

LEARNING SUPPORT WORKSHEETS THAT REQUIRE KNOWLEDGE OF THE STORY

ANSWERS FOR TEACHERS

TRUE TALES

If a worksheet does not appear in the list below, it is 'generic' in its requirements, calling on children's general basic skills, without specific reference to the story. In other words, a teacher will know what the correct answer is without having read the story at all.

SUBWAY HERO

1. Little Michelle held her mother's hand tightly as they walked carefully down the steps to the underground station. It was a cold winter's day in New York, January 1975. Michelle was pleased to be in the warm station, away from the snow and cold of the street. She was hungry and eager to get home. Trains ran every few minutes so she didn't have long to wait. In her excitement, she let go of her mother's hand and pushed through the crowd to the edge of the platform. She looked into the dark tunnel. She couldn't see a train coming. She leaned over to see better – and slipped! "There's a girl on the tracks!" someone screamed. The crowd on the platform went silent and stared in horror. Little Michelle was lying across the tracks with her eyes closed. Everyone looked but no one dared climb down the metre drop off the platform; how would they get back up? They were too scared to move. At the next subway station, under a kilometre away, the train had just entered the tunnel. The driver pulled his lever to FULL POWER. He knew nothing of the drama unfolding at the next station. Michelle came to and started to scream "Mummy! Mummy!" no one moved, it was as if they were frozen. There was the sound of crying. At last, a man decided to act, his name was Everett Sanderson. He was a father; his child was not much older than Michelle. He jumped down onto the tracks and ran toward her. The train driver could see nothing, only a few seconds remained before his train roared into the station. The train was full. Eight carriages, 500 tonnes of metal crammed with peak hour passengers was rolling toward the station at nearly 60kph. Everett was still six metres away from Michelle when the train burst out of the tunnel. He felt the ground tremble. He looked up, the train's bright lights dazzled him, he kept running. The driver looked down, his blood ran cold. He slammed on the EMERGENCY STOP. The train's wheels locked, sparks flew. There was a terrible screeching noise. It still skidded forward toward the man and child. Everett grabbed Michelle by the coat with all his strength and threw her up onto the platform. The people standing there grabbed her as she flew through the air. She was safe at last. However, her brave rescuer was facing death in two seconds. The train skidded at 30 kph towards Everett. He jumped and slipped back. The crowd groaned. He jumped again. People grabbed him and pulled him upwards. Everett wondered if his legs would be torn off. Would he be dragged back down under the wheels? The train skidded to a halt eight metres on. The driver stepped out and looked back. Everywhere people were crying and shouting. There, lying on the platform, shaken but completely unharmed was the man

who saved the little girl. “You’re a hero, that was a terribly brave thing to do,” they said patting him on the back. Michelle was crying, she knew something awful nearly happened to her. Everett Sanderson’s courageous deeds were written up in the New York newspapers. The subway system gave him a free pass to their trains for the rest of his life. The city of New York awarded him a medal for bravery. Everett said that he would have died inside if he didn’t try to save the little girl’s life. This is an absolutely true story.

2. 3, 6, 4, 1, 5, 2

5. b, a, c

THE TITANIC

1. The great ship sailed through the night. It was a huge – 46,000 tonnes – a sea going palace which carried more than 2,200 passengers and crew. It was on its first voyage across the Atlantic Ocean travelling close to its maximum speed (50kph). There was no moon. Far above stars twinkled. The sea was smooth. The date was Sunday 14th April 1912. Most of the passengers had gone to bed, confident that they were perfectly safe. The ship was brand new, and so cleverly built that it was ‘unsinkable’. It had twelve watertight compartments below the waterline, designed to prevent water spreading. The ship’s designer, who was onboard that night, was convinced that it was indestructible. Not far ahead, unseen in the darkness, was the only solid thing that floats on the ocean that is even bigger than the ship. A massive iceberg as big as a 20 storey building, towering 30 metres above the sea, and plunged 100 metres below. It was directly in the path of the ship. The ship’s name was The Titanic. As Sunday night ended Captain Smith went to bed. The Titanic had received radio messages warning of icebergs in the area. A nearby ship, unseen by The Titanic had slowed to a crawl, fearful of hitting one of the massive ice blocks. But proud Captain Smith was sure that his vessel was too big to worry. He left his second in command in charge. They sailed on at full speed cutting through the icy waters of the Atlantic. At 11.40, a lookout, straining his eyes in the darkness saw something ahead. A vast mass that was not sea, it stood up out of the sea. It got bigger and bigger. “Iceberg! Iceberg ahead!” he yelled in his telephone. The officer on the ship’s bridge heard the cry. He couldn’t see anything, but ordered a change in the ship’s wheel course. “Hard a-starboard!” he yelled. The seaman threw the ship’s giant wheel over and The Titanic began turning away. At that speed, such a big vessel turned slowly. It wasn’t going to hit the iceberg dead on, but would it clear the monster? Passengers who were still up felt a jolt. The Titanic trembled. One described the shock as being like ‘somebody had drawn a giant finger along the side of the ship’. Ice fell onto the deck as the ship scraped past. The iceberg towered over the top of the huge ship. There was no crash, The Titanic slid along the iceberg and kept going. Captain Smith was woken; he came to the bridge and was told what had happened. He and the ship’s designer made their way downstairs to the ship’s hold. What he saw took his breath away; the ship was filling with icy seawater. It took half an hour to assess the damage. By then the ship was stopped floating stationery in icy water. The iceberg had torn a 100 metre gash along the ship’s right side, well below the water line. Tonnes and tonnes of

water were pouring in. Already seamen in the engine room had drowned. The water level was rising rapidly. Worse still, the unthinkable happened. The Titanic could stay afloat if three of its watertight compartments were broken. Captain Smith gasped when he heard that the iceberg had cut a hole that extended to five. The ship's designer said they only had an hour and a half left. Just after midnight the emergency sirens sounded. Distress calls were sent out on the radio. Passengers were woken and the crew began to ready lifeboats. There were more people onboard than there were seats on lifeboats. Regulations weren't as strict back then. Not 10 miles away, another ship lay. The engines were idling, waiting for dawn to go on. The radio operator had switched off his set and gone to bed. The night watchman didn't see the red flares that The Titanic had fired into the night sky. Men, women and children stood on the decks of The Titanic wearing lifejackets, waiting for lifeboats to be lowered. In panic, some lifeboats were launched with only a few people in them. The deck sloped as the ship settled lower in the water. Liferrafts could not be lowered on one side. Below, the poor passengers had not even been told what was happening. Another ship, the Carpathia had heard the distress call and was on its way, but was 2 hours away. The last lifeboats left doomed ship. There were still well over 1500 men, women and children left on board. The Titanic sank even lower. A band played on board the deck to keep the spirits high, it could be heard across the water as the survivors watched from the lifeboats. Just after 2am The Titanic's bow dropped downwards. It's stern rose higher and higher, and people fell off into the sea screaming. There were explosions as water rushed into boilers. The ship broke in two, and one by one the two halves were dragged below water level. The ship plunged downward, dropping towards the ocean floor. The Atlantic is so deep, it took 10 minutes to reach the bottom. It crashed into the ink black seabed over two kilometres below the surface. Wreckage scattered over a wide area. Those who had fallen off the ship splashed around in the icy water, with only minutes to live. Onlookers watched in horrified silence. Three hours later the Carpathia arrived. 705 terrified, chilled survivors were taken from lifeboats and given medical treatment. As the dawn came up, Carpathia searched the waters, no one else was left alive. The worlds greatest 'unsinkable' ship The titanic had only been at sea just four days before it was lost. More than 1500 people lost their lives, it was the greatest maritime disaster in history.

2. no, yes, yes, yes, no, yes, no, yes

6. . Another ship, the Carpathia had heard the distress call and was on its way, but was 2 hours away. The last lifeboats left doomed ship. There were still well over 1500 men, women and children left on board.

SNAKE

Deep in the jungle, four men were sound asleep on the ground in their sleeping bags, covered only by waterproof canopies that protected them from the tropical rain. It had rained everyday. Ivor, the surveyor was the leader of the team. Alan was his assistant. Vargas was the team's guide. Indy was the man of all jobs, who looked after all the team's equipment. The sun came up, the rain stopped. They roused one by one. Indy was first, he started the campfire. Vargas joined him; together they cooked breakfast.

Soon Ivor joined them. The men were all irritable and could barely stand the sight of one another; they said nothing, and all longed for the expedition to be over. They had all been sick with jungle fever, and the never ending heat and rain made life awful. Angrily Ivor tried to wake Alan up, he thought he was a lazy good for nothing idiot. He stepped across to his bed and realised that Alan was wide awake. His eyes were rolling. Ivor bent down and Alan's eyes met his. They were wide with fear. He mouthed a single word: "SNAKE!" On Alan's stomach, under the sleeping bag was the shape of a coiled up snake. Ivor stepped back horrified. He knew the jungle was full of dangerous creatures, including deadly snakes. Vargas was yelling, wondering what was going on. "Shhhh!" The snake moved on Alan's stomach. His already white face turned an even more deathly colour. The snake settled down. Alan closed his eyes. He was perspiring with fear. The other men had a conference to discuss what they could do. Anything they did to rescue their comrade would almost mean him being bitten. They were a day's walk from the nearest village. Even if they radioed for help, a helicopter could not land in the jungle. "Cigarette?" said Vargas. He lit one to calm his nerves. "That's it! Why don't we smoke it out?" said Ivor suddenly. They carefully collected paper and grass; the intense tropical heat had dried everything out despite the rain. They lit a small fire and fanned the flames. It made lots of smoke. Ivor held a small canvas bag over the fire collecting the smoke. Pinching the neck of the bag, he quickly made his way over to where Alan lay. Vargas took his long sharp bush-knife and cut a small hole in the bottom of the bag near Alan's feet. Ivor squeezed the bag; smoke squirted through the hole and into the sleeping bag. The snake writhed and twisted. Smoke trickled out of the top of the sleeping bag. Alan's eyes were wide with terror. Alan's eyes darted back and forth crazily. "NO! Don't use the smoke. It angers the snake. If it gets angry it will kill me," he was saying. The three men withdrew to and whispered amongst themselves. What could they do next? They had to do something soon. They decide to try and heat the snake up using the sun. Together they pulled the waterproof canopy off Alan's bed. They watched anxiously. His face was red with heat and stress. The snake moved, the heat was doing its work. The lump under the sleeping bag was lifting up, uncoiling. The snake was moving towards the opening of the sleeping bag. Alan lay as still as death. An ugly brown head poked out of the sleeping bag, next to Alan's face. He never moved, he might as well have been made of stone. The snake slithered out of the sleeping bag. Its tongue flickered. It looked around and wound its way to the nearest shady bush. Vargas fired both barrels of the shotgun. The first blast ripped the snake in two. The second removed its head. The men dragged Alan out of the sleeping bag. He could barely stand; weak with dehydration and fear. They gave him water and patted him. They gave him food; he could barely eat. They asked what had happened. "It was on my stomach for twelve hours. I was awake when it came, thank goodness, or I might have touched it – and then.." he whispered. Alan thought that the other men would never wake up, but he knew he just had to keep still. The next day Alan was working again. The men's' problems as a team had vanished as if a dream. They radioed for supplies and messaged "All's well!"

2. yes, no, yes, no, yes, yes, no, yes, no

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CAPSIZING

It was Sunday January 5 1997. Darkness was falling as one lone yacht, the ‘Exide Challenger’ raced across the ocean. On board was just one man – Englishman Tony Bullimore. His boat was one of the fastest on the seas. He was competing in the Whitbread Round the World Yacht Race – a race for single-handed sailors. He was in the last leg of the race that ended in Sydney. The boat was built for speed. In the fierce winds of the Southern Ocean, the yacht flew through the water at speeds of up to 20 knots (40 kph)! As the winds rose, the yacht crashed through the waves. With every wave, the strain on the boat – particularly the keel – was enormous. Tony was making excellent speed; but could the boat hold up under the strain? If anything broke, he was in trouble. He was in the most empty ocean in the world. He was 1400 nautical miles (3000 km) south west of Australia. It could take days for a rescue ship to reach him, if they could find him at all. Soon a storm was raging. Sometime before midnight, the keel snapped. Immediately the yacht turned upside down. Tony grabbed whatever he could. Water began pouring inside the boat. The lights went out. Tony, already in his survival suit – a thick padded overall designed to keep a person warm no matter what the conditions around – climbed up away from the icy water that rushed in. He turned on a torch. The yacht was a mess. All his belongings, food and books were floating in the water. The yacht, though upside down was still afloat. The air trapped inside the hull was keeping it from sinking. Tony was bruised and chilled, but alive. The yacht had a satellite position beacon – telling people where he was. On Monday morning, the people in charge of the race told Australian authorities that Tony was missing. They tried to radio him but there was no answer. The search started. Using the last known position he had reported, they sent out a military helicopter. It flew down from Perth, and the crew began looking for him. Within hours they had spotted the upturned hull. The crew called Tony on the radio as they circled overhead. There was no answer. Back in Australia a tough decision had to be made. Was Tony dead or alive? The HMAS Adelaide was at dock ready for sea. The captain was told to sail to Tony’s yacht. Tony had tried to sleep in a hammock he had made out of ropes and blankets. But the intense cold was too much, even in his survival suit. He had some water to drink, and a chocolate bar. The rest was drenched by sea. To go outside would almost certain death. He tried to keep warm and wait. The Adelaide steamed at full speed towards the yacht. Night came. Tony ate the last of his chocolate. Tuesday dawned. The waves were 20 metre monsters. Tony was sick with the motion of the boat as it rose up and down. Tony thought he was a goner, and needed

a miracle to get out of this. Wednesday came. Mountainous seas were slowing the Adelaide down. Late Wednesday, a Navy plane dropped an electronic device into the sea beside the damaged yacht. It sent out 'PING PING' noises. Tony could hear the noises and tapped the hull. Could it be people come to rescue him? Thursday morning, the Adelaide arrived beside the upturned hull of the 'Exide Challenger'. The captain sent a rubber boat and divers who banged on the hull and yelled. There was no sign of life. Inside the yacht, Tony thought he was imagining things. They were about to turn back when they saw in the water, a man in a yellow survival suit. They pulled Tony from the freezing water and wrapped him in a blanket. They took him back to Adelaide, warmed him up and gave him food. But not before Tony had kissed the sailor who rescued him. "It's a miracle. It's like being born all over again!" said Tony.

2. 2, 6, 1, 5, 4, 3

3. pouring, lights, warm, torch, mess, floating

KAY COTTEE'S ADVENTURES

1. In 1988, Kay Cotee became the first woman ever to sail a yacht single-handed non-stop around the world. It took her 189 days (seven months). She travelled 22 000 nautical miles (45 000 km) on her own. Kay grew up in Sydney. As a child she loved boats. Her father taught her to sail, and as a girl she was an expert sailor. By the age 11, she was ocean racing. Sailing was what she really wanted to do. She grew up and went to work, but she really wanted excitement. She came up with a wild scheme to sail around the world on her own. She found a sponsor. Blackmores, the company who make vitamin pills agreed to provide money for a big boat, and for all the back up she would need. Kay bought an 11 metre (37 foot) yacht, which was named Blackmore's First Lady. The yacht was strengthened, because it would be sailing on some of the worst seas on earth. Big water tanks were put in because Kay would not be stopping anywhere. Enough food was packed on board to last for a year. On 29 November 1987, Kay waved her family and friends goodbye and sailed south out of the Sydney Harbour. On 10 December, she rounded the bottom of New Zealand. Then she headed due east across the Pacific. In a terrible storm, the yacht's boom broke and Kay had to repair it herself. The storms continued until she rounded Cape Horn (at the bottom of South America) on the 19th January 1988. She sailed up the Atlantic, almost to the top of South America to catch the winds. She now had the problem of almost no breeze at all to push her along. She watched the dolphins and read. Finally, with the winds picking up again, she headed south once more. She passed the Cape of Good Hope (at the bottom of Africa) on April 4. She was half way through the voyage. She talked by radio everyday with her friends, and wrote in her diary. Everything was going fine. She was in the Southern Ocean - the last part of her trip. That's when things started to go wrong. The waves were huge, some fourteen metres high – the height of a five storey building! The wind was 40 knots (80 kph) Kay was tired from lack of sleep, but she knew she had to stay alert. One evening she heard a terrible roar. She felt the boat lift up. Higher. Higher. Then there was silence. Kay jumped up and braced herself. The boat was falling off a wave. It was mid air. CRASH!! It hit the bottom of the wave. Kay was not hurt. There was a split in the

deck around the mast; it was not serious. If the yacht had not been specially strengthened, falling off the wave might have punched the mast right through the bottom of the boat. She sailed on. The winds howled. The yacht was knocked over repeatedly by the wind. It bounced back up again every time. Below, everything was a mess, things falling onto the floor. Kay couldn't sleep. No sails were up, but still the boat was travelling at frightening speeds. She couldn't afford to lose concentration. She neared the coast of Australia. The wind was 75 knots (150 kph)! The waves were 18 metres high. The boat – all 6 tonnes of it – was practically surfing. The speedo read 20 knots (50 kph). Yachts normally travel at around 6 knots (12 kph). Night fell. To Kay's amazement, she saw a light. It was a ship and it was going to cross her path in a very short time. If it didn't see her, she would be run down. She turned on all her lights and shouted in the radio. She let off a distress flare, and shone her torch on the mast, hoping that someone on the ship would see her. Just as collision seemed certain, the ship began to alter course. With only metres to spare, it turned, and the First Lady rushed past its huge black hull and into the night. That's when Kay was washed overboard! Her life flashed before her eyes. She held her breath under water waiting for the yacht to right herself again. The next wave half washed her back onto the boat. She was exhausted, and bruised from head to foot. On the 5th June 1988, Kay sailed back into the Sydney Harbour to a massive public welcome. Thousands of people came to cheer her in. She had set eight world records in her voyage. She was later honoured by numerous awards, including being named Australian of the Year. Kay Cottee is a very brave woman and did what few people even think of, and she came through smiling. She is a real hero.

2. first, yacht, sailed, April, huge, washed

6. One evening she heard a terrible roar. She felt the boat lift up. Higher. Higher. Then there was silence. Kay jumped up and braced herself. The boat was falling off a wave. It was mid air. CRASH!! It hit the bottom of the wave. Kay was not hurt. There was a split in the deck around the mast; it was not serious.

THE GREAT HOUDINI

1. Of the many magicians throughout history, the most famous of all was Harry Houdini. His real name was Ehrich Weiss. As a boy, he worked as a locksmith's assistant. He found locks really interesting, and would pull them apart, and put them back together again. Soon he could open them in just a few seconds. At age 15 he started to do magic tricks. He called himself "Ehrich the Great". He walked a rope like a trapeze artist in the circus. He pulled a rabbit out of a hat. He had someone lock him up in a box, and then he'd escape through a secret hatch in the back. He had someone tie him up with rope, and he'd wriggle free. He had handcuffs put on him, and he got out of them. His friends loved it. He wanted to go on stage, so he read all the magic books he could find. One of his favourites was about Robert Houdin, the great French magician. Ehrich changed his name. When he went on stage, he was Harry Houdini. Everyone loved Houdini's stunt where he was handcuffed and put inside a bag. The bag was put inside a large wooden box, and locked from the outside by audience members. A curtain was put over the box. His assistant would go behind the curtain and clap three times. On the third clap, the

curtain would open and there was Houdini. He would then unlock the box and open the bag, there was his assistant. He toured with his magic show. He would call the newspapers and go to the local police station. Reporters would go with him. He would ask the police to put their strongest handcuffs on his arms and legs, and then he would go into a cell. Minutes later, he would come out with no handcuffs. Sometimes he would unlock all of the prisoners, with no key! People would come from everywhere to see him escape. He started doing more dangerous tricks. He would hang above a city street, upside down, blindfolded and tied up. Huge crowds of people always gathered, and cheered! Houdini claimed that he could escape from anything, anywhere. A rich man offered Houdini thousands of dollars if he could escape from the knots that he tied. He spent forty-five minutes wrapping Houdini in fishing wire. It was so tight that it bruised him. Houdini was free in over an hour. The man paid up. One of Houdini's most dangerous tricks was where he was handcuffed, locked inside a box and dropped into a river. He had to get out before he drowned. Thousands of people watched these public tricks. One day he nearly died as the river was covered with ice. Eight minutes later Houdini popped out of the hole in the ice. He was shivering and blue with cold, but he was alive. Getting out of the handcuffs and box was easy; it was finding the hole in the ice that had been almost impossible. The river had a strong current and Houdini had been swept along. How did he do his magic tricks? Well, he guarded his secrets as magicians always do. We do know he always had a piece of wire with him to undo locks. He kept it hidden, sometimes even taped under his foot! He could use his body like no one else, he could tie knots with his toes, and undo buckles with his teeth. He could shrink his body to half-normal size in order to get out of things. Above all, he was fearless and would dare anything. That is why he was called 'The Great Houdini' – the greatest escape artist of all time.

2. tricks, river, heavy, eight, strong, find

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BLACKBEARD THE PIRATE

1. no, yes, yes, no, no, no

5. Imagine the terror of passengers and crew when they heard the lookout shout: "Ship Ahoy" and a ship loomed up alongside, with Blackbeard's Jolly Roger flapping in the breeze!

CASTAWAY

Everyone has heard of Robinson Crusoe. He was the man lost on a desert island. He lived alone for many years. He never existed, has was made up. The story is from a novel written in 1719 by the great English writer, Daniel Defoe. Robinson Crusoe was based on a real person, who did live on an island. This is the story of the real Robinson Crusoe. In 1704 a Scottish sailor named Alexander Selkirk was first mate on a British warship in the Pacific Ocean. The Captain was William Dampier. The two men did not like one another. One day they had a fight. Selkirk no longer wished to serve under Dampier. Dampier said that Selkirk was a hopeless sailor, and if he had his way he would throw him overboard. They were passing by an island. Selkirk asked to be put ashore that minute. Dampier summoned the ships' crew. There was a gasp from the sailors. Selkirk's face went white, but he said nothing. The captain told the sailors to row him ashore, give him food, clothing, tools, and a Bible. "And God have mercy on him." Selkirk, still angry, was rowed ashore. The sailor's unloaded the ship's chest containing all the items the captain had listed, along with a musket, a kettle, an axe and a knife. The sailors climbed back in the boat and rowed away from shore with Selkirk splashing behind them, crying out to not be left behind, and to be taken back to the ship. The sailors kept rowing. Selkirk could not swim. The ship pulled up its anchor and sailed away. Selkirk was completely alone. He was the only human being on a tiny island called Mas a Tierra. It was 600kms off the coast of South America. Selkirk had ended up on the island through his own foolishness, but he was not one to give up. He explored the island. It was full of good things, natural springs, trees full of tropical fruit, and most useful of all animals. The island had once been settled by missionaries, who had since long gone. They had left behind some goats, pigs and fowls. The island was full of them. He used the axe to cut down trees. He made a hut out of wood, lashed it together with vines, and put a roof on it made of leaves. He learnt to make fire by rubbing sticks together. And he had a Bible to read. He built a signal fire in the first days after being left on the island, hoping he would have to light it when a ship went by. But he never saw a ship. His clothes began to fall apart. He had had killed goats to eat. He found an old nail and sharpened it into a needle. He cut up the goatskins and sewed them into a suit of clothes. His beard had grown down to his waist. His hair was wild, and he was desperately lonely. But he was still alive. Years went by still no ship came. The signal fire stayed unlit. He had some close escapes. Falling down a mountainside had nearly killed him. He had to lie on his side and wait to get better. In the summer of 1707, a ship appeared on the horizon. Selkirk mad with joy, lit his fire. The ship stopped and a boat rowed to the island. British sailors came to the shore. Was it a coincidence? The navigator of the ship was William Dampier. Selkirk became a celebrity when he got back to England. The captain of the ship wrote an account of the castaway in a book called A Cruising Voyage Round the World. The book was read by William Defoe, who changed the name of the castaway when he came to write Robinson Crusoe. He added in all sorts of adventures, and his kept his unfortunate hero on the island for 24 years. But the story is basically that of Alexander Selkirk. In 1966 Mas a Tierra was renamed Robinson Crusoe island. Alexander Selkirk returned home and lived alone. He would say "People are idiot. I wish I were on my beautiful island after all." Some people are never happy.

2. fight, alone, plenty, axe, sticks, clothes, ship, sailors

3. Selkirk fell down a mountainside.

A signal fire is a fire that is lit to signal passers by. Hopefully they will see the fire's light or smoke. Selkirk lit the fire by rubbing sticks together.