

## TOEFL Junior : Reading Comprehension Test 8

Read the passage . 60 - 100 minutes

### The Lavish Royal Couple

King Louis XVI and Queen Marie Antoinette ruled France from 1774 to 1789, a time when the country was fighting bankruptcy. The royal couple did not let France's insecure financial situation limit their immoderate spending, however. Even though the minister of finance repeatedly warned the king and queen against wasting money, they continued to spend great fortunes on their personal pleasure. This lavish spending greatly enraged the people of France. They felt that the royal couple bought its luxurious lifestyle at the poor people's expense.

Marie Antoinette, the beautiful but exceedingly impractical queen, seemed uncaring about her subjects' misery. While French citizens begged for lower taxes, the queen embellished her palace with extravagant works of art. She also surrounded herself with artists, writers, and musicians, who encouraged the queen to spend money even more profusely.

While the queen's favorites gluttoned themselves on huge feasts at the royal table, many people in France were starving. The French government taxed the citizens outrageously. These high taxes paid for the entertainments the queen and her court so enjoyed. When the minister of finance tried to stop these royal spendthrifts, the queen replaced him. The intense hatred that the people felt for Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette kept building until it led to the French Revolution. During this time of struggle and violence (1789-1799), thousands of aristocrats, as well as the king and queen themselves, lost their lives at the guillotine. Perhaps if Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette had reined in their extravagant spending, the events that rocked France would not have occurred.

**INSTRUCTION:**

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

**1. The people surrounding the queen encouraged her to spend money \_\_\_\_\_.**

- A. wisely
- B. abundantly
- C. carefully
- D. foolishly
- E. joyfully

**2. The minister of finance tried to curb these royal \_\_\_\_\_.**

- A. aristocrats
- B. money wasters
- C. enemies
- D. individuals
- E. spenders

## Answers and Explanations

1. **B:** "Profusely" means abundantly, copiously, or excessively. It does not mean wisely (A) or carefully (B), which are both opposite in meaning to the excessive connotation of profuse spending. Foolishly (D) can be associated with spending profusely, but does not have the same meaning. Profusely does not mean joyfully (E), i.e. gleefully or happily.

2. **B:** "Spendthrifts" means money wasters. It does not mean aristocrats (A), i.e. nobles or privileged people. It does not mean enemies (C) or adversaries. It does not mean individuals (D) or persons. "Spenders" (E) denotes people who spend, but does not convey the sense of wasteful spending or squandering in the same way that "spendthrifts" does.