

**B2.II**

**UNIT 8**

**Exercise 1**

**READING COMPREHENSION**

The sinking of the RMS Titanic was one of the worst maritime disasters in history. On April 14, 1912, at 11:40 p.m., the 'unsinkable' luxury ship hit an iceberg and sank in just under three hours with the loss of around 1500 lives. There are many different descriptions of the disaster by the surviving passengers and crew, but few people doubt that human error played a part in the tragedy. Let's look at some of the things that went wrong. On the night of Sunday, 14 April 1912 the temperature was near freezing and the ocean was completely calm. Surviving 2nd Officer Charles Lightoller later wrote, "the sea was like glass". The ship's course had been changed by the captain, but other than this, he saw no reason to slow down. The owner of the ship, Bruce Ismay, was also on board and had instructed the captain to speed up in order to break the record for a transatlantic voyage. The captain agreed, but perhaps if he had known of the messages the ship had received in the radio room, he would have acted differently. According to a ship ahead called the Mesaba, lots of large icebergs were in the area. These messages did not reach him. There were three teams of lookouts on board keeping constant watch for obstacles in the ship's path, but as Charles Lightoller said at the British inquiry, "Everything was against us, there was no moon, no wind, no binoculars and with the dark side of the iceberg facing the ship, the lookouts were powerless." When the alarm was finally raised the crew acted very quickly but it was already too late to save the ship. Within twenty minutes of the collision the ship had flooded, so the captain ordered the lifeboats to be prepared, filled with women and children, and lowered into the water. This didn't go well, regulations about the number of lifeboats a ship should carry were already out of date when the Titanic set sail, and even if the evacuation had been better organised, there wouldn't have been enough boats to hold everybody. Meanwhile, the crew were sending out distress signals. The first message was "sinking, need immediate assistance," and then "SOS". Several ships responded, including the Mount Temple, Frankfurt, and the Titanic's sister ship, Olympic, but they were too far away. The closest ship to respond was the Carpathia, which arrived about four hours, too late to save everybody. Various distress flares launched from the sinking ship were also ineffective, including those seen by a ship called the Californian, whose captain, Stanley Lord, had ordered his crew to stop the ship for the night because of the icebergs. When Captain Lord was informed of the flares he failed to respond because he did not think they were important. Nor did the crew of the Californian wake their radio operator, who had gone to bed for the night. And what of Bruce Ismay, who many believe acted without regard for safety by requiring an unprepared ship to sail at such speed in spite of the danger? History tells us that he survived, but from the lifeboat turned his back on his beautiful ship as it sank. That night, of a total of 2,208 people, only 712 were rescued by the Carpathia, while 1,496 perished. If the lifeboats had been filled to capacity, 1,178 people could have been saved. If there had been enough lifeboats, maybe everybody could have been saved. If Captain Stanley Lord had responded to the distress signals seen by his crew, more lives could have been saved. And if the crew of the Titanic had taken better precautions of their own, the disaster may not even have happened in the first place. Like the mystery of the orchestra that played on to the end, this is something we may never know the truth about.

## Exercise 2

Now answer these questions:

1. How was the Titanic described before it set sail?
2. What do most people believe about the cause of the disaster?
3. Why was the ship travelling so fast?
4. Why didn't the captain know about icebergs in the area?
5. Why didn't the lookouts see the iceberg in time?
6. What two problems prevented everybody from being able to get into the lifeboats?
7. What was Captain Lord's response to the distress flares his crew saw?
8. What other mistake did the crew of the Californian make?
9. How much do you think Bruce Ismay was to blame?

## CONDITIONALS

### Exercise 3

Choose the correct option:

1. If I had gone on the camping trip with my friends, I would not feel so lonely now!

- a) She went with friends and feels lonely
  - b) She stayed behind and feels lonely
2. I would have studied English if my life was not so busy.
- a) Her life was busy and she never studied English then
  - b) She has a busy life and therefore never studied English
3. If I had enough money, I would have accompanied him to New York.
- a) She still does not have enough money and that is why she did not go with him
  - b) She did not have enough money and therefore she did not go with him
4. If I had lost my job I would not be able to afford to live in the capital of Spain.
- a) She lost her job and does not have enough money now
  - b) She did not lose her job and she has enough money

#### **Exercise 4**

**Rewrite the following sentences using conditionals:**

1. Don't take this course if you are not ready to study statistics. (unless)
2. You should put more paper in the photocopier tray. That way you will not have any problems. (as long as)
3. If we read the results carefully we are more aware of the limitations of the study. (when)
4. The research will continue if there is enough funding. (as long as)
5. The students have an excellent attitude to their studies, but they will drop the subject next year if it is not interesting. (unless)

6. Nothing can compensate for the lack of data, if you consider the matter carefully. (when)
7. I will go mad if they don't turn the music down.
8. He doesn't do any exercise; that's why he has gained weight.

9. I didn't have John's number, so I couldn't call him to invite him to the party.
  
10. He has more than enough time to do the project, but he is a procrastinator. He might leave it for the night before!
  
11. I didn't stop because I didn't see the signal.
  
  
12. I didn't take the elevator as it wasn't working

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