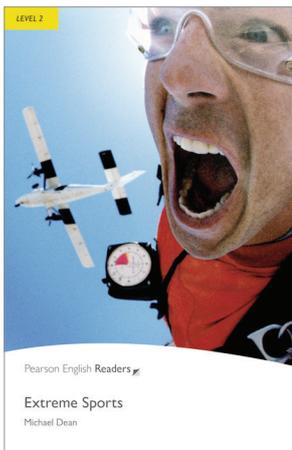


Extreme Sports

Michael Dean



About the author

Michael Dean has a large number of publications to his name, for different publishers, including coursebooks, skills books, workbooks and teacher's books, and has also written both originals and adaptations for Pearson English Readers. In addition he trained, taught and lectured in England and abroad on language and EFL from 1972 to 1997.

Summary

Extreme Sports is about the world of exciting and dangerous sports. These sports range from BASE jumping to cave diving. Dean splits these into sections about extreme air, ground, and water sports.

This reader starts with a questionnaire to determine whether the reader would be a good extreme sport participant. From there, we get an A–Z of Extreme Sports, where readers can decide which sports they may or may not be willing to try.

Following this is some background information and the history about the most dangerous extreme sport, BASE jumping. It is thought that about one person a year dies from this. We learn about the hang gliding world champion, Bill Moyes and the instructor, Michael Costello, who gave his life to save his student's. We read about Bren Jones's near-death experience as he did aerial ballet. And the author tells of his own experiences doing cave diving.

The author gives a lot of information about when and where these sports started, who did them and what dangers are involved. For example, in 1965 while watching his daughter sliding on wood on the ice, Sherman Poppen came up with the invention that we now call a

snowboard. So without his daughter, Wendy, we would not have this very trendy sport today.

As there are Olympic Games for athletes around the world, there are now X games, which started in 1995. They take place twice a year in the United States, one in summer, the other in winter. Since 1997, they have been held in Asia, Australia, and Europe, and there are even X games for kids. It is the happening thing for extreme sports lovers around the world. Everyone has it in them to learn. Take it from Michael Bane (he could not swim, and was afraid of heights), who swam from Alcatraz to San Francisco in water that is not only freezing cold, but is shark infested!

The book then ends with "What do you know now about Extreme Sports?" testing the readers to see if they were really taking it all in.

Background and themes

Extreme sports range from the risk-taking BASE jumping, the most dangerous and requiring no real skills, to aerial ballet and hang gliding, which require excellent flight skills. All of these sports can result in death, but this only increases the thrill for a lot of people. BASE jumping is thought to be the most dangerous. BASE is an acronym for Building, Antenna, Span, and Earth. These describe the fixed objects that one can parachute from. When it comes to buildings, unfinished high-rise buildings are popular as are famous buildings, like the Empire State Building in New York City. Antenna are a favorite because they are easy to get to. Span includes bridges like the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco. Earth has some pretty high mountains, such as El Capitan in Yosemite National Park, where the sport started in 1978.

Some other important dates in the world of extreme sports are:

- 1955 Bungee jumping in New Zealand
- 1965 Sherman Poppen makes first snowboard in Michigan, US
- 1967 Bill Moyes achieves his first World Altitude Record in hang gliding
- 1981 US BASE Association is started by Phil Smith and Jean Boenisch
- 1995 First Summer X Games
- 1997 First Winter X Games
- 1999 US Extreme Sports Team climb Mount Vinson (5,000 m high) in Antarctica

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A note to teachers

Extreme Sports describes exciting but very dangerous activities which require careful training, the correct equipment and a lot of skill. The author is careful to stress the danger and tells many stories of people who have been killed or severely injured when doing these sports. When using this book, teachers should be careful to reinforce this message. Teenagers are always keen to test themselves and challenge their fear. Teachers should be careful that they cannot be accused of encouraging their students to jump off high buildings or any of the other extreme sports described in this book without careful training from a qualified and experienced instructor. Encourage students to share their excitement about these sports and their admiration for the skilled athletes and their achievements, but remind students that they should not attempt to copy these activities without proper preparation, training and safety equipment.

Discussion activities

Introduction

- 1 **Read and discuss:** Read the Introduction and discuss. Is this book about extreme sports or about people who do extreme sports?
- 2 **Guess:** What do you think this book will talk about? What do you hope to learn from this book?

Pages 1–3

- 3 **Read carefully and discuss:** Answer the questions in the quiz and look at your results on page 26. Compare your results with your friends.
- 4 **Discuss:** In pairs, discuss the following question with your partner: Does a person who enjoys extreme sports prefer safety or danger? Why do you think these people enjoy extreme sports?
- 5 **Discuss:** Look at the A–Z of extreme sports. Give a score for each sport. Compare your results with your friends. Talk about why you want to try these sports.
- 6 **Discuss:** In pairs, talk about the sports you have seen on TV or tried. Tell your partner about the experience. Did you enjoy watching or doing the sports? Why or why not?
- 7 **Role play:** In pairs, role play the conversation between a parent and child about extreme sports.
Student A: You are a mother or father. Your teenage son or daughter wants to try an extreme sport. What questions do you ask? Do you encourage your son/daughter or do you suggest they try a safer sport?
Student B: You are a teenager. Explain why you want to try an extreme sport. Talk to your parent about this.

Pages 4–9

Before reading

- 8 **Discuss:** How do you feel when you look down from a high place? Do you feel comfortable or uncomfortable?

While reading

- 9 **Read carefully:** Read the chapters carefully and answer these questions:
 - a Where did BASE jumping start?
 - b Do BASE jumpers have parachutes or not?
 - c How did Bill Moyes make hang gliding into a business?
 - d What is an Xtralite?
 - e What is the difference between BASE jumping and skydiving?

After reading

- 10 **Discuss:** Do some research on the Internet about high places in your city/country where BASE jumping could be done. Why do you think they would be good locations for BASE jumping? Which places would you like to jump from? Why or why not?
- 11 **Discuss:** In the United States, the police put BASE jumpers in prison. Do you think the United States police are right or wrong? Give reasons for your answer.
- 12 **Discuss:** In pairs, discuss how Michael Costello saved his son Gareth's life. Is he a hero? What would you have done in the same situation?
- 13 **Role play:** In pairs, you and your partner imagine are in an airplane.
Student A: You are going to skydive. What do you say to your partner before you jump out of the plane?
Student B: You are also going to skydive. You listen to your partner and what he/she has to say about the dive. Respond to their concerns.
- 14 **Role play and research:** Have students imagine that they are a reporter. Ask them to prepare interview questions for either Gareth Griffiths or Bren Jones and take notes for a newspaper story. They can use the Internet to do additional research.
- 15 **Write:** Have students write their story including a headline and any interesting details. Choose students to share their article with the class.

Pages 10–14

Before reading

- 16 **Discuss:** Pages 10–14 contain two different stories presented in different ways. "Down on the Ground" is presented as a cartoon strip. "It started with Wendy snowboarding" is presented in normal text. Which type of presentation do you like best? Which type of presentation gives the most information?

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While reading

- 17 Discuss:** Joe first sees luge on television, but they are sliding on snow. Where does Joe want to slide? Does that sound dangerous to you? Would you be interested in trying this sport? Why or why not?
- 18 Discuss:** Ask students: How does Joe's wife Alma feel about his plan to street luge? Do they agree or disagree?
- 19 Discuss:** After trying the street luge, how does Alma feel? Imagine that you are Alma. What would you have said after your first street luge experience?
- 20 Read carefully:** Ask students: Who made the Wendy Poppen's first snowboard? Do you think the snowboard is a good invention? Have you ever snowboarded? Would you like to try it?
- 21 Read carefully:** Why is Antarctica good for snowboarding?
- Because it is very cold.
 - Because you get tired.
 - Because there is daylight for 24 hours.
- Would you like to visit Antarctica?

After reading

- 22 Discuss:** Streets are busy places. As a class, discuss why street luge is very dangerous.
- 23 Discuss:** Ski runs are also busy places. Why didn't skiers want snowboarders on the mountain? Do you agree or disagree?
- 24 Discuss:** Which came first, the surfboard, the skateboard or the snowboard? If you don't know, do some research and find out!
- 25 Research:** What are all the different sports which you can do on a board? Which one sounds like the most fun? Which one sounds like the least fun?

Pages 15–19

Before reading

- 26 Guess:** Pages 15–19 are about two different extreme sports. Look at the pictures in the book and try to guess what they are.

While reading

- 27 Read carefully:** How do cave divers 'talk' to each other?
- 28 Discuss:** In pairs, discuss the following question: Which is more dangerous, BASE jumping or canyoning?

After reading

- 29 Discuss:** As a class, discuss: Why is important to have an instructor or companion when you do extreme sports?
- 30 Research:** The book says that bungee jumping started in New Zealand in the 1950s. Find out more about the origins of bungee jumping. Write a short report on bungee jumping. Include photos and/or images.

Pages 20–26

Before reading

- 31 Guess:** The last section of *Extreme Sports* is about the X Games and various races. Look at the pictures and the headlines and try to guess what the different races will be like.

While reading

- 32 Read carefully:** What is the difference between the X Games and the Olympic Games?
- 33 Read carefully:** What was the island of Alcatraz in San Francisco Bay used as for many years? What are the two problems about swimming from Alcatraz to San Francisco?
- 34 Read carefully and discuss:** In pairs, talk about what is the greatest challenge in the Death Valley Race. What do you think about this? Why do you think people are interested in the Death Valley Race?

After reading

- 35 Role play:** *Student A* is a reporter. *Student B* is Michael Bane. *Student A* interviews Michael Bane and asks him why he does extreme sports. *Student B* answers the questions.

Extra activities

- 36 Discuss:** Talk about what you have learned from reading this book. Does the author say:
- Extreme sports are very dangerous so don't do them!
 - Extreme sports are very dangerous, but also very exciting, find a good instructor, buy the right equipment and try them!