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# CAMBRIDGE SPRING SEMINAR 2017


## C1 Advanced

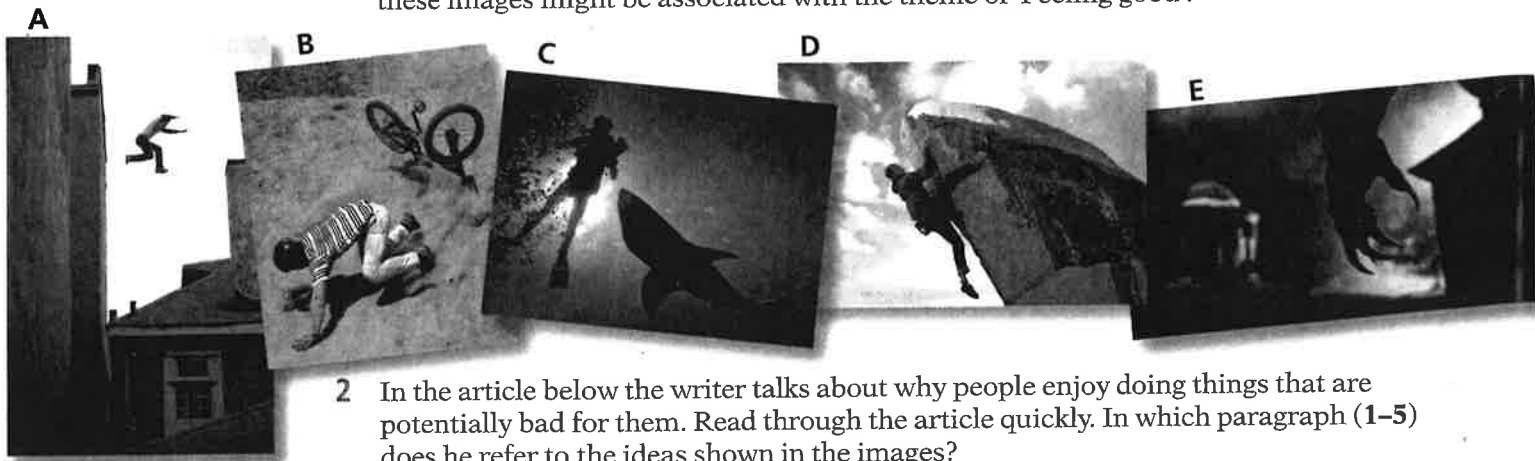
Reading Parts 5 - 8

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Multiple choice

- 1  What is your reaction to the images shown in the pictures? How do you think these images might be associated with the theme of 'Feeling good'?



- 2 In the article below the writer talks about why people enjoy doing things that are potentially bad for them. Read through the article quickly. In which paragraph (1-5) does he refer to the ideas shown in the images?
- 3 Read the text again. For questions 1-6, choose the answer (A, B, C or D) which you think fits best according to the text.

## Chasing the highs

*Why do people enjoy doing things which are potentially bad for them?*

- 1  
 'That which does not kill us makes us stronger,' wrote Friedrich Nietzsche, the German philosopher, conceptualizing the idea that suffering is an inevitable and essential part of life. Is this still true when we bring the misfortune upon ourselves, and end up with metal pins in our joints? A few weeks ago I heard of an old school friend (to be known here as Dave) who ended up with fractures in both ankles and his left wrist after failing to keep his grip while free climbing. My reaction, initially, was to grimace, but then I got round to wondering why a man of his age would be risking life and limb on a sheer rock face. I can't help feeling he was showing off, under the delusion that at 40 he was at his physical peak. His mother refused to pay a hospital visit, reportedly disgusted at his egoistic risk-taking, although surely this is the person she brought him up to be.
- 2  
 So what is the allure of extreme sports and living life on the edge? According to recent research, we can blame it all on dopamine, the chemical which helps control the brain's reward and pleasure centres. It's responsible for providing a sense of contentment after a meal or that ecstatic feeling when our soccer team wins. It's also responsible for the high we feel when we do something brave, like swimming with sharks. Studies show that in the risk-taker's brain, there are fewer dopamine-inhibiting receptors. In other words, the Daves of this world have brains more saturated with the chemical, meaning they'll keep taking risks and chasing the next high. The researchers are now working on a treatment, yet I don't envisage much uptake from the daredevils 'suffering' this condition.
- 3  
 People don't just do this sort of thing in their free time, though. Last night, I happened across a battered Brad Pitt-lookalike flying across my TV screen, explosions still firing off in the background. This was 'Body Double', a cut-above-the-rest documentary about the lives of stuntmen and women that stand in for the stars. Ironically, as a behind-the-scenes look at a career in Hollywood, nothing felt staged; rare for modern television. But it was the quieter moments of candid reflection that stood out, with some of the doubles expressing their anxiety to the presenter over the longevity of their career. This is hardly surprising, given the amount of physical punishment that is continuously self-inflicted: neck injuries, burns, torn ligaments; the list goes on. The last word went to Jake, who'd quit his promising career as an actor, and had been lured into stunt work because, as he put it, there'd be no dull moments. The famed camaraderie that exists amongst those in the profession was also a big drawback, and perhaps it's this that keeps him signing contracts, despite his wife's protestations.
- 4  
 While hurtling at 100mph towards the ground or leaping across rooftops will never be my thing, I confess to a love of horror movies. I take curious and enormous pleasure from being half-scared to death, to the point where I'm near-paralysed. Looking at the growth of the horror-flick industry, I'm not alone. But why do we do it? One explanation is that when you're on the edge of your cinema seat, you can benefit from what seems a life-or-death situation, with the advantage of realizing, a mere

60 moment later and with joyful relief, that it's not. From the evolutionary perspective, it's been suggested that we've developed to find terrifying moments mesmerizing so as to ensure that we study would-be threats to survival. There's little research to back this up, though.

5

65 Taking pleasure from activities which are potentially harmful or terrifying to ourselves is one thing; deriving it from the misfortune of others is quite another. The Germans refer to this phenomenon as *Schadenfreude*, a concept that other languages may not have an equivalent  
70 single word for, but which seems to be nonetheless

understood by the inhabitants of today's 'global village'. What with the exponential rise of internet video clips, it is now possible to view the humiliation of thousands of strangers on demand. If you want to see someone diving  
75 unwittingly into a frozen lake; it's online. How about a man being attacked by an angry deer? Click on 'Play'. As a form of entertainment, it says little for human evolution. But as life becomes more comfortable, and in a society where most of our basic needs are met, one has to wonder  
80 what new thrills we'll seek out next, and what we're prepared to sacrifice for that ephemeral feel-good factor.

- 1 After the writer had reflected on the news about his old school friend Dave,
  - A he felt some disapproval towards his behaviour.
  - B he was envious of his active lifestyle.
  - C he felt the accident was undeserved.
  - D he was sympathetic to Dave's mother's point of view.
  
- 2 When discussing dopamine and extreme sports, the writer puts forward the view that
  - A the findings of the dopamine research are hardly surprising.
  - B a lack of dopamine cannot fully account for the desire to live dangerously.
  - C risk-takers are unlikely to want their dopamine levels reduced.
  - D dopamine has a greater effect on the human body than some people think.
  
- 3 According to the writer, what was the most impressive aspect of the documentary?
  - A the use of previously unseen film footage
  - B the director's innovative style
  - C the interspersing of drama and fact
  - D the interviews with the subjects
  
- 4 Why did Jake become a stuntman?
  - A He liked the idea of working within a group of friendly people.
  - B He had been encouraged to have a go by others in the field.
  - C He had had unrealistic expectations about the nature of the job.
  - D He had been unsuccessful in an earlier line of work.
  
- 5 In the fourth paragraph, the writer is
  - A encouraging readers to experience horror movies for themselves.
  - B questioning the claims of people studying horror movies.
  - C downplaying the effect of horror movies on audiences.
  - D suggesting explanations for why people find horror movies enjoyable.
  
- 6 The writer mentions internet video clips to illustrate his suggestion that
  - A there is an element of risk in everything we do.
  - B the kind of risks people take may well become more extreme.
  - C the majority of people are not amused by other people's suffering.
  - D it makes more sense to laugh at other people's embarrassment than our own.

### Reacting to the text

Why do you think people take part in extreme sports or other potentially dangerous activities? Is it the kind of activity that you would enjoy?

Do you agree with the writer when referring to extreme internet video clips that 'As a form of entertainment, it says little for human evolution'?

**Cross-text multiple matching**

- 1 You are going to read four reviews of a book about travel. For questions 1–4 on page 69, choose from the reviews **A–D**. The reviews may be chosen more than once.

**Crossing Paths**

Four reviewers comment on writer Kerry Windham's book called *Crossing Paths*

**A**

As an acclaimed biographer of famous explorers, it was only a matter of time before Kerry Windham turned her attention to her own travels, and in her latest work she does not disappoint. In *Crossing Paths* we mount up behind Windham as she takes us on an exhilarating and often hazardous motorcycle ride around the vast territories of Australia. Unlike the continuous prose of her previous work, *Crossing Paths* is set out more as a series of encounters, each described succinctly, sometimes within a mere paragraph, and never requiring more than a few pages. Although Windham cannot claim this approach as hers alone, she does it justice by employing a frankness about her own occasional naivety which puts her in situations of jeopardy. Each unusual character she stumbles across is depicted with compassion; even while their quirks are noted, each malignant species of creature or plant is still admired for its tenacity and evolutionary genius.

**B**

When reading travel writing, one must be prepared to accept the overlap with fiction. In no other genre is there such an intertwining of fact with embellishment, of truth with the writer's own perception of it. That, indeed, is part of the allure; knowing that as travellers ourselves we have come home with a mythologized version of our own adventures, and recognizing this innate tendency in others. No doubt Kerry Windham has done the same with *Crossing Paths*, her account of her solo motorbike ride across the massive expanse of Australia. It is her eye for fine detail and her ability to describe it in ways that convince the reader that the memories are their own that make this tale the perfect armchair traveller's companion. An autobiographical journey is a departure from Windham's previous kinds of book, but this one is worthy of the same volume of praise.

**C**

In Kerry Windham's *Crossing Paths*, the fragments of her motorcycle journey through the Australian outback and isolated townships sparkle like individual jewels on a single thread. The idea of the set piece (rather than continuous narrative) owes much to *In Patagonia*, the seminal work of travel writer Bruce Chatwin. But unlike Chatwin's fictionalized anecdotes of real people and places, Windham gives us an undistorted account of her interactions with characters from all walks of life; a taciturn young station hand on a cattle ranch, an Aboriginal dreamtime healer, an 84-year-old surfer still paddling out to the beach break. Known for her writing on the exploits of earlier travellers and their epic voyages of discovery, Windham has taken a risk by reflecting on – in her own words – 'small, incidental moments' – but it has turned out to be a risk worth taking.

**D**

In her biographies, Kerry Windham has rightly been applauded for her inspirational prose; her pen becomes a paint brush that conveys the shades and hues, the light and the dark of her subjects, and the reader is fully present in the experience. The same mastery of technique can also be found in *Crossing Paths*, the story of her trip by bike around the Australian territories. Windham's apparent motive for embarking on this gruelling quest was to 'explore my own cultural backyard', and certainly there is much to discover. We are introduced to a diversity of people and plants, railroads and rock formations, abandoned settlements and thriving tourist towns. However, while none of these encounters lacks vividness or authenticity, there is a sense of inconsequentiality. In her other works Windham steps back and we see the full picture; in *Crossing Paths* we glimpse disassociated images.

**Which reviewer**

has a different opinion from the others on the overall merits of Kerry Windham's book?

takes a similar view to writer C on the format of Kerry Windham's book?

expresses a different view from the others regarding Kerry Windham's portrayal in the book of events as they happened?

shares reviewer D's opinion on the effect of Kerry Windham's use of language in the book?

## Reading and Use of English | Part 7

You are going to read an extract from an article about a sport. Six paragraphs have been removed from the extract. Choose from the paragraphs **A–G** the one which fits each gap (1–6). There is one extra paragraph which you do not need to use.

# *The scariest ride on the planet*

**Charles Starmer-Smith spent a weekend in Norway learning how to ride on a bob skeleton, a one-person sledge which races down an ice track at 60 mph.**

I glanced down at the red snow by my feet just a few yards from the finishing gate of the Lillehammer bob skeleton track. The bob skeleton is also known as a toboggan and reminded me of a tray a waiter might use to bring plates of food out in a restaurant. But this one was going to have me on it rather than a pile of food so seeing the blood of an earlier rider was a little unnerving. Make no bones about it, this has to be one of the scariest rides on the planet.

1

I feigned nonchalance at this information, but I was fooling no one. I have made a habit of scaring myself: I've leapt down the face of Switzerland's Verzasca Dam – the world's biggest bungee jump, I have descended the near-vertical Corbets Couloir at Jacksonhole – perhaps the most fearsome ski run in North America – and I have learnt to ski-jump at Calgary.

2

At least I was not alone as several other novices would be joining me. After a fitful sleep, we went out early to walk to the top of the track. The snow, hanging heavy on the branches of Lillehammer's forested slopes, made the track look even more imposing. Snaking down the slope like a giant metallic python, the walls were steeper, the straights were longer but the 16 turns were much sharper than I expected.

3

Halfway up, we arrived at the infamous Turn 13, a shuddering 180-degree U-turn where the centrifugal pressures equal those experienced by fighter pilots. 'This is where you'll feel the full force,' said Tony, our instructor, his eyes sparkling. 'So, is the track running quickly?' I asked tentatively. He did not need to answer.

4

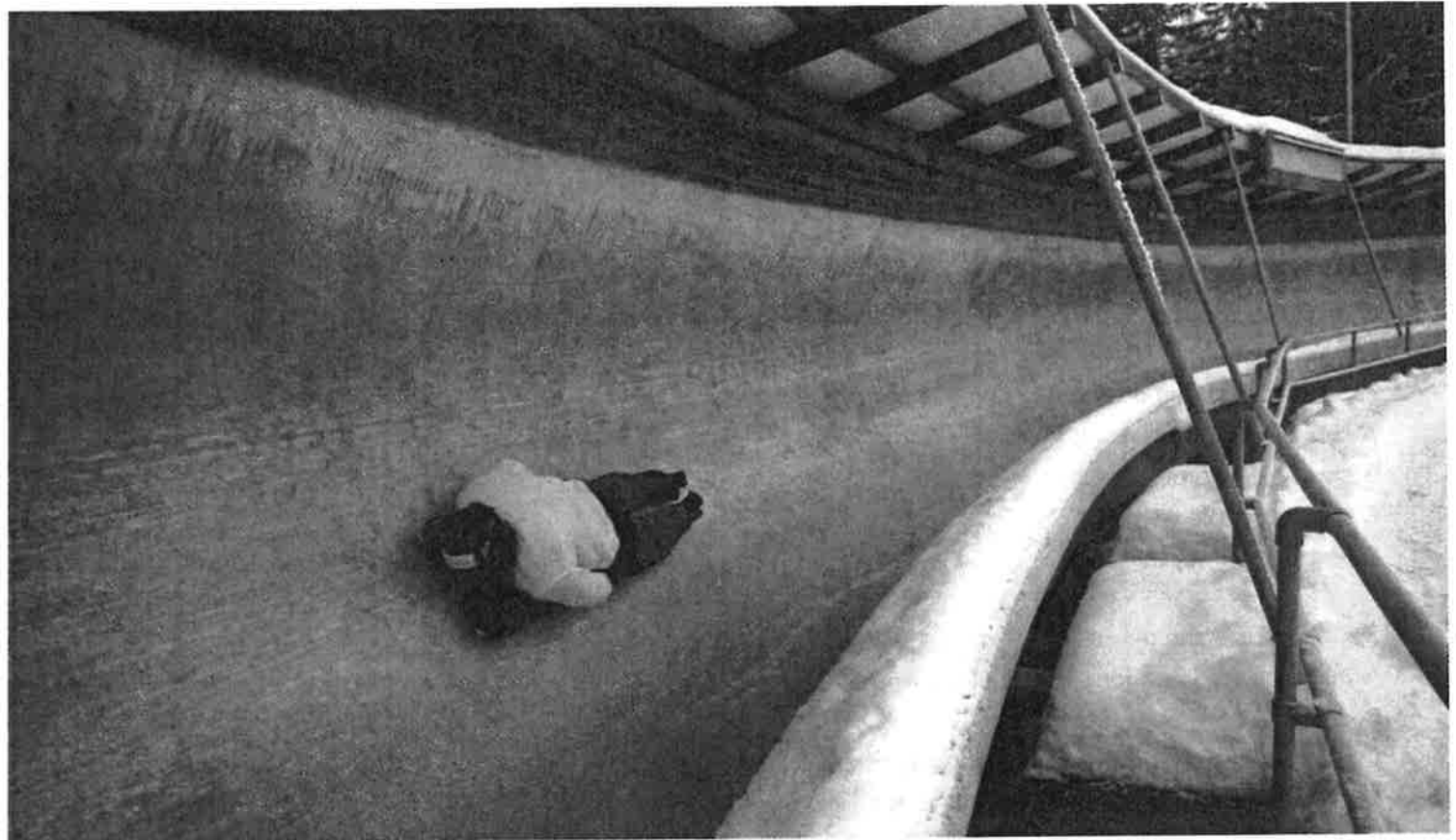
All we caught was a flash of eyeballs and overalls as the rider sliced around the curved wall of ice at breathtaking speed. We glanced at each other, panic etched across our faces and laughed the nervous laugh of the truly terrified as we realised this would soon be us.

5

I therefore took comfort in the knowledge that, with a professional in charge, someone would be keeping his head while the rest of us were losing ours. I drew the short straw and was given position four, where you feel the full brunt of the force with nothing but cool Norwegian air behind you.

6

We barely had time to check that we were all in one piece before we were sent off to get kitted up for the skeleton. On Tony's instructions I lay face down on the sledge, arms clamped by my sides, nose inches from the ice and off I went. After seventy seconds of terror, I could barely speak and my body felt as though it had been in a boxing ring, but I had never felt so alive. What a ride!



- A** Before we had any more time to contemplate our fate, we found ourselves at the top, climbing aboard a bobsled. Designed to give you a feel for the track before going down on your own, this giant, padded open-top box looked about as aerodynamic as a bus, but it travelled a whole lot faster. It had a driver who did this all the time which was reassuring.
- B** As if on cue, snow crystals began to jump in unison on the metallic railings as, high above, a sledge began its inexorable journey down. What started as a distant hum became a rattle, then a roar as the sledge reached top speed. The tarpaulin covering the track stiffened in its wake and the girders groaned.
- C** On these previous occasions, I had had experience or the expertise of others to fall back on, but with this there was nothing from which to draw strength. The bobsled confounds conventional logic.
- D** It started deceptively slowly, but within moments picked up speed. It soon became clear that the rider has little control and survival instinct takes over.
- E** It is hard to describe the debilitating effect that such immense speeds and forces have on your body. It was like nothing I have ever experienced. The last thing I remember going through my mind was straining just to keep my head upright.
- F** We listened to advice on how to get round them safely – use your eyes to steer and tilt your head away from the corners to minimise the pressure. It sounded simple enough, but get it wrong at these speeds and your chin faces the cheese-grater.
- G** The man behind these adrenalin-packed weekends at Norway's Olympic park, explained that those who attempt the famous run often accidentally 'kiss' the ice with their nose or chin, leaving a layer or three of skin behind.

## Reading and Use of English Part 8

### How I felt on conquering Everest

You are going to read four short articles by people who have climbed Mount Everest. For questions 47 – 56, choose from the articles (A-D). The articles may be chosen more than once.

a remarkable coincidence

a suggestion that other climbers sometimes take risks

a determination to continue climbing despite a problem

an awareness of the dangers of the descent

an obsession the climber briefly experienced

the temporary nature of the sense of achievement

the fact that the writer made the climb without some support that could have been used

the appeal of climbing to one of the senses other than sight

something that failed to live up to expectations

a claim that the writer rejects



## How I felt on conquering Everest

*Four climbers who succeeded in climbing the world's highest mountain write about how they felt when they reached the summit.*

### **A Roddy Mackenzie**

It has occasionally been claimed that people climb for the smell of it. Air at very high altitude smells completely different. When I reached the South Summit, I was suffering from a lack of Spanish olives. I was preoccupied with thoughts of a tin of them sitting in my tent at base camp. This was the result of a very intense dream about olives that was interrupted by the alarm summoning me to our summit attempt. At the South Summit, the view of the main summit fascinated me from a mountaineering point of view and all dreaming of olives evaporated. On the summit, I felt a mixture of apprehension and curiosity. It seemed to me that the curvature of the Earth was apparent, and I spent some time trying to think of a means to test if this was a real observation or an illusion. Many people on the Indian subcontinent believe that the ascent of Everest confers on the climber a greater wisdom in manifold subjects. That is something I do not agree with but never dispute.

### **B Anna Czerwinska**

When I reached the South Summit, I looked back at the mists rising from the valleys and I could feel their damp touch on my face. They prevented me from looking down on the long painful way up, but it was not only that. The curtain of mist had closed over my past. My oxygen was running out, and common sense demanded that I return, but before long I was climbing on an exposed ridge to the foot of the Hillary Step. A crampon had come undone and I painfully put it on again. Everest was doing everything to discourage me. I registered that dreamily and, as if dreaming, conquered the final metres of the snowy slope. Suddenly the clouds above me lifted in one blue moment and, very low down, I saw a rugged precipitous ridge. The wind was growing stronger and it was snowing lightly. I did not get the beautiful view as a reward and I felt fleetingly disappointed. However, those few minutes on the highest spot on Earth were worth every effort and have given me joy ever since.

### **C Andy Politz**

On the summit, I set out to get some sponsor photos, which at 8,850 metres without oxygen gives a unique insight into hypoxia. At one point, I looked down at Nepal and the South East Ridge only to be surprised by another climber coming up through the clouds. He was startled to see someone looking down at him. He was also climbing without oxygen and was tiring. The other thought I had, remembering six years of attempting to climb Everest, was 'He could take my picture'. Through scudding cloud, I saw that the colour and design of his clothing were unmistakably French. I do not speak French. As this Frenchman was taking his last steps to the summit, I made the international hand sign for 'Stop and I'll take your picture'. While I was struggling to focus the camera, he looked hard at me and exclaimed 'Andy!' To my amazement, it was my close friend Ed Viestours on his second ascent of the mountain.

### **D Frits Vrijlandt**

I approached Everest with respect and was well aware of being just a small human being. An excellent preparation is very important but far from a guarantee that you'll reach the summit. You have to be mentally ready to go for it, sufficiently experienced and a brave and careful climber. Before our summit bid, our team agreed that returning without injuries was our main objective. Some people can be blindly obsessed by Everest. I reached the top after eight hours of climbing. After I contacted base camp and they had congratulated me, I replied, 'Thank you, but first I have to get back down safely.' After my return to Kathmandu, I felt like a super-being because I had stood on the top of the world. I still had this feeling when I came back home but it soon faded away. The world or your life doesn't change because you climbed a mountain, even if it is the highest. But climbing Everest was a spiritual experience for me. It puts your feet back on the surface of mother Earth.