



## READING ACTIVITY N° 1

Full name: \_\_\_\_\_

Level: Upper-intermediate

**Competencia:** Lee diversos tipos de textos en inglés como lengua extranjera.

**Capacidad:** Obtiene información del texto escrito.

**Desempeño Precisado:** Identifica información explícita, y complementaria integrando datos para resolver diversos ejercicios de comprensión lectora.

### I. Look at the headline. What do you think is the article about?

The article...

- a) gives advice about what to do in a disaster.
- b) suggests how to prepare for a disaster.

# HOW TO SURVIVE A DISASTER

At seven o'clock on the evening of 27<sup>th</sup> September 1994, the ferry MS Estonia left Tallinn on its way to Stockholm. It never got there.

Six hours into the journey, strong winds caused a door to break open and the ferry started to take on water. In less than an hour, it had sunk, taking most of its passengers and crew with it.

Even given the speed of the tragedy, the stormy sea and the time it took rescuers to reach them, the number of victims was surprisingly high. It seems that many passengers were slow to react to save themselves, even when they were faced with imminent danger.

Why did this happen? John Leach, a survival instructor, has studied the behaviour of people in disasters around the world for several decades. According to Leach, around 75% of people are so bewildered by life-threatening situations that they are unable to think clearly. Only about 15% of people remain calm and are able to make rational decisions. The remaining 10% are so frightened that they are a danger to others.

According to Leach, in the majority of cases, it's a failure to react that puts people at a higher risk. One of the reasons for this lack of reaction is peer pressure. Many people are worried about responding to an alarm when no one around them does.

To illustrate this point, a group of people were invited to take part in an experiment. They were taken to a waiting room, and researchers blew smoke into the room from under the door. In the first part of the experiment, participants were alone, and in this case 75% of them left to report the fire. But when there was a group of actors in the room who were instructed not to react to the smoke, only 10% got up to leave. The overwhelming majority stayed, even when there was so much smoke that they could hardly see.

“ Many people are worried about responding to an alarm when no one around them does. ”

Another reason for passivity in the face of an emergency is that people find it difficult to adapt to a stressful situation. When disasters occur, events move quickly, but stress slows down the ability to think. The only way to overcome this problem, according to survival experts, is to prepare in advance. For example, by knowing what the safety procedures are, a person is able to act automatically without having to make a decision in a critical moment. For this reason, experts stress the importance of knowing where fire exits are and how to evacuate a building, and listening to safety instructions when flying.

In areas of the world where natural disasters occur, being prepared is a priority. In Japan, which is particularly prone to earthquakes, every precaution is taken to make sure that children know what to do when a quake occurs. The measures include monthly drills in which alarms sound and children retreat under their desks. If they are in the playground, they are taught to run to the centre to avoid being hit by falling debris.

And the local fire department takes groups of children into earthquake simulation machines so that they know what it feels like.

Thankfully, it's highly unlikely that any of us will ever find ourselves in a disaster situation. But even in the case of small emergencies, it's been shown that fast reactions can make all the difference to an outcome.



Earthquake drill in the Philippines

**II. Read the article again and choose the correct answer.**

1. There were many casualties in Estonia because...
  - a) rescuers took a long time to reach the boat.
  - b) the sea was exceptionally stormy.
  - c) passengers didn't know what to do.
  - d) people couldn't think clearly about what to do.
  
2. The experiment showed that people...
  - a) don't react unless other people react.
  - b) get more worried when they are alone.
  - c) wait until the last moment before they act.
  - d) think that the situation is a false alarm.
  
3. Some people survive disaster situations because...
  - a) they have special skills.
  - b) they know that the disaster is going to happen.
  - c) they have thought about what to do beforehand.
  - d) they are better able to deal with stress.

**III. Answer the questions.**

1. What happened to the ferry in less than an hour?

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2. How was the passengers' reaction during the tragedy?

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3. Who is John Leach?

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4. According to Leach, what's one of the reasons of these people's lack of reaction?

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5. What's the recommendation of survival experts?

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6. Write one example of "earthquake drills"?

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**IV. Match the underlined words in the article with these definitions.**

1. training for emergency \_\_\_\_\_
2. much larger than anything else \_\_\_\_\_
3. likely to be affected by \_\_\_\_\_
4. confused, not certain what to do \_\_\_\_\_
5. likely or certain to happen very soon \_\_\_\_\_

**V. Complete the sentences with the words from exercise IV.**

1. Rhinos are in \_\_\_\_\_ danger of extinction.
2. Craig was \_\_\_\_\_ by the decision to cancel his contract.
3. Athletes are often \_\_\_\_\_ to injury.
4. We couldn't do the exam today because we had a fire \_\_\_\_\_.
5. An \_\_\_\_\_ number of students voted for the class president.

