

Lost at Sea



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Lost at Sea

You have chartered a yacht with three friends, for the holiday trip of a lifetime across the Atlantic Ocean. Because none of you have any previous sailing experience, you have hired an experienced skipper and two-person crew.

Unfortunately in mid Atlantic a fierce fire breaks out in the ships galley and the skipper and crew have been lost whilst trying to fight the blaze. Much of the yacht is destroyed and is slowly sinking.

Your location is unclear because vital navigational and radio equipment have been damaged in the fire. Your best estimate is that you are many hundreds of miles from the nearest landfall.

You and your friends have managed to save 15 items, undamaged and intact after the fire. In addition, you have salvaged a four man rubber life craft and a box of matches.

Your task is to rank the 15 items in terms of their importance for you, as you wait to be rescued. Place the number 1 by the most important item, the number 2 by the second most important and so forth until you have ranked all 15 items.



Instructions

1. Provide a 'lost at sea ranking chart' for every member of your group.
2. Ask each person to take 10 minutes to decide their own rankings, and record the choices in the left-hand **Step 1** column.
3. Invite everyone to get into teams of 3/4. Encourage the group to discuss their individual choices and work together to agree on a collaborative list. Allow 20 minutes for this section. Record the group rankings in the second column (team rankings).
4. The correct answers were suggested by the US Coastguard. Display the 'expert' rankings on a PowerPoint presentation, whiteboard or photocopy. Compare your individual and group answers with the correct answers and determine a score.
5. For each item, mark the number of points that your score differs from the Coastguard ranking and then add up all the points. Disregard plus or minus differences. The **lower** the total, the better your score.
6. As the groups work together, sharing thoughts and ideas, this *should* produce an improved score over the individual results. Discuss with your group why the scores were different? What changed their minds? And was this enough to survive?



Lost at Sea Ranking Chart

Items	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4	Step 5
	Your individual ranking	Your team ranking	Coast Guard ranking	Difference between Step 1 & 3	Difference between Step 2 & 3
A sextant					
A shaving mirror					
A quantity of mosquito netting					
A 25 liter container of water					
A case of army rations					
Maps of the Atlantic Ocean					
A floating seat cushion					
A 10 liter can of oil/petrol mixture					
A small transistor radio					
20 square feet of opaque plastic sheeting					
A can of shark repellent					
One bottle of 160 proof rum					
15 feet of nylon rope					
2 boxes of chocolate bars					
An ocean fishing kit & pole					
			Totals	Your score	Team score



Coastguard expert analysis

According to the experts, in this case the US Coastguard, the basic supplies needed when a person is stranded mid-ocean are articles to attract attention and aid survival until rescue arrives. A transatlantic trip takes roughly 20 days; significantly less with good winds and significantly more without them.

Articles for navigation are of little importance since even if a small life raft were capable of reaching land, it would be impossible to store enough food and water to survive for that amount of time. Without signaling devices, there is almost no chance of being spotted and rescued.

So, the list below is the ranking order of the items according to their importance to your survival:

Item	Coast Guard Ranking	Coastguard Reasoning
A sextant	15	Useless without the relevant tables and a chronometer.
A shaving mirror	1	Of all the items, the mirror is absolutely critical. It is the most powerful tool you have for communicating your presence. In sunlight, a simple mirror can generate five to seven million candlepower of light. The reflected sunbeam can even be seen beyond the horizon.
A quantity of mosquito netting	14	There are NO mosquitoes in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean and the netting is useless for anything else.
A 25 liter container of water	3	Vital to restore fluids lost through perspiration. 25 liters will supply water rations for your group for several days.
A case of army rations	4	This is your basic food intake
Maps of the Atlantic Ocean	13	Worthless without navigation equipment.
A floating seat cushion	9	Useful as a life preserver if someone fell overboard.



A 10 liter can of oil/gasoline mixture	2	The second most critical item for signaling. The mixture will float on water and can be ignited using the matches.
A small transistor radio	12	You would be out of range of any radio station.
20 square feet of Opaque plastic sheeting	5	Can be used to collect rain water and shelter from the wind and waves.
A can of shark repellent	10	To repel sharks, of course!
One bottle of 160% proof rum	11	Contains 80% alcohol, which means it can be used as an antiseptic for any injuries, otherwise of little value. Very dangerous if drunk, as it would cause the body to dehydrate, the opposite of what you need to survive.
15ft nylon rope	8	Could be used to lash people or equipment together to prevent being washed overboard. There are a variety of other uses, but none high on the list for survival.
2 boxes of chocolate bars	6	Your reserve food supply
An ocean fishing kit with pole.	7	Ranked lower than the chocolate as there is no guarantee you will catch any fish. The pole might be used as a tent pole.



Scores

00 - 25	Excellent.	You demonstrated great survival skills. Rescued!
26 - 32	Good.	Above average results. Good survival skills. Rescued!
33 - 45	Average.	Seasick, hungry and tired. Rescued!
46 - 55	Fair.	Dehydrated and barely alive. It was tough, but rescued!
56 - 70	Poor.	Rescued, but only just in time!
71 +	Very poor	Oh dear, your empty raft is washed up on a beach, weeks after the search was called off.

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