

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 the essential life skills of working and communicating effectively together.

GRADE LEVELS: 11–12

STUDENT GROUPING: Small groups and whole-group reporting

ACTIVITY LENGTH: 40–60 minutes

CASEL CORE COMPETENCY: *RELATIONSHIP SKILLS*

- Communicating effectively
- Practicing teamwork and collaborative problem-solving
- Showing leadership in groups
- You can learn more about the CASEL framework [here](#)

SCOPE OF TASK:

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

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

1. Explain the task to the groups of students:

You have been stranded on a deserted island with your group. The island is subtropical and often has hurricanes. There are some coconut trees and fruit trees off the shoreline. You have only 10 items with you. Individually, consider what 10 items you believe would be the most useful for helping the group survive. Justify these items to your group. Then, decide as a group which 10 items you would most want with you on the deserted island. Finally, rank the items from most to least important.

2. After about 20 minutes, bring the groups back together. Each group shares their list of 10 items and a list of them is written on the board.

3. Do a comparison—are there any items that every group identified as necessary? What items are common? What items are outliers?

4. Challenge the whole class to work together to create one survival list of 10 items—appoint a recorder and a facilitator.

5. Reflect on the activity with the students, posing questions such as:

- How did you share your ideas in the group?
- Was it difficult having a large number of people in your group?
- How did you decide how to balance individual needs/opinions and the collective needs/opinions?
- 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 choose and/or rank the items.

RESOURCES:

- Pen and paper