

***The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* by Douglas Adams  
1976, Harmony Books, New York  
Post-Reading Problematic Situation**

**Context:** After reading the book you can have a game to help the students decide what they want to do if they had only a few minutes to grab what they want before taking a hitch hike around the galaxy. They do not want to be blown up with the rest of the world. Meaning put them in a similar situation as Ford and Arthur before the world went bye-bye. If can do this before but what would be better for the students is to do it after they read the book to bring the sense of humor into the answer. Or do it both and see what would change.

**Purpose:** The purpose is to see two things. How the students will work together as a group to bring the essential or nonessential items if they were the only ones on the ship? You can see how to assess them on how they are responding to their fellow students, if they get more fidgeting and to see if students go in the background, to avoid this you can get the students to write about their experience at the end til the bell rings.

**Rationale:** The students will learn how to problem solve with a group of people. Also they will have a chance to be a part of a democratic scenario and how it is to work with each other.

**Materials:** Handout for each student (Can make a classroom set). Paper and writing utensil.

**Time:** 45 to 50 minutes, maybe even longer. If they do not get their twenty items finished that is ok. You might need to do this in a couple of class periods.

**Directions:**

**Step 1:** Explain to the students what they are going to do. They are going to get into groups and are going to come to a consensus on deciding what they are going to name and bring with them on their spaceship. Hoping to explain before you spread into groups they will listen.

Start with an imagination scenario as if the earth is going to blow up. You have only the amount of time of class or allotted to the students, to make an consensus on what they are going to bring. The earth is going to blow up (for unity in your group allow them to come up with a name, or decide to give one to them, whatever is necessary to keep them focused on what they are going

to bring instead of the name of the ship.

**Step 2:** Depending on the size of group you want, the activity is set-up for three in a group, separate the students into how many groups is necessary.

**Step 3:** Let them decide on the name of their spaceship and also a recorder, leader and presenter.

**Recorder:** The student with this job is going to record what the group wants to bring.

**Leader:** Needs to make sure they stay on task. No goofing around. Also the leader needs to be able to let every person in the group to discuss why they want to bring something and what for. So that they all can come to a consensus of what they are going to bring.

**Presenter:** This person is going to present to the class the name of the spaceship and what they have decided to bring.

**Step 4:** Put them to work on the paper. Let them choose twenty items they would bring individually. Then as a group discuss what to bring together, they only have twenty items as a group to bring. By letting them decide to what to bring will let them decide on what needs to be done. Afterwards you can discuss what they let out.

**Step 5:** Have the presenter present their spaceship to the class and their twenty items.

**Step 6:** Discuss with the students what they forgot to include on such a trip. Make sure they do not have to be specific with items, food is one, water and so forth.

**Step 7:** Let them grab out their writing journal and have them write about their experience, what they might have changed in their list and so forth. You can even title it after their space ship.

# Escaping Planet Earth (Handout)

## Group Decision Instructions

**Step 1:** Individually write down twenty items you think you need or want on a separate sheet of paper.

**Step 2:** Number them between 1 to 20. 1 being the most important item and 20 being the least important item.

**Step 3:** Work together in your group to decide the 20 items you are going to bring and rank them between 1 to 20.

**Step 4:** Present them to the class.

**Coming to a Consensus:** Consensus is a decision-making process for making full use of available resources and for resolving conflicts creatively. Consensus is difficult to reach, so not every ranking will meet with everyone's complete approval. Complete unanimity is not the goal: it is rarely achieved. But each individual should be able to accept the group rankings on the basis of logic and feasibility. When all group members feel this way, you have reached consensus as defined here, and the judgment may be entered as a group decision.

This means in effect, that a single person can block the group if he thinks it is necessary: at the same time, he/she should use this option in the best sense of reciprocity. Here are some guidelines to use in achieving consensus:

1) Avoid arguing for your own rankings. Present your position as lucidly and logically as possible, but listen to the other members' reactions and consider them carefully before you press your point.

2) Do not assume that someone must win and someone must lose when discussion reaches a stalemate. Instead, look for the next most-acceptable alternative for all parties.

3) Do not change your mind simply to avoid conflict and to reach agreement and harmony. When agreement seems to come too quickly and easily, be suspicious. Explore the reasons and be sure everyone accepts the solution for basically similar or complementary reasons. Yield only to positions that have objective and logically sound foundations.