

Extreme Survival Stories

- Stories and activities for reluctant readers and those experiencing reading difficulties



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Teachers' Notes

The *Extreme Survival Stories Book* was designed to provide high interest language activities. The book aims to encourage interest in reluctant readers through providing literature and activities based upon real life stories of human endurance and survival.

This book may be used in a number of ways:

- As a general library resource.
- As a home or supplementary reader.
- In small group reading circles.
- As a tool for the individual tutoring of students at educational risk.

The Stories:

The *Extreme Survival Stories* provide high interest topics for upper primary/low secondary students. The vocabulary and syntax in the book is relatively simple so as not to discourage these readers. The "Words You Will Need" section at the beginning of each chapter provides some of the more difficult words within the piece. Talking through this vocabulary before reading, will give students confidence in approaching the text and in particular these words as they encounter them.

The Activities:

The activities are structured to provide comprehension, vocabulary, grammar and open ended language based tasks. There are approximately five activities designed to relate to each one of the corresponding stories.

Each topic can be extended within the classroom. Some possible extension ideas for *Extreme Survival Stories* are:

Story 1: The Grizzly Crawl

- Read *The Deliverance of Dancing Bears*, Elizabeth Stanley, 2003. (Can be read within one session.) Discuss with the students. Students retell the story through writing or a series of drawings.

Story 2: Dangers in the Deep

- Discuss the term, "living fossils" with students, referring to animals that are virtually unchanged since prehistoric times. Ask students what animals they know of that would fit this description. Students use the Internet to research the frilled shark and choose four more examples of "living fossils" to report back to the class about.

Useful websites:

- ▶ <http://nwcreation.net/fossilsliving.html>
- ▶ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Living_fossil
- ▶ <https://www.australiangeographic.com.au/topics/wildlife/2018/03/australias-living-fossils/>

Story 3: Cutting the Friendship

- Students research and write an account of the first time Everest was conquered by Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay.

Useful Websites:

- ▶ <http://teacher.scholastic.com/activities/hillary>

The Grizzly Crawl



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Words You Will Need

- supplies
- tough
- bloodied
- panicked
- scalp
- hostile
- remedies
- gaping

One of the most remarkable survival stories of all time is that of the amazing life of Hugh Glass. Hugh Glass is thought to have been born some time around 1783 in Pennsylvania. From an early age Glass had to look after himself and learned how to be tough. As a young man he went to sea to make a living but was caught by pirates around 1816. He was forced to become a pirate himself until he managed to escape by jumping off a boat, swimming to shore and making his way inland. Glass had no weapons, no food or supplies and no map. He made his way north, surviving as best as he could until he was captured by the Pawnee Native Americans.

Activity 5

Bear Aware



Use the Internet to help you with the activities below.


- ▶ <http://usparks.about.com/cs/natlparkbasics/a/beartips.htm>
- ▶ www.udap.com/safety.htm
- ▶ <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/bears/safety.htm>
- ▶ <http://www.bearsmart.com/play/bear-encounters/>

1. What type of bears inhabit North America?

2. Design a safety pamphlet for hikers and bear watchers.

- a) Give your pamphlet a title and draw an illustration for the front in the box below.

Be Bear Aware
Safety Guidelines



SAMPLE

- b) On the back of your pamphlet you will need to include the following information:
- *Precautions to take while camping or walking.*
 - *What to do or not do in a bear encounter.*

On a separate piece of paper lay out the information for your pamphlet. You can include pictures and illustrations.

for a second amazing stroke of good luck. Again, the shark had missed his flesh, bringing its teeth down on the metal diving belt that he was wearing around his middle. Now, inside the shark's mouth, Eric fought back. He had a chisel in his hand that he had been using for the abalone. Eric used it to stab the shark's mouth as hard as he could until it opened its jaws and was stunned enough that he managed to escape.

Eric's son pulled him into the boat and he was taken to hospital. Although he had some blood loss and was in shock, doctors were amazed to see him sitting up in bed and talking soon after. His amazing escape has made Eric Nerhus one of the luckiest people alive.

Facts about the Great White Shark

- The great white shark can grow up to 4.5 metres in length.
- The great white usually attacks from underneath – its greyish top colour helps it to blend in with the water so it can approach without being seen.
- Sharks use their sense of smell most to find prey. They are able to detect one drop of blood in 100 litres of water.
- Unlike other types of fish that have a gas-filled bladder to keep them afloat, the great white and all other sharks have to swim constantly to stop themselves from sinking.
- Some scientists estimate that the great white shark may live for about 100 years, but none yet know for sure.
- A great white shark has about 3000 teeth.
- It has recently been discovered that great white sharks can jump right out of the water chasing prey – not a nice thought if you're in a boat being circled by one!



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Activity 9

Picture It

1. In the speech boxes below, write what you think these sharks are saying to each other.



2. Draw your own short cartoon about a shark.

Use your own ideas or choose one of these:

- A shy shark who is bullied by tiny fish.
- A clever shark that makes an amazing escape after being caught by fishermen.
- A shark that wakes up and finds himself in an aquarium.

~Use the back of the page if you need more room.

Joe painfully made his way down to the bottom of the crevasse. With a badly broken leg it was agony and took hours. He yelled out in pain, hearing the bones in his leg cracking and grinding with each movement. When he finally got to the bottom Joe was exhausted and collapsed, feeling that he couldn't go on any further. But again he had no choice. Completely unable to walk he had to crawl his way along the crevasse. He crawled for hours in the dark and cold having no idea if he was heading in the right direction. Eventually he was overjoyed to see a blinding crack of sunlight. In agony he then had to try to pull himself up and out of the crevasse.

When he finally emerged he was overjoyed, amazed at his luck and proud of himself for coming so far, until it struck him that he still had to get down the mountain, alone and unable to walk. For the next three days Joe crawled. He had no food and only the water he got from mountain streams when he found them. He was freezing and starving and in terrible pain. His mind started to wander and he lost control of his thinking. He heard a song in his head that he repeated over and over and started to have visions of things that weren't there.

It was days now from when Joe had broken his leg. He had eaten nothing, was suffering terrible frostbite and pain from his leg and had completely lost his sense of where he was and of what was real. Despite all this he just kept on, pushing himself to keep crawling through the snow, refusing to give up. Amazingly, Joe finally made it all the way back to base camp.

By the time he arrived, Simon had given him up for dead. Feeling stressed and guilty he had burnt all of Joe's clothes and was starting to wonder what he was going to tell Joe's relatives. He had decided to leave the next day and was asleep in his tent on the last night when he heard a strange noise. After a while he recognised it to be Joe's voice. Panicked with guilt and fear he thought he must have been hearing a ghost. He tried to block the sound out and get back to sleep, but it continued. When Simon finally got out of his tent he found Joe, covered in frost and lying in the snow, with no idea where he was.



© courtesy of gimp -savy.com

If Joe had taken one day longer to make the journey back he would have missed Simon completely. His survival is widely thought by mountaineers to be one of the most amazing survival stories ever told.

Activity 14

How Loyal Are You?

When the documentary *Touching the Void*, (Page 25) was released many people were very critical of Simon Yates. They felt that he was disloyal to his friend by cutting the rope and then returning alone, despite the fact that he was in an impossible situation.

Do you think Simon Yates was a loyal friend to Joe or not? _____

Give reasons for your answer. _____

Complete the following quiz and then compare your answers with a friend's. Your teacher will read the results to you.

1. You have been invited around to a good friend's house to stay the night. You are happy about going until you find out your dad has tickets to a concert to see your favourite band. He doesn't have a ticket for your friend. Do you:
 - a) Say thanks to your dad, but refuse the tickets and go to your friend's house anyway?
 - b) Take the tickets and tell your friend you can't come over anymore?
2. You are sitting with a group of friends and some of them start talking about your best friend who isn't there. They are making fun of him/her and everyone is laughing. Do you:
 - a) Stick up for your friend, saying you don't want people talking about him/her that way?
 - b) Laugh along loudly and add your own comments?
3. Your friend has asked you to help him/her build a go-kart for a competition that they're going into the next day. You are good at that sort of thing and you said yes but when they come over you are right in the middle of watching a really good movie on TV. It's the best movie you've ever seen and you can't be bothered helping anymore. Do you:
 - a) Drag yourself away from the movie – you've said you'll help and you will?
 - b) Tell your friend that something came up and you can't help anymore?
4. You have been having a brilliant time at your friend's house making pancakes. When their mum comes home she nearly collapses at the mess. You look around – there is flour and goo everywhere. Do you:
 - a) Pull up your sleeves and start tidying?
 - b) Pretend to go and check on a strange noise you hear outside and then run away?

On the back of this sheet design your own questionnaire to find out how loyal your friends are.

Activity 19

Fierce Creatures!



The Amazon is home to many dangerous creatures, the piranha being one of them. Piranhas tend to fascinate people because they are fish that do not act like fish. The piranha eats a variety of things, including meat, as a part of their diet. Although they are only 15–25 cm long, piranhas have been known to work in schools, attacking people and animals that venture into waterways. People who live in the Amazon are cautious about going into the water with open wounds. While attacks on humans are fairly uncommon piranhas have been known to strip dead animal carcasses down to bones in minutes. Not your everyday small fish!

Imagine!

You are a journalist reporting from the dense rainforest of the Amazon where a new species of creature has been found. It looks like something we are familiar with, e.g. *sheep*, *bird*, *cat* but behaves quite unlike what we might expect of this kind of animal.

Write a brief report about what happens when it comes into contact with a human for the first time. Draw a picture of the new species in the box below.

The Amazonian Times