

Helen Karas  
ESL-LA  
Sec 5

## Extreme Measures

### **Pre-activity**

Scene from SAW 1: The part where the man is linked at the foot and is trapped. The only way to get out is by cutting his foot out.

Ask students to write down their thoughts about if they would be able to do something like that if it meant staying alive. So on board write: Would you be able to cut off a part of your body to stay alive? Why?

Then get them to ask 2 other people in the class what they answered and write down their partners answers.

### **While activity**

Students will read the true life story of Aron Ralston and how he was pinned in a canon by a bolder, and how he had to cut his wrist off to escape.

Teacher gets students to pay attention to some vocabulary words or expressions that could be troublesome. The rest they can look up in a dictionary.

Students answer comprehension questions on the handout

### **Post activity**

Students will write a response to Rick Reilly, the author of the article. Students will have to respond to the text stating what they thought was truly amazing about this story, and if they have ever been in a situation where they felt trapped. Students also write suggestions about what Aron should have done in order to have prevented a situation like this from occurring.

Reinvestment: We go to the lab and actually get students to retype their emails, the next class we decide which are the top 5 emails and send them to Rick Reilly of Sports Illustrated.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Group: \_\_\_\_\_

**Comprehension Questions**

Directions scan through the text to find the answers to the following questions. Answer in *complete* sentences.

1) Who is this article about and what did the person do?

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2) How was Aron stuck in the canyon?

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3) On what day did things begin to become even scarier? Why?

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4) What was the only solution for Aron to do in order to free himself?

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5) At some point Aron had to stop cutting, why?

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6) What occurred to him that he had to do to get through the bone and free himself?

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7) Do you think the author would have been able to do the same thing as Aron? What evidence in the text proves your answer?

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8) After he was finally free, what did he do to get out of the canyon? Who helped him to a hospital?

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9) Aron will never play piano again, but what does he vow he will keep doing?

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10) In your opinion why do you think the title of this article is 'Extreme Measures'?

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**Vocabulary**

In this section you will look for 5 new vocabulary words you find in the text you just read. Look for the word in the dictionary and write the definition of the word in your own words

1) \_\_\_\_\_ :

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2) \_\_\_\_\_ :

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3) \_\_\_\_\_ :

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4) \_\_\_\_\_ :

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5) \_\_\_\_\_ :

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omments to Rick Reilly

In this section you will write a **200 word** comment to the author Rick Reilly (the author of the article).

**Directions**

1) Make an outline of your text that will include:

- What you thought was truly amazing about this article
- A time when your felt trapped or in a scary situation
- 2 suggestions about what Aron should have done in order to have *prevented* this situation from occurring.
- Write your text according to the outline you just did.
- When you are finished get a partner to check your text by looking for spelling mistakes, tense agreement, and comprehension of your text. When you get the paper back, make the according changes and hand it in by the end of class.

2 things you thought were truly amazing:

A time you felt trapped or in a scary situation

2 suggestions to Aron that he should have done to prevent this situation:

## Extreme Measures



*By Rick Reilly*

In 25 years I've been to at least 1,000 press conferences. World Series, Super Bowls, boxing- huge rooms full of tough guys. However, the most fascinating and unforgettable press conference was last Thursday in a little room in Grand Junction, Colorado, by Aron Ralston, a man as skinny as a stick.

The 27-year-old adventurer, Aron Ralston, described for the world to know how he had saved his own life by cutting off his lower right arm with a very dull pocketknife.

For five days Aron's arm was stuck between an 800 pound boulder and the wall of the canyon he was climbing. He tried everything to move the big rock; throwing his body at it, chipping away at it, but the thing wouldn't move.

On the third day, things got scarier. Out of food, water, and ideas, he stared at his cheap multiuse tool, the kind you get for free with a flashlight or something you buy at Canadian Tire, and realized what he had to do with it. He used a pair of cycling shorts to wrap around his arm to decrease the blood flow to his wrist, picked up the knife, took a deep breath, and began sawing into his own skin.

The blade was too dull to even do that. "[The knife] wouldn't even cut my arm hair," Aron said. Still, for two more days he kept at it; through skin muscle and agony.

As he spoke, his parents, Donna and Larry, sitting on either side of him, cried quietly. Donna held Aron's left hand under the table. Reporters who have covered news events like wars were crying, but Aron didn't cry. He told his story like a man describing how he had fixed his lawnmower.

But imagine it. How do you keep slicing yourself against impossible pain, when you know it's *you* causing that pain? "I felt pain," he said with half a smile. "I dealt with it. I moved on." Then he stopped cutting. He had to. He couldn't get through the bone.

Even though he was an engineer for Intel, a man who climbed 45 peaks of at least 14,000 feet, alone, in winter, in the dark, usually with no oxygen canister, no GPS or radio, this seemed to be a problem he couldn't solve. "I needed a bone saw."

Between depression and visions of family members, friends, and dreams of margaritas, Aron was getting a kind of peace from the idea of death, and yet a revelation suddenly came to him: "It occurred to me that if I could break my bones up at the wrist, where they were trapped, I could be freed."

It *occurred* to you? It occurred to you that if you snapped the bones of *your own* arm, this would be a *solution*?

Sorry, but if it were to be me, I'm dead. Bring the wolves and vultures. Let

the wind spread my body parts over the sand. I cry when I take a Band-Aid off my arm, how would I be able to cut my arm open?

But not Aron Ralston. He found a way to live. “All the desires, joys, and euphoria of a future life came rushing to me,” he said. “Maybe this is how I handled the pain. I was so happy to be taking action.”

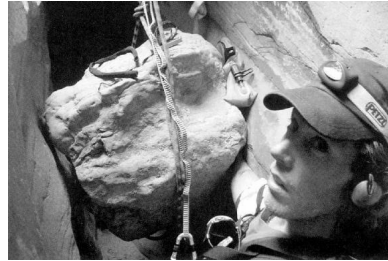
It took him most of the morning, but he was finally able to break the wrist bones in half. Yes, he did. Using the strength he had left, the man purposely broke two bones in his already unskinned arm. As he described that, everyone in the room forgot to blink, write, and breathe.

That done, “it took about an hour,” he said, to finish the amputation. Amazing. The man cut off a body part and timed himself.

Finally free, Aron crawled through the slim canyon, went down a cliff sixty feet, and walked about 6 miles, all with one arm, and the other arm profusely bleeding arm. Then he met two horrified Dutch hikers, and they helped him to a hospital.

Aron may never play concert piano again, but he vows to keep exploring the great canyons of the West.

They call Aron an extreme athlete, but the courage and will he displayed over those five days is not extreme, it's legendary. I don't care who you meet, you will never find anybody tougher than this guy. After the press conference, back in his hospital room, he said, “I wish I could have been funnier.”



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*If you have any comments for Rick Reilly, send it to [reilly@siletters.com](mailto:reilly@siletters.com)*

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