



**FOCUS:** Answering inference questions based on passages.

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**DIRECTIONS:** Read the passage and the inference questions that follow. Mark the choice that best answers each question.

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### A Pirate's Life



## Reading &gt; Lesson 3: Inference Questions &gt; Exercise 3.2

**DIRECTIONS:** Read the passage and the inference questions that follow. Mark the choice that best answers each question.

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Treasure--gold, silver, and jewels--was, of course, the loot that most pirates sought. Mostly, however, they stole food and drink and had to be satisfied with whatever cargo was aboard, even low-cost bulk items--barrels of molasses or tobacco. Selling such contraband was a problem because pirates could not simply set anchor at any port and advertise for buyers. There were a few wide-open pirate towns in the Bahamas and Belize where merchants of dubious integrity would come for the bargains available. In fact, the governor of Jamaica encouraged pirates to come to Port Royal; armed pirate ships in the harbor discouraged attacks by the Spanish and French. However, none of the sanctuaries lasted for long, and the strongest of them, Port Royal, was destroyed by an earthquake in 1692.

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1 The author suggests that piracy

- ☐ increased substantially after 1725
- ☐ dates to the beginning of cargo shipping
- ☐ originated in the West Indies
- ☐ is responsible in part for the development of navies



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2 The author implies that privateering

- ☐ provided a life many sailors were unwilling to give up
- ☐ offered a way for merchant captains to save money
- ☐ was first undertaken by French speakers from the West Indies
- ☐ was outlawed during the commercial wars of the 1600s



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3 The author suggests that some men likely became pirates because they

- ☐ were forced to by their captors
- ☐ found the thrill of pirate life more exciting than that of the honest seaman
- ☐ were unable to pay back the debts they owed for the purchase of their ships
- ☐ had few skills in other trades or professions



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4 It can be inferred that Captain William Kidd

- ☐ left Britain for New York to avoid punishment for piracy
- ☐ was once permitted by the British to attack and capture ships
- ☐ stole primarily from British ships
- ☐ helped the British capture and punish pirates



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- 5 It can be inferred that most merchant captains
- ☐ would not resist a pirate attack
  - ☐ were eventually robbed by pirates
  - ☐ were from France, Holland, Spain, or England
  - ☐ would avoid sailing in the West Indies



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6 The author suggests that pirate towns were

- ☐ no longer in existence by 1700
- ☐ ruled by pirate captains
- ☐ often located near deep ports
- ☐ not operated openly



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- 7 The author implies that pirates in Port Royal
- ☐ were allied with the Spanish and French
  - ☐ were eventually driven out by the Spanish and French
  - ☐ protected the town from the Spanish and French
  - ☐ sold their goods to the Spanish and French



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everything worth taking--often enough, the captured ship itself. The captain of a merchant ship with twelve seamen, who were not fighting men, was foolish to resist eighty vicious pirates armed with cutlasses, knives, and pistols. Very few of the captains did. Merchants knew that those who gave up without a fight were usually left alone. The principle was the same as the advice given today to people confronted on a dark street by armed robbers: give up the wallet.

Treasure--gold, silver, and jewels--was, of course, the loot that most pirates sought. Mostly, however, they stole food and drink and had to be satisfied with whatever cargo was aboard, even low-cost bulk items--barrels of molasses or tobacco. Selling such contraband was a problem because pirates could not simply set anchor at any port and advertise for buyers. There were a few wide-open pirate towns in the Bahamas and Belize where merchants of dubious integrity would come for the bargains available. In fact, the governor of Jamaica encouraged pirates to come to Port Royal; armed pirate ships in the harbor discouraged attacks by the Spanish and French. However, none of the sanctuaries lasted for long, and the strongest of them, Port

*marque* gives permission to cross into another country's territory to take a ship; a *letter of reprisal* authorizes taking the captured vessel to the home port of the capturer.

What kind of men became pirates? In the early 1720s, 98 percent of those who were captured said they had started life as "honest seamen," like those on the merchant ships that had become their prey. But an honest seaman's life was dull and laborious; the wages were poor, and punishments aboard ship were brutal. Piracy offered excitement and reward--pirates even risked their lives during robberies, but each job filled the pirate's pockets, and he did not need to work very often.

Pirate crews were large because numbers were the key to success. A merchant *sloop* of 100 tons was sailed by a crew of about a dozen, whereas the same vessel under the black flag of piracy carried eighty men. However, pirates were robbers; they did not want to destroy the ships they attacked. Their cannons were for defense only. They wanted victims' vessels undamaged so they could take everything worth taking--often enough, the captured ship itself. The captain of a merchant ship with twelve seamen,

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Curiously, the decision-making process aboard pirate vessels was more democratic than New England town meetings. Where to hunt merchant ships, from Newfoundland to the West Indies, was determined by majority vote, as was the decision whether or not to attack a vessel. The captain, who was elected and could be voted out, claimed a far smaller share of booty than the masters of merchant ships received. His allowance of food and drink was the same as that of the crewmen. Only when "fighting, chasing, or being chased" did he have the absolute authority of a naval commander.



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8 The captain of a pirate ship probably

- ☐ received a larger share of booty than his crew
- ☐ had less power than the master of a merchant ship
- ☐ made the decision to attack any particular vessel
- ☐ had absolute control over the daily routines aboard his ship



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