

Robinson Crusoe

A Reading A-Z Level Z Leveled Book
Word Count: 2,984

Connections

Writing

Imagine you are Robinson Crusoe. Create several journal entries based on what you are feeling while you are stranded. Be creative. Remember to include adjectives, adverbs, and sensory details.

Social Studies

Find clues in the story about the setting. Research locations around the world that have similar characteristics. Where do you think Robinson Crusoe is located? Use evidence to write a paragraph explaining your claim.

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A Selection from **Robinson Crusoe**



Adapted from the writing of Daniel Defoe
Illustrated by David Cockcroft

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Focus Question

How do Robinson Crusoe's survival skills help him while he is stranded?

Words to Know

arms	provisions
casks	realization
desolate	resolved
fortified	stranded
hold	stern
leagues	tarpaulin

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Correlation

LEVEL Z	
Fountas & Pinnell	U-V
Reading Recovery	N/A
DRA	50

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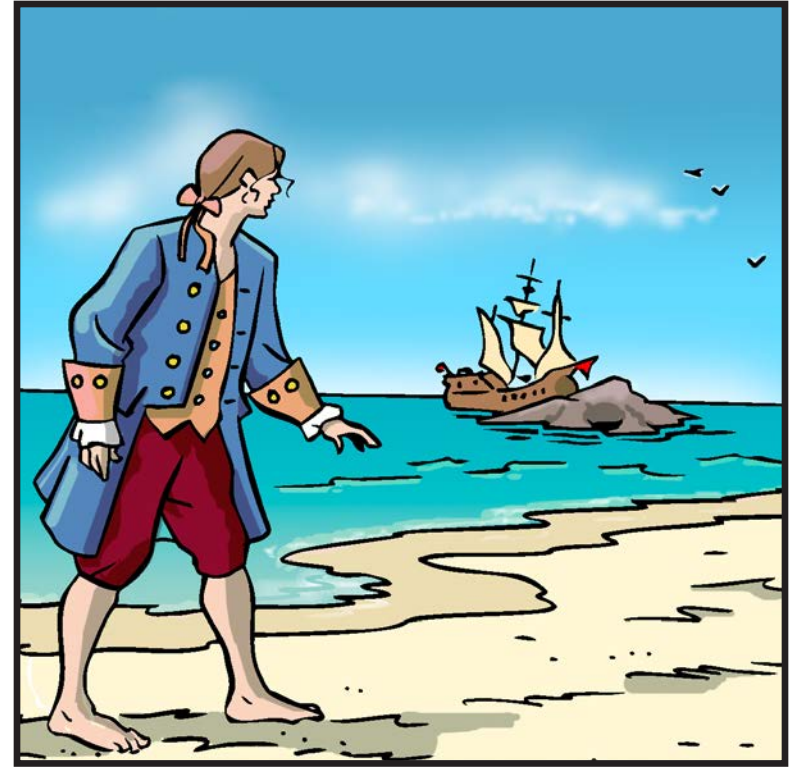
*In this classic novel, Robinson Crusoe, an English sailor exploring the Caribbean and South America, becomes **stranded** on a tropical island when his ship is blown off course and wrecked. This part of the story opens when Crusoe finds himself alone on the island, the only member of the ship's crew to survive.*

Shipwrecked

I looked to the wrecked ship, but the waves and spray of the sea were so big, I could hardly see it. It lay so far off. How was it possible I had gotten on shore?

After I had calmed my mind with the **realization** that I was alive, I began to look around to see what kind of place I was in. I soon had a dreadful shock. I was wet, had no warm clothes to cover me, nor anything to eat or drink. I couldn't see any future before me except dying from hunger or being eaten by wild beasts. This threw me into such misery that for a while I ran about like a madman. Night coming upon me, I began with a heavy heart to consider what would be my fate if there were any dangerous beasts in that country. At night, they always come out for their prey.

The only solution that entered my thoughts was to get up into a thick, bushy tree that grew near me. I **resolved** to sit all night and consider what death I should die. I saw no chance of surviving. I walked from the shore to see if I could find any fresh water to drink, which I did, to my great joy. Having drunk, I went to the tree. After getting up into it, I tried to place myself so that if I should sleep, I might not fall. I cut a short stick, like a club, for my defense and took up my lodging. Extremely tired, I fell fast asleep and slept as comfortably as few could have done in my condition.



Luck

When I awoke, it was broad day, the weather clear, and the storm had stopped. The sea did not rage and swell as before. But what surprised me most was that the ship had lifted in the night. It was driven up almost as far as the rock that I mentioned, where I had been bruised by the wave dashing me against it. This was within a mile from shore, and the ship seemed to stand upright. I wanted to get on board so at least I might save some necessary things for my use. . . .

A little after noon, I found the sea very calm and the tide gone so far out that I could come within a quarter of a mile of the ship. And here my grief returned, for I saw that if we had stayed on board, we would have been safe. I would not have been left entirely alone. This forced tears to my eyes again, but there was little relief in that.

I resolved, if possible, to get to the ship. So I pulled off my clothes—for the weather was extremely hot—and took to the water. But when I came to the ship, I did not know how to get on board, for she lay high out of the water, and there was nothing within my reach to lay hold of.

I swam round her twice, and the second time I spied a small piece of rope hanging above me. With great difficulty I got hold of it. By the help of that rope, I got up onto the deck of the ship.

Here I found that the ship had a great deal of water in her **hold**, but she lay on the side of a bank so her **stern** lifted up, and all in that part was dry. My first work was to search and see what was spoiled and what was free. First, I found that all the ship's food was dry and untouched by the water. Being very hungry, I went to the bread room and filled my pockets with biscuits. I ate as I went about other things, for I had no time to lose. . . .



We had several spare masts in the ship. I resolved to work with these, and I flung as many of them overboard as I could manage. I tied every one with a rope so they might not drift away. When this was done, I went down the ship's side. Pulling them to me, I tied four of them together at both ends in the form of a raft. Laying two or three short pieces of plank upon them crossways, I found I could walk upon it very well. . . . My raft was now strong enough to bear any reasonable weight.

Having considered well what I most wanted, I got three of the seamen's chests. I opened and emptied them and lowered them down upon my raft. The first of these I filled with food—bread, rice, three Dutch cheeses, five pieces of dried goat's flesh, and a little bit of European corn.

While I was doing this, the tide began to rise, though very calmly. I was distressed to see my coat, shirt, and waistcoat, which I had left on the shore, float away. However, this set me searching for clothes, of which I found enough. I took no more than I wanted for present use. I had other things which I was more eager to get. The first things I wanted were tools to work with on shore. After long searching, I found the carpenter's chest. It was a very useful prize to me and much more valuable than a shipload of gold would have been at that time.

My next thought was for some ammunition and **arms**. There were two very good hunting rifles in the cabin and two pistols. I knew there were three barrels of gunpowder in the ship, but knew not where our gunner had stowed them. After a long search I found them, two of them dry and good, though the third had taken water. The dry two I got to my raft. And now I thought my raft pretty well loaded.

I began to think how I should get to shore, having neither sail, oar, nor rudder. The least capful of wind would have overturned my raft.



Afloat

I had three encouragements: first, a smooth, calm sea; second, the tide rising; third, what little wind there was blew me toward land. And thus, having found two or three broken oars, I put to sea. For a mile or thereabouts my raft went very well, though it went a little distant from the place where I had landed before. I noticed that there was some movement of the water. I hoped to find some creek or river that I might use as a port. As I imagined, so it was. There appeared a little opening of the land, and I found a strong current of the tide set into it. I guided my raft as well as I could, keeping in the middle of the stream.

But here I almost suffered a second shipwreck, which would have broken my heart. My raft ran aground at one end upon some rocks and tilted so that the smallest wave would have sent all my cargo off into the water.

I did my best to set my back against the chests to keep them in their places. But even using all my strength, I could not free the raft. I dared not stir from the posture I was in, holding up the chests with all my might.

I stood in that manner nearly half an hour, during which time the rising of the tide floated my raft again. Eventually I came to the mouth of a little river, with land on both sides. A strong current of tide was running up. I looked on both sides for a proper place to get to shore.

At length I spied a little cove on the right shore of the creek. With great pain and difficulty I guided my raft there. At last I got so near that, reaching ground with my oar, I could pull her in. But here I almost dropped all my cargo into the sea again. The shore lay pretty steep, and there was no place to land. If one end of my raft ran on shore it would lie so high, and the other sink so low, that it would spill my cargo. All that I could do was to wait till the tide was high, keeping the raft near shore with my oar. As soon as I found water enough, I thrust her upon a flat piece of ground and there fastened her. Thus I lay till the tide went out and left my raft and all my cargo safe on shore.



Shelter

My next work was to view the country and seek a proper place for shelter and to stow my goods. Where I was, I knew not. Was this place the continent or an island, inhabited or not inhabited, in danger of wild beasts or not? There was a hill not more than a mile from me that rose up very steep and high. I took one of the hunting rifles and a horn of powder, and thus armed, I traveled up to the top of that hill. After great labor and difficulty, I got to the top. I saw, to my great distress, that I was on an island surrounded on all sides by the sea. No land to be seen except some rocks, which lay a great way off, and two smaller islands, which lay about ten miles to the west. . . .

Having seen this, I came back to my raft. I fell to work to bring my cargo on shore, which took up the rest of that day. What to do with myself at night, I knew not. I was afraid to lie down on the ground, not knowing if some wild beast might eat me, though I afterwards found no need for those fears. I went to work to make a little tent with a sail and some poles. Into this tent I brought everything that I knew would spoil either with rain or sun. I piled all the empty chests and casks up in a circle round the tent. This **fortified** it from any sudden attack, either from man or beast.

I now began to consider that I might get a great many things that would be useful to me out of the ship. I knew that the first storm might break her all in pieces. I resolved to put all other things off till I had got everything out of the ship that I could get. . . .



Storm

I had been now thirteen days on shore and had been eleven times on the ship. I had brought away all that one pair of hands could bring. I believe, had the calm weather held, I should have brought away the whole ship, piece by piece.

But the twelfth time I went on board, I found the wind began to rise. I thought nothing more could be found. Yet I discovered a locker with two or three razors and one pair of large scissors, with some ten or a dozen good knives and forks.

In another I found money—some European coin, some Brazilian, some gold, and some silver.

I smiled to myself at the sight of this money. “Money!” said I, aloud, “what are you good for? You are not worth anything to me—no, not worth taking off the ground. One of those knives is worth all this heap.”

I began to think of making another raft. While I was preparing this, the sky grew overcast, and the wind began to rise. In a quarter of an hour, it blew a strong wind from the shore.

It occurred to me that it was pointless to make a raft with the wind blowing out to sea. I needed to be gone before the tide turned; otherwise, I might not be able to reach the shore at all. Accordingly, I let myself down into the water and swam across the channel. Even that was difficult, partly with the weight of the things I had and partly because of the roughness of the water.

The wind rose very hastily. Before long, it blew a storm. But I had gotten home to my little tent, where I lay with all my wealth about me, very secure.

It blew very hard all night. In the morning when I looked out, behold, no more ship was to be seen! I was a little surprised, but thought to myself with satisfaction that I had lost no time getting everything out of her that could be useful to me. Indeed, there was little left in her that I might have brought away if I had had more time. I now gave up any more thoughts of the ship, or of anything out of her, except what might float on shore from her wreck. Indeed, pieces of her did, but those things were of small use to me.



Home

I soon found that the place I was in was not fit for my settlement because it was upon low, marshy ground near the sea. I resolved to find a more healthy and convenient spot of ground.

I thought of several things I needed: first, healthy and fresh water; second, shelter from the heat of the Sun; third, security from danger, whether man or beast; fourth, a view to the sea. I needed to be able to sight any ships so as not to lose any chance of escape.

In search of a proper place, I found a little plain on the side of a rising hill whose front was as steep as a house-side. Nothing could come down from the top. On the side of the rock there was a hollow place, worn a little way in. It was like the entrance or door of a cave, but there was not any cave.

On the flat, just in front of this hollow place, I resolved to pitch my tent. This plain was less than a hundred yards broad and about twice as long, and lay like a lawn before my door. At the end, it descended down into the low ground by the seaside. It was on the north side of the hill, so it was sheltered from the heat every day till near sunset.

Before I set up my tent, I drew a half-circle in front of the hollow place. In this half-circle I pitched two rows of strong stakes. I drove them into the ground till they stood very firm. The biggest end stood out of the ground five and a half feet and was sharpened on the top. This fence was so strong that neither man nor beast could get into it or over it. This cost me a great deal of time and labor.

The entrance into this place I made, not by a door, but by a short ladder to go over the top.

When I was in, I lifted the ladder over after me. I was completely fenced. I slept secure in the night, which otherwise I could not have done. I realized afterwards, though, that there was no need of all this caution.

Into this fence or fortress, with much labor, I carried all my riches, all my **provisions**, ammunition, and stores. I made a large tent to protect me from the rains. I made a smaller tent within and covered the top tent with a large **tarpaulin** that I had saved among the sails. And now I lay not in the bed that I had brought on shore, but in a hammock. It was a very good one that had belonged to the mate of the ship.





When I had done this, I began to work my way into the rock. Thus I made a cave, just behind my tent, which served me like a cellar to my house. Having now fixed my shelter, I found it absolutely necessary to provide a place to make a fire and fuel to burn. What I did for that, and how I enlarged my cave, I shall tell in its place. But I must now give some mention of myself and of my thoughts about living.

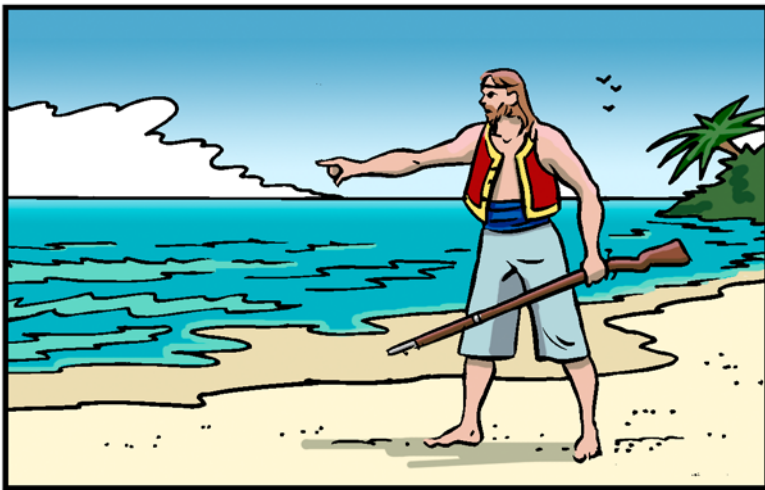


Hope

I was cast away upon that island after having been driven by a violent storm. We were quite out of the course of our planned voyage and some hundreds of **leagues** out of ordinary trade routes. I had great reason to consider it my fate that in this **desolate** place, and in this desolate manner, I should end my life. Many tears would run down my face when I had these thoughts. Sometimes I would ask myself why I was so absolutely miserable, so without help, abandoned, so entirely depressed. It could hardly be reasonable to be thankful for such a life.

But something always turned around inside me and stopped these thoughts. Particularly one day, walking by the seaside, I was very sorrowful about my present condition. But I thought to myself, “Well, you are in a desolate condition, it is true. But, pray remember, where is the rest of your crew? Did not eleven of you come in the boat? Where are the other ten? Why were they not saved, and you lost? Why were you singled out? Is it better to be here or there?” and then I pointed to the sea. All evils are to be compared with the good that is in them, and with what worse might have been.

If you would like to read more of Robinson Crusoe’s adventures, ask your librarian for the book Robinson Crusoe by Daniel Defoe.



Glossary

arms (n.)	weapons or firearms (p. 9)
casks (n.)	barrels that hold liquids (p. 13)
desolate (adj.)	empty, alone, and unwelcoming (p. 20)
fortified (v.)	made stronger or more resistant to attack (p. 13)
hold (n.)	the cargo deck or interior of a ship (p. 7)
leagues (n.)	units of measure; about 5 kilometers or 3 miles (p. 20)
provisions (n.)	supplies, especially those taken on a journey (p. 18)
realization (n.)	the act of understanding something clearly for the first time (p. 5)
resolved (v.)	decided (p. 5)
stern (n.)	the back end of a boat or ship (p. 7)
stranded (adj.)	left behind; in a helpless situation (p. 4)
tarpaulin (n.)	a sheet of waterproof fabric (p. 18)