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FACT FILE

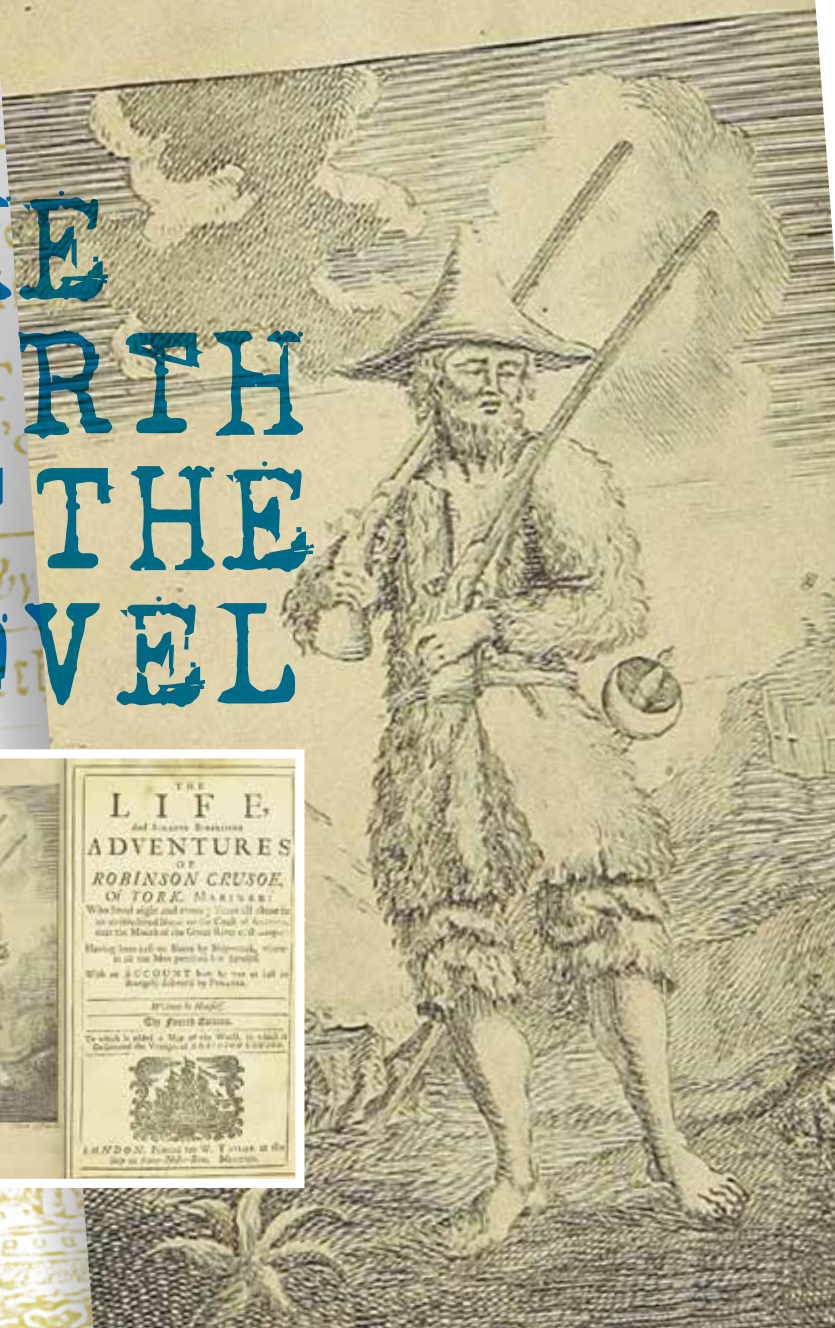
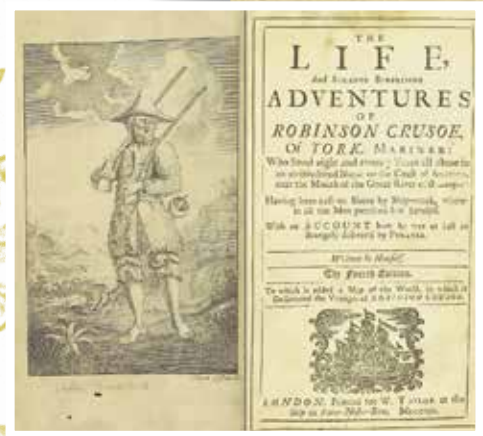
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Robinson Crusoe is considered to be the first novel written in English. And Daniel Defoe is often called the ‘father’ of the novel, which emerged as a new form of narrative at the beginning of the 18th century. As its name suggests, the novel was a literary novelty. It represented an enormous change from the unrealistic stories and romances of Elizabethan fiction and their mythological and biblical heroes. Defoe’s hero, Robinson Crusoe, is an ordinary man, a person just like the readers. The book describes Robinson’s struggle against a series of misfortunes and how he manages to resolve them.

Robinson Crusoe is a new kind of hero for the new capitalist system that was emerging in Britain at that time. The concept of capitalism is based on an idea of a society made up of individuals: each person with his or her own property and wealth and a determination to increase them. At that time, Britain was becoming an important colonial power. Its colonies in North America and the Caribbean produced tobacco, cotton, sugar, and lots of other materials that were important for the new industrial economy back at home. The slave trade was essential in order to find labour for these plantations. Likewise, Robinson colonizes his island and makes the most of what he finds there.

Of course, there are other artistic, social, economic and political reasons behind the rise of the novel. Yet it is strongly connected with the birth of modern capitalism, and what was going on in the banks of London, where lots of money began to change hands quickly, and where a new class of traders, of shopkeepers, of bankers, of investors were creating a new economic system.

DID YOU KNOW?

The word ‘Crusoe’ has become a common way to define a castaway, just like ‘Friday’ has become a synonym for helper.

GLOSSARY

- **castaway:** someone who is left alone on an island after a storm
- **colonial:** with colonies (areas of land that are controlled by other countries)
- **enormous:** very big
- **labour:** (here) workers
- **narrative:** how a story is told
- **novelty:** new thing
- **property:** things one owns
- **struggle:** fight

OVER TO YOU!

Robinson Crusoe is probably based on the real misadventure of **Alexander Selkirk**.

WEB Find out more about his story online.



Robinson Crusoe



Robinson goes to sea



Poll

Robinson in Brazil



Robinson, Xury
and the lion



Robinson is shipwrecked



Robinson and Friday



Robinson and the Europeans

BEFORE READING

-  **1 Listen and complete the sentences about Robinson Crusoe from the story.**

A I was born
in the year
.....

B My mother
and father
lived in the city
of



C I had
brothers, both older
than me.

D I left
home and went
to sea when I was
.....

- 2**  **Work with a partner. Tell each other about yourselves.**

- a** When were you born?
- b** Where does your family live?
- c** How many brothers and sisters have you got?
- d** What do you want to do when you are older?



3 Which animal? Circle the correct word. Use a dictionary if necessary.

- a** Robinson saw many dangerous animals in Africa. Once he killed a **rabbit** / **leopard**.
- b** He caught a **parrot** / **goat** and taught it to speak.
- c** He kept **lions** / **goats** for their meat and their milk.
- d** He sometimes caught **turtles** / **rabbits** for their eggs.


4 Match the words to the numbers in the picture.

- a** raft
- b** sail
- c** shore
- d** waves





1 My first time at sea

 My name's Robinson Crusoe, and I'm seventy-two years old now. When I was a young man of nineteen, I left home, and I went to sea. I had many adventures, and I'd like to tell you about them.

My father was from Germany. He came to England and got a job in the city of York. He met and married my mother, and they had three sons. I was born in 1632. My two brothers were both older than me.

When I was eighteen, my father told me to get a job and settle down•. 'That kind of life isn't for me, Father,' I replied. 'I want to see the world.'

He was sad when he heard this. My mother was too. They both cried, so I stayed at home with them. I tried to forget my dreams, but I couldn't. About a year later, I went to Hull with some friends. One of them was leaving for London on his father's ship.

'Why don't you come with us, Robinson?' he said. 'There's space• for you on the ship.'

I decided to go with him, and that evening, I went on board• a ship for the first time. I was happy to be with my friend and to be at the start of a new adventure. It was 1st September, 1651.

When we sailed out of Hull, a strong wind started to blow•, and the sea became very rough•. The ship went up and down, up and down on the waves•.

GLOSSARY

- **blow:** when the wind becomes strong
- **on board:** on a ship or plane
- **rough:** with high waves
- **settle down:** stay in one place and live a quiet life
- **space:** empty place
- **waves:** movement in water, normally sea

I felt very ill.

I'm going to die! I thought, as I lay on my bed.

The storm got worse during the night. I couldn't sleep.

'Please, God!' I said. 'Don't let me die! If you let me live, I promise• to go back home.'

The weather was better the following day. There was still a strong wind, but the sea was calmer•. That night I slept well.

'Well, Robinson?' said my friend in the morning. 'How do you feel?'

'I'm fine now!' I said. 'What a terrible storm!'

My friend laughed.

'Storm! That wasn't a storm. Just a bit of wind! Come on deck•. It's a beautiful day!'

He was right. The sun was shining and the sea was calm. My friend and I had a drink, and I felt very happy. I completely forgot my promise to God.

After a few days of good weather, there was another storm. This one was worse than the one before. The waves were like mountains. Every two or three minutes, a big one came over the sides of our ship and filled it with water. I was very afraid. The sailors• were too. The captain fired the guns• to call for help. Soon, some men in a small boat arrived and saved us. Luckily, we all got off the ship just before it went down.

GLOSSARY

- **calmer:** less rough
- **deck:** part of a ship that one walks on
- **fired the guns:**
- **promise:** say something and then do it
- **sailors:** people who work on a boat or ship



The men in the boat took us to a town on the shore•. The people there were very kind and looked after us. They even gave us money for our journey home. I didn't want to go back to York, so I went to London instead and looked for another opportunity• to travel. In London, I met the captain of a ship. He told me about his trip to Africa.

'Before I left,' he said, 'I bought some small things to take with me – toys, mirrors, knives. I gave them to the people in Africa, and they gave me gold. When I got back, I sold the gold in London. I made a lot of money.'

He saw that I was interested, so he invited me to go with him on his next trip. Before leaving, I bought some small things to sell for gold, and a few days later, I went to sea for the second time.

TRAVELLING



Ask and answer the questions with a partner.

- 1 Do you like travelling?
- 2 What kind of places do you like visiting?
- 3 What do you like doing in new places?
- 4 What's the best way to travel? Why?

• **opportunity:** right moment

• **shore:** land beside sea or lake

It was a good trip, and I returned to London with some gold. I sold it to a bank for £300.

Now I'm a real merchant, I thought.

Unfortunately, my next trip to Africa was less lucky than the first one. While we were sailing along the coast, a Turkish ship followed us and attacked our ship. The Turkish sailors came on board and there was a fight. At the end of it, many of our men lay dead on deck, and the rest of us were the prisoners of the Turkish captain. He put us on his ship and took us to a city called Sallee in Morocco.



AFTER READING VOCABULARY

1 Complete the conversations or sentences by choosing the correct answers. Use the underlined words to help you.

- a 'Why don't you get a job and settle down?'
1 'We must reach the shore to settle down.'
2 'A good job is hard to find.'
3 'That kind of life isn't for me.'
- b 'The pots are almost empty.'
1 'We must go and look for some fresh water.'
2 'We must find the other sailors.'
3 'We must hurry and go back to the ship.'
- c The sea became very rough...
1 because it was summer.
2 because of the high waves.
3 because of the strong wind.
- d 'I saw the footprints of a man in the sand.'
1 'They must be cannibals.'
2 'There must be other people on the island.'
3 'We must hurry and go back to the ship.'
- e 'Captain, the men put up their hands in surrender!'
1 'Quick, bring me my gun!'
2 'Stop firing!'
3 'This is a mutiny!'
- f Our army was small, but...
1 our enemies weren't ready for a fight.
2 it was very useful.
3 we need more gunpowder.
- g They lifted their spears...
1 in order to hide themselves.
2 to kill the prisoner.
3 but the boat could not move anymore.

A2 Key English Test Reading and Writing Part 5

1 Here is the imaginary email that Robinson wrote to his parents from the island. Complete the text with ONE word for each gap.

● ● ●Send

From: Robinson
To: Mum and Dad

Dear Mum and Dad,
I am so sorry I didn't (1) goodbye when I left, but I didn't know that I was going to be away so long.
I am writing from a very distant island. I got here after our (2) broke into pieces, and we all fell into the water. I arrived safely on the island, but my friends are all dead, and now I am completely (3) Luckily, I took lots of useful things from the ship.
Life is hard here, but I must stop feeling sad and sorry for myself. That is why I (4) two lists: one of all the bad things about my situation, and the other of all the good ones. The lists show (5) very important: that it is always possible to find something good even in a bad situation. I have to accept that my (6) life is here, on this island.
I don't know how long I must stay here before a ship comes, so I am going to (7) a new house. The house must be safe, so it must have thick walls. Then I (8) to put branches on the roof to keep out the rain. I also want to make (9) furniture, for example, a couple of tables and a chair.
Please don't worry about me, I am sure I (10) survive until someone comes to save me.
Love,
Robinson

A2 Key English Test Reading and Writing Part 6

2 Write Robinson's parents reply, asking some questions and giving some advice. Write 25 words or more.