

1 SPEAKING

- a**  Work in pairs and discuss the questions together.
- Do you think stories of survival based on true events are more interesting than imagined stories? Why / Why not?
 - Have you seen or read about any incredible story of survival? What happens and why is it incredible?
 - Look at the article title, introduction and photos on page 39. What do you think each film is about? Which looks the most interesting?

2 VOCABULARY: Words connected to difficult situations and places

- a** Read the article on page 39 and match the words 1–9 to the definitions a–i. Compare with a partner.
- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| 1 <input type="checkbox"/> endurance | a unable to escape |
| 2 <input type="checkbox"/> epic | b a very unpleasant or difficult experience |
| 3 <input type="checkbox"/> remote | c makes you feel ill in the stomach |
| 4 <input type="checkbox"/> harsh | d very far from the nearest town or village |
| 5 <input type="checkbox"/> blizzard | e a film, poem, or book which is long with a lot of action, usually historical |
| 6 <input type="checkbox"/> ordeal | f being unable to assist someone |
| 7 <input type="checkbox"/> trapped | g cruel or severe |
| 8 <input type="checkbox"/> sickening | h the ability to do something difficult and unpleasant for a long time |
| 9 <input type="checkbox"/> helplessly | i a bad snow storm with strong winds |
- b** Find two words you are not sure of the meaning of in *Rabbit-Proof Fence*. Guess the meaning and check in a dictionary.

3 READING 1

- a** Read the information in the article quickly and answer the questions.
- Which film is about a person or people who ... ?
- used what they knew about something to find their way home
 - travelled through different weather extremes
 - had to make a very difficult decision
- b**  Compare your answers to 2a with another student.
- c** Read the article more carefully and say if the statements below are true or false. Correct any false statements and compare with a partner.
- In *The Way Back* ...
- the prison camp in Siberia was near local towns.
 - bad weather helped the prisoners escape.
 - only six prisoners escaped.
- In *127 hours* ...
- Aron had plenty of food and water but no mobile phone.
 - Aron eventually met some people who helped him.
 - Aron is still adventurous despite his horrific experience.

In *Rabbit-Proof Fence* ...

- the girls had parents who were from different races.
- the fence was built to stop rabbits moving freely from the north to the south.
- all the girls eventually made it back to Jigalong.

4 READING 2



BETTER READING: INFERRING

It's often possible to understand more than the author has written by 'reading between the lines'. For example, when the author writes, '*They said he was a spy*', we can infer that Slawomir Rawicz was probably *not* a spy. If he really was a spy, the author would not need to include '*They said ...*' at the beginning.

- 1** Look at the two sentences below about *The Way Back*. How can you infer them from the text?
- Many prisoners died trying to escape from the Siberian prison camp.
 - The three survivors were not very healthy when they reached Calcutta.

- a** Choose *127 Hours* or *Rabbit-Proof Fence* and explain how you can infer sentences 1–3 below. Compare with a partner.
- 127 Hours*
- There was little chance of anyone rescuing Aron from the rock trap.
 - Aron ran out of food and water.
 - The writer thinks that after such a terrible ordeal, most people would hate outdoor adventure.
- Rabbit-Proof Fence*
- Mixed-race children are not taken from their homes in modern Australia.
 - Certain animals cannot get across the fence.
 - The two sisters would have liked to help their cousin.

5 SPEAKING

- a** Think about the most dangerous situation you've ever been in. Use the questions to help you. Make notes.
- Where and when was it?
 - How did you get into that situation?
 - Why was it dangerous?
 - What happened in the end?
 - How do you feel about it now, looking back?
- b**  Tell your partner about your adventure. Listen to your partner's story and ask questions to find out about the details.

True survival STORIES



There have been some incredible stories of endurance and survival shown in films, but they are even more incredible when they are based on true events. This week, we have chosen our **top three**.

The Way Back

The Way Back is a film about an epic escape from a prison camp in Siberia. It is based on the amazing true story of Slawomir Rawicz, a Polish soldier who was taken prisoner in World War II by the Soviet Union. They said he was a spy and took him first to Moscow and then to a very remote camp near the Arctic Circle in Siberia. Few prisoners managed to escape alive from such camps because of the enormous distances and harsh weather, but Rawicz and a small number of the other prisoners decided to try.

The group ran away from the camp under the cover of a blizzard and started walking south. Their 11-month trek took them 6,500 kilometres across the Arctic tundra, the Gobi Desert, Tibet and the Himalayas into India. But not all of them survived the ordeal. Four died in the desert and another two in the mountains. After each death, the desperate group had no choice but to bury the bodies and continue on their journey. Only three managed to get to India and received treatment in a hospital in Calcutta.

127 Hours

127 Hours is another true survival story, but this time the protagonist spends most of his ordeal in one place rather than walking a long distance. He is the American mountaineer Aron Ralston. In 2003, while climbing alone in a rocky area of desert in Utah, USA, Aron had an accident. He fell into a narrow space between two rock walls and his arm became trapped. He had a small amount of food and water, but nobody knew he was there, and there wasn't any mobile phone signal.

127 hours was the amount of time it took Aron to free himself. He tried everything he could to free his arm, and he did his best to preserve his food and water, but it was no use. It was a desperate situation, and finally he decided to cut off his own arm. He had to break the bone first – he only had a cheap pocketknife, and it wasn't sharp enough to cut bone. After his horrific escape from the rock trap, Aron climbed and walked until he found some people to help, and a helicopter came and took him to hospital.

Aron's ordeal is sickening enough just to see in the film, so we can only imagine how hard it was in real life. However, it did nothing to reduce Aron's love of outdoor adventure, and he's still keen on walking and climbing in the mountains to this day.



Rabbit-Proof Fence

Rabbit-Proof Fence tells another story of an amazing overland trek, this time across the desert of Western Australia. The protagonists are three young girls – 14-year-old Molly and her eight-year-old sister Daisy, and their 10-year-old cousin Gracie. The girls are mixed-race – one parent is aborigine and the other is white – and in 1930s Australia, such children were often taken from their homes and placed in special camps far away from their parents.



In this true story, the three girls were in a camp 2,400 kilometres south of their home, and they decided to escape and walk back. In order to find their way, they followed the rabbit-proof fence which is mentioned in the title of the film. This long-distance fence crosses Australia from north to south to stop animal diseases from spreading. The girls knew that the fence went past their home town of Jigalong, in the north.

The film shows how the girls survive in the desert with the police and local government authorities out hunting for them. Cousin Gracie was caught and taken back to the camp, and the two sisters could do nothing but watch helplessly from a distance. They were able to reach their mother in Jigalong nine weeks after their escape. It's a very moving story.