



GCSE

C700U20-1A



**ENGLISH LANGUAGE – Component 2
19th and 21st Century Non-Fiction Reading
and Transactional/Persuasive Writing**

FRIDAY, 7 JUNE 2019 – MORNING

RESOURCE MATERIAL FOR USE WITH SECTION A

Miners Rescued from Chilean Mine

*On August 5th 2010 in the San Jose Mine in Chile, South America, 33 miners were trapped by a rock collapse deep underground. Nearly 70 days later rescuers began to bring the trapped miners one-by-one to the surface, ending their long ordeal underground. No one in history had been trapped underground for so long and survived. **Jeffrey Brown** reports.*

In a flawless rescue operation, 33 miners who were trapped for more than two months deep beneath the Chilean earth were raised one by one through 600 metres of solid rock. They were brought to the surface in a rescue capsule nicknamed 'Fenix 2' through a 28-inch wide escape shaft that had taken two months to drill.

Scenes of jubilation erupted every time a miner arrived at the surface of the San Jose Mine. As they emerged into the fresh air some cried, others prayed and wrapped their arms around their wives and children.

When news of the mine collapse first became known, the mining company's emergency squad had tried to enter the mine but after nine hours, returned shaken and empty-handed.



The Chilean government then assembled its own rescue team to bring the men out. Meanwhile, many of the families set up a tent city near the mine entrance and called it 'Camp Hope' as they waited for news of their loved ones.

The men had been buried alive in the collapsed mine 2,000 feet below ground in northern Chile. They spent 69 days mostly in a dark, small shelter – about the size of a one-room apartment – in sweltering 120°F temperatures.

The first couple of weeks were the most challenging for the trapped miners, as no one even knew whether they were alive. During this time, the miners had to survive on just two spoonfuls of tuna, half a biscuit and half a glass of milk every two days.

One of the miners, Mario Sepulveda, told how he and his 32 trapped colleagues had to drink filthy water and had all but given up during the first weeks underground, when they were completely without contact with the outside world and feared rescuers had given up. "We heard nothing for 15 days and then for two days we heard drilling in the distance but it stopped. We felt for sure that they had given up on us." Conditions were so tough the men joked darkly about eating each other. As their helmet lamps grew dim, the men – who had difficulty breathing and lost up to four stone each – wrote farewell letters to loved ones.

On August 22nd the rescuers' drill finally broke through the ceiling of the miners' shelter. The miners attached a message to send back to the rescuers, letting them know they were all alive. Soon after, the rescuers began sending the miners supplies through narrow plastic tubes including food, water and medicine.

In the time it took to drill the escape shaft, the trapped miners alternated between sleeping, working, and playing cards and dominoes. In stifling heat and long eight-hour working shifts, the men helped with the rescue efforts, clearing away debris that fell into the tunnel from the drilling. The men also had to exercise regularly so they would be thin enough to squeeze into the small 'Fenix 2' capsule that would take them to the surface.

When the first survivor was brought to the surface, some onlookers sobbed, others hugged each other, chanting the name of a proud country: “Chile! Chile! Chile!” In the nearby town of Copiapo, about 3,000 people gathered in the town square, and the exuberant crowd waved Chilean flags and cheered as cars drove around the square honking their horns.

Chilean President Sebastian Pinera waited at the rescue shaft to greet and hug the men as they emerged. “Welcome to life,” President Pinera told Victor Segovia, the fifteenth miner out. It seemed no overstatement.

The last man out was a shift foreman named Luis Urzua who had enforced tight rations of their limited food and supplies before help could arrive. Immediately after his rescue, he said. “We had strength, we had spirit, we wanted to fight, we wanted to fight for our families, and that was the greatest thing.”

The men all recovered after undergoing exhaustive tests in Copiapo hospital. President Pinera ordered an overhaul of safety regulations in the wake of the accident.

