

2 Worksheet on Reading Comprehension

Text: “Ellis Island”, from: Peter Freese, *New York*, Viewfinder Topics (München: Langenscheidt, 2011), pp. 9-11.

A READING COMPREHENSION – WHY?

Some people may wonder why reading comprehension is tested at all. Everybody can read, can't they? Yes, but it is not only about “reading”, it is about “comprehension”, too. English texts can be quite tricky sometimes, for example the syntax can be misleading for a learner of English who is not experienced enough.

Reading comprehension tasks are supposed to help you look closer at particularly interesting spots of a text and also to help you find out whether you are able to put into your own words what you have just read.

So concentrate – and do not hesitate to read the same sentence a couple of times if you do not understand it fully the first time. The same goes for the tasks, too. Be careful – if some information in one option is correct, but other pieces of information are not, then you must not choose that option as the correct one, because it is partly false. The correct option must be without any wrong details, but it may be expressed in different words than in the original text.

B QUESTIONS AND TASKS

1. Ellis Island is ... (tick the two correct options)

- a small, tropical island.
- a small island in New York Harbor.
- barely visible because of the shadow of the Statue of Liberty.
- almost nine times as large than it originally was.

2. Before 1890, Ellis Island had a varied history. (Tick the two correct statements)

- The sandy island was especially good for a certain kind of rose.
- It was a meeting-place for pirates.
- It was bought by the US government and integrated into a harbor defense system.
- The last 100 years before 1890 were quite exciting.

3. Why were first and second class passengers not usually examined at Ellis Island? In what cases did they have to go there anyway?

4. What was unpleasant for the third class passengers on the ships?

5. Decide whether the following statements about ll. 97–132 are true, false or not in the text.

	true	false	not in text
a) If an immigrant did not have papers, he had to wait two days.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) The doctors were soon able to assess a person's health fast.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) The immigrants had to pass a written examination.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) 98 per cent of the immigrants were allowed to enter the US.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

6. How did immigration numbers change between 1900 and 1920?

7. How did the authorities try to keep the number of immigrants under control?
(Do not tick more than 2 options)

- By excluding people from certain countries.
- By keeping out people who had planned to make a work contract after they arrived.
- By testing if the immigrants could shoot with a bow and arrows.
- By testing if the immigrants could read and write.
- By excluding people of certain religions.

8. What was the aim of the Quota Laws and the National Origins Act?

9. During World War II, Ellis Island served as ...
(Do not tick more than 2 options)

- ... a prison.
- ... a shop for seamen.
- ... a Coast Guard training center.
- ... a store-room for suitcases and boxes.

10. Why did the US spend so much money on the restoration of Ellis Island? What do you think?

(Peter Ringeisen)