



The Royal National Lifeboat Institution (B2 - Upper Intermediate)

A – Before you start

Answer the questions with a partner.

1. What do you know about your country's sea rescue services? (How are they organised? Where are they stationed? Are they professionals or volunteers? etc.)
2. Are there also lifeguards on rivers and lakes in your country?
3. Can you name any famous shipwrecks?

B – Listen and answer

Read these incomplete statements. Then listen (without reading) and fill in the blanks.

1. Sir William Hilary first suggested the creation of a lifeboat service in _____.
2. At that time there were about _____ shipwrecks a year.
3. The service was founded in 1824 at the City of London _____ in Bishopsgate.
4. The service's biggest rescue was in March 1907 when _____ people were saved.
5. The RNLI saved thousands of lives during the two _____.
6. The organisation also provides _____ and _____ safety courses for children.
7. _____ per cent of lifeboat crews are unpaid volunteers.
8. The RNLI has recently been _____ for rescuing people crossing the Channel in small boats.

C – Read and answer

Read the article and answer the questions.

1. How did Sir William Henry get the idea for a lifeboat service?
2. Why was Henry Blogg's service with the RNLI impressive?
3. What figure shows the risks involved in being a member of a lifeboat crew?
4. How did the shipwreck of SS Suevic happen?
5. What rescue services does the RNLI operate?
6. How is it funded?
7. Why are there now lifeboat stations on inland waters?
8. What happened to daily donations to the RNLI after recent criticism of the organisation?
9. What was exceptional about a rescue that took place off the North Devon coast in 1899?
10. Why are the lifeboat stations on the River Thames extremely busy?

D – Learn it! Use it!

Complete these sentences with words from the glossary. (You may have to adapt the expression in some way; e.g. change the verb tense, or change from singular to plural.)

1. The situation was deteriorating fast, so the government had to act _____ to avoid a disaster.
2. The world's largest system of coral _____ lies off the north-east coast of Australia.
3. Mia has _____ the family business alone since her parents retired.
4. There used to be a large oak tree here, but last year it was blown down during a _____.
5. The guidebook says the _____ where Julius Caesar was assassinated is over there.
6. Heavy rainfall, due to global warming, is causing more _____ than in the past.

E – Ready for the B2 FIRST Certificate in English? (Reading and Use of English, Part 3)

Use the word in brackets to form a word that fits in the space given.

1. The RNLI is one of Britain's most _____ (ICON) institutions.
2. It was founded at a time when about 1,800 shipwrecks happened _____ (ANNUAL).
3. Now it is a popular and highly _____ (RESPECT) part of British and Irish life.
4. During World War II, it rescued crews from downed British and German _____ (AIR).
5. The RNLI has also rescued migrants trying to cross the Channel _____ (LEGAL).
6. In reply to criticism about this, it says it is an _____ (POLITICS) organisation.
7. The two _____ (BUSY) life boat stations in England are on the River Thames, in London.
8. In 1989, fifty-one _____ (PARTY) died when a party boat sank in the Thames.

F – Write about it

Write about a famous shipwreck. Mention:

- the name and type of ship involved;
 - where/when it happened;
 - what caused it;
 - whether there was any rescue operation;
 - how many people died/were rescued.
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Answers: The Royal National Lifeboat Institution (B2)

B – Listen and answer

1. 1823 2. 1,800 3. Tavern 4. 456 5. World Wars 6. sea – beach 7. 97 8. criticised

C – Read and answer

1. He had participated in rescues off the coast of the Isle of Man. 2. He served in the RNLI for over 53 years and helped to rescue 873 people. 3. Six hundred RNLI members have died while rescuing others. 4. The ship hit a reef in a strong gale and dense fog. 5. It operates a 24-hour search and rescue service around the coasts of Britain and Ireland, as well as national and international flood rescue services. 6. It depends on voluntary donations and legacies. 7. Because water activities, like paddle-boarding and wild swimming, have increased in popularity. 8. They rose by 300 per cent. 9. The sea was too rough to launch the lifeboat locally, so eighteen horses and hundreds of local people dragged it across land for thirteen miles to launch it from a calmer place.

10. Because the Thames is a dangerous river with an extremely powerful tide.

D – Learn it! Use it!

1. swiftly 2. reefs 3. run 4. gale 5. spot 6. floods

E – Ready for the B2 FIRST Certificate in English?

1. iconic 2. annually 3. respected 4. aircraft/airplanes 5. illegally 6. apolitical
7. busiest 8. partygoers