

Part 2.
Listening
Script

You will hear a presentation given by a university student called Megan Rowlings about a forest survival course she went on in Australia. Complete the sentences with a word or short phrase.

You now have forty-five seconds to look at Part Two.

[pause]

Hi, my name's Megan and I'm going to tell you about a forest survival course in Australia. So how did I come to do a course like that? Well, I'd been thinking about what to do in my summer holiday and my professor suggested I should do some teaching at a summer camp he was running, but I wanted to get away from academic stuff for a while. Then my father found the website about survival courses while looking for something to interest my brother. And that was it! –

The course leader, John, was a very experienced survival expert with an impressive range of skills. I can't tell you how absolutely terrifying the experience of being in the forest was at times but John's humour eased the tension, for which I was really grateful. He also knew exactly when to offer support and when to leave us to it.

Chris was his assistant, and he brought different qualities to the group. He was never short of enthusiasm, and was particularly keen on insects – he told us the name of every one we came across in the forest. He also knew all the facts about plants so that over the five days, we got to know what was safe to eat while we were there and what we had to avoid. That information proved really valuable.

There were ten of us on the course and we made a great team. I thought I'd struggle with the tasks that made big physical demands because of my size, but I soon learnt that mental toughness was equally important. And in fact, that turned out to be something I didn't have a problem with. John drilled into us the importance of staying safe at all times. In that respect, possessing sufficient self-awareness is key ... knowing our own capabilities and limitations could save our lives. All this holds back panic, which is often a greater danger than the situations we find ourselves in.

We'd all been equipped with a mini survival kit which contained things like a first aid kit and water sterilisation tablets, and of course we'd all brought other things as well, including some fancy gadgets which were never used ... but nobody else had thought about plastic bags to keep stuff dry in our rucksacks. I passed mine around and they were much appreciated.

Our first task was to make tools that we could use. For example, did you know you can actually make a spear from a branch if it's strong enough? We were shown how to make a knife out of a stone that was lying on the forest floor. It took me quite a long time to make one but it was great for all sorts of tasks.

The next thing was to find a water source. We found a small stream and we followed that some distance to where it finally joined a river. John told us that because the water at that point was quite fast-flowing, it was drinkable as long as we boiled it. There was also a small lake nearby but we were advised not to use that because of the wild animals that were often there.

Our first meal in the forest was what we collected ourselves, such as berries. Then, after all that walking and looking for food, we were ready for a good night's sleep. I didn't find making a shelter too problematic actually, which was just as well because if lighting a fire without matches had been left to me, then we'd have been shivering all night!

The thing that I found most interesting about the course was that many of the skills I use as a student at university are invaluable for survival too. Of course, you'd expect team-building to be useful. But what I hadn't expected was that being good at time management would also be an advantage.

[pause]

Now you'll hear Part Two again.

[The recording is repeated.]

[pause]

That's the end of Part Two.