

Test Your Speaking & Listening Skills

Group Speaking Activity 2 – Stranded on a Desert Island

*This is a basic outline for a group speaking and listening activity based on the topic of **Stranded on a Desert Island**.*

Level: Elementary and above – the activity can be graded to each level (made easier or harder depending on the level)

Time: 45-60 mins, but longer if you do the follow-up work (below)

First, divide your class into small groups of three or four.

Task in brief:

“You are on a passenger flight far above the Pacific Ocean when unfortunately your plane crashes into the ocean. Only your group members manage to survive and make their way onto a desert island. You manage to salvage six things from the plane, but nothing electrical.

“Decide what those six things are and give reasons for including each one.

“Your group live on the desert island for four months until you are either:

- a) rescued, or*
- b) killed*

What happens? How do you survive? Tell the story.”

Task in more detail:

- 4 months – SS (student/s) could/should give a report of events for each month
- after that time you are either rescued or die/killed
- give details about how you were shipwrecked – what happened leading up to this dramatic life-changing event?
- Decide how you are either rescued or killed, and give details

Also, SS should include the following:

1. How do you survive – food, water, shelter, medicine, entertainment, etc.
2. Wildlife and plants
3. Other native people on the island
4. How do you cope with hunger/thirst/boredom/loneliness/fear/ jealousy/stress, etc.

At an agreed time towards the end of the lesson T (teacher) asks each group to come to the front of the class and present their story. This could be read or acted, or a mix of both. T could improvise using the role of a news reporter, the person who finds the castaways, or a representative of the airline, etc. T awards marks for merit for each group – if necessary – or the other SS vote on which story is the best.

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Plus points of this activity:

- SS use the space and resources around them to create their “island”
- Fun speaking activity
- SS can use their imagination
- T can improvise and interact with SS – very funny!
- T can take a back seat, while monitoring each group’s activity
- SS can use it as a writing/reading out loud activity, or role play

Minus points:

- SS wander off and talk/don’t watch when it is not their group’s turn to present
- SS don’t talk in English when planning the activity
- SS don’t engage with the activity
- T is not confident in improvising and interacting informally with the SS

Follow up work – to be done in class or for homework:

- Write up a journal about life on the island
- Write about the process – what you did/how you felt
- Write a role play based on the activity or a problem that occurs on the island
- Create a comic strip that tells the story with pictures and text

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