



# *Robinson Crusoe & Swiss Family Robinson*

## **OUTLINE LESSON PLANS FOR TEACHERS**

**TEACHING LEVEL: 11-13 [ Years 7 and 8 in the UK]**

If using the book as a whole class reader (we would only recommend this with quite high-ability pupils) then we recommend the abridged Puffin versions of each.

Daniel Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe*, Puffin Classics, 2019. **ISBN:** 9780141377636

Johann Wyss, *The Swiss Family Robinson* . Trans. William H. G. Kingston. Puffin Classics, 2004. **ISBN:** 9780141325309

There is also an attractive easy-read graphic novel version of each book by Resolve:

*Robinson Crusoe* (abridged by Martin Powell) **ISBN** 1474703887

*Swiss Family Robinson* (abridged by Martin Powell) **ISBN:** 9781406224986

However, teaching could work equally well in terms of using the shorter or longer extracts from each text as a way of introducing pupils to 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Century literature – or this alongside the easy reader. In this case one could simply use the whole resource across 5 weeks as a special unit; as part of a Reading Intervention activity; with small groups.

Teaching resources build AROUND In-Game Tasks and draw upon material given separately in the EXTRACTS document. Comprehension questions are also given with EXTRACTS and difficult vocabulary is in bold.

# PREPARATORY PRE-TASK: SHIPWRECK!

[NOTE: No in-game activity for this initial reading task]

## Key Skills:

- To identify key narrative moments in a section of the text.
- To infer the thoughts/feelings of characters using evidence from the text.
- To compare events across texts.

## Reading Activity: Listing and Summarising

Introduce both texts (*Robinson Crusoe* and *Swiss Family Robinson*) to the class by reading the summaries of the novels in EXTRACTS document.

Split the class in half and put them into groups of four or five. Half of the class will work on the first extract from Robinson Crusoe (RC) and the other half on that from Swiss Family Robinson (SFR).

In groups, pupils read aloud the extract that they have been given and then work together to identify and summarise the sequence of events in their extract. They list these events in chronological order and put them into their own words.

## Drama/ role-play

Turn table upside down to create boats. Using their sequence of events pupils prepare a role play of the shipwreck from their text. Encourage them to use words from the text in their role play.

Pupils take turns to perform their role play. Teacher/TA/other child to photograph key moments from the performance.

## Comparing Texts

Once all of the role plays have been performed, jigsaw the groups so that pupils who have worked on RC are in the same group as those who have worked on SFR. As a group, they consider what is the same and what is different about the accounts of shipwreck from the two texts, focussing on the difference between being shipwrecked ALONE or in a Group. Which would they prefer and why?

Feedback and make a class comparison chart.

## Follow-on Activities:

- Make a storyboard using the pictures from the role play.
- Write a play script for the role play using quotations from the text.
- Create a found poem using the emotional descriptions of the shipwreck taken from both texts.

## TASK 1: Stripping the Wreck

### Key Skills:

- To read and scan for information.
- To compare information across texts.
- To agree through discussion.

### Reading and Discussion Activity:

Split the class in half – one half to focus on RC and the other on SFR – they will swap later.

Give pupils the scavenging extract from the relevant text. They read the extract with a partner, helping each other out with any tricky words.

Set a timer. Pupils have to read the passage again to scan for information and quickly identify and highlight the objects that the characters scavenge from the wreck. Make a list of these objects.

Repeat the two steps above with the extract from the text that pupils have not yet worked with.

Pupils work in groups or pairs and compare the lists of items from both texts. They consider the following:

- Are there any items on the lists that you are unsure of or don't know what they are? If so, find out.
- What types of items did the characters take from the wrecks? Why do you think they chose these items?
- Which items are on both lists?
- Which list is better and why?
- What is missing off these lists that the characters might need?

Feedback to the class.

Finish by asking pupils to identify what items they would scavenge if they were shipwrecked TODAY. What types of items would be important and why? How different would it be from the past?

### Comprehension

Give pupils the extract from *Robinson Crusoe*. Encourage them to use the Point, Evidence Explanation (P.E.E.) prompt when providing their answers to the following:

- Why does Crusoe eat as he “goes about other things”?
- Why does Crusoe need to drink a “large dram of rum”?
- How does Crusoe plan to transport his provisions from the ship to the island?
- Why can't Crusoe take the barley and wheat with him?
- Why might the rigging and the sails be useful to Crusoe? What do you think he might be planning to do with these items?



## **IN GAME TASK 1 – Stripping the Wreck**

**See also Written Transcript Document.**

### **In Game Instructions:**

Congratulations on making it safely ashore to Swiss Family Robinson Island.

The Family have two bases established on the island:

Tent House (on the shore)

Tree House (inland)

They are concerned that items might get wet or damaged if left in Tent house.

Help them by moving the items on the list below up to Tree house:

- Fishing rods and tridents
- Torch lights
- 3 helmets of different kinds
- A water bucket
- 4 different tools
- Some food
- 

Also, the following animals survived the wreck and swam safely ashore:

- A cow
- A pig
- 6 sheep
- 10 chickens
- a donkey

Catch any two kinds of animal and get them safely up to Tree house, ensuring that once there they cannot escape.

The family also would like to enlarge the tree house base.

Build an additional two rooms somewhere in the tree.

These should have easy access from the existing house as well as to the ground.



### **Follow-on Activities:**

- Create a survival toolkit of the essential items needed on a desert island. Encourage the inclusion of items from the text as well as the pupils' own items.
- Make a 'desert island disks' type radio programme where pupils interview the characters from the text and discuss why they have chosen some of the items they have scavenged from the ship.

## TASK 2: NAMING and EXPLORING

### Key Skills:

- To compare a text and a map.
- To scan for key information.
- To think about place-naming.

### Reading Activity (RC):

Whole class focus on the extended extract from *Robinson Crusoe*.

Pupils read the extract with a partner. They then re-read and highlight all the mentions of the places on the island in one colour and, in a different colour, any sentences which mention the direction of travel.

Give pupils a large map of Crusoe's island with the starting point for his journey in this section of the text already identified. Pupils have to use the text to chart Crusoe's journey in this extract on the map. Encourage them to annotate the map with extracts from the text to demonstrate why they have mapped the route as they have.

Compare the maps that the pupils have created – there will probably be variations – and ask them to discuss the following in their groups:

- How challenging was it to map Crusoe's journey using the text? What made it challenging? What would have made it easier?
- Why do you think the author decided to include a map with his narrative?
- In what ways does the map help you to understand the text?

Feedback and discuss answers.

Conclude with a discussion of other texts that pupils have read, which contain maps.

### Reading and Comprehension

Read the extract from *Swiss Family Robinson* and the map of the island to answer the following:

- Why does the family decide to name places on the island? Support your answer with evidence from the text.
- What different ideas do the family have for naming the bay where they first landed? Why do they eventually settle on the name "Safety Bay"?
- What do the names that the family chooses tell us about the places? Choose three examples to discuss not including Safety Bay.

- Highlight the names of places in the text and identify these locations on the map. In what ways does the map help the reader to understand the setting in the text?
- Do you think it is important for the map to be included with the story? If you do, say why. If not, say why not.



## **IN GAME TASK 2: NAMING**

**Two books in Chest.**

### **BOOK 1:**

Look at the map of Swiss Family Robinson island and find different place-names upon it.

Use the map to help you travel around the island and locate the place-names.

For each one when you find it, give it a different name of your own from your experience of the island.

Take the journal with you to write in each name and your reason for giving it that.

### **BOOK 2:**

PLACE-NAME JOURNAL

Take this journal with you.

For each name write why you think the family called this place by this name.

Then re-name the site, placing a new sign there. Give reasons for your new name.

JACKALL'S RIVER

SHARK'S ISLAND

FALCOLNHOLT

MONKEY WOOD

ARCADIA

CAPE DISAPPOINTMENT

Now travel across to Robinson Crusoe's island using the rail link and minecart.

What is his island called? Find his first journal in his base and this will tell you.

### **[CHEST 2 ON ROBINSON CRUSOE ISLAND]**

Find Robinson Crusoe's main base on the island (using his description of it from the book to help you).

Find his first journal within his base, this will tell you what he called the island.

Read his list as well.

### **FIRST JOURNAL [in chest in his hideout]**

September 30, 1659.—I, poor miserable Robinson Crusoe, being shipwrecked during a dreadful storm in the offing, came on shore on this dismal, unfortunate island, which I called "The Island of Despair"; all the rest of the ship's company being drowned, and myself almost dead.

### **[SECOND JOURNAL] LIST OF GOOD AND EVIL**

[Read them all through and then put them in order – which is the worst "Evil"?]

EVIL

I am cast upon a horrible desolate island

GOOD

But I am alive and not drowned

EVIL

I am singled out from all the world and alone

GOOD

But I am spared – the only survivor.

EVIL

I am divided from mankind and banished from society

GOOD

But I am not starving and have good food around me.

EVIL

I have no clothes

GOOD

But I am in a hot country so it doesn't matter.

EVIL

I am without any defence.

GOOD

But I am not shipwrecked in a dangerous place.

EVIL

I have no-one to speak to

GOOD

But I got many things out of the ship to help me survive and give me things to do.

STAY on Robinson Crusoe's island.



### **Follow-on Activities:**

#### **Evil vs. Good**

Read the list that Crusoe makes (this is also found in a chest within his first house).

- Why does this character use good and evil as the categories for the list?
- Some of the items in the evil list could be seen, instead, as positives. Which ones and why?
- Identify at least two things that you think are missing from this list in either of the categories. What did you choose and why?

## TASK 3: A HOME FROM HOME

### Key Skills:

- To identify the meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary.
- To answer questions about a text using the P.E.E. prompt.
- To summarise the main ideas drawn from more than one paragraph and identify key details.
- To compare similar events across texts.

### Reading for information

Read the two extracts about the additional dwellings made by Crusoe and the family. Why do the characters in these two novels decide to build another home? Support your answer with evidence from the texts.

Read the extract from *Swiss Family Robinson*. Identify the key improvements that the family make to the cave to make it habitable and draw out a plan of the inside of the cave following their description.

Look at the extract from *Robinson Crusoe*:

- What reasons does Crusoe give for thinking about building an additional home?
- Why does he decide not to move from where he lives?
- Identify the key things that Crusoe does to build his “country house”.

How important is the idea of home in these two texts?  
What does the building of the additional dwellings tell you about this?



### IN GAME TASK 3: A HOME FROM HOME CHEST 3 [ON ROBINSON CRUSOE'S ISLAND] [Items in chest: hoes, dispenser, redstone, levers]

Use the map of the island to locate the site of Crusoe's summer house and build it as accurately as you can, following his description in the book.

Once it is built, prepare the ground nearby and plant and grow a range of crops using his seeds and tools.

Use the dispenser in this chest to set up some kind of protective system for your crops to keep birds away. [NOTE: a dispenser can shoot a range of items]

Make a pumpkin pie to celebrate your crop. (You will need pumpkins, sugar and eggs).



Now catch some wild animals on the island using whatever means you can and keep them safe.

**IF TIME OR for teachers – divide into two groups – each group does a different build**

Take the minecraft rail back to Swiss Family Robinson Island and find the Underground cave/ grotto.

This is located somewhere on the rocky shoreline near Tent House.

Find diamond in the rocks and dig down.

Using the description from the book to ensure you are accurate, turn the grotto into a house as the family did.

NOTE: There is also a useful surprise hidden in the grotto.



### **Follow-on Activities**

#### **DEBATE**

Warm up by considering the following questions in relation to the extract:

- What will happen to Crusoe if the birds destroy the crop?
- How do you feel about what Crusoe does in this section of the text?
- Why does Crusoe hang the birds that he has shot on chains? What effect does this have on the birds?
- Come up with at least three reasons why Crusoe is right to kill the birds.
- Come up with at least three reasons why Crusoe is wrong to kill the birds.

Hold a class debate where one side argues that Crusoe is right to take the action he does do and where the other argues that they are wrong.

Write a persuasive letter to Robinson Crusoe explaining why his actions are wrong and the consequences of them.

## TASK 4: MAKING

### Key Skills

To compare across two texts

To write instructions

### *Canoe Building*

Read the two extracts about building canoes from SFR and RC.

What is the problem with building the canoes inland? Find evidence of this in *one* of the texts. Make a prediction about how the characters might solve this problem

From the accounts given of building the canoes (by the family and by Crusoe) which do you think:

- a) Is most likely to work safely on water
- b) provides clear and useful instructions on how to make it for someone else
- c) displays the ingenuity and determination of the person making it

Give reasons for your answers based on the text.



### IN GAME TASK 4 [ON ROBINSON CRUSOE ISLAND]

You have read two descriptions that remind you how hard it is to make things without modern machinery.

Find Robinson Crusoe's abandoned large canoe at the top of the island and see if you can get it into the water.

Design and build your own boat or ship in the water.

NOTE: If you can build this on top of the piston mechanism then it will move but otherwise it will not.

Now using either your own moving boat / ship or a small minecraft boat, navigate back to Swiss Family Robinson island following the buoys that you will find along the way.

Collect all the letters from the buoys as they will give you an important message. When you get to the other island find the chest on shore and follow the instructions in it.

[LETTERS ON BUOYS TOGETHER READ: "NEVER LOSE SIGHT OF LAND"]

### CHEST AT LANDING POINT ON SHORE:

Now that you have got safely to shore again I hope you have learnt the first lesson of being shipwrecked: NEVER LOSE SIGHT OF LAND!

Read how Robinson Crusoe felt and then describe your experience.

From Robinson Crusoe:

"it carried my boat along"

“I began to give myself over for lost”

“driven into the vast ocean”

“miserable condition”

“I looked back upon my desolate solitary island as the most pleasant place in the world . . .”

Now write your own notes about how it felt to be out in the middle of the ocean.



**Follow-on Activities:**

- Write an instruction text on how to make something. Choose a subject which you personally know well.
- Write it so clearly that another person could follow your instructions successfully.

Read the account of making the rope ladder in SFR to help you.

## TASK 5: MINI-ADVENTURE/ Writing a Journal

### Key Skills:

- To identify the features of a journal text.
- To understand why a writer may choose to write in a particular form.
- To undertake a piece of extended writing by breaking it up into stages.

### Reading and Writing

IN-GAME writing. Read the extracts from *Robinson Crusoe's* Journal.

- What textual form is the author using in this section of the text? Feedback.
- Pupils look at the extract again and identify the features that make this a journal. Feedback to class and make a list of the key features of this kind of text.
- Once the class has agreed on a list, pupils return to the extract and find evidence of those specific features in the text. Feedback.
- Ask pupils to think about the following:
  - i) How else might this section of the text have been written?
  - ii) What different options were available to the author?
  - iii) Why did he choose to write in the journal form?

Conclude by discussing other texts that the pupils have read in the journal form.



### IN-GAME TASK 5

#### CHEST 5 [ SWISS FAMILY ROBINSON ISLAND]

##### BOOK 1:

Go to the small island off the left-hand side (the West Coast) of Swiss Family Robinson Island.

This is the base for your own island adventure.

Use the descriptions of each stage of the shipwreck story to re-enact your own mini-shipwreck.

Write up each stage of the story in the Journal also in this chest.

Use Crusoe's journal form to help you write convincingly. Here are some ideas.

Make the island your home (you can use things from the main island to help you.)

1. Shipwrecked!  
Describe the effect of being wrecked. Think about the noises, the effect on the senses. How would it feel to be the only survivor?
2. Building a shelter  
What are your priorities? What makes you most at risk? What does your shelter need?

You can raid the SFR site for things you want. Describe what you do.

3. Exploring your surroundings.  
Take a boat and go all round the main island writing a description of what you see.
4. Rescue.  
Do you want to be rescued? If so what will you do about it?

Describe your feelings. Or are you happy with your island life?

#### **BOOK 2: JOURNAL OF LIFE ON MY ISLAND**



#### **Follow-on Task : EXTENDED WRITING**

Read the short extracts relating to the narrative structure of the “Robinsonade” or shipwreck narrative.

Encourage the children to see that if they focus on each STAGE of the shipwreck they can build and sustain a longer piece of writing.

Let them use the shorter version they wrote in-game in their Journal as the basis for a fuller version of the narrative. (You can take screenshots of the book written in on screen and print these off if you need to get the writing “out” of the world.)