

'Now it's continuous noise': Italy's Crusoe adjusts to life off his island

Level: Elementary

1 Warmer

- a. Listen carefully for one minute. Make a note in the box of the sounds you hear. Put a cross to show how each sound made you feel.

What?			
e.g. a dog barking	X		

- b. Compare your sounds box with a partner's. Tell them why each sound made you feel that way.

2 Key words

- a. Write the words from the wordpools next to the definitions below. Then find and highlight them in the article to read them in context.

consumerism

continuous

former

shelter

surrounded (by)

- used to say that someone or something had a particular job or use in the past but not now

- a place where people can hide from bad weather or from danger

- when something is all around you on every side _____
- something that goes on without stopping _____
- when people buy and use a lot of things and services _____

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bankrupt

caretaker

castaway

disaster

uninhabited

6. with no people living there _____
7. someone whose job is to look after a large building or other place

8. someone whose ship sank and who lives on an island or beach where there are no other people

9. a person or business with no money that cannot pay what they owe

10. something very bad that happens _____

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

1. My son lost his job when the company went _____.
2. The _____ unlocks the school gates every morning at seven.
3. His _____ wife is a famous TV presenter.
4. The children built a _____ from wood and leaves.
5. We are going camping on an _____ island.

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- 1 Every morning for 32 years, when Mauro Morandi woke up, he saw the sea, nature and wildlife. He lived alone in a former Second World War shelter on Budelli, a tiny Mediterranean island.
- 2 Now the 82-year-old lives in a one-bedroom flat next to a shop, surrounded by neighbours. He now lives on La Maddalena, the largest of an archipelago of seven islands off the north coast of Sardinia, Italy.
- 3 Morandi said, "I was used to the silence on Budelli. Now it's continuous noise ... music, motor scooters, people ... you can't think."
- 4 In April 2021, Morandi, a former sports teacher from the northern Italian city of Modena, had to leave Budelli, where he knew every rock, tree and animal.
- 5 Morandi always dreamt of living on an island. In 1989, he decided to sail to Polynesia to escape consumerism, politics and people. But a problem with his boat made him to stop in La Maddalena.
- 6 He decided to work on the island to pay for the boat repairs. But when he saw the nearby uninhabited island of Budelli, Morandi knew his paradise was much closer to home.
- 7 Morandi sold his boat and took the job of caretaker of the island. He looked after Budelli, cleared its paths, kept its beaches clean and taught summer day-trippers about its ecosystem.
- 8 Tourists cannot stay on the island overnight. Because many tourists stole sand from the island's pink beach, they cannot walk on the beach. But they are allowed to walk along a path behind the beach. They were often surprised to see Morandi. Some people called him Robinson Crusoe after the castaway in Daniel Defoe's novel.
- 9 Morandi's food arrived by boat from La Maddalena, and he had a homemade solar system for his lights, fridge and internet connection. In winter, when there are no visitors, he collected firewood, read and slept.
- 10 Morandi's life continued in this way until the private company that owned the island went bankrupt.
- 11 Budelli is now managed by La Maddalena National Park authorities. There is no caretaker, only CCTV cameras. Morandi went back there to collect some of his things. "It was a disaster," he said. "No one was looking after the beaches. There is nobody there now to educate the tourists."
- 12 Morandi is sad but knows that it was time for him to leave Budelli. "Last winter was very hard. It rained a lot, there was not enough sun to power the electricity ... for three months, I ate from tins. I'm 82 and life there became harder. I have a bad leg and it was difficult to walk."

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3 Understanding the article

a. Choose the best option, a or b, to answer the questions.

1. How long did Mauro Morandi live by himself on the island of Budelli?
 - a. all his life until April 2021
 - b. more than 30 years
2. Why did he leave his job and home in Modena?
 - a. He wanted to get a new job as a sports teacher.
 - b. He wanted to get away from the lifestyle of the people around him.
3. Where did he plan to go and how did he want to get there?
 - a. He planned to go to Sardinia by train and boat.
 - b. He wanted to sail in his boat to a quiet island very far away.
4. What did Morandi do in his job as caretaker of Budelli?
 - a. Keep the island clean and educate tourists
 - b. Use his boat to take tourists to the island
5. Where did Morandi live in Budelli?
 - a. in a one-bedroom flat
 - b. in a simple house without electricity
6. Why did he leave the island?
 - a. The company that owned the island had no money.
 - b. There was no electricity.
7. Who or what looks after Budelli now?
 - a. There is a new, much younger caretaker.
 - b. There are cameras that watch the tourists.
8. How did Morandi feel when he left the island?
 - a. He was sad, but he was getting old, and it was time to leave.
 - b. He was happy to leave and go to a new flat with lots of neighbours.

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4 Language structures

- a. Find and underline these words in the article. Write the words from the article to continue each sentence.

I was used to ...

Morandi always dreamt of ...

- b. Now continue each sentence for yourself.

In my past ...

I was used to ...

I always dreamt of ...

5 Discussion

- a. Discuss these questions.

- Would you like to live on an uninhabited island like Budelli? Why? Why not?
- What sounds would you prefer *not* to hear every day?
- What would you like to do when you retire?

6 In your own words

- a. Plan and hold short presentations about the seven islands of the *La Maddalena* archipelago. Divide the islands up between pairs or small groups so that everyone has something to say. Find information to write in the box.

Name of island	
Who lives there?	
Can tourists visit it?	
Can they stay there? If so, where?	
How can you get there?	
What plants grow there?	
What animals live there?	
What makes this island different from its neighbours?	

- b. Tell the other students about 'your' island.