

e-lesson

Week starting: February 21, 2011

1. Lucky escapes

This week's lesson is about lucky escapes from life-threatening situations that people found themselves in while taking part in outdoor activities. Two of the incidents are true and happened recently, and one of them is fictitious.

Level

Intermediate and above (equivalent to CEF level B1 and above)

How to use the lesson

1. Brainstorm on the subject of outdoor activities that contain an element of danger – how many can your students name in English? What are the potential dangers in each case (accidents, wild animals, etc.)? Ask your students if they have ever done any of those activities themselves, and if so, encourage them to describe their experiences. If they have ever seen movies or TV shows about expeditions to remote parts of the world, what risks were faced by the people involved?

2. Divide your students into pairs, then hand out Worksheet A and give them five to ten minutes to read through it. Encourage them to look up new vocabulary. Can they identify which two lucky escapes are true and which one has been made up?

3. Check answers in open class, and encourage your students to explain what factors influenced their choices.

Answers: The true cases are numbers 2 and 3; the first story, involving the anaconda, has been invented. (Anacondas do live in rivers in the Amazon, and can grow to the size described in the text, but there have been very few confirmed cases of attacks on humans. Also, the idea of cries of help being heard from a kilometer away, and of the members of an Amazon expedition not having “any kind of weapon,” might have made the students suspect that the story was fictitious.)

4. Keeping your students in their pairs, hand out Worksheet B and ask them to complete the crossword.

5. Check answers in open class.

6. Now divide the students into pairs, and ask them to turn over their copies of Worksheets A and B or to temporarily hand them back to you. Then hand out Worksheet C and ask the students to complete Exercise 2, in which they have to look at fifteen sentences based on the text, decide whether they have been written correctly, and then “bet” anything from ten to fifty points on their guesses. In the first column, after the statements they should write *C* (correct) or *I* (incorrect). In the second column, they should write the number of points they are willing to bet on their answer (ten points if they are forced to guess, going up to fifty if they are very confident about the answer). Note that the incorrect sentences only contain one mistake each.

7. After the pairs have given their answers, it's time to score. Each pair calls out their answer and how many points they have bet. If they have answered correctly, students enter their points in the final column (“Points won”). If they have answered incorrectly, they should enter their points in the third column (“Points lost”). At the end, students subtract the total of the third column from the total of the fourth column to give the total number of points they have won. The pair with the most points wins.

Answers:

Exercise 1

1. rifle
2. slope
3. dragged
4. standing
5. cushion
6. injured
7. kayak
8. shot
9. injuries

If the sentences have been completed correctly, *fortunate* will read from top to bottom.

Exercise 2

1. **Incorrect.** His friend was **seriously** injured but still alive.
2. **Correct.**
3. **Incorrect.** They were on a kayaking **expedition**.
4. **Incorrect.** The bear broke the rifle with its **paw**.
5. **Correct.**
6. **Incorrect.** He survived a 300-meter **fall**.
7. **Incorrect.** In Norway it is only **permitted** to kill a polar bear in self-defense.
8. **Correct.**
9. **Correct.**
10. **Incorrect.** He **opened fire** with his rifle.
11. **Correct.**
12. **Incorrect.** He suffered serious **injuries**.
13. **Incorrect.** The man's friend saved his life by **shooting** the bear.
14. **Correct.**
15. **Correct.**

2. Related websites

Send your students to these websites, or just take a look yourself.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-12319952>

A BBC News article (January 2011), with video, about the British climber's lucky escape after his 300-meter fall down a mountainside in Scotland. Challenging for intermediate level.

http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/38664696/ns/world_news-europe/

An MSNBC article (August 2010) about the Norwegian kayaker's escape from a polar bear, with a short video news clip from Sky News. Challenging for intermediate level.

<http://adventure.howstuffworks.com/survival/wilderness/survival11.htm>

On the "HowStuffWorks" website, an article about amazing outdoor survival stories, and links to related topics such as an interactive survival quiz. Challenging for intermediate level.