B1-B2 English Worksheet

SS United States: From Record-Breaking Ocean Liner to the World's Largest Artificial Reef

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Article

On 11 November 2026, a famous American ocean liner was deliberately sunk off the Florida coast, not lost in an accident. The SS United States had set a transatlantic speed record on its first voyage in 1952. For years it carried passengers, including celebrities, across the Atlantic. But when air travel grew, passenger numbers fell, and the ship was taken out of service in 1969. Several owners tried to come up with a new use for it, yet none of their plans worked out. Eventually, the enormous vessel faced being broken up for scrap.

In 2024, officials in Florida stepped in and bought the ship. They decided to turn it into an artificial reef, hoping it would attract sea life and divers. Before the sinking, workers had to clear out potentially harmful materials and cut openings in the structure. On 11 November, seawater was let in so the ship could settle on the seabed without explosives. The process took longer than expected. Parts of the ship, including its famous funnels, were set aside for a museum. Scientists will keep track of how plants and animals gradually move into the new habitat.

Supporters believe the project could bring in visitors and help marine life, although these benefits will take time to measure. Others wonder whether an important piece of history should have been saved on land. The dispute raises a wider question: when an old object has lost its original purpose, should we hold on to it, adapt it or let it go? Empty factories can become homes, and unused railway lines can become parks. Finding a second life for something may be better than simply throwing it away, but the best choice depends on cost, safety and what people value.

True/False

Decide if each statement is True (T) or False (F).

No.	Statement	T / F
1	The historic liner was deliberately sent to the seabed near Florida on 11 November.	
2	The vessel broke the transatlantic speed record after its retirement.	
3	Previous owners successfully converted the ship into a new attraction.	
4	Workers removed potentially dangerous substances before sinking the liner.	
5	Explosives were used to make the ship sink rapidly.	
6	Some recognisable parts of the ship were saved for a museum.	
7	Researchers plan to monitor how the underwater habitat changes.	
8	The writer argues that every old object should be kept unchanged.	

Phrase Match

Match the phrases (1-10) to the correct definitions (A-J).

Phrases (1-10)	Definitions (A-J)
1. come up with	A. transform it into something different
2. worked out	B. monitor progress or changes
3. broken up	C. remove unwanted things from a place
4. stepped in	D. save something for a particular purpose
5. turn it into	E. dismantled into separate pieces
6. clear out	F. keep rather than give something away
7. set aside	G. became involved to help or take action
8. keep track of	H. succeeded or produced the desired result
9. bring in	I. think of or suggest an idea
10. hold on to	J. attract people to a place

Synonym Match

Match the words (1-10) to the correct synonyms (A-J).

Words (1-10)	Synonyms (A-J)
1. enormous	A. anticipated
2. harmful	B. huge
3. gradually	C. advantages
4. original	D. damaging
5. adapt	E. initial
6. purpose	F. slowly
7. benefits	G. well-known
8. famous	H. function
9. expected	I. backers
10. supporters	J. modify

Use the New Language

Choose 5 words or phrases from the worksheet and write your own sentences.

No.	Your sentence
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	

Discussion Questions

Student A	Student B
1. Have you ever visited a historic ship, railway station or old building?	1. Was sinking the SS United States a creative solution or a loss of important history?
2. What is the oldest object you own, and why have you kept it?	2. Who should pay to protect historic buildings and vehicles when repairs become very expensive?
3. Have you ever found a new use for something you were about to throw away?	3. How should communities decide whether to restore, reuse or demolish an old building?
4. Would you enjoy diving to see a huge shipwreck, or would it make you nervous?	4. Can turning old industrial sites into restaurants or homes damage their original character?
5. Which historic place in your country would you most like to see preserved?	5. Are artificial reefs a good way to help marine life, or could they create new problems?
6. When do you repair something rather than replace it?	6. How much should tourism income influence environmental decisions?
7. Have you visited a museum that made history feel alive?	7. Is preserving a museum display as valuable as preserving the original object?
8. What would you do with an empty factory or abandoned building in your town?	8. Could exciting conservation projects distract attention from more urgent environmental problems?

Answer Key

True/False	1=T, 2=F, 3=F, 4=T, 5=F, 6=T, 7=T, 8=F
Phrase Match	1=I, 2=H, 3=E, 4=G, 5=A, 6=C, 7=D, 8=B, 9=J, 10=F
Synonym Match	1=B, 2=D, 3=F, 4=E, 5=J, 6=H, 7=C, 8=G, 9=A, 10=I

Example Sentences With the Phrases

No.	Example sentence
1	The council tried to come up with a new use for the old cinema.
2	The original plan worked out after months of testing.
3	The damaged vessel was nearly broken up for scrap.
4	Volunteers stepped in when the old theatre needed urgent repairs.
5	They wanted to turn it into a library rather than demolish the station.
6	Workers had to clear out the warehouse before renovation began.
7	The museum set aside several objects for a new exhibition.
8	Scientists keep track of changes in the reef over several years.
9	The festival could bring in visitors from nearby towns.
10	Residents wanted to hold on to the historic market building.