Lesson Plan: Desert Island  (Jeff Mohamed)

Level: Pre-intermediate up to High Intermediate
Focus: Free speaking (and vocabulary, if desired)
Time: 30-50 minutes (depending on the use of optional sections)

LESSON STAGES:

Optional Vocabulary Stage:
If you want to include some vocabulary teaching, start by handing each pair the picture sheet which does not have the objects’ names. The students work in pairs to try to name each object. After a few minutes, in open-class elicit the name of each object and drill it. Then hand a copy of the sheet to each student who doesn’t already have one. Write all the names on the board so students can copy them onto their sheets.

MAIN TASK:

Setting the Scene:
- Draw a desert island on the board.

- Ask “What’s this?” Elicit “It’s a desert island.” Check students understand this by asking e.g., “Is there water on a desert island?” (Maybe.) “Are there people?” (No.) “Are there plants and fruits?” (Usually.)

Pairwork:
- Tell students they will each be alone on a desert island for 5 years.
- Give each pair one copy of the picture sheet with named objects (assuming that you have not done the optional vocabulary stage).
- Tell the students they can take with them to the island 4 items from the picture sheet.
- They must work in pairs to agree which 4 items they will take and why.
- Give an example: “I’m going to take bug spray because I hate mosquitoes.”
Elicit another example from one student (to check they understand the task).
Monitor the pairwork without getting involved. Note down some common or important mistakes you hear.

Corrective Feedback:
- In open class, elicit one example from each pair. They must say why they will take each item.
- Then mention a couple of mistakes you overheard and elicit corrections from the class.
  (Example: “I heard someone say I want to take knife. Is that correct? What should you say?”) *

Optional Task:
- Tell the students they can each also take one animal.
- Put them into threes to tell each other which animal they would take and why.
- In open class, have one student report on the animals his/her group would take and why.

Optional Task:
- In open class, tell the students they can each take one more object. It has to be something from their house.
- Allow 20 seconds of thinking time.
- Elicit from each student which thing they want to take and why.

* One common mistake that is virtually certain to crop up – and I think is definitely worth some remedial work in the feedback stage - is the difference between “to + verb” and “for + verb+ing”: Students will say e.g., “I want to take an ax for cut trees” or “I want to take matches to making fire”. So you may want to plan in advance for how to clarify and perhaps quickly practice the two forms.

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