Reading

Reading Passage 1

You should spend about **20 minutes** on **Questions 1 – 13**, which are based on **Reading Passage 1** on the following pages.

THE BERMUDA TRIANGLE

The Bermuda Triangle is a mythical section of the Atlantic Ocean roughly bounded by Miami, Bermuda and Puerto Rico where dozens of ships and airplanes have disappeared. Unexplained circumstances surround some of these accidents, including one in which the pilots of a squadron of U.S. Navy bombers became disoriented while flying over the area; the planes were never found. Other boats and planes have seemingly vanished from the area in good weather without even radioing distress messages. But although myriad fanciful theories have been proposed regarding the Bermuda Triangle, none of them prove that mysterious disappearances occur more frequently there than in other well-travelled sections of the ocean. In fact, people navigate the area every day without incident.

The area referred to as the Bermuda Triangle, or Devil's Triangle, covers about 500,000 square miles of ocean off the South-Eastern tip of Florida. When Christopher Columbus sailed through the area on his first voyage to the New World, he reported that a great flame of fire (probably a meteor) crashed into the sea one night and that a strange light appeared in the distance a few weeks later. He also wrote about erratic compass readings, perhaps because at that time a sliver of the Bermuda Triangle was one of the few places on Earth where true north and magnetic north lined up.

William Shakespeare's play "The Tempest," which some scholars claim was based on a real-life Bermuda shipwreck, may have enhanced the area's aura of mystery. Nonetheless, reports of unexplained disappearances did not really capture the public's attention until the 20th century. An especially infamous tragedy occurred in March 1918 when the USS Cyclops, a 542-foot-long Navy cargo ship with over 300 men and 10,000 tons of manganese ore onboard, sank somewhere between Barbados and the Chesapeake Bay. The Cyclops never sent out an SOS distress call despite being equipped to do so, and an extensive search found no wreckage. "Only God and the sea know what happened to the great ship," U.S. President Woodrow Wilson later said. In 1941 two of the Cyclops' sister ships similarly vanished without a trace along nearly the same route.

A pattern allegedly began forming in which vessels traversing the Bermuda Triangle would either disappear or be found abandoned. Then, in December 1945, five Navy bombers carrying 14 men took off from a Fort Lauderdale, Florida, airfield in order to conduct practice bombing runs over some nearby shoals. But with his compasses apparently malfunctioning, the leader of the mission, known as Flight 19, got severely lost. All five planes flew aimlessly until they ran low on fuel and were forced to ditch at sea. That same day, a rescue plane and its 13-man crew also disappeared. After a

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massive weeks-long search failed to turn up any evidence, the official Navy report declared that it was "as if they had flown to Mars."

By the time author Vincent Gaddis coined the phrase "Bermuda Triangle" in a 1964 magazine article, additional mysterious accidents had occurred in the area, including three passenger planes that went down despite having just sent "all's well" messages. Charles Berlitz, whose grandfather founded the Berlitz language schools, stoked the legend even further in 1974 with a sensational bestseller about the legend. Since then, scores of fellow paranormal writers have blamed the triangle's supposed lethalness on everything from aliens, Atlantis and sea monsters to time warps and reverse gravity fields, whereas more scientifically minded theorists have pointed to magnetic anomalies, waterspouts or huge eruptions of methane gas from the ocean floor.

In all probability, however, there is no single theory that solves the mystery. As one skeptic put it, trying to find a common cause for every Bermuda Triangle disappearance is no more logical than trying to find a common cause for every automobile accident in Arizona. Moreover, although storms, reefs and the Gulf Stream can cause navigational challenges there, maritime insurance leader Lloyd's of London does not recognize the Bermuda Triangle as an especially hazardous place. Neither does the U.S. Coast Guard, which says: "In a review of many aircraft and vessel losses in the area over the years, there has been nothing discovered that would indicate that casualties were the result of anything other than physical causes. No extraordinary factors have ever been identified."

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Questions 1–8

Do the following statements agree with the information in the text? In **boxes 1–8** on your answer sheet, write:

TRUE *if the statement agrees with the text*
FALSE *if the statement does not agree with the text*
NOT GIVEN *if there is no information about this in the text*

1. Aircraft and ships mysteriously vanished when travelling through the Bermuda Triangle.
2. There were many fictional explanations for the Bermuda Triangle.
3. Many theories prove that mysterious incidents happened more often in the Bermuda Triangle than in other parts of the ocean.
4. Many people still traveled through the Bermuda Triangle because they were not familiar with the tales regarding mysterious accidents that had happened in the area.
5. Christopher Columbus was the first one to visit the Bermuda Triangle.
6. One of William Shakespeare's plays was based on an actual event that occurred in the Bermuda Triangle.
7. Only after the unexplained disappearance of a Navy ship did the Bermuda Triangle become the center of the public's attention.
8. After a distress signal was sent from The Cyclops, an extensive search was conducted yet found no trace of the vessel.

Questions 9 – 13

Complete the sentences below.

Write **NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS** for *each answer*

9. The leader of Flight 19 and the whole squad got lost because his _____ did not work properly.
10. Before the phrase "Bermuda Triangle" appeared in a magazine, unexplained _____ had been reported in this water.
11. Charles Berlitz published a thrilling _____ about the Bermuda Triangle.

12 – 13. The U.S. Coast Guard says there is hardly any evidence indicative of _____ being the result of _____.

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