

Lost at Sea: What To Do?

Situation

You were on a ship sailing from London to New York. The ship started to sink in the middle of ocean, just like the Titanic. You and 12 other people were lucky. You escaped and are now on a lifeboat.

The ship sank quickly, so nobody had time to prepare. Many people in the lifeboat do not have warm clothes and there is not much to eat or drink. The water temperature is about 2 degrees Celsius, the winds are strong, the waves are high and it is hard to see because of the fog. Everybody is cold, hungry and afraid.

The lifeboat has no motor, so you and the others have to row. Luckily, the ship's Captain was able to send an emergency message. Help is coming, but that might take one or two days.

Problem

Your lifeboat is overloaded. It has too much weight. Slowly, it is sinking. In order to keep everybody safe, it is necessary to throw 60 kilograms of stuff out of the lifeboat. You and the other people have to decide quickly which items to throw away. You cannot remove any people.

These are the items from which you must choose:

Item	Total Weight (kg)
1. 5 raincoats with hoods - each 2 kg.	10
2. 30 cans of tuna - each 1 kg.	30
3. a 10-liter bottle of water - 10 kg.	10
4. a battery operated signal light - 8 kg.	8
5. 3 diving suits - each 5 kg.	15
6. 2 buckets for bailing water - each 3 kg.	6
7. 4 wool blankets - each 3 kg.	12
8. a large S.O.S. flag - 3 kg.	3
9. a first aid kit - 10 kg.	10
10. 8 oars - each 5 kg.	<u>40</u>
Total	144

In small groups, decide which items to throw away. You must provide reasons for each decision.

Notes

This inquiry based learning activity was adapted by Rob Whyte, eslwriting.org. It is based on an exercise by Larry Johannessen in a paper called 'Teaching Writing in the Information Age.'