

Survival science: learning through group interviews

Rainforest rally: scoring sheet

Item ranking and reasoning

1. Solar-powered UV water sterilizer – while solar power may not work well under the canopy, any sunlight should be used to clean water of parasites. This will not clean debris from water
2. Potassium permanganate crystals – can be used to disinfect water, as it readily accepts electrons from other substances. This redox reaction can break cell walls, killing viruses and bacteria. Drinking this water is considered safe at low concentrations
3. Two empty plastic bottles – vital for storing water. Can be used to make a water filter
4. 5 kg of activated charcoal powder – you don't need to take all the charcoal, but due to its porous nature, it can trap gas molecules and help settle an upset stomach. It can also be placed in a bottle and used as a water filter, as impurities bind to the surface of the charcoal through the process of adsorption
5. Box with 16 antibiotic tablets – antibiotics could be vital for treating possible infections
6. Bandages and gauze pads – useful for any scrapes or injuries. Bandages can also be used to form a rope if needed
7. Large convex lens – a convex lens can be used to concentrate light onto a singular spot and could be used with light from the sun to start a fire
8. Pocket mirror – can be used to signal to planes or rescue parties, as it reflects light
9. Chainsaw full of fuel – can be used to cut down trees and make noise; however, fuel will run out, blades will become dull, and the item is heavy
10. Can of insect repellent – keeping away insects is vital to prevent infection and irritation
11. Two walkie talkies – communication with your fellow volunteers may be helpful to check on each other's wellbeing and prevent each other from being trapped alone, but they will not aid in the return journey
12. Inflatable raft – if you can find your way to water, this may be useful or it might be useful as a shelter; however, it will be very difficult to bring along
13. 1 kg of canned food – food will be necessary to get electrolytes and maintain energy on the journey. The body can survive longer without food than water
14. Loaded hunting rifle – safety may be a concern if there are natural predators in the area or uncontacted native tribes that may see you as a threat
15. Bluetooth speaker – this offers no advantage to survival

Scoring

For each item, mark the number of points that your score differs from the official ranking, then add up all the points. Disregard plus or minus differences. The lower the total, the better your score!

0–25 Excellent – your group survives the trip, escaping the rainforest unscathed, and you gain worldwide recognition for your strength and decision-making abilities. Alongside your many awards for bravery, you are also asked to host the upcoming series of I'm a Celebrity... Get Me Out of Here!

26–32 Good – you navigate your way out of the rainforest but are found dehydrated, malnourished, with minor injuries, but, overall, just happy to be alive. You take the experience as an opportunity to educate the world about the importance of climate conservation.

33–45 Average – you escape the Amazon safely, but it takes many years to adjust back to normal civilization. You vow never to go travelling again or speak to anyone about “the incident”.

46–55 Fair – you navigate your way to safety but are badly shaken up and require numerous annual medical checkups. You live your days in ‘fight, flight, or freeze’ mode and develop dendrophobia (fear of trees).

56–70 Poor – you survive and are eventually saved by a rescue party, but two members of your group are lost.

71–112 Very poor – you and your group do not survive the weeklong expedition.