

Reading Comprehension, Level II

Julius Caesar describes his first landing in Britain: 55 B. C.
(adapted from *de Bello Gallico*, Book IV)

Nostri perterriti et huius omnino generis pugnae imperiti non solita alacritate utebantur. Quod ubi Caesar animadvertit, naves longas paulum removeri ab onerariis navibus, et remis incitari, et ad latus apertum hostium constitui, atque inde fundis, sagittis, tormentis hostes propelli ac summoverti iussit.

Barbari, et navium figura et remorum motu et inusitato genere tormentorum permoti, constiterunt ac paulum rettulerunt.

Atque nostris militibus cunctantibus, maxime propter altitudinem maris, quidam decimae legionis aquilifer, contestatus deos, ut ea res legioni feliciter eveniret: "Desilite," inquit, "milites, nisi vultis aquilam hostibus prodere. Ego certe meum rei publicae atque imperatori officium praestitero." Mox se ex navi proiecit atque in hostes aquilam ferre coepit.

Tum nostri, tantum dedecus metuentes, universi ex navi desiluerunt. Hos item ex proximis navibus ubi conspexerant, subsequuti hostibus adpropinquarunt. Pugnatum est ab utrisque acriter. Hostes vero, notis omnibus vadis, ubi ex litore aliquos singulares ex navi egredientes conspexerant, equos incitabant. Nostros impeditos adoriebantur; plures paucos circumstabant.

Quod ubi viderat, Caesar subsidia submittebat. Tum nostri in hostes impetum fecerunt atque eos in fugam dederunt.

omnino (adv.) = entirely, completely
imperiti = pf. pass. part., inexperienced in (+ gen.)
solitus, -a, um (adj.) = accustomed
alacritas, -atis (f.) = swiftness, speediness
utor, uti, usus sum (+ abl.) = to use, employ
animadverto, -tere, -ti, -sum = to realize
onerarii naves = supply boats (the opposite of "long boats", which carried troops)
remus, -i (m.) = oar
incito (1) = to stir up
latus, -eris (n.) = side, flank
constituo, -uere, -ui, -utum = to station, place
funda, -ae (f.) = sling / sagitta, -ae (f.) = arrow / tormentum, -i (n.) = (military) weapon
inusitatus, -a, -um (adj.) = unaccustomed
consisto, -ere, constiti, constitum = to halt, stop
aquilifer, -eri (m.) = standard bearer (lit. "eagle bearer")
desilio, -ere, -ui, -ultum = to jump down, leap down
contestatus deos = "having called the gods to witness"
prodo, -ere, -didi, -ditum = to hand over, surrender
aquila, -ae (f.) = standard (lit., the "eagle" standard carried in front of a legion)
praesto, -are, praestiti, -stitum = to perform, carry out
dedecus, -i (m.) = disgrace
metuo, -ere, -i = to fear
conspicio, -ere, conspexi, conspectum = to observe
vadum, -i (n.) = a shallow (in the water)
impeditus, -a, -um (adj.) = burdened, weighed down
adorior, -iri, aditus sum (v. deponent) = to attack
circumsisto, -ere, circumstisti = to surround
subsidium, -i (n.) = auxiliary (troops)

The Roman army falls into a Samnite trap at the "Caudine Forks": 321 B. C.
(adapted from Livy, *Ab urbe condita* Book 9)

C. Pontius, imperator Samnitium, exercitu educto, circa Caudium castra quam occultissime locat; inde ad Calatiam, ubi audiebat iam consules Romanos castraque esse, milites decem pastorum habitu mittit iubetque pecora haud procul Romanis praesidiis pascere. Qui capti dixerunt legiones Samnitium in Apulia esse atque Luceriam omnibus copiis circumsedere. Iam is rumor, ante de industria vulgatus, ad Romanos venerat, sed captivi fidem auxerunt, maxime quod sermo inter omnes congruebat.

Pontius pro certo habebat Romanos opem Lucerinis laturos esse, bonis et fidelibus sociis, ne Apulia omnis deficeret; modo incertum erat qua irent. Duae viae ad Luceriam ferebant, altera praeter oram maris, patens apertaue, sed quanto tutior, tanto fere longior; altera per Furculas Caudinas, brevior. Sed locus ita natus est: duo alti saltus, angusti silvosique sunt, montibus circa perpetuis inter se iuncti; iacet inter eos satis patens, clausus in medio, campus herbidus aquosusque, per quem medium iter est. Sed antequam ad eum venis, primae angustiae sunt intrandae, et aut via retro repetenda est aut, si ire pergis, per alium saltum artiozem impeditioremque est evadendum.

Hac via Romani constituerunt ire. Cum in eum campum descendissent protinusque ad alias angustias pergerent, saeptas arboribus saxisque ingentibus invenerunt. Cum fraus hostilis apparuisset, praesidium etiam in summo saltu conspicitur. Citati inde retro, qua venerant, pergunt viam repetere; eam quoque clausam inveniunt. Sistunt inde gradum sine ullius imperio, stuporque omnium animos tenet, intuentesque alii alios, diu immobiles silent. Deinde legati ac tribuni sua sponte ad consules maestos conveniunt, militesque ab duobus opem exposcunt quam vix di immortales ferre poterant.

exercitu educto - ablative absolute: "when the army had been led out"

quam occultissime - "as secretly as possible"

locat, mittit, iubet - all are historic present tenses; translate as simple past tenses

ad Calatiam - "toward, in the direction of" + [the name of a town]

procul - used with ablative or ab + ablative to mean "a long way from"

ante - here functions as an adverb: "previously"

fidem auxerunt - "increased their reliance (in the story)"

maxime quod - "especially because"

qua irent - "which way they would go"

quanto tutior, tanto fere longior - the normal way to express proportion; literally translates: "by how much the safer, by almost as much the longer", i.e. "safer but longer"

montibus circa perpetuis inter se iuncti - "linked together by an unbroken stretch of surrounding hills"

intraendae, repetenda - gerundival adjectives: "to be entered", "to be returned to"

si ire pergis - *pergere* + infinitive = "if you proceed (to go) further"

evadendum - gerundival adjective. Literally: "it has to be gone out"; translate as if active, "you have to go out"

pergerent, *pergere* - here used by itself to mean "to press on"

in summo saltu - "at the top of the pass"

ullius - genitive singular of *ullus*, translate as "any" after *sine* ("without")

intuentes alii alios - "looking at each other"

conveniunt - *convenire* with *ad* + accusative = "to assemble in a place or before a person"

These questions refer to Selection One: *Nostrī perterriti*

1. *Nostrī* in line 1 refers to _____.
A. the Britons B. Caesar C. the Roman troops D. the ships
2. In what were the Roman soldiers inexperienced?
A. this kind of battle B. the water C. disembarking from boats
D. the cold
3. Where did Caesar order the long boats to be moved?
A. the shore B. out to sea C. dry dock
D. the open flank of the enemy
4. What were the long boats supposed to do once they had moved?
A. sound an alarm B. attach the enemy
C. sail away D. serve as a backup
5. Which of these things did not disturb the Britons?
A. the size of the boats B. the type of military weapons
C. the shape of the boats D. the motion of the oars
6. Why were the Romans delaying their disembarkation?
A. the noise from the Britons B. the Britons' weapons
C. a storm arising D. the depth of the water
7. In what legion did the brave *aquilifer* serve?
A. eleventh B. ninth C. tenth D. eighth
8. Why did the *aquilifer* "call the gods to witness"?
A. so he would survive in the water
B. so he would not drop the standard
C. so the situation would turn out well for his legion
D. no reason
9. What might have happened if the Romans had refused to jump from the boats?
A. The boats would have sunk.
B. The standard would have been lost to the enemy.
C. Caesar would have lost the battle.
D. The *aquilifer* would have drowned.
10. For whom and /or what did the *aquilifer* say that he would "do his duty"?
A. king and country B. school and team
C. mom and dad D. republic and commander
11. Which of these would be the best translation for "in" in the last sentence of the third paragraph (*in hostes aquilam ferre coepit*)?

A. after B. toward C. over D. under

12. What disgrace did the Romans fear?
A. cowardice B. stupidity C. getting wet
D. silliness
13. Once the first group of soldiers had jumped, what did those nearby do?
A. jumped also B. laughed C. cheered D. shrugged
14. What was the biggest advantage the Britons had over the Romans?
A. They could stay on the beach.
B. They were painted blue.
C. They spoke English.
D. They knew all the shallow places in the water.
15. How does the phrase *aliquos singulares ex navi edredientes* describe the manner in which the Romans were leaving their boats?
A. one by one B. in large groups C. on horseback?
D. on foot
16. How were the Britons being transported?
A. on boats B. in chariots C. on horseback
D. on foot
17. What did the Britons attempt to do to the groups of Roman soldiers in the water?
A. drown them B. outrun them C. surround them
E. welcome them
18. Why were the Roman soldiers “weighed down”?
A. They were fat. B. They carried weapons and armor.
C. They were covered in ice. D. They were clumsy.
19. When Caesar saw his soldiers being surrounded, what did he do?
A. cursed B. sent auxiliary troops C. sent supply boats
D. jumped into the water
20. What was the enemy response to the new Roman attack?
A. They fought harder. B. They surrendered.
C. They counter-attacked D. They fled.

These questions refer to Selection Two: “*C. Pontius, imperator. . .*”

21. Of what army was Pontius the commander?
A. Roman B. Gallic C. Parthian D. Samnite

22. Where did Pontius establish his camp?
 A. around Caudium B. outside Calatiam
 C. close to Apulia D. near Samnitium
23. What had Pontius heard about the Roman consuls and camp?
 A. that they had departed B. that they were at Samnitium\
 C. that they were at Calatia D. nothing
24. How many Samnite soldiers were sent toward the Roman camp?
 A. four B. five C. seven D. ten
25. How were the soldiers of Pontius sent out dressed?
 A. in armor B. as shepherds C. as road builders D. in togas
26. What lie did the Samnite soldiers tell to their Roman captors?
 A. that the Samnite army was Apulia
 B. that the Samnite army was unprepared
 C. that the Samnite army was in Naples
 D. that the Samnite army had mutinied
27. From whom did Pontius think the Romans would be bringing help?
 A. the Calatians B. the Parthians C. the Lucerines D. nobody
28. How many road led toward Luceria?
 A. two B. three C. one D. none
29. What road was "*patens aptertaque*"?
 A. the one in the plain B. the one over the hills
 C. the one downhill D. the one along the seacoast
30. What was preferable about the Caudine Forks road?
 A. it was steeper B. it was shorter C. it was narrower
 D. it was flatter
31. How many passes (*saltus*) did the Caudine Forks road run through?
 A. one B. two C. three D. four
32. Which tow adjectives describe those passes?
 A. short and high B. grassy and watery C. dark and ugly
 D. narrow and wooded
33. Which two adjectives describe the plain (*campum*) between the two passes?
 A. short and high B. grassy and watery C. dark and ugly
 D. narrow and wooded
34. How far along the Caudine Forks road did the Roman army get?

- A. into the central plain
- B. only into the first pass
- C. well into the second pass
- D. all the way through the second pass

35. What did the Romans then see at the top of the further pass?

- A. goats
- B. siege engines
- C. an enemy garrison
- D. cattle

Tie-breakers: these five items will be scored only to break ties.

96. Where did the Romans try to go next?

- A. forward to the farther pass
- B. to the middle of the plain
- C. back to the first pass
- D. nowhere at all

97. How did the Roman soldiers react when they realized they were trapped?

- A. They yelled.
- B. They cried
- C. They were terrified.
- D. They were stupefied.

98. What order did the Roman commanders give when they saw the Samnite trap?

- A. none
- B. to surrender
- C. to fight
- D. to commit mass suicide

99. Who are the "*legati*" and "*tribuni*"?

- A. footsoldiers
- B. officers
- C. cavalymen
- D. camp followers

100. What adjective describes the emotions of the consuls at that moment?

- A. sorrowful
- B. elated
- C. disgusted
- D. inebriated