

Desert island survival - Collaboration

EXPLANATION:

Working together to survive on a deserted island will stretch students' problem-solving skills and build team dynamics. Collaborative group activities give students opportunities to learn essential life skills working and communicating effectively together.

YEAR LEVELS: Years 11–12

STUDENT GROUPING: Small groups and whole group reporting

ACTIVITY LENGTH: 40–60 mins

LINK TO CURRICULUM:

This activity supports the development of 21st century skills that include critical thinking, creative thinking, communication, collaboration and teamwork, personal and social skills, and skills in information and communication technologies (ICT). In particular: problem-solving, reasoning, innovation, generating and applying new ideas, relating to others (interacting with others), recognising and using diverse perspectives, identifying alternatives, seeing or making new links, adaptability/flexibility, and self-awareness.

Link to General Capabilities in the English curriculum:

Literacy: Literacy is important in the development of the skills and strategies needed to express, interpret, and communicate complex information and ideas. In *English* students apply, extend and refine their repertoire of literacy skills and practices as they examine how meaning is communicated and as they engage in creative response and argument. Students compare texts and consider them in relation to their contexts and purposes, and they consider how texts are created for specific purposes, contexts and audiences.

Personal and social capability: Students develop personal and social capability in *English* by enhancing their communication skills, teamwork and capacity to empathise with and appreciate the perspectives of others. Close study of texts assists students to understand different personal and social experiences, perspectives and challenges. Students identify and express their own opinions, beliefs and responses by interacting with a range of texts. *English* actively assists students in the development of communication skills needed for analysis, research and the expression of viewpoints and arguments. Students work collaboratively in teams and also independently as part of their learning and research endeavours.

SCOPE OF TASK:

This activity builds problem-solving skills as team members analyse ideas, negotiate and cooperate with one another and make decisions about how best to survive.

- Arrange students into groups of 8 – 10 or allow to self-select their groups.

1. Set the task to the groups of students:

You have been stranded on a deserted island with your group. The island is sub-tropical with monsoonal rain. There are some coconut trees and fruit trees off the shoreline. You have only 10 items that will help you survive. Individually, you must consider and determine items that you believe the group needs to survive. Justify these items to the group. Together prioritise the items and decide on the 10 items you will need.

Rank the items.

2. After approx. 20 minutes bring the groups back together. Each group shares their list of 10 items and a table is created on the white board.

3. Do a comparison – are there any items that each group has identified as necessary? What is common? What items are outliers?

4. Challenge the whole class to work together to create one survival list of 10 items – appoint a scribe and a mediator.

5. Reflect on the activity with the students posing questions:

- How did you share your ideas in the group?
- Was it difficult having a large number of people in your group?
- How did you decipher the individual needs and the collective needs?
- Did anyone have expertise that you relied on?
- What collaborative skills did you need to engage in the task?
- Where else would you use these types of skills?



Variation: The teacher can provide a list of survival items and students prioritise and rank the items.

RESOURCES:

- Pen and paper
- Computer and internet.