

1 Lost on the Moon

Your spaceship has just crashed on the moon. You were scheduled to rendezvous with a mother ship 200 miles away on the lighted surface of the moon, but the rough landing has ruined your ship and destroyed all the equipment on board except for the 15 items listed below.

Your crew's survival depends on reaching the mother ship, so you must choose the most critical items available for the 200-mile trip.

Your task is to rank the 15 items in terms of their importance for survival. Place a number 1 by the most important item, number 2 by the second most important, and so on, through number 15, the least important.

Item	Your Rank (1)	Group's Rank (2)	NASA's Rank (3)	$ (3) - (1) $	$ (3) - (2) $
Box of matches					
Food concentrate					
50 feet of nylon rope					
Parachute silk					
Solar-powered portable heating unit					
Two .45 caliber pistols					
One case of dehydrated milk					
Two 100-pound tanks of oxygen					
Stellar map (of the moon's constellations)					
Self-inflating life raft					
Magnetic compass					
5 gallons of water					
Signal flares					
First-aid kit containing injection needles					
Solar-powered FM receiver-transmitter					
Total					

Solution:

Item	NASA's Reasoning	NASA's Rank
Box of matches	No oxygen to sustain flame, virtually worthless	15
Food concentrate	Efficient means of supplying energy requirements	4
Fifty feet of nylon rope	Useful in scaling cliffs, tying injured together	6
Parachute silk	Protection from sun's rays	8
Solar-powered portable heating unit	Not needed unless on dark side	13
Two .45 caliber pistols	Possible means of self-propulsion	11
One case of dehydrated milk	Bulkier duplication of food concentrate	12
Two 100-pound tanks of oxygen	Most pressing survival need	1
Stellar map (of the moon's constellations)	Primary means of navigation	3
Self-inflating life raft	CO2 bottle in military raft may be used for propulsion	9
Magnetic compass	Magnetic field on moon is not polarized; worthless for navigation	14
5 gallons of water	Replacement for tremendous liquid loss on lighted side	2
Signal flares	Distress signal when mother ship is sighted	10
First-aid kit injection needles	Needles for vitamins, medicines, etc., will fit special aperture in NASA space suits	7
Solar-powered FM receiver-transmitter	For communication with mother ship; but FM requires line-of-sight transmission and short ranges	5

Error points are the absolute difference between your rankings and NASA's.

0-25	excellent
26-32	good
33-45	fair
56-70	oops
71-112	oh well