

TEXT	RED
AUTHOR	Somerset Maugham
THEMES	What are you like? (Unit 1), Against all odds (Unit 7), Green travel (Unit 12), Exploited, endangered, extinct (Unit 15)
VOCABULARY	Boats, islands and actions.
WRITING	Students write a description of meeting someone for the first time.
SPEAKING	Students write and perform a dialogue.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

William Somerset Maugham (1874–1965) was an English playwright, novelist, and short story writer. He was one of the most popular writers of his time. Maugham's parents died before he was ten years old. Not wanting to become a lawyer like other men in his family, he trained as a doctor. His first novel was so successful that Maugham gave up medicine to write.

During the First World War, he served with the Red Cross and in the ambulance corps. In 1916 he started working for the British secret intelligence service. He worked in Switzerland and Russia before the October Revolution of 1917. During and after the war, he travelled in India, Southeast Asia and the Pacific. He drew from those experiences in his later short stories (such as *Red*) and novels.

WARMER

Focus on the photograph. Where in the world do students think this is? What are the possible clues? (Types of trees, the size of the waves, the fact we don't see buildings or people for example.) How do people travel to a place like this? Why might someone want to go here? Who in the class would like to visit this place? Could there be any dangers in a place like this?

? ABOUT YOU

The questions encourage students to talk about boats, the sea and islands. Monitor and help with vocabulary as necessary. Explain that a 'desert island' means uninhabited.

- 1 The photograph, although it's black and white, will have suggested some colours and the text, with its description of the morning, the sea and the island will have suggested more. However, many people imagine colours as they read depending on their own associations and memories (most of us have some degree of synesthetic connection with words and colours), so encourage students to say which colours they were thinking of as they read the text.

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Suggested answers

- 1 He is so focused on not falling into the water and crossing the bridge demands all his attention.
- 2 Draw students' attention to the dialogue and establish that they have not met before. Is this a normal way to talk to a stranger? Is it friendly? Why don't they introduce themselves? Why did Neilson want to see if the skipper fell in? There is no definitive answer but students can think about why Neilson invites the stranger into his house – is he used to having visitors? Is he alone (or lonely) and welcomes the opportunity for company and conversation? Is the skipper used to making trips to places like this and meeting strangers as part of his work? As for Neilson watching the skipper approach, perhaps he is simply curious to see if he can get to the house without falling in!
- 3 Maybe it is unusual to see books in places like this, as they must have been transported a long way, or are very expensive. He might be someone who never reads or sees books so for him it is strange. It tells us something about the skipper's world – it is very different from Neilson's.
- 4 Discuss the question with the whole class, asking for opinions and reasons and finish with a class vote on which is the more interesting character.

VOCABULARY

3

Answers

- 1 creek 2 skipper 3 ashore 4 falling in 4 bungalow

4

Answers

- 1 She is intent on finishing the work by Saturday. (Point out the grammatical change from *determined* + infinitive with *to* to *intent* + *on* + gerund/noun form.)
- 2 The bedroom floor was littered (all over) with his clothes, books and magazines. / His clothes, books and magazines littered the bedroom floor. (Point out that though both active and passive forms are possible, the passive is more likely as the emphasis is on the objects rather than the agent.)
- 3 It takes nerve to take a penalty. (Point out the switch from *you* to the impersonal *it* form.)
- 4 His desk was in such / so much disorder that he couldn't find his pencil.

WRITING

5

The questions and prompts provide students with a framework for the writing but you might want to stress that they don't have to include all the information, but rather make a selection and combine them. Go back to the text if necessary and look at how the setting and encounter are combined.

SPEAKING

- 6 The questions and prompts provide students with a framework for the speaking. There is a lot of flexibility here so encourage students to imagine any kind of dialogue they think these two men might have.

MIXED ABILITY

In Activity 6, the stronger students will probably have more input when writing the dialogue. Unless you feel they are too shy, choose two of the weaker students to perform the dialogue – since they are reading, rather than producing language they can feel more relaxed and make an important contribution to the activity.