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Tightrope walker breaks world record

http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/1008/100830-tightrope_walker.html

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THE ARTICLE

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1008/100830-tightrope_walker.html

A death defying feat took place on August 28 more than 26 stories above the ground in the Bahamas. Nik Wallenda, 31, a.k.a. The King of The High Wire, broke the Guinness World Record for the highest bicycle ride without a safety net. Crowds watched with their hearts in their mouths 79 metres below as Nik cycled 31 metres between two towers of the luxury Atlantis resort. As if this wasn't enough of an adrenalin rush for him, he also decided to go for a 610-metre, 20-minute walk along the high wire, a dizzying 76 metres up. This broke his own personal best distance. Nik described it after as "the longest walk of my life". He decided to make the walk just a little scarier by walking above an enclosed ocean pool full of sharks and piranhas.

Mr Wallenda is a seventh generation high wire star. He comes from a long line of aerial trapeze performers and acrobats that dates back to 1780. He is the great-grandson of the legendary Karl Wallenda, who fell to his death during a high wire walk in Puerto Rico in 1978 aged 73. Nik told reporters: "Against all odds I walked on that wire today. There was lightning in the area, high winds, and it was the first walk without my father. It was one of the hardest decisions I ever made in my life...But my family history and my family tradition is that the show must go on." He also spoke about his future plans: "I want to be the first person in the world to walk across the Grand Canyon, and I have the permit to do it," he said.

WARM-UPS

1. WORLD RECORDS: Walk around the class and talk to other students about world records. Change partners often. Sit with your first partner(s) and share your findings.

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

death defying / high wire / world records / safety net / adrenalin / personal best / generations / performers / acrobats / lightning / against all odds / decisions / plans

Have a chat about the topics you liked. Change topics and partners frequently.

3. DEATH DEFYING FEATS: Think of some. Complete this table with your partner(s). Change partners and share what you wrote. Change and share again.

Feat involving...	The feat is	The (imaginary) record is...
water		
curry		
mice		
a mountain		
the cold		
a mobile phone		

4. HIGH WIRE: Students A **strongly** believe being a high wire tightrope walker would be a great job; Students B **strongly** disagree. Change partners again and talk about your conversations.

5. CIRCUS: Which of these would you do? Rank them and share your rankings with your partner. Put the best at the top. Change partners and share your rankings again.

- Tightrope walker
- Trapeze artist
- Lion tamer
- Clown
- Fire eater
- Magician
- Human cannonball
- Escapologist

6. TIGHTROPE: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word 'tightrope'. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1008/100830-tightrope_walker.html

1. TRUE / FALSE: Read the headline. Guess if a-h below are true (T) or false (F).

- | | |
|--|-------|
| a. A tightrope artist broke a world record over 26 floors up in the air. | T / F |
| b. The man rode a bicycle on a tightrope between two hotels. | T / F |
| c. The man also broke the world record for the longest tightrope walk. | T / F |
| d. The man walked 76 metres above sharks and piranha fish. | T / F |
| e. The man's family started performing in the 18 th century. | T / F |
| f. His grandfather fell to his death from a high wire when he was 73. | T / F |
| g. The high wire artist said to go for the record was an easy decision. | T / F |
| h. The man has authorization to walk the Grand Canyon on a tightrope. | T / F |

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

- | | |
|---------------|----------------|
| 1. feat | a. length |
| 2. stories | b. license |
| 3. rush | c. achievement |
| 4. distance | d. artists |
| 5. enclosed | e. high |
| 6. performers | f. vicinity |
| 7. legendary | g. custom |
| 8. area | h. floors |
| 9. tradition | i. famous |
| 10. permit | j. shut in |

3. PHRASE MATCH: (Sometimes more than one choice is possible.)

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. A death defying | a. all odds |
| 2. watched with their hearts | b. pool full of sharks |
| 3. an adrenalin | c. best distance |
| 4. This broke his own personal | d. back to 1780 |
| 5. an enclosed ocean | e. in their mouths |
| 6. a seventh | f. must go on |
| 7. dates | g. feat took place on August 28 |
| 8. Against | h. decisions I ever made |
| 9. one of the hardest | i. generation high wire star |
| 10. the show | j. rush |

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WHILE READING / LISTENING

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1008/100830-tightrope_walker.html

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

A death _____ feat took place on August 28 more than 26 _____ above the ground in the Bahamas. Nik Wallenda, 31, a.k.a. The King of The High Wire, broke the Guinness World Record for the highest bicycle ride without a _____ net. Crowds watched with their hearts in their mouths 79 metres below as Nik cycled 31 metres between two towers of the _____ Atlantis resort. As if this wasn't enough of an _____ rush for him, he also decided to go for a 610-metre, 20-minute walk along the high wire, a _____ 76 metres up. This broke his own _____ best distance. Nik described it after as "the longest walk of my life". He decided to make the walk just a little _____ by walking above an enclosed ocean pool full of sharks and piranhas.

dizzying

luxury

stories

scarier

adrenalin

defying

personal

safety

Mr Wallenda is a seventh _____ high wire star. He comes from a long line of _____ trapeze performers and acrobats that dates back to 1780. He is the great-grandson of the _____ Karl Wallenda, who fell to his death during a high wire walk in Puerto Rico in 1978 aged 73. Nik told reporters: "Against all _____ I walked on that wire today. There was lightning in the _____, high winds, and it was the first walk without my father. It was one of the hardest _____ I ever made in my life...But my family history and my family _____ is that the show must go on." He also spoke about his future plans: "I want to be the first person in the world to walk across the Grand Canyon, and I have the _____ to do it," he said.

area

legendary

permit

odds

generation

tradition

aerial

decisions

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LISTENING – Listen and fill in the gaps

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A death _____ on August 28 more than 26 stories above the ground in the Bahamas. Nik Wallenda, 31, a.k.a. The _____, broke the Guinness World Record for the highest bicycle ride without a safety net. Crowds watched with _____ 79 metres below as Nik cycled 31 metres between two towers of the luxury Atlantis resort. As if this wasn't _____ rush for him, he also decided to go for a 610-metre, 20-minute walk along the high wire, a dizzying 76 metres up. This broke _____ distance. Nik described it after as "the longest walk of my life". He decided to make the walk just a little scarier by walking _____ pool full of sharks and piranhas.

Mr Wallenda _____ high wire star. He comes from a long line of aerial trapeze performers and acrobats _____ 1780. He is the great-grandson of the legendary Karl Wallenda, who fell to his death during a high wire walk in Puerto Rico in 1978 aged 73. Nik told reporters: "_____ walked on that wire today. There was _____, high winds, and it was the first walk without my father. It was one of the hardest decisions I ever made in my life...But my family history and my family tradition is that _____." He also spoke about his future plans: "I want to be the first person in the world to walk across the Grand Canyon, and I _____," he said.

AFTER READING / LISTENING

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1008/100830-tightrope_walker.html

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionary / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'tight' and 'rope'.

tight	rope

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

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• feat• net• mouths• rush• personal• pool	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• star• legendary• odds• area• show• permit
--	--

STUDENT DEATH DEFYING FEATS SURVEY

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1008/100830-tightrope_walker.html

Write five GOOD questions about death defying feats in the table. Do this in pairs. Each student must write the questions on his / her own paper. When you have finished, interview other students. Write down their answers.

	STUDENT 1 _____	STUDENT 2 _____	STUDENT 3 _____
Q.1.			
Q.2.			
Q.3.			
Q.4.			
Q.5.			

- Now return to your original partner and share and talk about what you found out. Change partners often.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

DISCUSSION

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

- a) What did you think when you read the headline?
- b) What springs to mind when you hear the word 'tightrope'?
- c) Why do you think people like tightrope walking?
- d) Have you ever tried a death defying feat?
- e) When was the last time your heart was in your mouth?
- f) Do you have a head for heights?
- g) What was the longest walk of your life?
- h) What's the scariest thing you've ever done?
- i) What do you do to get an adrenalin rush?
- j) What do you think of Nik Wallenda?

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DISCUSSION

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

- a) Did you like reading this article?
- b) How far does your family go back?
- c) What do you think life is like as a high wire star?
- d) Have you ever done something against all odds?
- e) What do you think went through Nik's mind when he was on the high wire?
- f) What would you do if one of your family took up the high wire?
- g) What's the hardest decision you've made in your life?
- h) What is there in your family history that could shape your future?
- i) Do you think he'll walk across the Grand Canyon?
- j) What questions would you like to ask Nik Wallenda?

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LANGUAGE – MULTIPLE CHOICE

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A death defying (1) _____ took place on August 28 more than 26 stories above the ground in the Bahamas. Nik Wallenda, 31, a.k.a. The King of The High Wire, broke the Guinness World Record (2) _____ the highest bicycle ride without a safety net. Crowds watched with their hearts in their (3) _____ 79 metres below as Nik cycled 31 metres between two towers of the luxury Atlantis resort. As if this wasn't enough of an adrenalin (4) _____ for him, he also decided to go for a 610-metre, 20-minute walk along the high wire, a (5) _____ 76 metres up. This broke his own personal best distance. Nik described it after as "the longest walk of my life". He decided to make the walk just a little scarier (6) _____ walking above an enclosed ocean pool full of sharks and piranhas.

Mr Wallenda is a (7) _____ generation high wire star. He comes from a long line of aerial trapeze performers and acrobats that (8) _____ back to 1780. He is the great-grandson of the legendary Karl Wallenda, who fell (9) _____ his death during a high wire walk in Puerto Rico in 1978 aged 73. Nik told reporters: "Against all (10) _____ I walked on that wire today. There was lightning in the area, high winds, and it was the first walk without my father. It was one of the hardest decisions I ever made in my life...But my family history and my family tradition is that the (11) _____ must go on." He also spoke about his future plans: "I want to be the first person in the world to walk across the Grand Canyon, and I have the (12) _____ to do it," he said.

Put the correct words from the table below in the above article.

- | | | | | |
|-----|-------------|-------------|---------------|---------------|
| 1. | (a) feet | (b) fate | (c) fete | (d) feat |
| 2. | (a) at | (b) by | (c) for | (d) with |
| 3. | (a) lungs | (b) mouths | (c) hands | (d) backpacks |
| 4. | (a) rush | (b) hurry | (c) speed | (d) quick |
| 5. | (a) busying | (b) fizzing | (c) dizzying | (d) whizzing |
| 6. | (a) try | (b) why | (c) shy | (d) by |
| 7. | (a) seven | (b) seventh | (c) sevens | (d) seventy |
| 8. | (a) dates | (b) months | (c) days | (d) times |
| 9. | (a) on | (b) to | (c) over | (d) in |
| 10. | (a) evens | (b) wires | (c) odds | (d) highs |
| 11. | (a) show | (b) shown | (c) showed | (d) shower |
| 12. | (a) hermit | (b) termite | (c) permanent | (d) permit |

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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 out more about this record. Share what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

3. DEATH DEFYING FEATS: Make a poster about death defying feats. Show your work to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all have similar things?

4. NIK WALLEDA: Write a magazine article about Nik Wallenda. Include imaginary interviews with him and someone who always worries about him.

Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Write down any new words and expressions you hear from your partner(s).

5. LETTER: Write a letter to Nik Wallenda. Ask him three questions about tightrope walking. Suggest three alternative pastimes he might prefer. Read your letter to your partner(s) in your next lesson. Your partner(s) will answer your questions.

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

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

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|---------------|----------------|
| 1. feat | a. achievement |
| 2. stories | b. floors |
| 3. rush | c. high |
| 4. distance | d. length |
| 5. enclosed | e. shut in |
| 6. performers | f. artists |
| 7. legendary | g. famous |
| 8. area | h. vicinity |
| 9. tradition | i. custom |
| 10. permit | j. license |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. A death defying | a. feat took place on August 28 |
| 2. watched with their hearts | b. in their mouths |
| 3. an adrenalin | c. rush |
| 4. This broke his own personal | d. best distance |
| 5. an enclosed ocean | e. pool full of sharks |
| 6. a seventh | f. generation high wire star |
| 7. dates | g. back to 1780 |
| 8. Against | h. all odds |
| 9. one of the hardest | i. decisions I ever made |
| 10. the show | j. must go on |

GAP FILL:

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Mr Wallenda is a seventh **generation** high wire star. He comes from a long line of **aerial** trapeze performers and acrobats that dates back to 1780. He is the great-grandson of the **legendary** Karl Wallenda, who fell to his death during a high wire walk in Puerto Rico in 1978 aged 73. Nik told reporters: "Against all **odds** I walked on that wire today. There was lightning in the **area**, high winds, and it was the first walk without my father. It was one of the hardest **decisions** I ever made in my life...But my family history and my family **tradition** is that the show must go on." He also spoke about his future plans: "I want to be the first person in the world to walk across the Grand Canyon, and I have the **permit** to do it," he said.

LANGUAGE WORK

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

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