

Angry Spain ousts ruling party

Level 2 | Intermediate

Aznar is punished for bloodshed and for 'hiding the truth'.

1 Key words

Fill the gaps using these key words from the text.

vote	aftermath	separatist	claim
victim	commuter	pledge	withdraws

1. A _____ is someone who travels to another town or city to work each day.
2. The consequences of an accident or a terrible event are called its _____.
3. To _____ is to make a serious promise.
4. You _____ in an election by choosing one of the candidates.
5. If a country _____ its soldiers from another country, it brings them home.
6. A _____ is someone who suffers in an accident or an attack.
7. A _____ is someone who wants part of a country to become independent.
8. If you _____ responsibility for something you try to say that it was you who did it.

2 Find the information

Look in the text and find this information as quickly as possible.

1. How many people were killed in the terrorist attack in Madrid?
2. How many explosions were there?
3. How many stations were attacked?
4. How many people were injured?
5. How many people were arrested?
6. Who claimed responsibility for the attack?

Angry Spain ousts ruling party

Level 2 | Intermediate

Angry Spain ousts ruling party

Just three days after the terrorist attacks in Madrid, the Spanish people voted in a general election. Everyone expected that the People's Party, led by the Prime Minister, Jose Maria Aznar, would win the election easily but the Spanish people voted against the government and elected the opposition Socialist Party. It was an angry reaction to the way the government handled the aftermath of the terrorist attack, which killed more than 200 people and injured 1,500. At first the government said that the Basque separatist group Eta had carried out the attack, but most people thought that the Islamist terrorist group Al-Qaeda was responsible for the attack. They believed that the government was trying to hide the truth.

Intelligence agencies around the world were trying to identify a man who, in a videotape found

in Madrid, claimed responsibility for the attacks for Al-Qaeda. Three Moroccans were arrested by the police in connection with the attack. So it was quite logical that most people would believe that Al-Qaeda planted the bombs and that this was Spain's version of September 11th.

The Socialist leader, Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero, was the surprise winner of the election and it was a result that shocked President Bush and his government. The new Spanish government immediately promised to withdraw Spain's 1,300 troops from Iraq and accused President Bush and Tony Blair of lying about the war. In his first radio interview Mr Zapatero said: "Mr Blair and Mr Bush must do some thinking... you can't organise a war with lies."

Mr Zapatero began his victory speech with a minute's silence for the victims of the attacks – a series of 10 explosions on commuter trains at Atocha, El Pozo and Santa Eugenia

stations in the south of Madrid. "Together we will defeat [terrorism]," he told supporters outside his party headquarters in the capital.

There were angry demonstrations on the streets of many Spanish cities as protesters accused the Spanish government of trying to hide the fact that Islamists were responsible for the attacks. Protesters also demanded explanations for Mr Aznar's support of the Iraq war, a conflict which about 90% of the Spanish people opposed.

This was the first example of a single terrorist attack having a direct influence on the result of an election in a Western country. Before the election, Mr Zapatero had pledged to end Spain's close relationship with the Bush government and to return to its former alliance with France and Germany.

The Guardian Weekly

Angry Spain ousts ruling party

Level 2 | Intermediate

3 Comprehension check

Choose the best answer.

1. Why did the Spanish people vote against the government?
 - a. Because they were against the war in Iraq.
 - b. Because they thought the government had lied.
 - c. Because the demonstrations were angry.
2. Who did the government accuse of carrying out the attack?
 - a. The Basque separatist group Eta.
 - b. Al-Qaeda.
 - c. No-one specific.
3. What was the new government's first action?
 - a. To accuse Al-Qaeda of carrying out the attack.
 - b. To promise to withdraw Spanish soldiers from Iraq.
 - c. To criticise President Bush.
4. What influence did the attack have on the election?
 - a. No influence.
 - b. It stopped many people from voting.
 - c. It changed people's minds about who they should vote for.

4 Word building

Complete the table.

Verb	Noun
1. elect	_____
2. accuse	_____
3. promise	_____
4. withdraw	_____
5. explode	_____
6. demonstrate	_____
7. defeat	_____

Angry Spain ousts ruling party

Level 2 | Intermediate

- 8. explain _____
- 9. react _____
- 10. speak _____

5 Vocabulary - prepositions

Fill the gaps using an appropriate preposition.

1. Many people accused the government _____ lying.
2. They said Al-Qaeda was responsible _____ the attack.
3. There was an angry reaction _____ the government's handling of the attack.
4. The people voted _____ the government.
5. They voted _____ the opposition.
6. Three Moroccans were arrested _____ the police.
7. The attack had a direct influence _____ the result of the election.
8. The government had a close relationship _____ President Bush.

6 Grammar focus

Look at this sentence from the text.

Everyone expected that the People's Party would win the election easily.

This is a reported statement. The original (direct) thought was:

"The People's Party will win the election easily."

Report these thoughts, expectations and opinions in the same way, beginning with 'everyone' and using the verbs in brackets in the past tense.

1. "The Socialists will lose the election." (THINK)
2. "Aznar will win easily." (BELIEVE)
3. "The bomb attack will have an influence on the result of the election." (EXPECT)
4. "The police will catch the bombers soon." (HOPE)
5. "The Socialist government will withdraw Spanish troops from Iraq." (BELIEVE)
6. "The bombers will attack again." (FEAR)

Angry Spain ousts ruling party

Level 2 | Intermediate

7 Discussion

Should democracies be influenced by terror attacks?

Was the Spanish government right to announce the withdrawal of Spanish troops from Iraq so soon after the bombings?