

# CAST AWAY!

## A Speaking Lesson with Realia

**Level:** Intermediate

**Aim:** Students practice oral fluency talking about uses for everyday objects in a difficult situation.

**Language Point:** “it’s used for... it could be used for...”

*In language teaching, realia are actual objects, which have a purpose outside the classroom and can be used in the classroom. This speaking lesson is based around the use of realia.*

**Materials:** A collection of everyday objects from around the house and a large bag to put the objects in. Here is a sample list of the kind of objects that work well for this activity:

**A coat hanger, some diskettes, a bread knife, a can opener, a hammer, some lipstick, a comb, a paintbrush, some string**

### Warmer

Tell the students that to imagine the following situation: they were all on a cruise ship when there was a terrible storm. The boat sank, but they have managed to reach a small tropical island. There is abundant fruit on the island and lots of fish too. However, the only things they have with them are these objects, which have washed ashore.

### Stage One

Bring out the objects and make sure the students know what they are in English. While doing this, ask, “What is it used for?” making sure that they use the gerund. Divide the students into groups of three or four. Each group has to come up with alternative uses for the objects in their situation. Write an example on the board.

*The coat hanger is used for hanging clothes. It could be used for fishing.*

They have to discuss this as a group and at the end present their solution to the class.

### Stage Two

Circulate and monitor the groups while they are doing the speaking activity. Set a time limit (10 minutes is usually enough, but let it go on longer

if they get into it!). The activity works better if each group has some or all of the objects so that they can touch and handle them. If you have a big class, or don’t have enough objects, try one of the variations below.

### Stage Three

Stop the activity when students have decided how they can use the objects. Ask each group to present their ideas to another group. At the end, ask which group had the most imaginative uses for the objects. To follow this up, ask students to work in their groups again and make a list of the ten objects they would most like to have in their situation.

### Variations

If you can get a copy of the film Cast Away starring Tom Hanks, you could use it as part of the warmer or study some scenes after the activity.

You could also ask the students to bring in the objects without telling them what they are for. Tell them to each bring in four household objects that they don’t know the word for in English. Do stage one with them in groups.