
Survival

Level

7+

Key questions

What are the most important things we need to survive?

What are the most important actions to take to survive after a shipwreck?

Key outcome

To develop and decide upon a group strategy about survival on a desert island.

Adapted from *Project ReefEd*, GBRMPA, 1998, Activity 117, and from *Outback! A team adventure*, a team training course by Organisation Design and Development, 1995.

This is a good evening activity for field camps and could follow fieldwork about marine life. This version is one of many used by groups.

What you need

Scenario sheet for each group
Action table for each individual
Pencils

What you do

1. Divide into roughly equal sized groups. Each group is given the same scenario. Each individual completes the individual ranking table for the most important items, ranking each item in order of their importance to the individual. No discussion! The most important item is one, the least is 10. Then repeat the process with 'actions taken', ranking the actions in terms of group survival.
2. The small group discusses the ranking and attempts to reach a consensus about the rank of the items, and the most appropriate action order, again in terms of survival of the group.
3. The whole group compare notes, discussing the item ranking and the reasons behind these, and the action ranking with the reasons behind these.
4. Discuss the results. Which individual was closest to the team ranking in both rank orders? Which item caused the most disagreement in ranking?
5. Discuss your decision-making process. Was everyone's opinion taken into account? Did you consider all possibilities in making the decisions?

Scenario

You are a member of a school field trip to study an island off the coast. You are eight hours out of port when your launch is overturned in a freak wave and sinks. The crew and teachers drown. The rest of you manage to swim to a nearby island and land on the beach about 11 am in the morning. You know the mainland is at least 90 km away. You also realise that your group will not be missed for at least 20 hours as your first radio call back to base was not planned until the evening of the next day. It may take at least three or four days before a

Survival

launch or plane spots you. To make matters worse, one of the group has a severe gash on his leg, which is bleeding, and has to be helped up the beach.

The island is rather barren and dry. You heard from the last weather report that the temperature is likely to be 35° Celsius, with no immediate rain forecast. You are all dressed in lightweight summer clothing and sandals, but only half the group are wearing hats. When you collect on the beach, you pool everything each individual was carrying and the list is as follows.

Sheet 1. Items rescued:

Item rescued	Your ranking	Team ranking	Difference
Mirror in plastic case			
Large sheet of light blue plastic			
Book Marine Animals of Australia			
One cigarette lighter			
First aid kit			
Three canteens, each with three litres of drinking water			
Folding knife (60 mm blade)			
One packet of bread in plastic bag			
Small bottle of rum			
Chart of the sea area			

A second sheet containing an Action Alternatives List is on the next page.

Following the game

The next day in the field, each group could be responsible for ‘making’ freshwater using a solar still, or distillation from boiling salt-water, or by transpiration (by tying plastic bags over leaves to collect water), or extract water from cut tree branches (not if you are in a national park!)

- How much water is collected in one day?
- Would it be enough to drink?

References

Further bushcraft suggestions are contained in Donlevy, M., 1991, *Stay Alive*, AGPS, Canberra.

Survival

Sheet 2. List of Action Alternatives

Action alternatives	Your ranking	Team ranking	Difference
Assess your food and water supplies and decide what to do			
Build a fire			
Stay put and conserve energy whenever possible			
Give first aid to the injured			
Discuss how you will work as a team to save yourselves			
Make a raft to hold three people and sail for help			
Select a camp site in the shade			
Search for edible fruit, seaweed and marine animals			
Create a distress signal on the ground that can be seen by potential rescuers			
Devise a means for collecting drinking water			