

eslactive

Desert Island Discs

Tags: [advanced](#), [beginner](#), [intermediate](#), [kids](#), [past simple](#),
[second conditional](#), [travel](#), [warmer](#)

The Desert Island Discs ESL conversation activity is based on the BBC radio program of the same name, in which participants discuss luxury items they would like to have with them if they were a castaway.

 1+  10-20 mins  None

Setup

Write/project the following list on the board:

- 1) A song
- 2) A movie
- 3) A book
- 4) Another personal item (something special to you)
- 5) A food/dish

Conversation

1. Ask students to imagine they are to be castaway on a desert island. They can choose one thing from each of the five categories to take with them. Individually, the students take a few minutes to write down their choices.
2. Students find a partner or small group and discuss their choices. Depending on the student level and target language, you could ask them to explain some/all of the following: Why they chose the item, The first time they experienced it, How it makes them feel, What it reminds them of, How it could help them deal with situations on the island (e.g. providing motivation, relaxation etc.)
3. Pairs/groups then feed back to the class on whether their choices were similar or different to their discussion partners.

There is also the option of turning this activity into a show-and-tell style presentation. Students could bring items in from home and/or find clips of songs and movies to show the class.

Target Language

The Desert Island Discs ESL conversation activity can be used as a conversation-based warmer, a conversation activity, or to practise specific language. Use it with any level, beginner, intermediate or advanced. With younger kids, you could perhaps replace song or book with game.

For the [past simple](#), place the focus of discussion on when and how they first experienced the item, and how it made them feel at that time.

For the [second conditional](#), students should not only introduce their items using this grammar, but also explain it would help them, e.g. *It would cheer me up if I were sad.*

For a similar activity focused more on survival, try [Stranded On A Desert Island](#).