

Stoked! Surfboard lost in Tasmania turns up 2,700km away in Queensland

Level: Intermediate

1 Warmer

- a. In pairs, think of all of the rivers, oceans or seas near you.
- b. If you dropped something that could float into one of these rivers, oceans or seas, where might it go? Think about which way the water flows and things that it might have to go around.

2 Key words

a. Find words in the article that match the definitions below.

1. sea creatures that stick to objects in the sea _____ (para 2)
2. in or related to the particular area that you are talking about _____ (para 4)
3. easy to recognize because it is different from other similar things _____ (para 5)
4. a type of colour that is very bright and reflects light _____ (para 6)
5. the parts on some surfboards that you put your feet through _____ (para 6)
6. a strong movement of water in one direction _____ (para 9)
7. the word for when you fall off a surfboard _____ (para 11)
8. wishing you still had something that you used to have _____ (para 12)
9. a light, strong material used for making objects such as containers and boats _____ (para 13)
10. found someone or something by asking questions and getting information _____ (para 14)

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b. Use some of the key words above to complete these sentences.

1. A strong _____ swept their boat out to sea.
2. The coffee had a strong _____ taste.
3. High-vis jackets worn by police and security employees are usually _____ yellow or orange.
4. They couldn't find him at first but they finally _____ him to a small mountain village in Sicily.
5. Why don't you borrow the book from your _____ library?

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Naaman Zhou

17 March 2021

- 1 An Australian surfer has found a surfboard he lost in 2017 after it floated at sea for thousands of kilometres, from the bottom of Australia to the top – probably via New Zealand.
- 2 Danny Griffiths, a big-wave surfer, lost his favourite board after he crashed off a wave south of Tasmania. It was found, covered in barnacles, by two brothers near Townsville in north Queensland, more than 2,700km away.
- 3 Griffiths said the brothers had kept the board for years, until recently, when their parents took a trip to Tasmania and told local surfers about it. Those surfers realized that it belonged to Danny.
- 4 “Their parents were on holiday in Tasmania and told a couple of local surfers about their sons’ finding a surfboard while they were fishing,” he said. “As Tasmania is a pretty small state, the surfers all know each other. They soon worked out it was mine and the brothers sent me some photos.”
- 5 Griffiths said he recognized the board because it was a distinctive bright green and made by a small specialist Tasmanian company.
- 6 “I knew straight away,” he said. “All my big-wave boards are fluorescent green, and there are not that many big-wave surfers around Australia. Everyone puts their straps on differently. And the logo on it is from a small surfboard shaper here in Tasmania.
- 7 “I think the brothers hung it on their wall for the past two years. It’s not the type of surfboard that a general surfer can use.”
- 8 Edward Doddridge, from the Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies said that the board could not have travelled up the Australian east coast but “must have gone the long way round” via New Zealand.
- 9 “The big current that comes along the east Australian coast goes north to south, which means this board must have gone another way,” he told the ABC. “It must have gone east from Tasmania to New Zealand and then north up through the middle of the Pacific Ocean and then come back in towards the Australian coast.”
- 10 Griffiths said he had lost the board in 2017 when he was surfing huge swells at Pedra Branca, a remote island 27km south of Tasmania’s coast.
- 11 “The whole day was going well; we got some pretty big waves. On my last wave, I fell off and had a wipeout. When I came up and was saved by the jet ski, I couldn’t see the board. We lost it.”
- 12 Griffiths said he had been missing the board for years, and no new ones were as good. “The old one was so much better.”
- 13 “Big-wave boards are very heavy – up to 15 to 20kg – and the amount of fibreglass on them means they are really, really strong. It’s pretty much built like a rocket, to be able to punch through big-waves at high speeds. Possibly that’s why it’s still in one piece.”
- 14 Experts said they could have traced its journey by looking at what barnacles grew on it from different parts of the ocean. But the Queensland brothers had pressure cleaned it and taken all the barnacles off.
- 15 The brothers are getting the board ready to be sent to Danny. “Hopefully, in a week’s time, it will be here,” he said.

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3 Comprehension check

Are these statements true (T) or false (F) according to the article? Correct any that are false.

1. Danny Griffiths lost his big-wave board off New Zealand. T / F
2. The board was found a few years later far away in the north of Australia. T / F
3. It was found by two brothers who were out surfing. T / F
4. The board probably floated out to sea and then up the east coast of Australia for 2,700km. T / F
5. Danny Griffiths met the brothers' parents when he was travelling around Queensland. T / F
6. Danny knew it was his board because of the barnacles on it. T / F
7. The board did not break during its long journey. T / F
8. The brothers decided to keep Danny's board and send him the money to buy a new one. T / F

4 Informal language

- a. Read the headline again. Which do you think is the correct definition of the informal adjective *stoked*?
 1. annoyed
 2. happy and excited
 3. amazing
- b. The word *pretty* appears in the article three times. Circle it and the word that follows it each time. What meaning does it have in the article?
 1. good-looking
 2. crazy, mad
 3. fairly, mostly
- c. Use *pretty*, with the meaning above, in example sentences of your own.

5 Discussion

- Have you, or someone you know, ever lost anything that was found somewhere unexpected?
- Have you ever found anything belonging to someone else in an unexpected place?
- Imagine you have lost something that you really want to have back. What can you do to try to find it?

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6 In your own words

- a. **Research and retell stories from the news, and from books, about items that were lost at sea or in rivers and floated a long way before they were found.**
- b. **Research ocean currents.**
 - Which are the fastest, strongest, longest, most dangerous, most important, etc?
 - Where are they?
 - Which direction do they go?