

Level 4

Suitable for:	young learners aged 9–11 years who have completed 300–400 hours of study in English
Type of English:	American
Headwords:	up to 1400
Words per page:	up to 100
Key grammar:	past simple, past continuous, past simple + infinitive, narrative adverbs of time (first, then, as, when, etc.), future (will & going to).

Summary of the story

A resourceful family create a life for themselves on an uninhabited island. Salvaging items from the ship in which they were almost shipwrecked, and improvising with materials they find on the island, they build a house, cultivate their own crops and rear animals. Their first house is built in a tree, but when winter comes, they make a more sheltered home in a cave. Exploring the nearby islands, Fritz, the eldest son, finds Jenny, another shipwreck survivor. Later, Fritz and Jenny return to civilization with Jenny's father, but Fritz promises his family he will come back soon.

About the author

Johann David Wyss (1743–1818) was a priest in Berne in Switzerland. He created *The Swiss Family Robinson* to entertain his children, just as the father in the book itself makes up stories for his family. The story was completed and edited by Wyss's son, Johann Rudolph, and published in 1813. It has been a children's bestseller ever since. The author used the story to give his children moral and practical advice as well as to entertain them.

Topics and themes

Family Do the pupils think this is a usual or an unusual family? How does it compare to their own

family? Does anyone in the class come from a family with a lot of brothers or a lot of sisters? If a pupil's own family were stranded on the island, how would they divide up the different jobs which need to be done?

Homes How many different types of homes can the pupils think of, first in their own country, then around the world? They can list words for different types of home (house, flat, caravan, palace) and collect pictures.

Nature Talk about islands. Have the pupils ever been to an island? Can they name any islands? Are islands always surrounded by sea? Encourage pupils to draw a map of the island in the story and the neighbouring islands, including the island where Fritz finds Jenny.

Animals The boys in the story adopt a monkey. What would it mean to keep a wild animal as a pet? Would it be possible with any animal, or only with some? Ask pupils to make a list of dos and don'ts for keeping a monkey or another exotic pet. They should write sentences beginning You must and You mustn't.

Weather / Seasons When the family first arrive at the island, the weather is good. How do things change for them when winter comes? What things do they say or do which show that it is winter now? Pupils can make lists of things they say, do and wear in warm weather and in cold weather.

Making use of the Reader

Screenplays Tell pupils to imagine that they are turning the story into a film. They have to tell the story entirely through dialogue and action. Ask pairs of pupils to focus on different episodes in the story and prepare a screenplay, e.g. the day when Dad and the boys create their new home in the cave, or the meeting of Fritz and Jenny. Fix a limit to the number of different speeches that will make up the scene: probably no more than ten.

Cross-sections If you are working on the theme of houses, ask pupils to draw a floor plan or cross-section of the family's treehouse. They should label the rooms (kitchen) and the items of furniture.

If I lived on an island ... Ask pupils to name the ways in which the family improvises (using blankets to make a tent and coconut shells as bowls). Encourage pupils to think of ways that they might improvise if they lived on an island (using big leaves as umbrellas or making a bath out of a rock pool). They can write and illustrate sentences on this model: If I lived on an island, I would use a leaf as an umbrella. I would use a pool as a bath.

Using the accompanying audio

During listening At the beginning of a chapter, tell the pupils that they are going to hear a word or phrase which means ... – then give either a paraphrase of the target item or a translation into the pupils' own language. Pupils should follow the text and try to spot the word or phrase in question.

Notes on using the photocopiable activities

Activity 1 Pupils match the pictures to the words and add the missing letters to the words.

Activity 2 Pupils decide which character in the story said each sentence. They then draw an arrow to show where the missing verb should go in the sentence.

Activity 3 Pupils write two or three sentences to say what is happening in each picture.

Activity 4 Pupils use their knowledge of the story to identify the incorrect word in each sentence. They replace it with a word from the word bank.

The Swiss Family Robinson

Name

Activity 1

Complete each word and draw a line to the picture.

1 b _ _ _ e

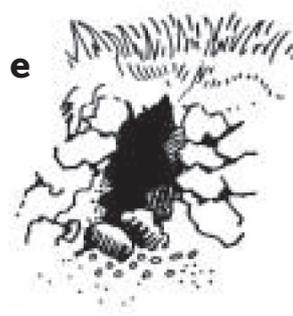
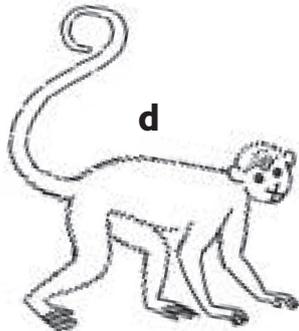
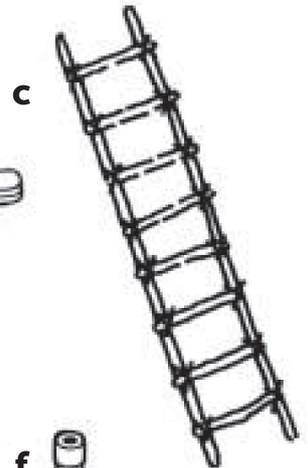
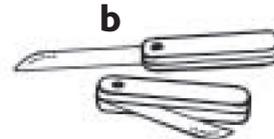
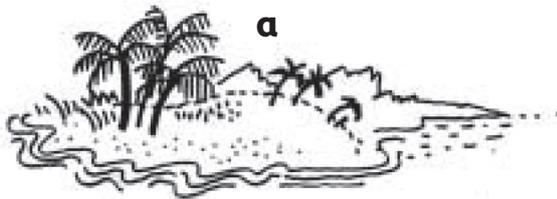
2 k _ _ _ s

3 m _ _ _ y

4 i _ _ _ d

5 l _ _ _ r

6 c _ _ e



Activity 2

Who said it? Choose a person from the box. Then draw a line to show where the word at the end of the sentence goes.

Dad Dad Dad Fritz Jenny Jenny's dad Mom Mom

1 Dad Come on, boys. We're going to a treehouse. / **make**

2 _____ I think he outside in the night. / **went**

3 _____ I've our new winter home! / **found**

4 _____ I can cotton from these plants. / **make**

5 _____ I am to explore the ocean. / **going**

6 _____ One day you return to our old home, and pearls cost a lot of money there. / **may**

7 _____ I'm sure my mom and dad very worried. / **are**

8 _____ Thank you for my daughter. / **helping**

Activity 3

Look at the pictures.

Can you describe what is happening?

Write two or three sentences for each picture.



1 The boys have found a box on the beach. In the box, there are

2 _____

3 _____

Activity 4

Find one mistake in each sentence.

Correct it, using a word from the box.

stories chickens letter bowls necklace ~~raft~~ clothes found

- 1 The family sailed to the island on a ^{raft}~~tree~~.
- 2 They used coconut shells as spoons.
- 3 The brothers bought a monkey. They called him Knips.
- 4 The brothers learned where the donkeys liked to hide their eggs.
- 5 Dad wrote letters about the island.
- 6 Mom made new hats for herself, for Dad and for the boys.
- 7 Fritz made a boat for Mom.
- 8 Fritz found a story in a bottle.

The Swiss Family Robinson

Chants help pupils become familiar with the sounds and rhythm of English. The language in each chant recycles language from the Reader.

Suggested procedure

Pupils listen to the chant one or two times, clapping their hands or tapping their desks in time with the rhythm. Pupils then say the chant, verse by verse, with you, beating the rhythm as they speak, until they are familiar with the words and the rhythm.

You can then split the class into 2 or 3 groups and each group can say one verse of the chant in turn.

Chant 1

We are the Robinsons
The Swiss Family Robinson
We're making a raft
To sail to the island

We can see palm trees
We can see coconuts
We can catch fish
We can live on the island

We are the Robinsons
The Swiss Family Robinson
We're making a raft
To sail to the island

Chant 2

Cold winds blow
It's soooooo cold
It's too wet and cold
To do anything

When the storms come
We'll stay in the house
We'll try to get warm
We'll stay in the house

Cold winds blow
It's soooooo cold
It's too wet and cold
To do anything
Brrrrrrrr

Chant 3

Fritz has gone exploring
Exploring the ocean
Searching the ocean
What will he find?

He dives in the ocean
Deeper and deeper
Searching the ocean
What will he find?

Will he find oysters?
Will he find pearls?
Searching the ocean
What will he find?

Answer Key

In the back of the Reader

- 1 1 h 2 f 3 d 4 g 5 c 6 e 7 a 8 b
- 2 There are pictures of a ship, a family, a storm, a beach, a raft, a tent, a treehouse, a cave, a bottle
- 3 Words across:
ship, puppy, donkey, saw, pearl, oyster, amazed, sailor
Words down:
seed, branch, shellfish, jewel.

In the photocopiable activities

Activity 1

- 1 bottle (f) 2 knives (b) 3 monkey (d)
4 island (a) 5 ladder (c) 6 cave (e)

Activity 2

- 1 Dad: We're going to make a treehouse.
2 Mom: I think he went outside in the night.
3 Dad: I've found our new winter home!
4 Mom: I can make cotton from these plants.
5 Fritz: I am going to explore the ocean.
6 Dad: One day you may return
7 Jenny: mom and dad are very worried.
8 Jenny's dad: for helping my daughter.

Activity 3

Possible answers:

- 1 The boys have found a box on the beach. There are clothes in the box. They are sailors' clothes. Mom is happy because the clothes are clean.
- 2 Dad and the boys are in the cave. They are breaking the rock on the walls to make the cave bigger. They are making a new home.
- 3 Fritz has come to the smoking island. He has seen Jenny. She is on the beach. They are waving.

Activity 4

- 1 Tree : raft
2 Spoons : bowls
3 Bought : found
4 Donkeys : chickens
5 Letters : stories
6 Hats : clothes
7 Boat : necklace
8 Story : letter