The following is a passage adapted from the New York Times about a fisherman who was able to survive falling into the ocean against impossible odds. Please read the passage and alert the researcher when you are finished. You will then answer some questions about the passage.

John Aldridge leaned over the railing of the lobster boat to grab the coolers.

And then the handle snapped.

Suddenly Aldridge was flying backward, tumbling across the deck toward the back of the boat, which was wide open, just a flat, slick ramp leading straight into the black ocean a few inches below. Aldridge grabbed for the side of the boat as it went past, his fingertips missing it by inches.

Aldridge was 45, a fisherman for almost two decades. He had a thriving business, 800 traps sitting on the bottom of the Atlantic, and two times a week he'd take the boat out overnight, spend an 18-hour day hauling in their catch and return the next morning to Montauk loaded down with lobster and crab.

Aldridge had the reputation of being quiet, intense, determined. Work on the Anna Mary was physically demanding, and Aldridge, who was lean but strong, drew a sense of accomplishment, even pride, in how much he was able to endure each trip — how long he could keep working without sleep, how many heavy traps he pulled out of the water, how quickly and precisely he and his team were able to unload them, restock them with bait and toss them back in. Now, alone in the water, he tried to use that strength to push down the fear that was threatening to overtake him. No negative thoughts, he told himself. Stay positive. Stay strong.

As Aldridge treaded water, he realized that his boots were not pulling him down; in fact, they were lifting him up, weirdly elevating his feet and tipping him backward.

Treading water awkwardly, Aldridge reached down and pulled off his left boot. Straining, he turned it upside down, raised it up until it cleared the waves, then plunged it back into the water, trapping a boot-size bubble of air inside. He tucked the inverted boot under his left armpit. Then he did the same thing with the right boot. It worked; they were like twin pontoons, and treading water with his feet alone was now enough to keep him stable and afloat.

The boots gave Aldridge a chance to think. He wasn't going to sink — not right away, anyway. Aldridge set a goal, the first of many he would assign himself that day: Just stay afloat till sunrise.

The sun rose on John Aldridge at about 5:30 on the morning of July 24. He was cold, thirsty and tired — he'd been awake for 24 hours — but he was still alive and afloat. Now that it was light, he gave himself a new assignment: find a buoy. To most people, the Atlantic Ocean 40 miles south of Montauk is just a big, undifferentiated expanse of waves, but Aldridge knew roughly where he fell overboard — a few miles south of the 40-fathom curve. And he knew that several lobster fishermen had trawls nearby — he knew them by name, in fact. If Aldridge could make his way to a buoy, he figured, he would be more visible to the searchers, and it would be easier to stay afloat.

He was able to see that a buoy had a flag on top of it, which lobster fishermen attach to the west end of their strings. Aldridge figured that a mile or so to the east of the buoy, he would find the other end of that string of traps, and with it, another buoy. He

started swimming east, stopping briefly at the top of each swell to see if he could catch sight of the eastern buoy. It was painful work. His legs were cramping. He couldn't feel his fingers. The sun, rising higher in front of him, was blinding. But finally, after more than an hour, he spotted a buoy, and using the current, he was able to angle himself directly into it. He grabbed the rope and held on.

Aldridge could see the plane and the helicopters running their patterns, but everyone searching for him seemed to be at least a mile to the east. Clinging to the buoy, he realized that the Coast Guard thought he was still drifting. Even if they'd figured out more or less where he fell in, their search patterns hadn't taken into account the possibility that he snagged a buoy. Aldridge knew if he wanted to have a chance of being found, he had to get himself farther east. He took out his buck knife and started chopping away at the rope that held the buoy in place. When he got it free, he tied it around his wrist and began swimming east again, holding the buoy in front of him.

He willed himself to keep kicking until eventually — he doesn't know how much time went by — he reached another buoy. He recognized that it belonged to his friend Pete Spong, a Rhode Island fisherman who owned a lobster boat called the Brooke C. He untied the rope from his wrist and tied it to the anchor rope underneath the new buoy. Now he had two buoys connected by a few feet of rope. He swung his leg over the rope and straddled it, facing east.

The pilot of the rescue helicopter hit the mark button in the cockpit and turned the helicopter around.

And there was John Aldridge, sitting on the rope between his two buoys, clutching his boots and waving frantically. Bob Hovey, the rescue swimmer, clipped his harness onto the helicopter's hoist cable, and Hill lowered him into the water. As Hovey swam to Aldridge, Hill lowered a rescue basket, and Hovey helped Aldridge climb in. Just as Hill was about to raise him up, Aldridge realized that his boots were floating away, and he yelled to Hovey to grab them and put them in the basket with him.

After Aldridge was safely in the helicopter huddled under blankets, Deal flipped the radio to channel 21 and called Sosinski, who was somewhere below them, staring out at the water, still looking for Aldridge. "Anna Mary," the rescuer said, "we have your man. He's alive." After 18 hours doing whatever it took to survive in the open ocean, John Aldridge had been rescued.

The person who seems least shaken by the experience is Aldridge himself. He spent the night after his rescue in a hospital in Cape Cod, being treated for hypothermia, dehydration and exposure, but he has no post-traumatic stress, he told me: no nightmares, no flashbacks, no fear when he goes out on the water to work. The Coast Guard pilots and the men in the search unit in New Haven express a certain understandable pride when they talk about their work that day, and when Aldridge talks about it, he sounds the same way. "I always felt like I was conditioning myself for that situation," he told me one day in September while we were sitting in the Dock. "So once you're in it, it's like: All right, I can do that. I did it. I had that sense of accomplishment.

Init: _____

Questions

1) How would you rate John Aldridge's perseverance (circle one number)?

1 2 3 4 5

No perseverance High perseverance

2) How would you rate the perseverance of the rescuers (circle one number)?

1 2 3 4 5

No perseverance High perseverance

3) What could John Aldridge have done differently?

4) What could the rescuers have done differently?