

FIRST AID

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Did they know everything about diving? Skubba might be a good diver and Fred has the knowledge, but they had certainly not seen everything yet. Next week they would learn first aid and CPR. CPR? That word did not make any sense. Was Nella mistaken? Or did that word have no meaning? A few months back they had been worrying about the term, "ABC material". They had come up with all kinds of combinations of words and possible meanings. None were correct, because "ABC" turned out not to be initials at all. ABC material just stood for basic material. Basic as ABC. How strange!

CPR did have a meaning. It was not like ABC. As usual it was Fred who had found the answer. Or was it the wrong answer? CPR, according to Fred, stood for Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation. It sounded complicated and medical. Was diving dangerous? Skubba did not believe that diving was dangerous, and if it was, they were well trained to make it safe! Fred had to be wrong this time. It had to mean something else. If so, they strangely enough did not find another meaning for it.

Skubba was surprised when Nella confirmed the following week of their session that CPR had something to do with accidents. And yes, they were well trained, but you never knew when something bad would happen and then you had better know what to do. As divers you need to be prepared for anything. That is why all divers have to learn first aid and CPR.

They first learnt how to get help and call for an ambulance. Helping someone is good, but calling for professional help is better. Then they learnt how to treat a small cut or a simple wound, or what to do if a dive tank fell on your toe. Skubba never thought of those things before, but

now that he was made aware of them, he found it interesting.

After half an hour of first aid training, Nella brought out a tank. "Ah, we're going to dive now," Skubba said. "No, this is not a dive tank, but an oxygen cylinder," explained Nella.

And he could indeed now see the differences. That tank looked different than the one he used in the pool. Nella explained that oxygen is good for a lot of things and certainly for divers, so it was important that they knew what an oxygen tank looked like and how to assemble and use it. She invited them to each breathe a few times from the tank.

"It tastes like air," Fred said.

"It does taste the same as air, but it is no ordinary air," Nella told them. "You cannot dive with this tank and you have to be very careful with it."

Nella explained that oxygen was good to prevent things from getting worse, but the gas was also very flammable. They were not allowed to use oxygen by themselves, only adult divers could use it. Every diver was trained to use oxygen safely.

Nella then showed them how she would examine a person, not necessarily a diver, but someone who had fainted and possibly needed resuscitation. That was a difficult word, but Nella explained it meant, 'saving someone's life by keeping him or her alive'. You could prevent a person from dying by helping that person to breathe, and by keeping his or her blood pumping. They were to try the technique on a mannequin named, 'Little Annie'. A weird name, because that mannequin was not little. As such young divers, they would not be expected to be able to resuscitate a person, but it was fun to try it and useful to know how to do it. It was also important to know how to assist an adult performing CPR.

