

43 I can talk about areas of conflict

Reporting from a war zone

The streets were filled with **rubble** and broken glass was everywhere. Food, water, medicine – the necessities of life – were **scarce**, and hospitals **were overwhelmed with** casualties. Apart from the obvious danger of bombing, there was also the threat of unexploded **shells, snipers**, and other forms of **random** violence. Soldiers and civilians alike suffered from the tension, and were never far from **breaking point**, but most people refused to **desert** their city. How did I get through that period? **Adrenalin**. That alone kept me going in the face of the **grim** reality that confronted a city **under siege**.

1 Match 1–8 with a–h.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---------------|
| 1 The soldiers were firing | a sniper |
| 2 He was shot by a | b rubble |
| 3 The situation was | c at random |
| 4 I just keep going on | d under siege |
| 5 Food was | e grim |
| 6 The city was | f scarce |
| 7 Life is tough in a war | g adrenalin |
| 8 The streets were full of | h zone |

2 Cross out parts of the text and replace them with these words. Write the numbers in the text.

- | | | |
|------------------|--------------------|----------|
| 1 grim | 2 abandoned | 3 sniper |
| 4 lay siege to | 5 breaking point ✓ | 6 debris |
| 7 shelling | 8 scarce | |
| 9 overwhelmed by | | |

We were close to **5** the point where people couldn't deal with the situation. Food was in short supply, the situation was unpleasant and depressing, and many people had already left the city for good. Then at 7 a.m. yesterday the attack happened. A man who was just clearing stones, bricks, and glass from a damaged building was shot by a hidden gunman. Amid the ensuing chaos, a small group of rebel soldiers entered the nearby radio station and took control of it. The army immediately began to surround the building. They brought in large guns and started firing at it, then, as night approached, they attacked. The rebels were soon defeated by the superior numbers and firepower of the army.

Glossary

- zone** an area or region with a particular feature (a **war/danger zone**).
- rubble** broken stones or bricks from a building that has been destroyed (**debris** is similar but is more general and includes wood, glass, etc.).
- scarce** not readily available; in short supply. **scarcity** N.
- overwhelm sb/sth** 1 present sb or fill sth with too much of sth (**be overwhelmed with/by**).
2 defeat sb/sth completely).
- shell** a metal case full of explosives, to be fired from a large gun (**shell sth** = fire shells at sth).
- sniper** a person who shoots at sb from a hidden position.
- random** happening without any intended or regular pattern (things that happen **at random** are not ordered or regular).
- breaking point** the time when problems have become so great that sb can no longer deal with them (**be at / reach breaking point**).
- desert sth** go away from a place and leave it empty. **SYN abandon sth**.
- adrenalin** a substance created in the body when you are excited or afraid, giving you more energy.
- grim** unpleasant and depressing.
- siege** a military operation in which an armed force surrounds a place and stops the supply of food, etc. (**lay siege to sth, be under siege**).

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