

Reading Text 1

Sailing Solo

Laura Dekker, the youngest sailor to circumnavigate the globe single-handedly, arrived at the Caribbean Island of St Maarten on 21st January, 2012. She survived weeks at sea with just a few cockroaches for company – and did her homework too.



She said, 'I became good friends with my boat. I learned a lot about myself.'

Born to Sail

Her Dutch parents were living on a yacht in a port in New Zealand when Laura was born, and she was six when she first sailed solo. At eight, she decided her dream was to sail round the world and, aged just 13, Laura sailed solo from the Netherlands to England and back – a trip her father hoped would 'cure her wanderlust'.

Dangers and Discomforts

On her round-the-world trip she took on six-metre-high waves and extreme weather. On one occasion, heading to the Cape of Good Hope in Africa, her storm jib (a sail used in storms) got jammed. She finally managed to take it down in the early hours of the morning. Another of her sails ripped completely during the voyage. She slept on a damp bed and lived on rice and pasta, with cookies and pancakes as occasional treats. She dodged near collisions with cargo ships and worried about pirates. Not

in the least squeamish, she had to rescue live flying fish that had flung themselves into her cabin. She survived weeks at sea with no company – except for the rats and cockroaches that had stowed away in her cabin. On top of all that, she had to do schoolwork!

Adapted from The Guardian, January 2012

Answer the questions.

1. Tick (✓) True or False.

	True	False
a. Laura Dekker's sailing trip was a week long.		
b. Laura carried on with her schoolwork.		
c. At age thirteen, Laura managed a round-trip.		
d. Her trip round the world went smoothly.		
e. Laura was disgusted by the flying fish.		

2. Do you think Laura's father, was keen on Laura's round-the-world trip?
Give a reason for your answer.

3. Describe what happened to Laura near the Cape of Good Hope.

4. Mention two other dangers Laura faced on her journey.

a. _____

b. _____

5. Write a different title for the article and suggest different subheadings.

Title: _____

Subheading 1: _____

Subheading 2: _____

6. Write a suitable caption for the photo in the article.

7. From the text find the word or phrase which means:

a. to go round the world _____

b. without help from anyone _____

c. a wish to travel _____

d. avoided _____

e. feeling easily sick _____

8. 'It is okay for a person under 18 to travel alone at sea for a long time.'

Do you agree or disagree? Give your reasons.



Reading Text 2

Laura kept a diary every day when she sailed round the world. She sent it to her family and friends. They wanted to know that she was safe. She might have written like this:

Monday, 6th December

I'm in the harbour at Cape Town today. Dad and his friends helped me to buy all my food and water for the next part of the trip. We packed everything carefully so that it won't get wet. I checked my list to make sure that I hadn't forgotten anything. I'm excited about leaving tomorrow morning.

Tuesday, 7th December

I didn't sleep well because I was so nervous. This morning I was pleased because the sea was calm. Lots of people came to wave goodbye and some boats sailed beside me for the first few kilometres to keep me company. Then I was alone again.

Wednesday, 8th December

The wind is perfect and I'm sitting here writing this in the sun. Lots of dolphins came and played around the boat and kept me company. I'm getting used to being by myself again. I tried to do some schoolwork this afternoon but dolphin watching is more fun. They aren't scary like the whales I saw last month.

Thursday, 9th December

The sea got really rough and the waves were very high. The wind is still strong but that's a good thing. We are moving in the right direction. I've been wearing my waterproof clothes and staying in the cabin for hours to keep dry. I saw the cockroaches again. They have become my friends and I don't mind them.

Friday, 10th December

It wasn't quite so rough today and the flying fish kept jumping into the boat. I don't like it when they smash on the deck or fall into the cabin. They smell if I don't get rid of them quickly. Please try to send me a message tonight. I've sailed 150 kilometres since Tuesday. Give Spot a hug and a bone from me. It would be so nice to have him on board, but dogs can't come on a journey like this.

Adapted from

Answer the questions.

1. Find the following information from the text.

a. the name of the city from where Laura sailed	
b. the day when Laura started her journey	
c. the sea condition when Laura started sailing	
d. the activity Laura did instead of doing schoolwork	
e. the date when the sea was very choppy	
f. the insects that were on board the boat	
g. the distance she sailed by Friday	
h. the name of Laura's dog	

2. Pretend you are Laura. Write your diary for the next two days. You can make up anything you like.

- ⚓ You could discover a mysterious island.
- ⚓ A whale might almost overturn your boat.
- ⚓ You might have seen a mermaid.
- ⚓ You could have rescued some sailors.
- ⚓ An albatross might decide to take a free ride on your boat.



Use the writing frame as a guide.

Use first person pronouns e.g. I, we, us, my, our...

Be informal.

Saturday, 11th December

Sunday, 12th December
