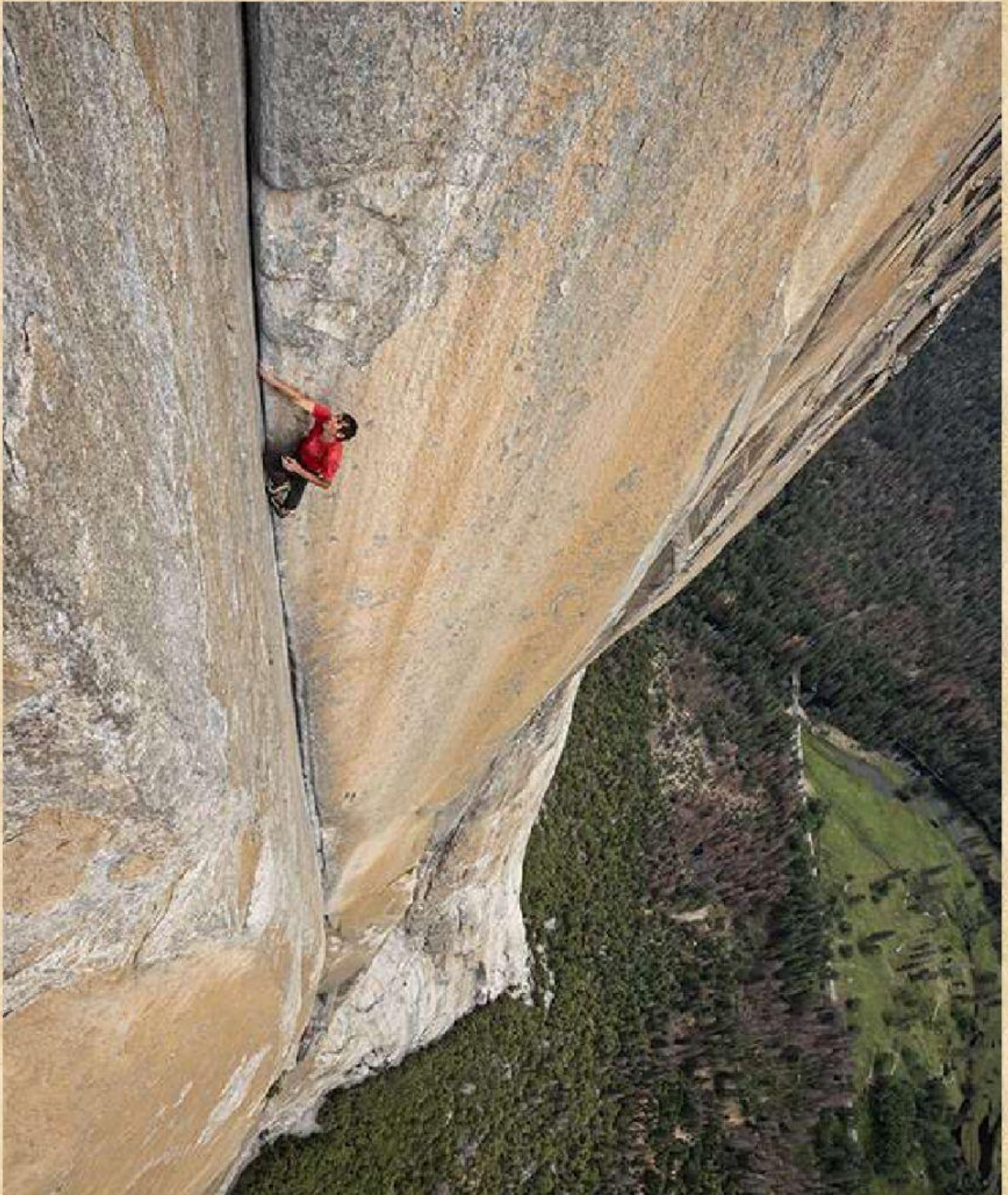


ALEX HONNOLD FREE SOLO CLIMBS EL CAPITAN, YOSEMITE

Name: _____



Daring. Defiant. Free.

A new generation of superclimbers is pushing the limits in Yosemite



Every rock climber who has come to Yosemite has a dream. Alex Honnold's dream was to free solo Half Dome, a 2130-foot (649-meter) wall of granite. Free soloing means climbing with only rock shoes and some chalk to help keep the hands dry. Honnold couldn't use a rope or anything else to help him stick to the slippery stone. The few people who **had climbed** Half Dome before **had used** ropes, and it **had taken** them more than a day to do the climb.

On a bright September morning, Honnold was clinging² to the face of Half Dome, less than 100 feet (30 meters) from the top. He **had been climbing** for two hours and forty-five minutes, but all of a sudden he stopped. Something potentially disastrous had occurred—he had lost some of his confidence. He **hadn't felt** that way two days before when **he'd been racing up** the same rock *with* a rope. That climb **had gone** well. Today though, Honnold hesitated. He knew that even the slightest doubt could cause a deadly fall, thousands of feet to the valley floor below. He knew he had to get moving, so he chalked his hands, adjusted his feet, and started climbing again. Within minutes, he was at the top.

Bloggers spread the news of Honnold's two-hour-and-fifty-minute free solo, and climbers were amazed. On this warm fall day, 23-year-old Alex Honnold **had just set** a new record in one of climbing's biggest challenges.

¹ **granite**: a kind of very hard rock

² **cling**: to hold something tightly

2 CHECK. Circle the correct answer to complete each statement.

1. When you free solo, you climb without **shoes / rope**.
2. Alex Honnold's free solo of Half Dome **was / wasn't** successful.
3. Honnold lost his **confidence / rope** for a moment on his way up Half Dome.
4. **No / Some** climbers before Honnold climbed Half Dome in under three hours.