

READING COMPREHENSION #02

1. Skim the text. What is it about?

- A. The difference between natural and man-made disasters
- B. How emergency services respond to a disaster
- C. The causes of a disaster
- D. The effects of a disaster on people and the environment
- E. Ways in which people rely on the sea



1 Every year catastrophic natural disasters happen around the world. But there are also man-made disasters, and these can be just as deadly. In April 2010, the Deepwater Horizon oil rig exploded in the Gulf of Mexico while a large number of people were working on it. Fortunately, the majority of these people were rescued, but eleven people died in the disaster. Nearly five million barrels of oil spilled into the sea. It was the largest
5 US oil spill in history.

As soon as the disaster occurred, a huge clean-up operation began. Engineers worked around the clock to stop more oil from spilling into the sea. Local volunteers worked with emergency services on the shore to try to prevent the oil drifting onto beaches. Later, scientists used chemicals to break up the large mass of oil.

10 Scientists say that it will take years or even decades to know the long-term effects on sea life in the Gulf, and we don't know how long it will take for things to get back to normal. This is because the ecosystem is very complex. It is also difficult to get accurate information on what is happening far out at sea. Nevertheless, new studies show that the environmental impact on dolphins and other marine wildlife may be eventually worse than feared.

15 The effects on human life are easier to measure. People involved in the fishing industry have perhaps suffered the most. Local fishermen were worried that there wouldn't be any fish for them to catch. They also thought that customers would not want to risk eating seafood that might be contaminated with chemicals. Many people who work in the tourist industry have also lost their livelihoods as thousands of tourists have chosen to go elsewhere for their vacations. And, because this was a man-made disaster, people's concerns soon turned to anger towards the company responsible for the oil rig. Thousands of people are currently suing the oil
20 company for compensation. Experts say it could take 20 years and billions of dollars to settle all the claims.

2 Read the text again. Choose the best heading A–E for each paragraph 1–4. There is one extra heading.

- A Cleaning up _____
- B Impact on humans and legal action _____
- C Disaster at sea _____
- D Predicting the consequences _____
- E The effects of the disaster _____

3 Read the text again. Choose the correct answers.

- 1 Man-made disasters ...
 - A can have the same harmful effects as natural disasters.
 - B happen more often than natural disasters.
 - C don't happen as often as natural disasters.
 - D are worse than natural disasters.
 - E aren't usually as bad as natural disasters.
- 2 When the oil rig exploded ...
 - A oil was already spilling into the sea.
 - B the rescue efforts failed.
 - C most of the people on the rig survived.
 - D there were no survivors.
 - E people thought that it was a natural disaster.
- 3 When the disaster happened ...
 - A the clean-up operation did not start soon enough.
 - B scientists immediately started using chemicals on the oil.
 - C people took action immediately to prevent damage to the environment.
 - D a lot of oil drifted onto beaches.
 - E engineers tried to stop the oil from reaching the shore.
4. New studies show that ...
 - A the effects on marine life are not as bad as predicted.
 - B people were able to predict what the environmental effects would be.
 - C we will soon know the long-term effects on sea life.
 - D the ecosystem is very complicated.
 - E the environmental impact of sea life might be worse than originally thought.
- 5 Local fishermen feared that ...
 - A dolphins would be killed.
 - B they would suffer most.
 - C their customers would get sick.
 - D they would have to get a different job.
 - E they wouldn't be able to fish.
- 6 Tourists ...
 - A still visit the area.
 - B are unable to visit the area.
 - C are angry that they cannot visit the area.
 - D have stopped visiting the area.
 - E are keen to return to the area.

4 Find words and phrases 1–6 in the text. Match them with definitions A–F.

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| 1 catastrophic (line 1) | ___ | A moving slowly |
| 2 around the clock (line 6) | ___ | B ways of earning money to live |
| 3 drifting (line 8) | ___ | C during the day and the night |
| 4 ecosystem (line 10) | ___ | D extremely bad |
| 5 livelihoods (line 17) | ___ | E taking legal action against someone |
| 6 suing (line 19) | ___ | F all the animals and plants that live in an area |