

TOEFL Junior : Reading Comprehension Test 4

Read the passage . 60 - 100 minutes

the Spanish Armada

Conflict had existed between Spain and England since the 1570s. England wanted a share of the wealth that Spain had been taking from the lands it had claimed in the Americas.

Elizabeth I, Queen of England, encouraged her staunch admiral of the navy, Sir Francis Drake, to raid Spanish ships and towns. Though these raids were on a small scale, Drake achieved dramatic success, adding gold and silver to England's treasury and diminishing Spain's supremacy.

Religious differences also caused conflict between the two countries. Whereas Spain was Roman Catholic, most of England had become Protestant. King Philip II of Spain wanted to claim the throne and make England a Catholic country again. To satisfy his ambition and also to retaliate against England's theft of his gold and silver, King Philip began to build his fleet of warships, the Spanish Armada, in January 1586.

Philip intended his fleet to be indestructible. In addition to building new warships, he marshaled 130 sailing vessels of all types and recruited more than 19,000 robust soldiers and 8,000 sailors. Although some of his ships lacked guns and others lacked ammunition, Philip was convinced that his Armada could withstand any battle with England.

The martial Armada set sail from Lisbon, Portugal, on May 9, 1588, but bad weather forced it back to port. The voyage resumed on July 22 after the weather became more stable.

The Spanish fleet met the smaller, faster, and more maneuverable English ships in battle off the coast of Plymouth, England, first on July 31 and again on August 2. The two battles left Spain vulnerable, having lost several ships and with its ammunition depleted. On August 7, while the Armada lay at anchor on the French side of the Strait of Dover, England sent eight burning ships into the midst of the Spanish fleet to set it on fire. Blocked on one side, the Spanish ships could only drift away, their crews in panic and disorder. Before the Armada could regroup, the English attacked again on August 8.

Although the Spaniards made a valiant effort to fight back, the fleet suffered extensive damage. During the eight hours of battle, the Armada drifted perilously close to the rocky coastline. At the moment when it seemed that the Spanish ships would be driven onto the English shore, the wind shifted, and the Armada drifted out into the North Sea. The Spaniards recognized the superiority of the English fleet and returned home, defeated.

INSTRUCTION:

Read the questions carefully and refer to the text above then choose the best answer:

1. Sir Francis Drake added wealth to the treasury and diminished Spain's _____.

- A. unlimited power
- B. unrestricted growth
- C. territory
- D. treaties
- E. Answer not available in article

2. King Philip recruited many _____ soldiers and sailors.

- A. warlike
- B. strong
- C. accomplished
- D. timid
- E. inexperienced

3. The _____ Armada set sail on May 9, 1588.

- A. complete
- B. warlike
- C. independent
- D. isolated
- E. Answer not available

4. The two battles left the Spanish fleet _____.

- A. open to change
- B. triumphant
- C. open to attack
- D. defeated
- E. discouraged

5. The Armada was _____ on one side.

- A. closed off
- B. damaged
- C. alone
- D. circled
- E. Answer not available in this article

Answers and Explanations

- 1. A:** "Supremacy" means unlimited power, not unrestricted growth (B). The passage states that Drake diminished Spain's supremacy, but does not specifically mention diminishing its territory (C). Drake's raids enriched England and reduced Spain's power; no mention is made of eliminating any treaties (D).
- 2. B:** "Robust" means strong. It does not mean warlike (A), accomplished (C) or competent, timid (D) or fearful, or inexperienced (E).
- 3. B:** "Martial" means warlike or war-related. It does not mean complete (A), independent (C), or isolated (D).
- 4. C:** "Vulnerable" means open to attack or susceptible to harm. It does not mean open to change (A) or receptive, triumphant (B) or victorious, defeated (D) or beaten-they were vulnerable to attack first and then consequently were defeated-or discouraged (E), i.e. disheartened or dispirited.
- 5. A:** The passage indicates the Armada was "blocked" on one side, i.e. closed off rather than damaged (B) (it was damaged extensively, not on one side); alone (C) or circled (D), i.e. surrounded, neither of which can be done on only one side.