



Read the text.

Choose one of the variants A, B, C or D.

There is something every visitor to Ireland must do kiss the Blarney Stone. On my first visit to Ireland last fall, I accomplished this. On the way to Blarney Castle, our guide tried to discourage us from climbing to the top of the five-story castle where the stone is located. However, I was not to be deterred. Entering the 15th century castle, it was obvious that it was built as a fortress, not a tourist attraction. The walls are 18 feet thick at the base, and the battlements at the top allowed the defenders to

pour boiling water or tar on their visitors.

To reach the stone, I had to scramble up 160 steps around a circular staircase. The steps were built too narrow so only one attacker could advance up them at a time - a great idea for the ancient lords but a bad one for modern-day tourists, especially when we had to squeeze by folks heading down.

A stone walkway runs around the top of the castle offering a panoramic view of the lush green countryside. I spent a few minutes enjoying the view until I spotted a sign: "Blarney Stone". I headed over and observed the unusual goings-on. One does not just kiss the stone; there is a ritual to follow.

First I emptied my pockets. Then I lay on my back and with a guard holding my feet I bent backward down a shaft - with only a grate separating me from a five-story fall - until I could smack the magic stone. Was it worth all those contortions? I'm now one of a select group of several million or so who have a document certifying their eloquence.

1. When was Blarney Castle built?

- A Four centuries ago.
- B Over 500 years ago.
- C In the 1500's.
- D 1500 years ago.

4. Which statement is true?

- A The Blarney Stone has magical powers.
- B The castle was designed to attract tourists.
- C The use of the castle has changed over time.
- D The Blarney Stone has been relocated to make it easier to find.

2. What was the author's complaint about the stairs in the castle?

- A There were too many.
- B They were too old and dangerous.
- C They weren't wide enough.
- D They were too steep.

5. How did the author learn to kiss the Blarney Stone?

- A He read the instructions.
- B His tour guide taught him how.
- C He watched other people kiss it.
- D It was obvious. No one had to show him.

3. How did the soldiers defend the castle?

- A By pouring hot water or tar on them.
- B By squeezing up the narrow staircase.
- C By throwing sharp pieces of stones.
- D By attracting visitors inside the walls of the castle and battling with them.

6. Which word best describes how the author felt about the visit?

- A Depressed.
- B Enthusiastic.
- C Relaxed.
- D Puzzled.