

It was like the Titanic!

A luxury winter cruise in the Mediterranean turned into a horrific scramble for survival for 4,000 people as the giant 114,500-tonne ocean liner *Costa Concordia* hit rocks off the coast of Italy on Friday evening. Survivors said, "It was like the *Titanic*". The drama began when the cruise ship hit some rocks, which tore a 300ft gash along the lower side of it. The cruise ship was near the tiny Tuscan island of Giglio, off the west coast of Italy, north of Rome. Holidaymakers, who were enjoying the last day of their vacation, suddenly faced the horrifying ordeal of abandoning ship. Panic soon spread as they realised how serious the situation on board actually was. The ship soon lurched to starboard throwing passengers all over the place. There were desperate scenes on board as people fought to survive. The ship soon flipped on its side half submerged in the sea.

Many stories are now emerging of the drama. At first passengers were told it was an electrical fault. Passengers rapidly realised it wasn't. The crew gave conflicting orders, telling some passengers that everything was alright and to return to their cabins. Some lifeboats were not launched for 45 minutes, by which time the ship was listing so severely it was impossible to launch them. People were scrambling to get in them. Chaos ruled as the lifeboats eventually managed to get away, some being lowered too quickly, striking passengers and other lifeboats already in the water. Local boats went to the rescue. Many survivors told how the chaos resembled a scene from the 1997 film *Titanic*, as men and women dressed in elegant evening dress clambered in dark corridors clinging to walls as they tried to make their way to the ship's outer deck. People were slammed against walls. Once they reached the outer decks they put on their lifejackets. Passengers complained there was no instruction on how to evacuate the ship.

So far three people are known to have died after diving into the chilly waters of the Tyrrhenian Sea. Another three were critically ill. Today it was reported another three have been miraculously rescued. This included a South Korean couple on their honeymoon! Another 40 are still missing. Divers continue to look for survivors. The Captain has been arrested on the suspicion of multiple homicides. **Note: It is 100 years since the *Titanic* hit an iceberg in the Atlantic and sunk in 1912.**

Category: Italy / Holidays / Cruise ship disaster

Level: Intermediate / Upper intermediate

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EXERCISES

1. Cruise ship disaster: Briefly, discuss the recent cruise ship disaster that took place off Italy. Go round the room swapping details with others.

2. Dictation: The teacher will read four to six lines of the article slowly and clearly. Students will write down what they hear. The teacher will repeat the passage slowly again. Self-correct your work from page one - filling in spaces and correcting mistakes. Be honest with yourself on the number of errors. Advise the teacher of your total number of errors. Less than five is very good. Ten is acceptable. Any more is room for improvement! More than twenty - you need to do some work!

3. Reading: The students should now read the article aloud, swapping readers every paragraph.

4. Vocabulary: Students should now look through the article and underline any vocabulary they do not know. Look in dictionaries. Discuss and help each other out. The teacher will go through and explain any unknown words or phrases.

5. The article: Students should look through the article with the teacher.

- a) What is the article about?
- b) What do you think about the article?
- c) What is the latest on this story?

6. Geography: Italy: Where is Italy? What sea lies off Italy? What is its capital? Draw a map on the board then **look on Google maps** to help you.

7. Cruise ship disaster: In pairs think of five things you know about the cruise ship *Costa Concordia* disaster. Then add five things you know about the *Titanic* sinking. Write them below. Discuss together. What similarities are there?

Cruise ship <i>Costa Concordia</i>	<i>Titanic</i>
1	1
2	2
3	3
4	4
5	5

The teacher will choose some pairs to discuss their findings in front of the class.

8. Let's roleplay 1: CNN: In pairs/groups. One of you is the interviewer. The others are one of the following people. You are in the *CNN* TV studio in London. Today's interview is about: *Cruise ship disaster off Italy*.

1	A passenger who survived
2	A local ferry captain
3	A helicopter pilot who assisted the rescue
4	A spokesperson from the shipping company

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9. **Let's think!** In pairs. On the board write as many words as you can to do with **Cruise ship disaster**. *One-two minutes*. Compare with other teams. Using your words compile a short dialogue together.

10. **Let's roleplay 2:** In pairs. You are in a bar on the tiny island of Giglio, off the Italian mainland. You have both survived the cruise ship disaster. Over a hot cup of coffee and covered in a blanket discuss what happened. Go over what each of you had to live through in order to survive. How did you escape? Who helped you escape from the luxury cruise ship *Costa Concordia*? *5-minutes*.

11. **Let's do 'The Article Quiz':** Have the students quiz each other in pairs. They score a point for each correct answer and half a point each time they have to look at the article for help. See who can get the highest score!

Student A

- 1) Name the seas.
- 2) Name the ship in the disaster.
- 3) Name the island.
- 4) Name the other famous ship.
- 5) What happened in 1912?

Student B

- 1) What took 45 minutes?
- 2) Which way did the ship lurch?
- 3) How many passengers were on board?
- 4) How many tonnes is the ship?
- 5) Did the ship sink?

12. **Lessons learnt from the disaster:** Think of three lessons learnt from the disaster. Write them below. Discuss together with your partner.

Lessons learnt from the disaster
1 _____
2 _____
3 _____

The teacher will choose some pairs to discuss their findings in front of the class.

13. **Presentation:** In pairs, groups or individually: Prepare in class or at home a two minute presentation on: **The Costa Concordia disaster**. Stand at the front of the class to give your presentation to the class. The class can vote on the best presentation. Class – After the presentations go through the good and weak points on each presentation. Learn from the results.

14. **Let's write an e-mail:** Write and send a 200 word e-mail to your teacher about: **The Costa Concordia disaster**. Your e-mail can be read out in class.

15. **Sentence starters:** Finish these sentence starters. Correct your mistakes. Compare what other people have written.

- a) The Titanic _____
- b) The cruise ship _____
- c) Passengers _____

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DISCUSSION

Student A questions

- 1) Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- 2) What do you think of the disaster?
- 3) How would you have reacted had you been on board?
- 4) Have you ever been on a sinking ship?
- 5) Did the crew do enough to help the passengers?
- 6) During the evacuation was it strictly women and children first?
- 7) Why did the captain leave the ship before everyone had been evacuated?
- 8) Where were you when you heard about the disaster?
- 9) Are you planning on going on holiday on a cruise ship?
- 10) Are cruise ships safe?

Student B questions

- 1) What do you think about what you read?
- 2) Have you learnt anything in today's English lesson?
- 3) Are cruise ships too big?
- 4) What is the appeal of a cruise ship?
- 5) Would you want to travel on one of the sister ships of the *Costa Concordia*?
- 6) Why did the ship stray off course?
- 7) Surely in this day and age modern technology should have alerted the crew about the rock it hit before it did?
- 8) Is modern technology to blame for this disaster?
- 9) Do you think the survivors will be going on any other cruises after this one?
- 10) Did you like this discussion?

SPEAKING

Let's discuss! The *Costa Concordia* disaster 2012 / The Titanic disaster 1912

Allow 10-15 minutes – As a class / small groups / pairs / 1 to 1

20 things about the *Costa Concordia* disaster of 2012

Or

20 things about the *Titanic* disaster of 1912

The teacher can moderate the session.

GAP FILL: READING:

Put the words into the gaps in the text.

It was like the Titanic!

A luxury winter cruise in the Mediterranean turned into a (1)_____ scramble for survival for 4,000 people as the giant 114,500-tonne ocean liner *Costa Concordia* hit (2)_____ off the coast of Italy on Friday evening. (3)_____ said, "It was like the *Titanic*". The (4)_____ began when the cruise ship hit some rocks, which tore a 300ft gash along the lower side of it. The cruise ship was near the tiny Tuscan island of Giglio, off the west coast of Italy, north of Rome. Holidaymakers, who were enjoying the last day of their (5)_____, suddenly faced the horrifying ordeal of abandoning ship. Panic soon spread as they realised how (6)_____ the situation on board actually was. The ship soon lurched to (7)_____ throwing passengers all over the place. There were desperate scenes on board as people fought to survive. The ship soon flipped on its side half (8)_____ in the sea.

serious

drama

starboard

rocks

submerged

vacation

survivors

horrific

Many stories are now emerging of the drama. At first passengers were told it was an electrical fault. Passengers (1)_____ realised it wasn't. The crew gave conflicting orders, telling some passengers that everything was alright and to return to their (2)_____. Some lifeboats were not launched for 45 minutes, by which time the ship was listing so severely it was impossible to (3)_____ them. People were scrambling to get in them. (4)_____ ruled as the lifeboats eventually managed to get away, some being lowered too quickly, striking passengers and other lifeboats already in the water. Local boats went to the rescue. Many survivors told how the chaos resembled a scene from the 1997 film *Titanic*, as men and women dressed in elegant evening dress (5)_____ in dark corridors (6)_____ to walls as they tried to make their way to the ship's outer deck. People were (7)_____ against walls. Once they reached the outer decks they put on their (8)_____. Passengers complained there was no instruction on how to evacuate the ship.

cabins

slammed

chaos

clinging

rapidly

launch

lifejackets

clambered

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GAP FILL: LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

It was like the Titanic!

A _____ in the Mediterranean turned into a horrific scramble for survival for 4,000 people as the giant 114,500-tonne ocean liner *Costa Concordia* hit rocks off the coast of Italy on Friday evening. Survivors said, "It _____". The drama began when the cruise ship hit some rocks, which tore a 300ft gash _____ of it. The cruise ship was near the tiny Tuscan island of Giglio, off the _____, north of Rome. Holidaymakers, who were enjoying the last day of their vacation, suddenly faced the horrifying ordeal of abandoning ship. _____ they realised how serious the situation on board actually was. The ship soon lurched to Starboard throwing passengers all over the place. There were desperate scenes on board as people fought to survive. The ship soon _____ half submerged in the sea.

Many stories are now _____. At first passengers were told it was an electrical fault. Passengers rapidly realised it wasn't. The crew gave conflicting orders, telling some passengers that everything was alright and to return to their cabins. Some lifeboats were not launched for 45 minutes, by which time the ship was _____ it was impossible to launch them. People were scrambling to get in them. Chaos ruled as the lifeboats _____, some being lowered too quickly, striking passengers and other lifeboats already in the water. Local boats went to the rescue. Many survivors told how the chaos resembled a scene from the 1997 film *Titanic*, as men and women dressed in _____ clambered in dark corridors clinging to walls as they tried to make their way to the ship's outer deck. People were _____. Once they reached the outer decks they put on their lifejackets. Passengers complained there was no instruction on how _____.

GRAMMAR

Put the words into the gaps in the text.

It was like the Titanic!

(1)___ luxury winter cruise in the Mediterranean turned into a horrific scramble (2)___ survival for 4,000 people as the giant 114,500-tonne ocean liner *Costa Concordia* hit rocks off the coast of Italy on Friday evening. Survivors said, "It was like (3)___ *Titanic*". The drama began when the cruise ship hit some rocks, which tore a 300ft gash along the lower side of it. The cruise ship was near the tiny Tuscan island of Giglio, off the west coast of Italy, north of Rome. Holidaymakers, (4)___ were enjoying the last day of their vacation, suddenly faced the horrifying ordeal (5)___ abandoning ship. Panic soon spread as they realised (6)___ serious the situation on board actually was. The ship soon lurched to Starboard throwing passengers all over the place. There were desperate scenes on board as people fought to survive. The ship soon flipped on (7)___ side half submerged (8)___ the sea.

how

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of

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they

some

there

that

from

which

their

many

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SPELLING TEST

The teacher will ask the class individually to spell the following words that are in the article. Afterwards, check your answers with your teacher, using the following ratings: **Pass = 12, Good = 15, Very good = 18, Excellent = 20**

1	cruise	11	homicides
2	luxury	12	desperate
3	impossible	13	abandoning
4	miraculously	14	passengers
5	rescued	15	Mediterranean
6	honeymoon	16	horrific
7	suspicion	17	suddenly
8	multiple	18	ordeal
9	scramble	19	starboard
10	survival	20	panic

LINKS

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-16564789>

http://edition.cnn.com/2012/01/15/world/europe/italy-cruise-deaths/index.html?hpt=hp_t1

http://edition.cnn.com/2012/01/14/europe/gallery/italy-ship/index.html?hpt=hp_t1

<http://www.france24.com/en/20120115-cruise-ship-italy-costa-concordia>

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/europe/2012/01/20121158510904403.html>

Note: starboard = right side of ship!

ANSWERS

GAP FILL: It was like the Titanic! A luxury winter cruise in the Mediterranean turned into a **horrific** scramble for survival for 4,000 people as the giant 114,500-tonne ocean liner *Costa Concordia* hit **rocks** off the coast of Italy on Friday evening. **Survivors** said, "It was like the *Titanic*". The **drama** began when the cruise ship hit some rocks, which tore a 300ft gash along the lower side of it. The cruise ship was near the tiny Tuscan island of Giglio, off the west coast of Italy, north of Rome. Holidaymakers, who were enjoying the last day of their **vacation**, suddenly faced the horrifying ordeal of abandoning ship. Panic soon spread as they realised how **serious** the situation on board actually was. The ship soon lurched to **Starboard** throwing passengers all over the place. There were desperate scenes on board as people fought to survive. The ship soon flipped on its side half **submerged** in the sea.

Many stories are now emerging of the drama. At first passengers were told it was an electrical fault. Passengers **rapidly** realised it wasn't. The crew gave conflicting orders, telling some passengers that everything was alright and to return to their **cabins**. Some lifeboats were not launched for 45 minutes, by which time the ship was listing so severely it was impossible to **launch** them. People were scrambling to get in them. **Chaos** ruled as the lifeboats eventually managed to get away, some being lowered too quickly, striking passengers and other lifeboats already in the water. Local boats went to the rescue. Many survivors told how the chaos resembled a scene from the 1997 film *Titanic*, as men and women dressed in elegant evening dress **clambered** in dark corridors **clinging** to walls as they tried to make their way to the ship's outer deck. People were **slammed** against walls. Once they reached the outer decks they put on their **lifejackets**. Passengers complained there was no instruction on how to evacuate the ship. **(V4)**

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