

Survivor

Equipment: pen, paper, blackboard

Number of players: 8 to 15

Grades: 8 - 12 (Advanced level English)

Time: 45- 60 minutes

Survivor is a compelling debate that will give every the member of the group a chance to enter the discussion, formulate opinions and make informed decisions. In this debate, every participant will be assigned a character and will have to defend their character throughout the entire debate.

NOTE: The language used below is for advanced students. Depending on the language level of your students you may need to alter the text to make it easier.

1) Calculate the number of participants and then write on the blackboard a corresponding number of characters and their character information from the list below (e.g. if there only 10 participants then only write the first 10) :

1. Doctor (Female, 40 years old)
2. Animal Farmer (Male, 38 years old)
3. Soldier (Male, 45 years old)
4. Doctor's Daughter (17 years old)
5. Soldier's Son (18 years)
6. Scientist (Female, 40 years old)
7. Builder (Male, 35 years old)
8. Fisherman/ Captain (Male, 60 years old)
9. Architect (Male, 38 years old)
10. Musician (Female, 25 years old)
11. Structural Engineer (Male, 50 years old)
12. Lawyer (Female, 30 years old)
13. Hunter (Male, 25 years old)
14. Chef, Expert in food (Female, 30 years old)
15. Teacher (Female, 33 years old)

(This list of characters is just a suggestion and of course can be changed to suit your needs. The characters have been given a gender and age as that will allow the debate to have more substance and grounding. It isn't necessary to match the genders of characters to genders in your group e.g. male participants can have female characters and vice versa, this only adds to the challenge.

2) **Introduction:** Read the following to the students: "A float at sea, on an old wooden boat are (number of participants) survivors of the apocalypse. Each survivor sits in stunned silence by the terrible events and unimaginable terrors that lead up to this point, remembering how they hastily scrambled into the boat to escape certain death 12 hours ago. How did all this happen they wonder? No one could have predicted that



the downfall of humanity could have happened so quickly; riots, famines, nuclear wars, one disaster met the next in a seamless flow of destruction- the world as they knew it was over.

Now drifting at sea in this lifeboat are possibly the last remaining humans left on the planet, a terrifying concept that slowly seeps into their minds. Are they the final hope for mankind? Is it up to them to find land and rebuild society, a better, peaceful and balanced society?... does mankind really get one more chance?

The passengers are lucky however that at least one person, an aged and experienced fisherman has taken command of the boat and ascertains the state and provisions on the boat. He estimates that there is sufficient water for the amount of passengers when rationed, for at least 6 days, which he believes should be enough time to reach an island. But he gravely states that the motor and navigation equipment are broken and they will have to rely on currents. Yet, these are not his biggest concerns, due to the weight of the passengers the boat is taking on too much water and even with everyone busily bailing out water, the fisherman predicts the boat will sink within an hour - unless an extreme decision is made- to sacrifice one passenger to save the rest. This is agreed upon by all. Every person will be given a fair opportunity to justify their place on the boat and subsequently be a main contributor to the Brave New World.

3) Allocate a character to each person. The suggested method is to do this randomly by writing the characters on small cards (one on each card) and handing them out. But by distributing the characters yourself you may help a weaker student in your class by giving them an easier character like the Doctor.

4) **Preparation:** Allow the participants 10 – 15 minutes to note down and formulate their arguments about the reasons why they should stay on the boat and also a for/against argument for each of the other characters. This way they can justify their decision to nominate or defend an opposing character to be sent overboard.

Suggest to the students that they should be creative with their character's backstory e.g. that they may have other skills and experience that would be useful to rebuild society. But make sure that this creativity is within reason e.g. the builder cannot have also studied medicine as that would nullify the doctor's position.

5) **Introduction round:** Once everyone is sufficiently prepared for the debate, set up the room with the participants sitting at tables facing each other. Then allow every character up to three minutes (no interjections from other students) to introduce themselves and argue why they should be kept on the boat. During this time suggest that students write down notes about their opponents, as that may be valuable information to use later.

6) **Preliminary Vote:** Explain to the group that now they must cast their preliminary vote, they will each be allowed to nominate one character to be thrown overboard and to justify this decision (Place a mark next to the character name on the blackboard when they have been nominated). Participants may also abstain from voting. The three characters with the most votes will then be put forward to the next round of voting (If there are tied votes in the first round both participants with the same votes are included in the final voting). All characters not in the top three are now safe for this round.

7) **Defence:** Allow the top three characters 3 minutes to defend themselves and persuade the group that they should not be thrown overboard and that in fact it is another character that should take a long swim.

8) **Debate:** Allow an open discussion about who should be thrown overboard. Participants should know that there may be other rounds and setting up alliances may be a good thing.



9) **Final vote:** Let everyone cast a vote on which one of the three they believe should be thrown over. If there is a tie for the most votes, then the character with the least votes is safe and there is a revote on the remaining two, until a consensus has been reached. The character with the most votes is now 'dead' and cannot make any comments for the rest of the game. (Unless there is a tied vote in round 2 and the eliminated character can cast the deciding vote as a ghost)

10) **ROUND 2:** Please read the following: "As the body of the (the loser of the last round, e.g. Scientist) descends slowly into the deep ocean, it is not just watched by all that remain on the boat, but also by a hungry swarm of sharks that have been just waiting for the voting to conclude. The sharks surge toward the body causing blood to bubble up with such force that it even splashes onto the laps of the people that had just condemned the poor (the loser of the last round, e.g. Scientist) to death. But that taste of human has only just teased the sharks, now they hit against the boat wanting not just breakfast but lunch and dinner as well. The boat struggles to deal with the forceful blows of the sharks and water starts to gush in at a great rate. It is clear to all that remain on the boat that now the only chance for their survival and the survival of the human race must come at an even a greater cost than before: Three people must become shark food for the boat to stay afloat and to satisfy the sharks' appetite for humans. Maybe then and only then will they be safe.'

11) Now repeat steps 7, 8, 9 with the exception that all (not just top 3) characters nominated in the Preliminary Vote will advance to the final vote and need to defend themselves. Ensure that there are at least 6 characters nominated for the Final vote. In the case of a drawn Final Vote- the player that was eliminated in round 1 can cast the deciding vote.

12) **ROUND 3:** Please read the following: 'The sharks have not been very patient at all. While the remaining passengers of this doomed voyage were squabbling over which three were worth the least to the Brave New World, the sharks have been gnawing, grinding and shredding away at the boat, threatening to sink the boat with everyone in it. It's not until the three sacrifices are thrown overboard that the sharks quiet down and concentrate on their three-course meal. This feasting bleeds late into the evening, darkness slowly surrounds the boat and all the remaining passengers slowly rock asleep to the sounds of nibbling and burping from the contented sharks.'

Three long days pass, the boat has drifted on a prevailing current further south east. The immediate dangers have momentarily passed, as the sharks seem long gone and leaks have become manageable by each passenger taking turns at bailing out the water. However land is still not in sight and may not be for many days yet to come and the fresh water rations will last only two more days. But the remaining water and finding land is not the only thing on the mind of the passengers, they have not eaten now for four days and as the sun bakes down upon them they are becoming weaker by the hour.'

13) The remaining participants should brain storm, debate and vote on the next step. The ending of the story/debate will be decided by them.

Added extras:

The revenge from beyond the grave: Eliminated players can also cast votes in the Preliminary and Final Votes as their characters' ghost (You can also allow them half votes if that is considered more fair).

Add character traits and skills: Perhaps the farmer is also a skilled archer, the aggressive Fisherman has a gun and the Scientist is already wounded.

Let the students think of their own characters

