we deploy the standard metric that emphasizes the accuracy of top positions for evaluation, including Hit@1, nDCG@5, Recall@5, and MRR.

4.2 Evaluated Models

We evaluate a set of off-the-shelf LLMs on WXIMPACTBENCH. For the multi-label text classification task, we include seven open-source models: DEEPSEEK-V3-671B (DeepSeek-AI, 2024), LLAMA-3.1-8B-INSTRUCT (Llama, 2024), Mistral-7B-Instruct (Jiang et al., 2023), MIXTRAL-8X7B-INSTRUCT (Jiang et al., 2024), MISTRAL-24B-INSTRUCT (Jiang et al., 2024), GEMMA-2-9B-IT (GemmaTeam, 2024), QWEN2.5-7B-INSTRUCT, and QWEN2.5-14B-INSTRUCT (Qwen2.5, 2025); and three closed-source models: GPT-3.5-TURBO, GPT-4 (OpenAI, 2024a), and GPT-4O (OpenAI, 2024b). For the ranking-based QA task, we evaluate GPT-3.5-TURBO, QWEN2.5-7B-INSTRUCT, QWEN2.5-14B-INSTRUCT, MISTRAL-7B-INSTRUCT, and LLAMA-3.1-8B-INSTRUCT. The relatively smaller models (with 7B size) ensure the latency requirements (Sun et al., 2023). The used models for the two tasks cover different sizes and support the input length of at least 8k tokens. The version details are provided in Appendix E.

4.3 Implementation Details

Multi-label Classification. The multi-label classification is conducted on each evaluated LLM by the same prompt provided in Appendix C.2. Different from traditional methods that decompose multi-label text classification into multiple binary classification tasks (Boutell et al., 2004; Liu et al., 2017), we simultaneously identify all relevant disruptive weather impacts for each input by calling the LLM once. The example of in-context learning in the one-shot setting is handcrafted with a complex sample detailing multiple impacts.

Ranking-based Question-Answering. We employ GPT-4O for pseudo question generation with default hyper-parameters. For ranking evaluation, we adopt the sliding window mechanism within LLM-based ranker implementation following the state-of-the-art study (Sun et al., 2023) to reduce the potential negative effect of noisy long contexts. Specifically, each article in the candidate pool was segmented into three chunks, and then the initial ranking was performed independently within each chunk. The used prompts for both stages are provided in Appendix C.3.

To ensure stable results, following previous studies (Chen et al., 2023), all LLMs were evaluated with the temperature set to 0, and the reported performance is the average value of running the experiments three times.

5 Experiments

5.1 Results of Multi-label Classification

Table 1 and Table 2 show the performance of the evaluated LLMs on WXIMPACTBENCH for the settings of categorized by six societal impacts with different context lengths, overall row-wise evaluation, and divided into two periods, respectively. The additional experimental results are provided in Appendix F. We have the observations as follows.

LLMs struggle to understand disruptive weather impacts. Table 1 shows that the F1-score for multi-label classification remains consistently low across models, especially among the political and ecological categories. The financial, agricultural, and human health impacts categories perform slightly better but still exhibit suboptimal results at 55%. The low performance might be attributed to the challenges in these categories with abstract and context-dependent narratives. Different from the infrastructure category (with the highest performance), which describes the impacts of weather events explicitly, e.g., "bridges destroyed" and "power outages", the descriptions in other categories are usually more abstract. For example, the financial damage could be embedded within discussions of damaged infrastructure or agricultural setbacks, which makes it more difficult for models to distinguish them as standalone impacts.

Table 2 shows row-wise performance, in which

	Infrastructure	Political	Financial	Ecological	Agricultural	Human Health	Average
Positive Cases	168 (326)	61 (101)	98 (134)	54 (71)	80 (100)	117 (178)	-
Zero-Shot Performance							
GPT-4o	80.94 ↑ 0.39	**58.46** ↑ 3.70	**65.82** ↓ 0.23	**46.81** ↑ 2.51	**70.33** ↑ 1.92	**73.23** ↑ 1.12	**69.48** ↑ 1.07
GPT-4	74.87 ↑ 2.13	49.38 ↑ 2.47	55.70 ↑ 1.18	37.84 ↑ 4.71	60.00 ↑ 3.83	62.96 ↑ 3.71	60.66 ↑ 2.12
GPT-3.5-TURBO	77.59 ↑ 3.73	41.60 ↑ 7.73	42.39 ↑ 7.16	36.52 ↓ 0.01	55.63 ↑ 4.49	47.29 ↑ 10.91	55.24 ↑ 5.12
DEEPSEEK-V3-671B	**81.87** ↑ 0.80	44.44 ↑ 12.40	60.91 ↑ 3.91	36.00 ↓ 0.60	61.74 ↑ 4.34	65.20 ↑ 0.20	65.13 ↑ 3.07
MISTRAL-24B-IT	79.12 ↓ 0.17	47.18 ↑ 6.91	59.64 ↑ 2.04	44.90 ↑ 10.75	67.74 ↑ 1.07	66.88 ↑ 1.30	62.74 ↑ 1.57
MIXTRAL-8X7B-IT	72.31 ↑ 3.01	39.29 ↑ 6.86	57.02 ↑ 0.33	36.59 ↑ 5.23	44.44 ↑ 14.23	50.00 ↑ 9.69	55.02 ↑ 4.84
MISTRAL-7B-IT	74.27 ↑ 4.27	36.63 ↑ 6.63	45.56 ↑ 0.56	39.19 ↑ 5.19	55.30 ↑ 5.30	61.61 ↑ 11.61	52.59 ↑ 1.98
QWEN2.5-14B-IT	76.21 ↓ 1.45	41.45 ↑ 0.34	45.07 ↑ 5.32	41.62 ↓ 2.15	52.99 ↑ 5.01	63.08 ↓ 1.64	57.75 ↓ 1.36
QWEN2.5-7B-IT	70.52 ↑ 4.75	34.29 ↑ 2.82	43.43 ↑ 0.83	41.06 ↓ 6.51	40.26 ↑ 3.96	38.19 ↑ 7.34	48.33 ↑ 1.88
GEMMA-2-9B-IT	77.42 ↑ 1.52	43.33 ↑ 2.59	54.60 ↓ 0.33	42.16 ↑ 1.73	55.60 ↑ 4.10	61.82 ↑ 0.87	57.01 ↑ 1.31
LLAMA-3.1-8B-IT	70.13 ↑ 8.82	40.47 ↑ 1.51	55.29 ↓ 2.08	33.90 ↑ 4.99	55.49 ↑ 5.05	50.68 ↑ 11.72	53.28 ↑ 4.91
Average	75.90 ↑ 2.93	43.51 ↑ 5.36	54.04 ↑ 1.34	39.50 ↑ 2.80	56.65 ↑ 4.83	57.79 ↑ 5.85	57.93 ↑ 2.38
In-Context Learning (One-shot) Performance							
GPT-4o	81.25 ↑ 0.29	**59.54** ↑ 2.71	**63.64** ↑ 1.18	**50.00** ↓ 0.02	**71.43** ↑ 1.39	**72.94** ↑ 2.80	**69.72** ↑ 1.02
GPT-4	72.63 ↑ 3.54	40.00 ↑ 5.92	55.15 ↑ 0.55	32.38 ↑ 7.30	61.29 ↑ 2.92	60.22 ↑ 5.06	58.00 ↑ 3.25
GPT-3.5-TURBO	76.88 ↑ 2.29	38.93 ↑ 9.72	48.50 ↑ 0.95	40.00 ↑ 0.02	57.30 ↓ 0.02	60.98 ↓ 0.02	56.97 ↑ 2.26
DEEPSEEK-V3-671B	**81.62** ↑ 1.32	49.48 ↑ 7.40	63.37 ↑ 2.10	43.55 ↑ 1.21	62.82 ↑ 5.04	67.78 ↑ 3.07	66.67 ↑ 2.36
MISTRAL-24B-IT	78.38 ↑ 0.58	43.48 ↑ 12.36	56.99 ↑ 1.05	35.09 ↑ 6.39	61.45 ↑ 4.50	65.28 ↓ 0.08	62.59 ↑ 2.06
MIXTRAL-8X7B-IT	68.31 ↑ 4.47	12.50 ↑ 24.14	42.00 ↑ 8.43	26.45 ↑ 7.74	36.80 ↑ 10.26	46.46 ↑ 14.82	46.21 ↑ 8.63
MISTRAL-7B-IT	73.31 ↑ 3.31	20.74 ↑ 6.74	45.33 ↑ 5.33	31.94 ↑ 1.94	52.77 ↑ 2.77	54.87 ↑ 4.87	51.05 ↑ 1.57
QWEN2.5-14B-IT	78.10 ↑ 0.05	43.36 ↑ 1.21	48.42 ↑ 6.13	43.65 ↑ 0.30	62.18 ↑ 4.49	63.60 ↑ 3.78	60.31 ↑ 1.71
QWEN2.5-7B-IT	71.04 ↑ 2.70	31.46 ↓ 4.19	48.80 ↑ 0.69	37.68 ↓ 0.09	47.54 ↓ 14.21	45.85 ↑ 8.51	51.44 ↑ 0.75
GEMMA-2-9B-IT	74.24 ↑ 1.54	31.79 ↑ 7.36	51.76 ↑ 0.91	34.52 ↑ 0.39	48.13 ↑ 7.87	63.76 ↑ 0.57	55.19 ↑ 1.63
LLAMA-3.1-8B-IT	71.88 ↑ 4.73	34.92 ↑ 8.01	49.50 ↑ 3.95	40.30 ↑ 1.08	52.69 ↑ 3.91	54.85 ↑ 5.48	53.18 ↑ 4.45
Average	74.95 ↑ 2.48	36.28 ↑ 8.02	52.50 ↑ 2.51	37.19 ↑ 2.60	55.22 ↑ 2.44	59.30 ↑ 4.51	57.39 ↑ 2.70

Table 1: F1-scores results of zero-shot and one-shot evaluation categorized on six impacts and two context length settings. The number in parentheses refers to the improvement with ↑ or degradation with ↓ of the evaluation on the mixed-context dataset (1,386 entries) compared to the original dataset (350 entries). The number in the "Positive Cases" row denotes the positive label in each impact categorization corresponding to two context-length versions. **Bold** and underline indicate the best and the second-best performance.

Model	Zero-Shot	One-Shot
GPT-4o	32.28 ↑ 0.29	**31.99** ↓ 0.85
GPT-4	22.19 ↑ 0.38	20.46 ↑ 0.11
GPT-3.5-TURBO	21.61 ↓ 0.18	12.39 ↑ 6.18
DEEPSEEK-V3-671B	**34.01** ↓ 1.72	**31.99** ↓ 0.28
MISTRAL-24B-IT	19.88 ↓ 1.02	25.65 ↓ 1.08
MIXTRAL-8X7B-IT	25.07 ↓ 0.50	19.88 ↑ 0.12
MISTRAL-7B-IT	4.90 ↓ 0.04	8.93 ↓ 3.50
QWEN2.5-14B-IT	19.02 ↓ 2.45	18.16 ↓ 0.73
QWEN2.5-7B-IT	27.38 ↓ 6.52	25.65 ↓ 1.36
GEMMA-2-9B-IT	15.56 ↑ 0.44	9.51 ↓ 1.51
LLAMA-3.1-8B-IT	12.68 ↑ 2.18	15.56 ↓ 1.85
Average	21.96 ↓ 0.57	20.80 ↓ 0.10

Table 2: Row-wise accuracy performance across different models and prompting strategies. The used notions are the same as Table 1.

the model must identify the given sample correctly for each involved category, the performance of classification drops dramatically due to the more precise requirement. Thus, a sophisticated model is expected to understand the complex societal effects of historical narratives via reasoning (Wei et al., 2022).

Long-context LLMs not always be strong on long-context de-noising. The results in Table 1 show that, when the original long-context is segmented into smaller chunks, the classification accuracy increases in most cases. These improvements suggest that smaller chunks help models focus on relevant information and thus minimizing distraction from extraneous content. Even the used models are claimed with long-context capacity, more precise split that reduces potential noise is still effective for context de-noising, which is consistent with previous studies (Sun et al., 2024).

However, we also find that this trend is not observed with the row-wise accuracy evaluation. This is due to the evaluation bias, where the F1-score measures precision and recall per category, and benefits from partial correctness. Row-wise accuracy requires an exact match across all labels. The small chunks might be helpful to improve the classification of one of the categories but not enough to correct all labels. Thus, the helpfulness of long-context de-noising via small chunks is not obvious in overall performance.

In-context Learning offers limited improvement. The in-context learning is achieved by providing one demonstration as the one-shot example for model decision. Compared zero-shot and one-shot performance in Table 1, we find that providing a single example in the prompt offers limited benefits and might decrease the performance in some cases.

Such a phenomenon implies that the LLMs lack sufficient knowledge to disambiguate disruptive weather impacts even with enhanced examples for knowledge arousing. These results indicate that our WXIMPACTBENCH is challenging for LLMs to understand disruptive weather impact.

Historical narratives are easier for LLMs to understand. The evaluation of different narratives in terms of historical and modern articles is presented in Table 3. Surprisingly, the evaluated models perform better on the articles recorded in the historical period. The reason might be the structured and formal narrative style used to report disruptive weather events in historical periods, which more explicitly highlights cause-and-effect relationships. The observation is revealed by the earlier studies (e.g. Mauch and Pfister, 2009), where the historical narratives emphasize empirical observations over interpretations, offering a more immediate and naturalistic account of events. Though the modern text might dominate within the pre-trained corpus, the language patterns used in historical narrative styles are easier for language models to identify, and thus perform better on classifying disruptive weather impacts.

Scaling law might hold for disruptive weather impact understanding. As illustrated in Table 1 and Table 2, larger models usually perform better than smaller ones, which is consistent with the scaling law for LLMs (Kaplan et al., 2020). For example, the largest DEEPSEEK-V3-671B obtains the best results and MISTRAL-24B-IT outperforms its 7B version. Although the model size is unavailable in closed-source models, the open-source models with the feasibility of manipulation can be viable alternatives to adaptively work for domain requirements. With proper optimization, the second-best DEEPSEEK-V3-671B for understanding disruptive weather impact might offer performance close to or on par with GPT-4O.

5.2 Results of Ranking-based QA

The performance of each evaluated model for ranking-based QA is reported in Table 4. We find that QWEN-2.5-14B-IT achieves the best performance in this task. LLAMA-3.1-8B is slightly better than GPT-3.5-TURBO and QWEN-2.5-7B-IT, while the MISTRAL-7B-IT cannot address the tasks related to disruptive weather context. Notice that the ranking results would contain bias when the evaluated model is used for question generation (GPT-4O in our cases). This is a common phenomenon (Zhou et al., 2023) and needs to be avoided in benchmarking.

The practical open-retrieval setting, i.e., identifying the relevant articles from a huge database, is left for future studies, which could further facilitate knowledge enhancement in understanding disruptive weather impacts.

	Historical	**Modern**
Cases	200 (504)	150 (882)
GPT-4O	**70.19** ↑ 1.50	**68.59** ↑ 0.59
GPT-4	65.54 ↑ 0.66	53.81 ↑ 4.50
GPT-3.5-TURBO	57.27 ↑ 4.78	52.21 ↑ 5.92
DEEPSEEK-V3-671B	65.42 ↑ 3.91	64.74 ↑ 2.05
MISTRAL-24B-IT	62.30 ↑ 4.13	63.33 ↓ 1.68
MIXTRAL-8X7B-IT	58.31 ↑ 4.28	50.11 ↑ 6.14
MISTRAL-7B-IT	55.27 ↑ 1.50	49.22 ↑ 2.78
QWEN2.5-14B-IT	57.75 ↑ 2.30	57.75 ↓ 5.48
QWEN2.5-7B-IT	54.29 ↑ 0.66	40.85 ↑ 4.14
GEMMA-2-9B-IT	60.41 ↑ 0.90	52.80 ↑ 1.97
LLAMA-3.1-8B-IT	55.30 ↑ 5.08	50.67 ↑ 4.98
Average	60.19 ↑ 2.70	54.92 ↑ 2.36

Table 3: F1-score performance across historical and modern impact categories in zero-shot setting. The used notations are the same as Table 1.

Model	**Hit@1**	**nDCG@5**	**Recall@5**	**MRR**
GPT-3.5-TURBO	62.09	67.31	71.04	66.90
MISTRAL-7B	6.21	15.86	25.16	14.82
QWEN-2.5-14B	**82.09**	**86.34**	**85.48**	**89.55**
QWEN-2.5-7B	42.69	61.80	75.52	58.04
LLAMA-3.1-8B	64.18	70.85	75.82	69.90
Result with Bias for Reference				
GPT-4O	91.94	95.54	97.91	94.88

Table 4: The performance of ranking-based QA tasks across different models.

6 Conclusion

In this study, we propose a disruptive weather impact understanding benchmark, WXIMPACTBENCH, to address the lack of datasets and evaluation frameworks in climate change adaptation. We first process the corpus from newspaper articles and provide comprehensive instruction for impact annotation with each processed article. Then, we design multi-label classification and ranking-based QA tasks to evaluate the LLMs in understanding various defined disruptive weather impacts. Extensive experiments on WXIMPACTBENCH reveal that the existing LLMs struggle with understanding disruptive weather impacts across different style narratives and context settings. Our WXIMPACTBENCH enables the community to evaluate the developed systems on disruptive weather impact understanding, which supports the society to learn from and prepare for the impacts of climate change.

Limitation

Although WXIMPACTBENCH provides valuable insights (e.g., exhibit the strengths and weaknesses of various society impact understanding) about evaluating LLMs on disruptive weather, it may have potential biases in underrepresented historical events and linguistic variations. Future work could expand the range of evaluated models, strategies, and designed tasks to further strengthen the evaluations.

Ethical Considerations

Our primary data source is a corpus of historical digitized newspapers, obtained through collaboration with an official organization which should be anonymous at this moment. This organization preserves the copyright of the newspaper articles and has been granted permission to publish this subset of articles for benchmark build-up to facilitate the research community. Thus the data is publicly available and thus no potential privacy or content safety concerns. Additionally, topic-aware article selection is conducted by researchers specializing in historical climate analysis to ensure the dataset is not biased on specific time and location. This research contributes to the broader societal goal of understanding historical disruptive weather impacts to help society defend its vulnerabilities from disasters. The interpretation of weather-related disruptions in historical newspapers might be influenced by demographic and contextual factors, which is similar to other text datasets generated through crowd-sourcing with inherent challenges in ensuring that dataset labels are fully representative of diverse societal perspectives (Talat et al., 2022).

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Appendix

A Post-OCR Correction

A.1 Example of OCR-Digitized Text

Figure 5 presents an example of OCR-digitized text from the *Illustrated Montreal Gazette*, dated February 18, 1885. This excerpt, titled "Snow-storm_delays," was retrieved from *ProQuest* and illustrates the typical noise and distortions introduced by OCR processing in historical newspaper archives.

A.2 Post-OCR Correction Instruction

To reduce the substantial noise in OCR-digitized text, GPT-4o was used for post-OCR correction to enhance text quality. The specific prompt used for this process is presented in Table 5.

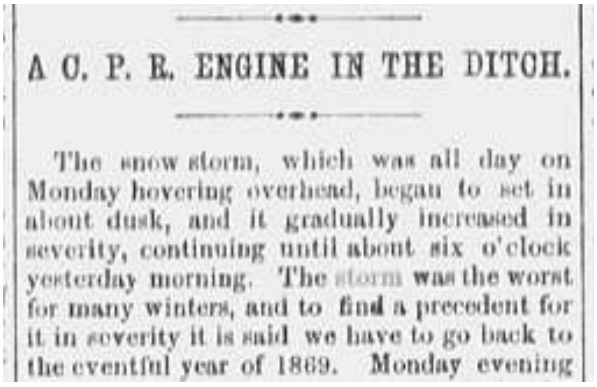
Post-OCR Correction Instruction

You are an expert OCR correction assistant specializing in historical newspaper text. Your task is to:

1. Correct OCR errors while preserving the original text's meaning, structure, and formatting.
2. Accurately retain proper nouns, dates, numbers, and domain-specific terminology.
3. Maintain paragraph breaks, section headers, bylines, and other structural elements.
4. Remove extraneous characters (e.g., unnecessary punctuation, OCR artifacts) without altering the content.
5. Properly reconstruct hyphenated words that were split across lines.
6. Standardize spacing by eliminating extra spaces and ensuring a consistent format.
7. Return the corrected text as a single continuous line, with no newline characters.

NOTE: Do not include explanations, summaries, or additional comments. Only return the corrected text in the specified format.

Table 5: Prompts used for Post-OCR correction.



A C. P. R. ENGINE IN THE DITCH.

The snow storm, which was all day on Monday hovering overhead, began to set in about dusk, and it gradually increased in severity, continuing until about six o'clock yesterday morning. The storm was the worst for many winters, and to find a precedent for it in severity it is said we have to go back to the eventful year of 1869. Monday evening

Figure 5: Example of OCR-digitized text from the *Illustrated Montreal Gazette*, dated February 18, 1885.

B Annotation Guidelines for Multi-Label Classification

B.1 Definition of Primary Disaster Categories

Using Latent Dirichlet Allocation, the dataset was categorized into 15 primary weather event types. The major weather categories are listed in Table 6:

Disaster Type	Definition	Example
Blizzard	Severe snowstorm	*Whiteout conditions*
Cold	Low temperatures	*Frostbite risk*
Deluge	Heavy rainfall	*Flash flooding*
Drought	Prolonged dryness	*Water scarcity*
Flood	Overflowing water	*River flooding*
Heat	High temperatures	*Heat exhaustion*
Heatwave	Extended hot weather	*Record-breaking heat*
Ice	Frozen precipitation	*Slippery surfaces*
Rain	Liquid precipitation	*Persistent showers*
Freezing	Below 0°C conditions	*Frost formation*
Snow	Frozen precipitation	*Accumulating snowfall*
Snowstorm	Intense snowfall	*Reduced visibility*
Storm	Severe weather event	*Strong winds/rain*
Thunder	Sound from lightning	*Loud rumbling*
Torrential	Extreme rainfall	*Flooding risk*

Table 6: Primary weather types and their definitions.

B.2 Background

In the absence of standardized impact records (e.g., flood-related property damage, injuries due to ice accumulation, power outages, and road closures), we assessed vulnerabilities and resilience based on the consequences of weather events and how they have changed since the 19th century. To do so, we categorized disruptive weather impacts into six primary groups — Infrastructural, Agricultural, Ecological, Financial, Human Health, and Political — following previous studies (Imran et al., 2016a).

To ensure high-quality and consistent annotations, the task was conducted using a set of specific instructions reviewed by meteorological experts. The annotation guideline and the categories definition are provided in Table 12 and Table 13, respectively.

Notably, the same instruction guidance is contained within the prompts for LLMs in Appendix C to perform impact classification, following a binary output approach for each category.

B.2.1 Multi-Impact Labeling Format

Annotators are tasked with determining whether an article includes descriptions that correspond to the impact categories defined in Table 13. Each article is assigned a label based on the presence or absence of relevant descriptions.

- **1** – At least one mention of the relevant topic is identified.
- **0** – No relevant description is identified.

Special Case When an article describes multiple types of impact, each mentioned impact category is labelled as "1".

A Special Case Example

Input Text: "Severe Storm Wreaks Havoc on Coastline. Bayport, September 15. A violent tempest swept the eastern seaboard last night, leaving a trail of devastation in its wake. The cargo vessel Harbor Star collided with a fishing trawler in the churning waters, capsizing the smaller craft and claiming three lives. Fierce winds reduced docks and piers to splinters, bringing commercial shipping to a standstill. The storm's toll is estimated to exceed $200,000, with Bayport Textile Mills filing for financial restructuring, placing 150 jobs in jeopardy. Hospitals are overwhelmed with storm-related injuries and illnesses, and emergency shelters are strained beyond capacity. The community now faces the arduous task of recovery."
Output: "Infrastructural: true, Agricultural: false, Ecological: false, Financial: true, Human Health: true, Political: false"

Table 7: A special case with multiple positive labels and is used for one-shot learning.

B.2.2 Instructions for annotators

The instructions for annotators are provided in Table 12. The annotation process was conducted by members of a research group specializing in uncovering the history of a region's climate change through the regional historical weather records. Their expertise can ensure the accuracy and reliability of annotations.

C Instructions

C.1 Multi-Label Classification Instructions

The Multi-Label Classification instructions template in Table 14 is designed for both zero-shot and one-shot classification tasks.

- Zero-Shot: The model is given only the classification instructions and the input text.
- One-Shot for In-Context Learning: The model is provided with a demonstration for predicting a new sample. One example of demonstration we used is shown in Table 7.

C.2 Prompt Template for Multi-Label Text Classification

Table 14 presents the prompt designed to analyze historical newspaper texts and classify them into six distinct impact categories based on explicit mentions of weather-related events. The prompt is structured in alignment with the definitions provided in Table 13, which details the scope of each impact category, including Infrastructural, Agricultural, Ecological, Financial, Human Health, and Political impacts. The classification task is binary (true/false), requiring the model to identify whether the text explicitly mentions any of the defined impacts. The guidelines emphasize focusing on direct and immediate effects, ensuring that classifications are based solely on explicit references within the text. This prompt was used to evaluate multi-label classification models.

C.3 Prompt Template for Question Answering Ranking

The ranking-based QA task consists of two key components: question generation and candidate ranking. The prompts used for both stages are provided in Table 9 and Table 10, respectively.

D Dataset Statistic

Figure 6 presents the token length distribution of passages in two versions of our dataset: (a) the Long Context dataset and (b) the Mixed Context dataset used for context-denoising evaluation.

Model	Infrastructural	Political	Financial	Ecological	Agricultural	Human Health	Average
Zero-Shot Performance							
GPT-4o	78.96 ↑ 0.18	84.44 ↓ 0.44	76.66 ↓ 0.95	78.39 ↑ 0.47	**84.44** ↑ 0.42	**80.40** ↓ 0.11	80.55 ↓ 0.07
GPT-4	72.33 ↑ 2.24	76.37 ↓ 2.37	59.65 ↑ 0.06	80.12 ↓ 3.26	79.25 ↑ 1.32	71.18 ↑ 0.82	73.15 ↑ 0.17
GPT-3.5-TURBO	77.52 ↑ 3.05	78.96 ↓ 0.67	69.45 ↓ 1.45	78.96 ↓ 1.82	80.69 ↑ 0.74	69.16 ↑ 1.70	75.79 ↑ 0.25
DEEPSEEK-V3-671B	**80.98** ↑ 0.45	**85.59** ↑ 1.84	**77.81** ↑ 0.48	81.56 ↓ 2.13	83.57 ↑ 1.00	77.23 ↑ 1.06	**81.12** ↑ 0.45
MISTRAL-24B-IT	76.30 ↓ 0.59	74.35 ↓ 3.78	69.45 ↓ 1.16	76.66 ↑ 0.20	82.42 ↑ 0.44	69.45 ↑ 0.26	74.77 ↓ 0.77
MIXTRAL-8X7B-IT	75.36 ↑ 2.16	80.29 ↓ 2.42	69.86 ↓ 4.06	**84.93** ↓ 3.32	78.26 ↑ 3.92	68.12 ↑ 1.99	76.14 ↑ 0.05
MISTRAL-7B-IT	77.23 ↑ 2.48	50.14 ↓ 1.00	34.58 ↓ 1.15	74.06 ↓ 3.49	72.05 ↑ 0.52	75.22 ↑ 0.49	63.88 ↑ 0.47
QWEN2.5-14B-IT	73.20 ↓ 2.91	70.03 ↓ 3.46	66.28 ↓ 2.28	66.86 ↓ 6.29	75.79 ↓ 7.22	70.32 ↓ 4.03	70.41 ↓ 4.37
QWEN2.5-7B-IT	72.05 ↑ 1.66	73.49 ↓ 8.35	67.72 ↓ 6.58	74.35 ↓ 10.06	73.49 ↓ 5.20	64.55 ↓ 2.84	70.94 ↓ 5.23
GEMMA-2-9B-IT	74.00 ↑ 3.49	61.14 ↓ 6.00	54.86 ↑ 2.26	66.29 ↓ 3.57	69.43 ↓ 5.43	64.00 ↓ 4.00	65.37 ↑ 0.47
LLAMA-3.1-8B-IT	73.49 ↑ 5.94	55.91 ↑ 0.66	62.25 ↓ 3.96	77.52 ↓ 2.66	77.81 ↑ 1.33	68.59 ↑ 4.55	69.26 ↑ 1.14
Average	75.58 ↑ 1.65	71.88 ↓ 2.36	64.42 ↓ 1.71	76.34 ↓ 3.27	77.93 ↓ 0.74	70.75 ↑ 0.00	72.82 ↓ 0.71
In-Context Learning (One-shot) Performance							
GPT-4o	79.25 ↓ 0.82	84.73 ↓ 1.02	74.64 ↑ 0.07	**79.83** ↓ 1.26	**85.01** ↓ 0.15	**80.12** ↑ 1.02	80.60 ↓ 0.36
GPT-4	70.89 ↑ 2.82	70.61 ↓ 0.90	61.10 ↓ 1.10	79.54 ↓ 1.25	79.25 ↑ 1.32	69.16 ↑ 2.27	71.76 ↑ 0.52
GPT-3.5-TURBO	73.49 ↑ 3.65	73.78 ↑ 4.51	55.33 ↑ 5.53	61.96 ↑ 9.47	77.23 ↑ 2.77	72.33 ↑ 0.24	69.02 ↑ 4.36
DEEPSEEK-V3-671B	**80.40** ↑ 1.03	**85.88** ↓ 0.71	**78.67** ↓ 0.67	79.83 ↓ 2.40	83.29 ↑ 1.28	77.81 ↓ 0.38	**80.98** ↓ 0.08
MISTRAL-24B-IT	76.88 ↓ 0.02	81.21 ↓ 0.64	76.01 ↓ 2.87	78.61 ↓ 1.18	80.06 ↑ 1.94	71.10 ↓ 1.39	77.31 ↓ 0.69
MIXTRAL-8X7B-IT	70.59 ↑ 4.12	77.49 ↓ 1.90	62.70 ↑ 3.77	71.38 ↑ 6.97	74.43 ↑ 1.75	65.81 ↑ 7.43	70.40 ↑ 3.52
MISTRAL-7B-IT	73.70 ↑ 1.73	69.08 ↑ 1.21	44.22 ↓ 1.36	71.68 ↓ 4.82	67.92 ↓ 8.78	70.52 ↓ 2.23	66.19 ↓ 2.38
QWEN2.5-14B-IT	76.08 ↓ 0.37	76.66 ↓ 4.37	71.76 ↓ 0.33	68.01 ↓ 3.72	78.96 ↑ 1.61	72.62 ↑ 1.09	74.02 ↓ 1.18
QWEN2.5-7B-IT	69.45 ↑ 0.84	82.42 ↓ 0.71	63.11 ↓ 5.68	62.82 ↓ 8.02	81.56 ↓ 3.27	60.52 ↑ 0.62	69.81 ↓ 2.48
GEMMA-2-9B-IT	71.14 ↑ 0.62	67.14 ↓ 3.09	50.29 ↓ 2.31	60.57 ↓ 2.15	74.86 ↑ 2.89	68.00 ↓ 0.79	65.33 ↑ 0.62
LLAMA-3.1-8B-IT	74.06 ↑ 3.08	64.55 ↑ 2.02	55.91 ↑ 0.38	76.95 ↓ 6.09	74.64 ↓ 0.93	69.16 ↑ 0.55	69.05 ↑ 0.19
Average	74.17 ↑ 1.52	75.78 ↓ 0.51	63.07 ↓ 0.42	71.93 ↓ 1.31	77.93 ↑ 0.04	70.65 ↑ 0.77	72.26 ↑ 0.19

Table 8: Accuracy by percentage results of zero-shot and one-shot evaluation categorized on six impacts and two context length settings. The used notations are the same as Table 1.

Question Generation Template

```
Given the following passage about
{row['Weather']}, generate a
single, focused question that
meets these criteria:
1. Can be answered using ONLY the
information in this passage
2. Focuses on the {impact_str}
impacts mentioned
3. Is detailed and specific to
this exact situation
4. Requires understanding the
passage's unique context
5. Cannot be answered by other
similar passages about
{row['Weather']}
Passage: {row['Text']}
```

Table 9: Instruction used to generate Questions in the ranking-based QA task.

The Long Context dataset (Figure 6a), which contains 350 articles, exhibits a broader distribution of passage lengths, with a significant portion exceeding 2000 tokens. While most passages are concentrated in the lower ranges, a noticeable number extend beyond 8000 tokens, demonstrating the dataset's emphasis on long-form content.

In contrast, the Mixed Context dataset (Figure 6b), which contains 1,386 articles, is heavily skewed toward shorter passages, with an overwhelming majority containing fewer than 2000 tokens. Only a small fraction of passages exceed 4000 tokens, highlighting the dataset's mixed nature, where shorter contexts are predominant.

E The Source of the Models

The models evaluated in this paper can be found as follows

1. GPT-4o, GPT-4 and GPT-3.5-TURBO are provided by OpenAI, the base model API document: https://platform.openai.com/docs/models

2. DEEPSEEK-V3-671B is upgraded the DEEPSEEK-CHAT, the base model API documents: https://api-docs.deepseek.com/

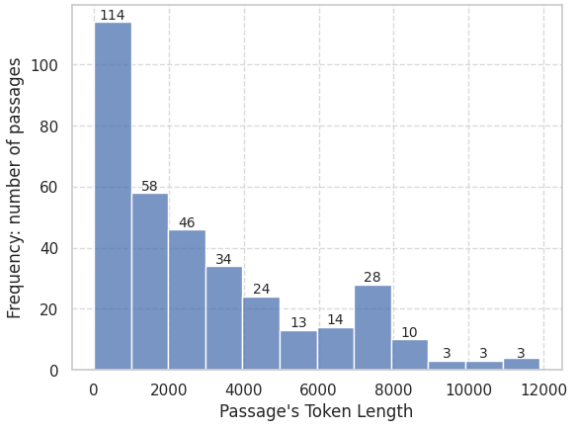
3. MIXTRAL-8X7B-IT[1], MISTRAL-24B-IT[2], MISTRAL-7B-IT[3], LLAMA-3.1-8B-

[1] https://huggingface.co/mistralai/Mixtral-8x7B-Instruct-v0.1
[2] https://huggingface.co/mistralai/Mistral-Small-24B-Instruct-2501
[3] https://huggingface.co/mistralai/Mistral-7B-Instruct-v0.2

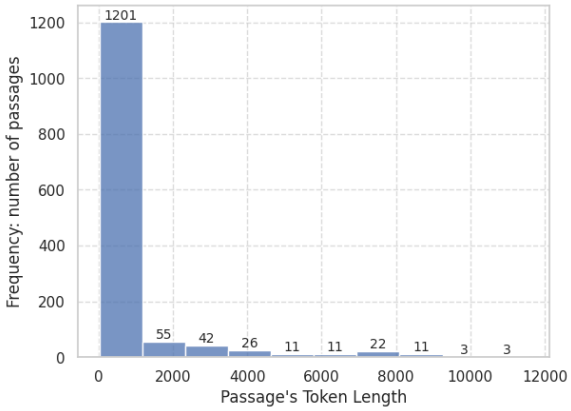
QA Ranking Task Prompt

```
{
"role": "system",
"content": "You are an expert that
ranks passages based on their
relevance to a given query.
  The most relevant passage should
answer the query"
},{
"role": "user",
"content": f"Query: {query} Rank
the following passages
[{start_idx+1} to
{start_idx+len(passages)}] by
relevance."
}
for i, passage in
enumerate(passages):
messages.extend([
"role": "user", "content":
f"[start_idx+i+1] passage",
"role": "assistant", "content":
f"Received passage
[start_idx+i+1]"
])
{
"role": "user",
"content": "Provide ranking as
numbers separated by '>',
  e.g., [3] > [1] > [2] > [5] >
[4]. No explanation needed."
}
```

Table 10: Instruction used in Ranking-based QA task.



(a) Long context dataset



(b) Mixed context dataset

Figure 6: The histogram shows the token length distribution (measured using the GPT-4 tokenizer) of articles in the two versions of our dataset.

IT[4], QWEN2.5-14B-IT[5], QWEN2.5-7B-IT[6] and GEMMA-2-9B-IT[7], are base models weights from the Huggingface website: https://huggingface.co/

F Additional Experimental Results

LLMs might be more effective in historical narratives. Table 11 presents the performance of the evaluated LLMs on WXIMPACTBENCH across historical and modern impact categories in the one-shot setting. The results are categorized based on six societal impact dimensions with varying context lengths.

[4] https://huggingface.co/meta-llama/Llama-3.1-8B-Instruct

[5] https://huggingface.co/Qwen/Qwen2.5-14B-Instruct

[6] https://huggingface.co/Qwen/Qwen2.5-7B-Instruct

[7] https://huggingface.co/google/gemma-2-9b-it

G Annotation Guidelines

To ensure a high-quality evaluation of historical weather impact analysis, we developed a structured annotation framework for meteorology experts. The goal of this annotation is to create a reliable benchmark for assessing the ability of LLMs to understand and classify disruptive weather-related societal and environmental impacts. The detailed annotation guidelines are provided in Table 12, outlining the task objectives, category definitions, and better practices for identifying and classifying weather impacts in historical texts.

Model	Historical	Modern
Cases	200 (504)	150 (882)
GPT-4o	**70.24** ↑ 1.09	**69.05** ↑ 0.97
GPT-4	62.77 ↑ 1.81	50.89 ↑ 5.85
GPT-3.5-TURBO	60.26 ↑ 1.18	52.63 ↑ 3.91
DEEPSEEK-V3-671B	65.77 ↑ 3.68	67.83 ↑ 0.68
MISTRAL-24B-IT	63.51 ↑ 4.16	61.27 ↓ 0.64
MIXTRAL-8X7B-IT	49.17 ↑ 8.83	41.99 ↑ 9.01
MISTRAL-7B-IT	53.11 ↑ 3.75	48.16 ↓ 0.92
QWEN-2.5-14B-IT	60.66 ↑ 2.42	59.83 ↑ 0.84
QWEN2.5-7B-IT	52.74 ↑ 2.60	48.84 ↓ 1.76
GEMMA-2-9B-IT	57.82 ↑ 0.86	51.82 ↑ 2.73
LLAMA-3.1-8B-IT	55.06 ↑ 4.89	50.75 ↑ 4.03
Average	59.19 ↑ 3.2	54.82 ↑ 2.25

Table 11: F1-score performance across historical and modern impact categories in the one-shot setting. The used notations are the same as Table 1.

Instructions For Annotators

Annotation Guidelines for Historical Weather Impact Analysis

This document provides comprehensive guidelines for annotators who analyze historical newspaper articles describing disruptive weather events. The primary objective is to identify and categorize six distinct impact categories within each text. This analysis will facilitate comparisons with the performance of large language models in understanding weather-related impacts across various societal and environmental dimensions.

Task Overview

Annotators will examine historical newspaper articles documenting disruptive weather events. The analysis requires the identification of impacts across six categories: infrastructural, agricultural, ecological, financial, human health, and political. Please refer to Table 13 for the definitions of these categories.

Note: While specific examples are provided for each impact category, annotators should apply their meteorological expertise to identify and classify impacts beyond these examples, maintaining a comprehensive analytical approach.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us. Thank you for your invaluable support!

Table 12: Instructions for annotators

Category	Definition
Infrastructural Impact	Examines weather-related damage or disruption to physical infrastructure and essential services. Includes structural damage to buildings, roads, and bridges; disruptions to transportation (e.g., railway cancellations, road closures); interruptions to utilities (e.g., power, water supply); failures in communication networks; and industrial facility damage. Both immediate physical damage and service disruptions should be considered.
Agricultural Impact	Focuses on weather-related effects on farming and livestock management. Includes crop yield variations; direct damage to crops, timber, or livestock; modifications to farming schedules; disruptions to food production and supply chains; impacts on farming equipment; and changes in agricultural inputs (e.g., soil conditions, water availability, fertilizers, animal feed). Both immediate and long-term effects should be considered.
Ecological Impact	Examines effects on natural environments and ecosystems. Includes changes in biodiversity; impacts on wildlife populations and behavior; effects on non-agricultural plant life; habitat modifications (e.g., forests, wetlands, water bodies); changes in hydrological systems (e.g., river levels, lake conditions); and urban plant life impact. Immediate environmental changes should be prioritized.
Financial Impact	Analyzes economic consequences of weather events. Includes direct monetary losses; business disruptions requiring financial intervention; market fluctuations; impacts on tourism and local economies; and insurance claims or economic relief measures. The focus should be on explicit financial impacts rather than inferred consequences.
Human Health Impact	Examines both physical and mental health effects. Includes direct injuries or fatalities (including cases where one or more casualties are explicitly mentioned); increased risks of weather-related illnesses; mental health consequences (e.g., stress, anxiety); impacts on healthcare accessibility; and long-term health implications. Both short-term and chronic health effects should be considered.
Political Impact	Evaluates governmental and policy responses to weather events. Includes government decision-making and policy changes; shifts in public opinion or political discourse; effects on electoral processes; international aid and relations; and debates on disaster preparedness and response. Both direct political reactions and policy implications should be analyzed.

Table 13: Impact categories and their definitions

Multi-Label Classification Task: Zero-Shot Instruction Template

Given the following historical newspaper text:
"{instruction}"

Analyze the text and provide a binary classification (respond ONLY with 'true' or 'false') for each impact category based on explicit mentions in the text. Follow these specific guidelines

1. **Infrastructural Impact**: Classify as 'true' if the text mentions any damage or disruption to physical infrastructure and essential services. This includes structural damage to buildings, roads, or bridges; any disruptions to transportation systems such as railway cancellations or road closures; interruptions to public utilities including power and water supply; any failures in communication networks; or damage to industrial facilities. Consider only explicit mentions of physical damage or service disruptions in your classification.

2. **Agricultural Impact**: Classify as 'true' if the text mentions any weather-related effects on farming and livestock management operations. This includes yield variations in crops and animal products; direct damage to crops, timber resources, or livestock; modifications to agricultural practices or schedules; disruptions to food production or supply chains; impacts on farming equipment and resources; or effects on agricultural inputs including soil conditions, water availability for farming, and essential materials such as seedlings, fertilizers, or animal feed.

3. **Ecological Impact**: Classify as 'true' if the text mentions any effects on natural environments and ecosystems. This includes alterations to local environments and biodiversity; impacts on wildlife populations and behavior patterns; effects on non-agricultural plant life and vegetation; modifications to natural habitats including water bodies, forests, and wetlands; changes in hydrological systems such as river levels and lake conditions; or impacts on urban plant life.

4. **Financial Impact**: Classify as 'true' if the text explicitly mentions economic consequences of weather events. This includes direct monetary losses; business disruptions or closures requiring financial intervention; market price fluctuations or demand changes for specific goods; impacts on tourism and local economic activities; or insurance claims or economic relief measures. Focus only on explicit mentions of financial losses or fluctuations.

5. **Human Health Impact**: Classify as 'true' if the text mentions physical or mental health effects of weather events on populations. This includes direct injuries or fatalities (including cases where zero or more casualties are explicitly mentioned); elevated risks of weather-related or secondary illnesses; mental health consequences such as stress or anxiety; impacts on healthcare service accessibility; or long-term health implications.

6. **Political Impact**: Classify as 'true' if the text mentions governmental and policy responses to weather events. This includes government decision-making and policy modifications in response to events; changes in public opinion or political discourse; effects on electoral processes or outcomes; international relations and aid responses; or debates surrounding disaster preparedness and response capabilities.

Note:
- Return 'false' for any impact category that is either not present in the text or not related to weather events
- Base classifications on explicit mentions in the text
- Focus on direct impacts rather than implications
- Consider immediate and direct effects

Answer only once in the following format:
Infrastructural: true/false
Agricultural: true/false
Ecological: true/false
Financial: true/false
Human Health: true/false
Political: true/false

Table 14: Multi-Label Classification instructions template used as the Zero-Shot prompt.