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Blind pilot flies from London to Sydney

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2nd May, 2007

THE ARTICLE

Blind pilot flies from London to Sydney

A blind British pilot landed his tiny aircraft in Sydney on Monday to complete a record-breaking flight halfway around the world. Miles Hilton-Barber left London on March 7 and flew nearly 22,000 kilometres to Australia. His aim was to raise money for charity. He did not fly solo, but was accompanied by a sighted co-pilot who helped Hilton-Barber by telling him what figures were on the navigation instruments. The 58-year-old aviator said: "It's the fulfillment of an amazing dream. I've been waiting to do this flight for about four years." He added: "I've wanted to be a pilot since I was a kid. Now I'm totally blind but I've had the privilege of flying more than halfway around the world." He described the most important thing for him: "The big deal is not me doing this, it's raising funds," he said.

Hilton-Barber has been blind for 25 years. He hopes his trip will raise over two million dollars for the charity Seeing is Believing, which works to cut preventable blindness in developing countries. His intercontinental flight is not the first adventure he has been on. In 1999 he competed in the "Toughest Foot-race on Earth" a run across the Sahara Desert. He then went on to take part in the "Coldest Marathon on Earth", across Siberia. To add to his feats, he has climbed Mt Kilimanjaro and Mt Blanc, Africa and Europe's highest mountains. He also set the Malaysian Grand Prix lap record for a blind driver in a 200 kilometre-per-hour Lotus. His achievements are an inspiration to blind and sighted people everywhere. Hilton-Barber is living proof that anything is possible, and that where there's a will, there's a way.

WARM-UPS

1. BEING BLIND: Walk around the class and talk to other students about what it is / would be like to be blind. Change partners often. After you finish, sit with your original partner(s) and share what you heard.

2. CHAT: In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words from the article are most interesting and which are most boring.

pilots / aircraft / record-breaking flights / charity / figures / amazing dreams / blindness / developing countries / adventures / Sahara Desert / Grand Prix / will

Have a chat about the topics you liked. For more conversation, change topics and partners frequently.

3. ADVENTURE: With your partner(s), rank the following adventures – which would you most / least like to do together?

- fly around the world
- walk across the Sahara Desert
- run across Siberia
- climb Mount Kilimanjaro
- race a Formula One racing car
- study English for 10 hours a day, every day for two years

4. CHARITY: Brainstorm ideas you could do to raise money for charity. Talk about them with your partner(s). Which one(s) will you start planning? How much money would you like to raise?

5. CHARITIES: With your partner(s), rank the following charities. Give a score of 1 (= I wouldn't give them money) to 10 (= I'd donate my life savings).

- | | |
|------------------------------------|------------------------|
| • Seeing is Believing | • Save the Rainforests |
| • World Wildlife Fund | • Stop Whaling |
| • Amnesty International | • Save the Children |
| • International Red Cross/Crescent | • Help the Aged |
| • Other _____ | • Other _____ |

6. QUICK DEBATE: Have this quick debate with your partner(s). Students A think being blind is a major disability; students B think blind people live normal lives. Change partners and topics every two minutes.

7. BLIND: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word "blind". Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

1. TRUE / FALSE: Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- a. A blind British Airways pilot flew a Boeing 747 across the world. T / F
- b. A blind pilot wanted to raise money for charity. T / F
- c. The pilot wanted to fly around the world ever since he was 25. T / F
- d. The cash raised and not the achievement means most to the pilot. T / F
- e. The pilot raised over two million dollars for a blindness charity. T / F
- f. The pilot has also climbed mountains and run across the Sahara. T / F
- g. His next plan is to become a Formula One racing driver. T / F
- h. The article said the pilot is making a will to give his money away. T / F

2. SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article:

- | | |
|----------------|--------------|
| a. tiny | partnered |
| b. aim | desire |
| c. accompanied | completion |
| d. fulfillment | collect |
| e. privilege | joined |
| f. raise | minute |
| g. preventable | achievements |
| h. competed in | honour |
| i. feats | goal |
| j. will | stoppable |

3. PHRASE MATCH: Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| a. landed his | sighted co-pilot |
| b. accompanied by a | blind |
| c. the fulfillment of | feats |
| d. totally | there's a way |
| e. big | tiny aircraft |
| f. preventable | deal |
| g. To add to his | blindness |
| h. an inspiration | proof |
| i. living | an amazing dream |
| j. where there's a will, | to blind and sighted people |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

GAP FILL: Put the words into the gaps in the text.

Blind pilot flies from London to Sydney

A blind British pilot _____ his tiny aircraft in Sydney on Monday to complete a record-breaking _____ halfway around the world. Miles Hilton-Barber left London on March 7 and flew nearly 22,000 kilometres to Australia. His aim was to _____ money for charity. He did not fly _____, but was accompanied by a sighted co-pilot who helped Hilton-Barber by telling him what _____ were on the navigation _____. The 58-year-old aviator said: "It's the fulfillment of an amazing dream. I've been waiting to do this flight for about four years." He added: "I've wanted to be a pilot since I was a kid. Now I'm totally blind but I've had the _____ of flying more than halfway around the world." He described the most important thing for him: "The big deal is not me doing this, it's raising _____," he said.

Hilton-Barber has been blind for 25 years. He hopes his _____ will _____ over two million dollars for the charity Seeing is Believing, which works to _____ preventable blindness in developing countries. His intercontinental flight is not the first adventure he has been on. In 1999 he _____ in the "Toughest Foot-race on Earth" a run across the Sahara Desert. He then went on to take part in the "Coldest Marathon on Earth", across Siberia. To add to his _____, he has climbed Mt Kilimanjaro and Mt Blanc, Africa and Europe's highest mountains. He also _____ the Malaysian Grand Prix lap record for a blind driver in a 200 kilometre-per-hour Lotus. His achievements are an _____ to blind and sighted people everywhere. Hilton-Barber is living proof that anything is possible, and that where there's a _____, there's a way.

raise
landed
funds
flight
figures
privilege
instruments
solo

will
competed
raise
cut
trip
inspiration
set
feats

LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

Blind pilot flies from London to Sydney

A blind British pilot _____ aircraft in Sydney on Monday to complete a record-breaking flight _____ the world. Miles Hilton-Barber left London on March 7 and flew nearly 22,000 kilometres to Australia. _____ money for charity. He did not fly solo, but was accompanied _____ co-pilot who helped Hilton-Barber by telling him what figures were on the navigation instruments. The 58-year-old aviator said: "It's the fulfillment _____ dream. I've been waiting _____ for about four years." He added: "I've wanted to be a pilot since I was a kid. Now I'm totally blind but I've had _____ flying more than halfway around the world." He described the most important thing for him: "The _____ me doing this, it's raising funds," he said.

Hilton-Barber _____ 25 years. He hopes his trip will raise over two million dollars for the charity Seeing is Believing, which _____ preventable blindness in developing countries. His intercontinental flight is not the first adventure _____ on. In 1999 he competed in the "Toughest Foot-race on Earth" _____ the Sahara Desert. He then went on to take part in the "Coldest Marathon on Earth", across Siberia. To _____ feats, he has climbed Mt Kilimanjaro and Mt Blanc, Africa and Europe's highest mountains. He _____ Malaysian Grand Prix lap record for a blind driver in a 200 kilometre-per-hour Lotus. His achievements are _____ blind and sighted people everywhere. Hilton-Barber is living proof that anything is possible, and that where _____, there's a way.

AFTER READING / LISTENING

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'blind' and 'pilot'.

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. GAP FILL: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. STUDENT "BLINDNESS" SURVEY: In pairs / groups, write down questions about being blind and overcoming problems.

- Ask other classmates your questions and note down their answers.
- Go back to your original partner / group and compare your findings.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

6. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall exactly how these were used in the text:

| | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• tiny• halfway• raise• navigation• kid• deal | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• charity• first• run• feats• lap• proof |
|--|---|

DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a) What did you think when you read the headline?
- b) What do you think about the blind pilot's feat?
- c) Would you like to have flown with him?
- d) Do you think blind people can do anything?
- e) What is your dream?
- f) What have you wanted to do since you were a kid?
- g) Would you have given money to the blind pilot (how much)?
- h) Do you think you'll do something amazing one day?
- i) What would you like to do to raise money for charity?
- j) What question would you like to ask Mr. Hilton-Barber?



STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a) Did you like reading this article?
- b) What do you think of the fact that he raised two million dollars?
- c) Do you think Seeing is Believing is a good name for a charity?
- d) Would you like to cross the Sahara Desert and Siberia?
- e) How do you think he drove so fast in a Formula One car?
- f) How much of an inspiration is Mr. Hilton-Barber to you?
- g) Do you think he is living proof that anything is possible?
- h) Do you believe that where there's a will, there's a way?
- i) What's the biggest hurdle you've overcome in your life?
- j) Did you like this discussion?

AFTER DISCUSSION: Join another partner / group and tell them what you talked about.

- a) What was the most interesting thing you heard?
- b) Was there a question you didn't like?
- c) Was there something you totally disagreed with?
- d) What did you like talking about?
- e) Which was the most difficult question?

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SPEAKING

ADVENTURE:

You are going to do one of these things for charity with your partner(s). Decide which one.

(1) Walk across the Sahara Desert (2) Run across Siberia (3) Climb Mt. Everest

Give your charity adventure a name: _____

Decide what you need to do.....

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Now | |
| The week before | |
| The day before | |
| The first day | |
| The last day | |
| The day after the last day | |
| A week after you finish | |

Change partners and share your ideas and plans. Give each other ideas on how to make your adventure work better.

Make a presentation to the class about your plans.

LANGUAGE

CORRECT WORD: Put the correct words from a–d below in the article.

Blind pilot flies from London to Sydney

A blind British pilot (1) ___ his tiny aircraft in Sydney on Monday to complete a record-breaking (2) ___ halfway around the world. Miles Hilton-Barber left London on March 7 and flew nearly 22,000 kilometres to Australia. His aim was to (3) ___ money for charity. He did not fly solo, but was accompanied by a sighted co-pilot who helped Hilton-Barber by telling him what (4) ___ were on the navigation instruments. The 58-year-old aviator said: "It's the fulfillment of an amazing dream. I've been waiting to do this flight for about four years." He added: "I've wanted to be a pilot (5) ___ I was a kid. Now I'm (6) ___ blind but I've had the privilege of flying more than halfway around the world." He described the most important thing for him: "The big deal is not me doing this, it's raising funds," he said.

Hilton-Barber has been (7) ___ for 25 years. He hopes his trip will raise over two million dollars for the charity Seeing is Believing, which works to (8) ___ preventable blindness in developing countries. His intercontinental flight is not the first adventure he has been on. In 1999 he (9) ___ in the "Toughest Foot-race on Earth" a run across the Sahara Desert. He then went on to take (10) ___ in the "Coldest Marathon on Earth", across Siberia. To add to his feats, he has climbed Mt Kilimanjaro and Mt Blanc, Africa and Europe's highest mountains. He also (11) ___ the Malaysian Grand Prix lap record for a blind driver in a 200 kilometre-per-hour Lotus. His achievements are an inspiration to blind and sighted people everywhere. Hilton-Barber is living proof that anything is possible, and that where there's a (12) ___, there's a way.

- | | | | | |
|-----|-----------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|
| 1. | (a) land | (b) landing | (c) landed | (d) lands |
| 2. | (a) flight | (b) flew | (c) flier | (d) fly |
| 3. | (a) elevate | (b) raise | (c) increase | (d) lift |
| 4. | (a) fingers | (b) figs | (c) figure | (d) figures |
| 5. | (a) during | (b) ever | (c) since | (d) for |
| 6. | (a) totally | (b) total | (c) all | (d) whole |
| 7. | (a) blindly | (b) blinded | (c) blind | (d) blindness |
| 8. | (a) cut | (b) slice | (c) chop | (d) saw |
| 9. | (a) competition | (b) competitor | (c) completed | (d) competed |
| 10. | (a) apart | (b) parts | (c) part | (d) partner |
| 11. | (a) bet | (b) set | (c) wet | (d) let |
| 12. | (a) might | (b) will | (c) should | (d) could |

HOMEWORK

1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION: Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

2. INTERNET: Search the Internet and find more information about Hilton-Barber's flight. Talk about what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

3. HISTORIC FLIGHTS POSTER: Make a poster about different historic flights that have taken place in history. How are they different? Show your poster to your class in the next lesson. Vote on the best one(s).

4. MAGAZINE ARTICLE: Write a magazine article about the flight to Sydney. In particular, write about how it's possible to do anything, and that where there's a will, there's a way. Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Which article was best and why?

5. LETTER: Write a letter to Mr. Hilton-Barber. Ask him three questions about his life. Give him three pieces of advice about what he should do next. Read your letter to your partner(s) in your next lesson. Your partner(s) will answer your questions.

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

- a. F b. T c. F d. T e. T f. T g. F h. F

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|----------------|--------------|
| a. tiny | minute |
| b. aim | goal |
| c. accompanied | partnered |
| d. fulfillment | completion |
| e. privilege | honour |
| f. raise | collect |
| g. preventable | stoppable |
| h. competed in | joined |
| i. feats | achievements |
| j. will | desire |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| a. landed his | tiny aircraft |
| b. accompanied by a | sighted co-pilot |
| c. the fulfillment of | an amazing dream |
| d. totally | blind |
| e. big | deal |
| f. raise | over two million dollars |
| g. preventable | blindness |
| h. To add to his | feats |
| i. living | proof |
| j. where there's a will, | there's a way |

GAP FILL:

Blind pilot flies from London to Sydney

A blind British pilot **landed** his tiny aircraft in Sydney on Monday to complete a record-breaking **flight** halfway around the world. Miles Hilton-Barber left London on March 7 and flew nearly 22,000 kilometres to Australia. His aim was to **raise** money for charity. He did not fly **solo**, but was accompanied by a sighted co-pilot who helped Hilton-Barber by telling him what **figures** were on the navigation **instruments**. The 58-year-old aviator said: "It's the fulfillment of an amazing dream. I've been waiting to do this flight for about four years." He added: "I've wanted to be a pilot since I was a kid. Now I'm totally blind but I've had the **privilege** of flying more than halfway around the world." He described the most important thing for him: "The big deal is not me doing this, it's raising **funds**," he said.

Hilton-Barber has been blind for 25 years. He hopes his **trip** will **raise** over two million dollars for the charity Seeing is Believing, which works to **cut** preventable blindness in developing countries. His intercontinental flight is not the first adventure he has been on. In 1999 he **competed** in the "Toughest Foot-race on Earth" a run across the Sahara Desert. He then went on to take part in the "Coldest Marathon on Earth", across Siberia. To add to his **feats**, he has climbed Mt Kilimanjaro and Mt Blanc, Africa and Europe's highest mountains. He also **set** the Malaysian Grand Prix lap record for a blind driver in a 200 kilometre-per-hour Lotus. His achievements are an **inspiration** to blind and sighted people everywhere. Hilton-Barber is living proof that anything is possible, and that where there's a **will**, there's a way.

LANGUAGE WORK

- 1 - c 2 - a 3 - b 4 - d 5 - c 6 - a 7 - c 8 - a 9 - d 10 - c 11 - b 12 - b