

# Extreme sports

## Prepare to read

*Talk about the answers to these questions with a partner.*

1. What sports do you like to play or watch?
2. Do you think a sport should be dangerous? Can you name any dangerous sports?
3. Why do you think some people like dangerous sports?



## Reading

*Read the passage, the BASE-jumping basics and the cartoon.*

## Over the edge

*Kristen Ulmer went on her first ski trip when she was a kid.*

*Ever since then, she has been hooked on adventure and risk. Now in her thirties, she has skied down some of the world's tallest mountains, in remote places from Tajikistan to New Zealand. She has also gone mountaineering in Tibet, and ridden a bike solo across India. She goes rock-climbing to relax! Kristen is skilful and fearless – and some might say crazy! She is part of a new kind of sport where risk is the most important thing.*

Heart-stopping activities such as mountain biking, snowboarding and skydiving are known as 'extreme sports'. And they are attracting more and more people. Rock-climbing, for example, is now enjoyed by more than half a million Americans. Only 50,000 were doing it in 1989.

One of the most extreme of all these sports is BASE jumping. First done in 1980, BASE jumping is jumping off tall buildings, towers and bridges using a parachute. It's dangerous, but of course that's why BASE jumpers love it. Like other extreme sports, it's the risk of disaster that makes BASE jumping so exciting. As one BASE jumper puts it, 'There aren't many injuries in BASE jumping; you either live or you die.'

Some experts predict that extreme sports will become the major sports of the 21st century. They may become more popular than traditional favourites like soccer and baseball. At one recent extreme sports show in Chicago, most of the crowd were kids under sixteen. As they stood watching in their baggy pants and hooded sweatshirts, one excited eleven-year-old spoke for the next generation of athletes. 'That is so cool!' he exclaimed. 'I gotta do that!'





## **BASE-jumping** **basics**

**BASE-jumping experts recommend that all jumpers take the following safety items on any BASE jump.**

### **Helmet**

**A helmet can make the difference between life and death. Important for all extreme sports.**

### **Shoes and ankle protection**

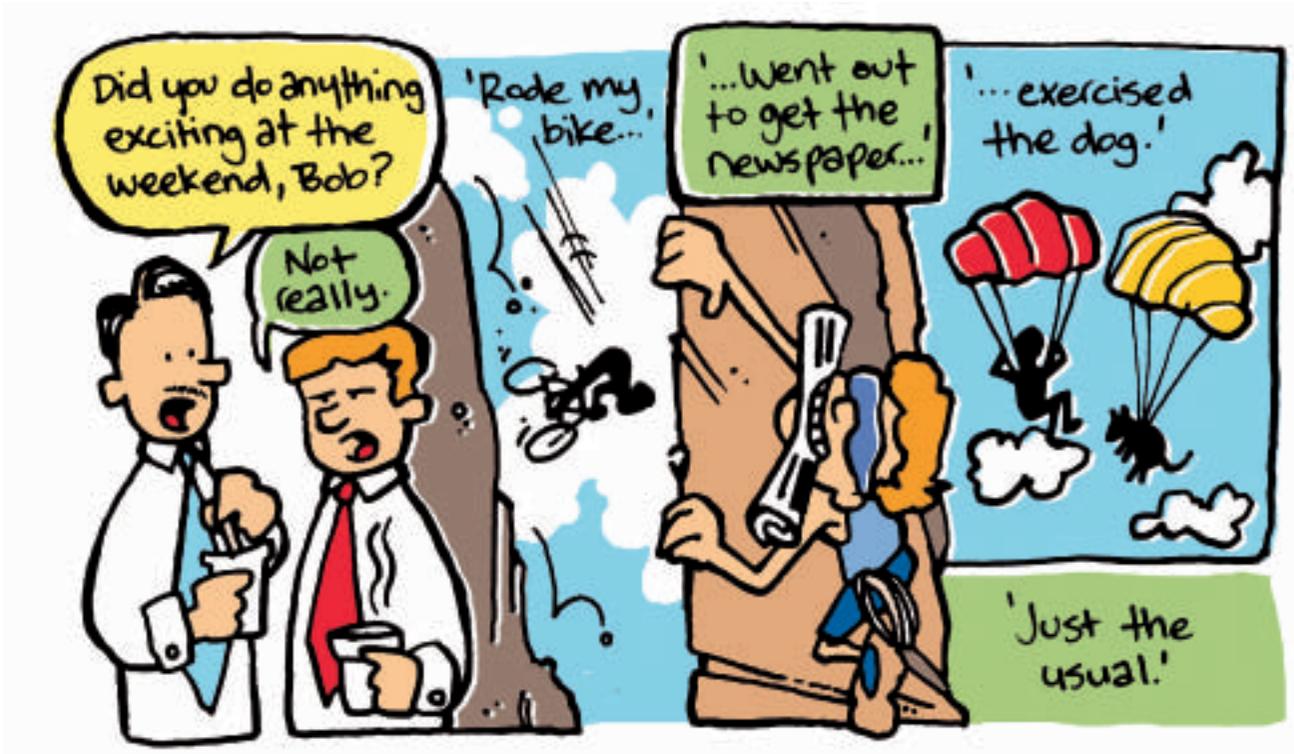
**Your feet are the first thing to touch the ground when you BASE jump. Proper footwear can protect you from broken feet or ankles.**

### **First-aid kit**

**This might make your pack a little heavier, but it could save your life if you get injured and have to wait for medical help.**

### **Radio or mobile phone**

**Handy for communicating with your buddies on the ground, and very important if the jump goes wrong and you need help.**



## Reading

### A. Understanding key points

Read the sentences below. Which sentences are true? Correct the sentences that are not true.

#### Example:

Kristen loves exciting activities. ✓

Kristen learned to ski when she was thirty. ✗

*Kristen learned to ski when she was a kid.*

1. These days fewer and fewer people are doing extreme sports.
2. People can die when BASE jumping.
3. Experts predict that baseball and soccer could be even more popular in the future.
4. It's best not to wear shoes when you BASE jump.
5. BASE jumpers can use mobile phones or radios to call for help if they need it.
6. Bob says that he did lots of exciting things at the weekend.



## Reading

### B. Understanding details

Which is the best answer, a, b, c or d, to each of the following questions?

1. Kristen Ulmer
  - a. rode a bike through New Zealand by herself.
  - b. rode a bike through India by herself.
  - c. rode a bike through India with a group of friends.
  - d. ran across New Zealand.
2. The number of Americans who enjoy rock-climbing is now
  - a. less than the number in 1989.
  - b. the same as the number in 1989.
  - c. double the number in 1989.
  - d. more than ten times the number in 1989.
3. Many young people think that extreme sports are
  - a. boring.
  - b. only for old people.
  - c. attractive and exciting.
  - d. relaxing.
4. Some BASE jumpers might not want to take a first-aid kit in their pack because
  - a. they want their pack to be as light as possible.
  - b. they think it will bring them bad luck.
  - c. there are no injuries in BASE jumping.
  - d. they don't know how to use one.
5. BASE jumpers usually have friends waiting for them
  - a. in hospital.
  - b. at the top of the tower or tall building.
  - c. on the ground.
  - d. at the local police station.
6. At the weekend, Bob
  - a. didn't do anything.
  - b. went mountain biking, rock-climbing and skydiving.
  - c. took the dog to the park.
  - d. read the newspaper.

## USAGE

Kristen Ulmer is **hooked on** adventure and risk. This means that she loves adventure and risk and can't stop doing things that are risky.

To be **hooked on** something means to be addicted to it. We often talk about people being **hooked on** drugs or cigarettes. They can't stop using them. But it's also possible to talk about being **hooked on** other things; for example, a kind of music or an activity:

*Richie is **hooked on** jazz music. He never listens to anything else.*

*I'm **hooked on** the Internet. I spend hours using it each day.*

In the passage, the eleven-year-old kid at the extreme sports show says, 'I **gotta** do that!' That's another way of writing 'I've got to do that.' (Meaning 'I really want to do that' or 'I must do that.')

It's written this way because that's how it sounds when spoken by American kids.

In the passage, extreme sports are described as **heart-stopping**. This means that they are so exciting or terrifying that they make you feel like your heart will stop!



## Reading

### C. Developing skills

*Read the passage and the BASE-jumping basics again. Which items should BASE jumpers take with them?*

1. helmet	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. bike	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. snowboard	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. parachute	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. baseball	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. shoes	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. first-aid kit	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. skis	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. radio or mobile phone	<input type="checkbox"/>



## Developing vocabulary

*A. Match the numbers on the left with the letters on the right to form sentences.*

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. If you drive too fast, there is a risk  | a. nobody sings with her.                      |
| 2. I like some adventure on my holidays,   | b. to carry water, food and a tent.            |
| 3. This island is very remote. It's a long | c. somewhere where there is no doctor.         |
| 4. Tammie likes to sing solo, so           | d. so this year I'm going to Africa on safari. |
| 5. An extreme sport is a sport which is    | e. you jump out of the plane.                  |
| 6. Open your parachute ten seconds after   | f. difficult, dangerous and exciting.          |
| 7. If you're going camping, take a pack    | g. that you might have an accident.            |
| 8. A first-aid kit is important if you go  | h. way from anywhere else.                     |

**B. Which word or phrase fits?**

mountaineering mountain biking snowboarding  
skydiving rock-climbing

1. If you like the idea of jumping out of a plane, why not try \_\_\_\_\_?
2. If you want to ride a bike off the road, then you should take up \_\_\_\_\_.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ is very difficult. You have to climb up rock cliffs using ropes.
4. In \_\_\_\_\_, you ride down a mountain on a board like a small surfboard.
5. If you want to climb to the top of tall mountains, try \_\_\_\_\_.

**Writing**

Kristen Ulmer goes rock-climbing **to relax**. The infinitive (to relax) can be used to talk about the purpose of someone's action. It tells us why someone does something. Kristen goes rock-climbing because she wants to relax.

*Match the actions below to the correct purposes using 'to'.*

**ACTION**

1. Rob looked in the telephone directory.
2. Sam washes his car every Saturday.
3. Lee writes letters to a friend in America.
4. Laura and Ruth took a taxi.
5. Jerry works in a bookshop at night.

**PURPOSE**

- keep it shiny and clean
- practise his English
- earn some money
- find Meg's phone number
- get to the theatre on time

1. Rob looked in the telephone directory to find Meg's phone number.
2. \_\_\_\_\_.
3. \_\_\_\_\_.
4. \_\_\_\_\_.
5. \_\_\_\_\_.