

Unit 3: Going to Extremes

Skydiving

Keywords

| | | | | |
|---------|---------|------------|-----------|---------|
| achieve | athlete | coach | complain | feature |
| further | seek | suggestion | typically | victim |

From the earliest time, people have always liked to try new things. This wish to **seek** something new has helped us to **achieve** many great things. Wanting to feel free and beat challenges is a big part of our story. Skydiving is one example. It is not just an exciting sport but also shows our wish to go **further** beyond limits and face fears, such as the fear of falling. It is a way we keep looking for and doing great things.

In 1783, a man named André-Jacques Garnerin did something wonderful: he made the first skydive from a balloon. Imagine being 3,000 feet up in the air in a balloon and then jumping out! That's really high, higher than any high building. Garnerin was brave and interested in many things. He wanted to test something new that he had made—a parachute. This was the first time anyone had ever tried something like this, and it was a big moment in the history of skydiving.

After his first try at skydiving, Garnerin realized he needed to improve his parachute. He **complained** that the first one he used was difficult to control because it didn't have a vent. A vent is like a small opening in the parachute that lets some air out. This is important because it helps the skydiver control their fall more easily, like having brakes in a car. By adding this **feature**, Garnerin made his parachute safer and better at landing. This showed others how skydiving could be done in a safe way.

In 1798, Jeanne Geneviève, who was Garnerin's wife, became the first woman to try skydiving. This was important because, **typically** back then, it was not common for women to do such exciting things. By skydiving, Jeanne Geneviève showed that not only men could be brave and adventurous. Her jump was important in skydiving history because it opened the door for more women to join in this exciting sport. It created the **suggestion** that skydiving was something everyone could enjoy.

In 1912, Albert Berry **achieved** a new record in skydiving history. He was the first person to jump out of a plane with a parachute. This was different from jumping from balloons. Berry was a test pilot, and he wanted to show that parachutes could save pilots in danger. He used a parachute on his back, which he had to open by hand after jumping from a plane at 1,500 feet. His successful jump was a huge moment and proved that parachutes could be used for safety in planes and prevent people from becoming **victims** in accidents.

In World War II, skydiving became very important. Soldiers used it to fight and save people. They had to jump from planes and land safely in dangerous places. This made everyone work hard to make parachutes better and safer. Skydiving was no longer just for fun; it was a serious skill that helped in the war. The things learned during this time made skydiving much safer and helped it grow into the sport it is today.

After World War II, until the late 20th century, parachutes got much better, and skydivers gained more control over their jumps. Better designs allowed skydivers to control and land in the right place, making skydiving safer and more fun. New technology made jumping safer and easier to control. This period following World War II was key in changing skydiving from a dangerous activity into a popular sport.

As skydiving developed, skydivers tried different styles and techniques. They became **athletes** in the sky. Free-falling became popular, where skydivers would wait before opening their parachutes to enjoy the feeling of flying. Formation flying was another technique where skydivers jumped together and created shapes and patterns while in the air. Wingsuit flying was introduced as well, where skydivers wore special suits with wings to fly through the air. These new techniques in skydiving allowed for new ways to be creative in the sport, making it not just about the jump, but also about the experience and skill in the air.

One of the most famous skydivers in history is Joseph Kittinger. In 1960, he **achieved** something really exciting. He was part of a project called Excelsior, led by the US Air Force, which aimed to study the effects of flying very high. Kittinger jumped from a balloon at a height of 102,800 feet. That's higher than most planes fly! At that height, the air is very thin, and the temperature is very cold. Just imagine being so high up that you can see the shape of the Earth! During his jump, he fell faster than the speed of sound, reaching a shocking speed of 614 miles per hour. This made him the fastest human ever without using a plane.

Kittinger free-fell for almost five minutes before opening his parachute at 18,000 feet. This set world records for the highest and fastest skydive. Despite the extreme conditions, Kittinger's parachute opened successfully, and he landed safely. His jump made him a hero in the skydiving community and a symbol of human achievement in pushing the limits of what's possible in the sky.

Felix Baumgartner is another skydiver who made history. In 2012, he jumped from an amazing height of 38,969 meters, breaking records and pushing the limits of human achievement. During this jump, Baumgartner reached a speed of 1,357.6 kilometers per hour, which is faster than the speed of sound. This achievement marked a significant record in the world of skydiving, and his jump inspired a new generation of skydivers and adventurers. In fact, just two years later, this record was broken when Robert Eustace jumped from a height of 41,419 meters.

Today, skydiving has changed from a risky adventure into a popular sport enjoyed by millions of people all around the world. It's not just about jumping out of planes; it's also a way for people to come together and have fun. There are thousands of skydiving centers and clubs where skydiving **coaches** offer training and equipment for anyone who wants to give it a try. Even children can learn to skydive with the right training. Skydiving brings people from all over the world together. People of different ages and ways of life become friends because they share the love of skydiving. It's like being part of a big family.

Questions

1. What motivated André-Jacques Garnerin to make the first skydive?
 - A) To test a new parachute design
 - B) To set a world record
 - C) For a military operation
 - D) To entertain a crowd
2. Why did Garnerin find it necessary to improve his parachute after his first skydive?
 - A) It was too fast.
 - B) It didn't open.
 - C) It lacked control.
 - D) It was too big.
3. Who was the first woman to try skydiving?
 - A) Jeanne Geneviève

- B) Amelia Earhart
 - C) Sally Ride
 - D) Harriet Quimby
4. What significant difference did Albert Berry's skydive have compared to previous jumps?
- A) He jumped from a higher altitude.
 - B) He used a wingsuit.
 - C) He jumped from a plane.
 - D) He skydived without a parachute.
5. How did World War II affect the development of skydiving?
- A) It was banned.
 - B) It became a competitive sport.
 - C) It lost popularity.
 - D) It focused on improving safety and techniques.
6. What technological advancements post-World War II benefited skydiving?
- A) Jet engines
 - B) Computer simulations
 - C) Virtual reality training
 - D) Better parachute designs
7. Who set records for the highest and fastest skydive in 1960?
- A) Joseph Kittinger
 - B) Robert Eustace
 - C) Felix Baumgartner
 - D) Chuck Yeager
8. At what height did Felix Baumgartner jump from during his record-breaking jump?
- A) 1,357.6 meters
 - B) 38,969 meters
 - C) 41,419 meters
 - D) 135,760 meters
9. How has skydiving changed over time according to the passage?
- A) It has become less popular.
 - B) It evolved from a risky adventure to a popular sport.
 - C) It is only for professional athletes.
 - D) It requires extensive training.
10. What makes skydiving a unique community?
- A) Its competitive nature
 - B) The high cost of participation
 - C) Its inclusivity and ability to bring people together
 - D) The requirement for military experience

Vocabulary Review

achieve: to successfully reach a goal or complete a task through effort or skill

Example: This wish to seek something new has helped us to **achieve** many great things. (Paragraph 1)

athlete: a person who competes in sports or physical activities

Example: *They became **athletes** in the sky.* (Paragraph 8)

coach: a person who trains and guides athletes or teams in sports

Example: *There are thousands of skydiving centers and clubs where skydiving **coaches** offer training and equipment for anyone who wants to give it a try.* (Paragraph 12)

complain: to express dissatisfaction or annoyance about something

Example: *He **complained** that the first one he used was difficult to control because it didn't have a vent.* (Paragraph 3)

feature: a distinctive aspect, quality, or characteristic of something or someone

Example: *By adding this **feature**, Garnerin made his parachute safer and better at landing.* (Paragraph 3)

further: at a greater distance or to a more advanced degree

Example: *It is not just an exciting sport but also shows our wish to go **further** beyond limits and face fears, such as the fear of falling.* (Paragraph 1)

seek: to attempt to find or obtain something

Example: *This wish to **seek** something new has helped us to achieve many great things.* (Paragraph 1)

suggestion: an idea or plan put forward for consideration

Example: *It created the **suggestion** that skydiving was something everyone could enjoy.* (Paragraph 4)

typically: in a usual or common manner; normally

Example: *This was important because, **typically** back then, it was not common for women to do such exciting things.* (Paragraph 4)

victim: a person who has been harmed, injured, or negatively affected by someone or something

Example: *His successful jump was a huge moment and proved that parachutes could be used for safety in planes and prevent people from becoming **victims** in accidents.* (Paragraph 5)