BLOGS

Reading Comprehension Questions for CLAT 2026

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Prepare for CLAT 2026 by attempting these 15 questions on Reading Comprehension.

PASSAGE

In the 16th century, an age of great marine and terrestrial exploration, Ferdinand Magellan led the first expedition to sail around the world. As a young Portuguese noble, he served the king of Portugal, but he became involved in the quagmire of political intrigue at court and lost the king's favor. After he was dismissed from service by the king of Portugal, he offered to serve the future Emperor Charles V of Spain.

A papal decree of 1493 had assigned all land in the New World west of 50 degrees W longitude to Spain and all the land east of that line to Portugal. Magellan offered to prove that the East Indies fell under Spanish authority.

On September 20, 1519, Magellan set sail from Spain with five ships. More than a year later, one of these ships was exploring the topography of South America in search of a water route across the continent. This ship sank, but the remaining four ships searched along the southern peninsula of South America.

Finally they found the passage they sought near 50 degrees S latitude. Magellan named this passage the Strait of All Saints, but today it is known as the Strait of Magellan.

One ship deserted while in this passage and returned to Spain, so fewer sailors were privileged to gaze at that first panorama of the Pacific Ocean. Those who remained crossed the meridian now known as the International Date Line in the early spring of 1521 after 98 days on the Pacific Ocean. During those long days at sea, many of Magellan's men died of starvation and disease.

Later, Magellan became involved in an insular conflict in the Philippines and was killed in a tribal battle. Only one ship and 17 sailors under the command of the Basque navigator Elcano survived to complete the westward journey to Spain and thus prove once and for all that the world is

round, with no precipice at the edge.

Source: https://www.testprepreview.com/modules/reading1.htm

1. What was Magellan's main objective in offering his services to Spain?

a) To explore South America

b) To prove the East Indies fell under Spanish authority

c) To find a route back to Portugal

d) To conquer the Philippines

Correct Answer: b) To prove the East Indies fell under Spanish authority

Explanation: The passage mentions that Magellan offered to prove to Spain that the East Indies were under their jurisdiction as per the papal decree of 1493.

2. Which event led Magellan to leave Portuguese service?

a) His inability to lead an expedition successfully

b) His involvement in political intrigue at the Portuguese court

c) His failure to find a passage through South America

d) The collapse of Portuguese naval power

Correct Answer: b) His involvement in political intrigue at the Portuguese court

Explanation: The passage specifies that Magellan lost the king's favor due to his involvement in court politics and was dismissed from Portuguese service.

3. Where did Magellan find the passage that allowed his fleet to cross South America?

a) At 50 degrees W longitude

b) Near 50 degrees S latitude

c) At the equator

d) Along the northern coast of South America

Correct Answer: b) Near 50 degrees S latitude

Explanation: The passage states that Magellan's fleet found the passage near 50 degrees S latitude, which was later named the Strait of Magellan.

4. What was the original name Magellan gave to the Strait of Magellan?

a) Strait of All Saints

b) Strait of the Pacific

c) International Date Line Strait

d) Strait of Magellan

Correct Answer: a) Strait of All Saints

Explanation: The passage mentions that Magellan named the passage the Strait of All Saints, but it is now known as the Strait of Magellan.

5. What was significant about the crossing of the International Date Line by Magellan's fleet?

a) It marked the discovery of a new ocean

b) It confirmed the spherical shape of the Earth

c) It was the first recorded crossing of the line

d) It was the point where Magellan died

Correct Answer: b) It confirmed the spherical shape of the Earth

Explanation: The passage highlights that Magellan's expedition proved the Earth's roundness through their westward journey.

6. Why did Magellan's crew suffer during their voyage across the Pacific Ocean?

a) They encountered violent storms

b) They were attacked by hostile tribes

c) They faced starvation and disease

d) They lost their way due to poor navigation

Correct Answer: c) They faced starvation and disease

Explanation: The passage explicitly states that many of Magellan's men died of starvation and disease during the 98-day Pacific crossing.

7. Who completed the circumnavigation after Magellan's death?

a) The King of Portugal

b) Charles V of Spain

c) The Basque navigator Elcano

d) Ferdinand Magellan himself

Correct Answer: c) The Basque navigator Elcano

Explanation: The passage indicates that Elcano took command after Magellan's death and completed the journey to Spain.

8. What was the significance of the expedition led by Magellan?

a) It discovered the Americas

b) It proved the Earth is round

c) It ended hostilities between Spain and Portugal

d) It established the Strait of All Saints as a trade route

Correct Answer: b) It proved the Earth is round

Explanation: The passage concludes by noting that the expedition demonstrated the Earth's roundness and disproved the idea of a precipice at its edge.

9. Choose the word that is closest in meaning to "quagmire" as used in the passage.

a) Solution

b) Predicament

c) Clarity

d) Stability

Correct Answer: b) Predicament

Explanation: The word "quagmire" refers to a difficult or complicated situation, much like a predicament.

10. What was a direct consequence of Magellan's involvement in the Philippines?

a) He discovered new trade routes

b) He established a Spanish colony

c) He was killed in a tribal battle

d) He captured the islands for Spain

Correct Answer: c) He was killed in a tribal battle

Explanation: The passage notes that Magellan became involved in a tribal conflict in the Philippines and was killed.

11. Identify the error in the following sentence from the passage: "Only one ship and 17 sailors under the command of the Basque navigator Elcano survived to complete the

westward journey to Spain and thus prove once and for all that the world is round, with no precipice at the edge."

a) "Only one ship and 17 sailors" is incorrect.

b) "The Basque navigator Elcano" is unnecessary.

c) "Prove once and for all" should be replaced with "proves once and for all."

d) No error.

Correct Answer: d) No error

Explanation: The sentence is grammatically correct and well-constructed.

12. Replace the word "gaze" in the sentence "fewer sailors were privileged to gaze at that first panorama of the Pacific Ocean" with a synonym.

a) Look away

b) Stare

c) Glimpse

d) Observe

Correct Answer: d) Observe

Explanation: "Observe" is a more formal synonym for "gaze" and fits the context of the sentence.

13. Identify the error in the sentence: "A papal decree of 1493 had assigned all land in the New World west of 50 degrees W longitude to Spain and all the land east of that line to Portugal."

a) "Had assigned" should be replaced with "assigns."

b) "All land in the New World" is redundant.

c) "To Spain and all the land" should be replaced with "to Spain, and all the land."

d) No error.

Correct Answer: d) No error

Explanation: The sentence is clear and correctly structured.

14. Rewrite the sentence "Magellan named this passage the Strait of All Saints, but today it is known as the Strait of Magellan" to make it grammatically concise without changing the meaning.

a) Magellan named this passage the Strait of All Saints; it is now the Strait of Magellan.

b) Magellan named this passage the Strait of All Saints, later renamed the Strait of Magellan.

c) Magellan's Strait of All Saints is now the Strait of Magellan.

d) The passage once called the Strait of All Saints by Magellan is today the Strait of Magellan.

Correct Answer: a) Magellan named this passage the Strait of All Saints; it is now the Strait of Magellan.

Explanation: Option (a) retains the original meaning and improves conciseness with proper punctuation.

15. Magellan became involved in a(n) _____ conflict in the Philippines, leading to his death.

a) Naval

b) Insular

c) International

d) Religious

Correct Answer: b) Insular

Explanation: "Insular" means relating to islands, which aligns with the Philippines being an island nation.