

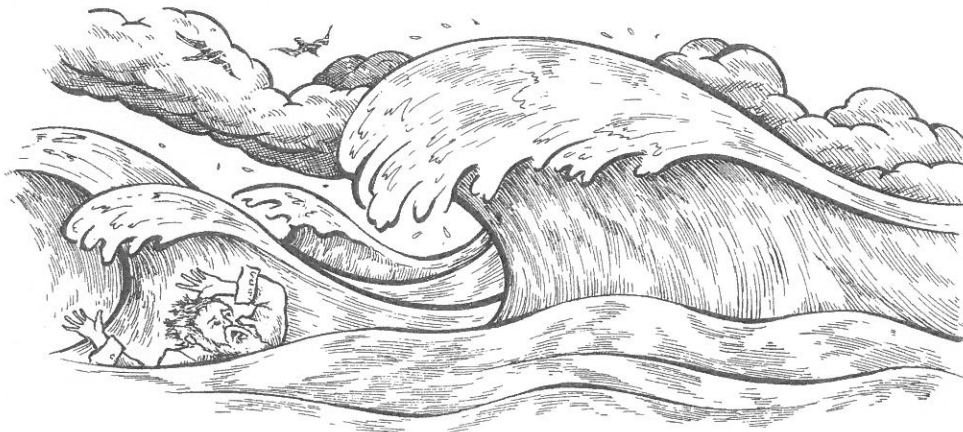
Carried with a mighty force



Robinson Crusoe is based on the true story of Alexander Selkirk who, in 1704, ran away to sea and was eventually put ashore on an uninhabited island. The author, Daniel Defoe, added many exciting incidents to make the true story more interesting. In this extract, Crusoe is swept back and forth by the sea as he tries to reach dry land.

Nothing can describe the confusion of thought which I felt when I sank into the water; for though I swam very well, yet I could not deliver myself from the waves so as to draw breath, till that wave having driven me, or rather carried me, a vast way on towards the shore, and having spent itself, went back, and left me
5 upon the land almost dry, but half dead with the water I took in. I had so much presence of mind, as well as breath left, that seeing myself nearer the mainland than I expected, I got upon my feet, and endeavoured to make on towards the land as fast as I could before another wave should return and take me up again; but I soon found it was impossible to avoid it; for I saw the sea come after me as high as a great hill,
10 and as furious as an enemy, which I had no means or strength to contend with: my business was to hold my breath, and raise myself upon the water if I could; and so, by swimming, to preserve my breathing, and pilot myself towards the shore, if possible, my greatest concern now being that the sea, as it would carry me a great way towards the shore when it came on, might not carry me back again with it when it gave back
15 towards the sea.

The wave that came upon me again buried me at once twenty or thirty feet deep in its own body, and I could feel myself carried with a mighty force and swiftness towards the shore – a very great way; but I held my breath, and assisted myself to swim still forward with all my might. I was ready to burst with holding my breath, when, as I
20 felt myself rising up, so, to my immediate relief, I found my head and hands shoot out above the surface of the water; and though it was not two seconds of time that I could keep myself so, yet it relieved me greatly, gave me breath and new courage. I was covered again with water a good while, but not so long but I held it out; and finding the water had spent itself, and began to return, I struck forward against the return of
25 the waves, and felt ground again with my feet.



From *Robinson Crusoe*
Daniel Defoe (1660–1731)

1 The speaker's 'confusion of thought' on first sinking suggests that he was mostly feeling (ring one):
embarrassed perky panic-stricken emotional discontent. 1 mark

2 What does the speaker mean by 'could not deliver myself from the waves'?
_____ 1 mark

3 The wave 'having spent itself' means that the wave has (ring one):
used up its energy drowned me enjoyed itself. 1 mark

4 In your own words, explain why Crusoe, having landed on dry land, couldn't prevent himself from again being washed out to sea.

_____ 1 mark

5 What simile does the author use to describe the ferocity of the sea?
_____ 1 mark

6 Find words in the story that have the same meaning as the following words:
a) 'steer' or 'drive': _____ 1 mark
b) 'tried', 'attempted': _____ 1 mark
c) 'speed': _____ 1 mark

7 Describe what you think might happen on Robinson Crusoe's first night on the island.

_____ 1 mark

8 This piece of prose consists of long sentences, unbroken by any shorter phrases or direct speech. How does this contribute to the effectiveness of the description and scene creation?

_____ 1 mark

Review
