

# WORK



**DEFINITION:** (*noun*) activity in which one exerts effort to perform something; the labor, task, or duty that gives one a means of livelihood; something to be done

## THE SWISS FAMILY ROBINSON

“I shall be satisfied if young people who read this record of our lives and adventures should learn from it how admirably suited is the peaceful, industrious life of a cheerful and united family to the formation of strong, pure character.” ~ Johann David Wyss



|                             |                                  |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| TITLE                       | <i>The Swiss Family Robinson</i> |
| AUTHOR                      | Johann David Wyss (1743-1818)    |
| PUBLICATION DATE   LOCATION | 1812   Switzerland               |
| TYPE OF WORK   GENRE        | novel   adventure fiction        |

### SETTING THE STAGE

*The Swiss Family Robinson* follows the adventures of a family of emigrants on their way to Australia who get caught in a storm and are shipwrecked in the South Pacific. After their ship is destroyed, the crew escapes in lifeboats, leaving the family (parents William and Elizabeth, and their four sons Fritz, Ernst, Jack and Franz) to make their way alone to an uninhabited island nearby. Gathering supplies from the wreckage<sup>1</sup>, the family sets up camp on the island. Eventually, as the weather grows cooler, they move into a cave. This is where our excerpt begins, narrated by the father.

### Chapter 10 (excerpt)

The weather became very unsettled and stormy. Heavy clouds gathered in the horizon, and passing storms of wind, with thunder, lightning, and rain swept over the face of nature from time to time. The sea was in frequent commotion with water foaming against the cliffs.

It was now near the beginning of the month of June, and we had twelve weeks of bad weather before us.

We established some of the animals with ourselves at the cave. The cow, the donkey and the dogs were all necessary to us, while the eagle was sure to be a great amusement in the long evenings.

Next, I looked to building an aqueduct, so that fresh water might be led close up to our cave, for it was a long way to go to bring it from the river, and especially difficult on washing days. As I wanted to do this before the rainy season began, I set about it at once.

Pipes of hollow bamboo were used for this purpose, and a large cask<sup>2</sup> formed the reservoir<sup>3</sup>. The supply of water was good, and the comfort of having it close at hand so great, that my wife stated she was as well pleased

with our engineering as if we had made her a fountain with mermaids and dolphins.

Anticipating the rains, I worked to prepare the stores<sup>4</sup> for the winter, and great was the gathering of roots, fruits, and grains, potatoes, rice, guavas, sweet acorns, and pine-cones; load after load arrived at the cave, and my wife's active needle was in constant motion, as the demand for more sacks and bags was constant.

Now, much remained to be done in order to give the cave a comfortable appearance, which became more desirable now that we had to live indoors.

The darkness of the inner regions annoyed me, and I set myself to invent a **remedy**. After some thought, I called in Jack's assistance, and we got a very tall, strong bamboo, which would reach right up to the vaulted roof. This we planted in the earthen floor, securing it well by driving wedges in round it.

Jack ascended this pole very cleverly, taking with him a hammer and chisel<sup>5</sup> to enlarge a **crevice** in the roof so as to fix a pulley, by means of which, when he descended, I drew up a large ship's lantern, well supplied with oil,

and as there were four **wicks**, it **afforded** a very fair amount of light.

Several days were spent in arranging the different rooms. Ernest and Franz undertook the library, fixing shelves, and setting the books in order. Jack and his mother took in hand the sitting-room and kitchen, while Fritz and I, as better able for heavy work, arranged the workshops. The carpenter's bench and a large chest of tools were set in convenient places, and many tools and instruments hung on the walls.

An **adjoining** chamber was made up as a **forge**, with fire-place, bellows<sup>6</sup>, and anvil<sup>7</sup>, all which we had found in the ship, packed together, and ready to set up.

When the great affairs were settled, we still found in all directions work to be done. Shelves, tables, benches, movable steps, cupboards, pegs, door-handles and bolts—there seemed no end to our requirements, and we often thought of the enormous amount of work necessary to maintain the comforts and conveniences of life which at home we had received as matters of course.

But in reality, the more there was to do the better; and I never **ceased contriving** fresh improvements, being fully aware of the importance of constant employment as a means of strengthening and maintaining the health of mind and body. This, indeed, with a consciousness of continual progress toward a desirable end, is found to **constitute** the main element of happiness.

Our rocky home was greatly improved by a wide porch which I made along the whole front of our rooms and entrances, by levelling the ground to form a terrace, and sheltering it with a verandah<sup>8</sup> of bamboo, supported by pillars of the same.

Ernest and Franz were highly successful as librarians. The books, when unpacked and arranged, proved to be a most valuable collection, capable of affording every sort of educational advantage.

Besides a variety of books of voyages, travels, divinity<sup>9</sup>, and natural history (several containing fine colored illustrations), there were histories and scientific works, as well as standard fictions in several languages; also, a good assortment of maps, charts, mathematical and astronomical instruments, and an excellent pair of globes.

I **foresaw** much interesting study on discovering that we **possessed** the grammars and dictionaries of a great many languages, a subject for which we all had a taste. With French we were well acquainted. Fritz and Ernest

had begun to learn English at school, and made further progress during a visit to England. Their mother, who had once been intimate with a Dutch family, could speak that language pretty well.

After a great deal of discussion, we agreed to study different languages, so that in the event of meeting with people of other nations, there should be at least one of the family able to communicate with them.

All determined to improve our knowledge of German and French. The two elder boys were to study English and Dutch with their mother.

Ernest, already possessing **considerable** knowledge of Latin, wished to continue to study it, so as to be able to make use of the many works on natural history and medicine written in that language.

Jack announced that he meant to learn Spanish 'because it sounded so grand and **imposing**'.

I myself was interested in the Malay language, knowing it to be so widely spoken in the islands of the Eastern Seas, and thinking it as likely as any other to be useful to us.

Our family circle by and by represented Babel<sup>10</sup> in miniature, for scraps and fragments of all these tongues kept buzzing about our ears from morning to night, each **sporting** his newly acquired word or sentence on every possible occasion, using peculiar expressions like riddles, to puzzle the rest.

In this way, the labor of learning was very considerably lightened, and everyone came to know a few words of each language.

Occasionally we amused ourselves by opening chests and packages as yet untouched, and brought unexpected treasures to light—mirrors, wardrobes, a pair of tables with polished marble tops, elegant writing tables and handsome chairs, clocks of various descriptions, and a musical-box; and little by little, our **abode** was fitted up like a palace, so that sometimes we wondered at ourselves, and felt as though we were **strutting** around in borrowed **plumes**.

The children begged me to decide on a name for our cave dwelling, and that of "Rockburg" was chosen **unanimously**.

The weeks of **imprisonment** passed so rapidly that no one found time hang heavy on his hands.

Books occupied me so much that but little carpentering was done, yet I made a **yoke** for the oxen and a spinning-wheel for my wife.

<sup>1</sup>wreckage:

<sup>2</sup>cask: a container for holding liquids.

<sup>3</sup>reservoir: a place for storing liquid.

<sup>4</sup>stores: a supply of something essential.

<sup>5</sup>chisel: a tool with a flat edge used for cutting.

<sup>6</sup>bellows: a bag that blows air into a fire to keep it burning.

<sup>7</sup>anvil: an iron tool used by blacksmiths to shape metal.

<sup>8</sup>verandah: a long balcony outside of a house.

<sup>9</sup>divinity: the study of divine things; theology.

<sup>10</sup>Babel: the tower from a Bible story that explains the origin of multiple languages.



# SECTION 1: VOCABULARY

| ROOT WORD    | PART OF SPEECH | DEFINITION  | WORD IN CONTEXT     |
|--------------|----------------|---|---------------------|
| abode        | noun           | a home; a dwelling                                  | ---                 |
| adjoin       | verb           | to attach or connect with                           | adjoining (adj.)    |
| afford       | verb           | to offer, give or provide                           | afforded; affording |
| cease        | verb           | to stop or discontinue                              | ceased              |
| considerable | adjective      | a large amount of something                         | ---                 |
| constitute   | verb           | to form or represent                                | ---                 |
| contrive     | verb           | to plan or design                                   | contriving          |
| crevice      | noun           | an opening that is long and narrow                  | ---                 |
| foresee      | verb           | to anticipate or know beforehand                    | foresaw             |
| forge        | noun           | a furnace used for heating metal                    | ---                 |
| imposing     | adjective      | impressive; dignified                               | ---                 |
| imprisonment | noun           | the state of being confined, as in jail             | ---                 |
| plume        | noun           | a colorful, fluffy feather                          | ---                 |
| possess      | verb           | to have or to own                                   | possessed           |
| remedy       | noun           | a cure for a problem                                | ---                 |
| sport        | verb           | to display proudly                                  | sporting            |
| strut        | verb           | to walk proudly to impress others                   | strutting           |
| unanimous    | adjective      | when everyone agrees                                | unanimously (adv.)  |
| wick         | noun           | a cord or string used to light a candle             | ---                 |
| yoke         | noun           | a tool connecting animals so they can work together | ---                 |

## I. Sentence Completion *Complete the following sentences with the correct vocabulary word.*

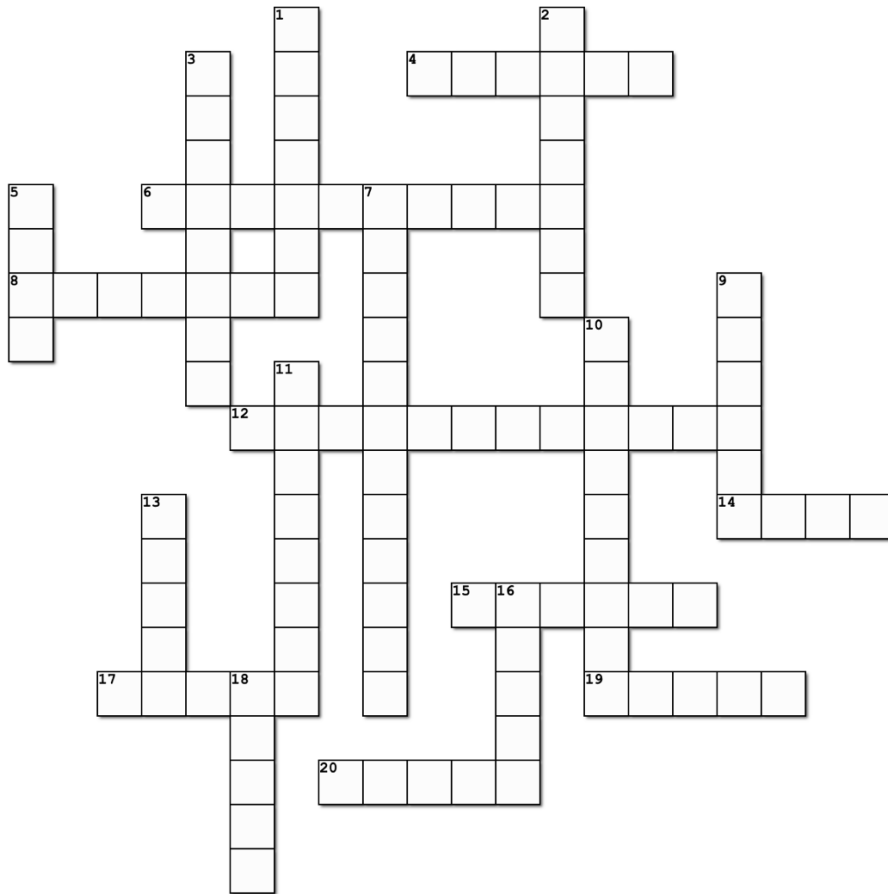
1. We live in a nice little \_\_\_\_\_ near the ocean.
2. I can \_\_\_\_\_ trouble ahead with the two groups of angry men.
3. The models wore purple \_\_\_\_\_ in their hats.
4. The lawyer \_\_\_\_\_ a plan to save his client's life.
5. The athletes \_\_\_\_\_ their medals around their necks at the school assembly.
6. There is a large \_\_\_\_\_ on the side of the mountain.
7. The women received the maximum time of \_\_\_\_\_ for their crimes.
8. The farmer placed the \_\_\_\_\_ on the animals and worked his fields.
9. The documentary \_\_\_\_\_ much interesting information about the Galápagos Islands.
10. It was decided by \_\_\_\_\_ vote that the captain would be Fred.
11. The Lambert family live in a large and \_\_\_\_\_ house on Ridgewood Avenue.
12. Bill lit the \_\_\_\_\_ of the candles on the birthday cake.
13. For some people, the \_\_\_\_\_ for a headache is caffeine.
14. Right now, only Bob, Jackie, Tom and I \_\_\_\_\_ the Pro-Life Group at our church.
15. Jonathan has a \_\_\_\_\_ behind his house where he makes horseshoes.

## II. Sentence Construction *Use the following words in original sentences:*

- considerable: \_\_\_\_\_
- strut: \_\_\_\_\_
- possess: \_\_\_\_\_
- cease: \_\_\_\_\_
- adjoining: \_\_\_\_\_

### III. Crossword Puzzle

Use the clues below to fill in the crossword puzzle with vocabulary words.



#### ACROSS

- 4. to connect
- 6. to represent
- 8. narrow opening
- 12. large amount
- 14. tool to join animals
- 15. to give or allow
- 17. opposite of start
- 19. to proudly display
- 20. decoration (for a hat)

#### DOWN

- 1. to know ahead of time
- 2. to own or have
- 3. impressive
- 5. string on a candle
- 7. being confined in a jail
- 9. to cure
- 10. in total agreement
- 11. to design or plan something
- 13. synonym for dwelling
- 16. metal-heating furnace
- 18. proud walking



## SECTION 2: CONTENT

### I. True | False

Write "T" in the box if the statement is true and "F" if it is false.

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|--|--|
| ◆ The Robinsons are from the South Pacific.        |  |
| ◆ All the Robinsons want to learn English.         |  |
| ◆ There is no light in the cave.                   |  |
| ◆ The family's work is overwhelming and unwelcome. |  |
| ◆ The verandah is made of bamboo.                  |  |
| ◆ The father has no time for carpentry.            |  |

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### II. Explaining the Context

For each word below, write a sentence explaining its function/role in the story.

1. Dutch: \_\_\_\_\_
2. yoke: \_\_\_\_\_
3. librarians: \_\_\_\_\_
4. Babel: \_\_\_\_\_
5. Rockburg: \_\_\_\_\_
6. ship's lantern: \_\_\_\_\_
7. treasures: \_\_\_\_\_
8. shipwrecked: \_\_\_\_\_
9. cave: \_\_\_\_\_
10. conveniences: \_\_\_\_\_

### III. Summary

Summarize the excerpt you read by writing what happened in the beginning (“First”), middle (“Then”), and end (“Last”).

First →

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Then →

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Last →

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### IV. Virtue Analysis

Answer the following questions in the spaces provided.

① Analyze the quote in the box below according to one of the three bulleted items:

- the theme of **WORK**
- the effect of the specific language
- what the author is trying to communicate

“But in reality, the more there was to do the better; and I never ceased contriving fresh improvements, being fully aware of the importance of constant employment as a means of strengthening and maintaining the health of mind and body.”

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② This excerpt showcased multiple types of **WORK** performed by members of the Robinson family. Identify what type of **WORK** each person did and discuss the value of teamwork.

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③ How do you think the father in the story instills the virtue of hard **WORK** in his sons?

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