Part 5

You are going to read an extract from a novel about a man called Alex, who with three other snowboarders, Dave, Hope and Bryce, is being trained to rescue people in the mountains. For questions **31–36**, choose the answer (**A**, **B**, **C** or **D**) which you think fits best according to the text.

Mark your answers on the separate answer sheet.

Snowboarders

The helicopter pitched forward, almost tossing me out of the open door. I grabbed the safety handle and pushed my goggles down over my eyes. There was a tap on my back. I turned around to see Dave waving at me to get out. In the front of the chopper, the copilot was making little circular motions with his hand. I knew what that meant: jump. The wind tossed the helicopter around and threw pellets of snow that felt like gravel on my face. I shifted my snowboard away from where I had it wedged against the door. The helicopter jerked backward again, and I held on to the safety handle with all my strength.

'Take a deep breath, Alex,' our instructor, Sam, said into my ear. I turned to look at him, and he smiled his big white smile. 'Now exhale.' I nodded. 'And then you just float out.' His hand drifted before him like a feather falling to earth. I nodded again, more confidently this time. Inhaled, like he had told me. Exhaled. 'Go, Alex,' Dave shouted. Dave had been heli-boarding half a dozen times. This was the first time I had ever even been in
line 25 a helicopter. Never mind jumping out of one.

I inched my board forward and let it dangle over the edge. The ground was thick and white, like a giant duvet. The rotor blades of the helicopter forced the snow up and out. It seemed like I was about to fall into a cloud. I wanted to jump, but you know what they say – the first step is the hardest. I inhaled again. Exhaled. Then I jumped. It felt like I was falling forever. When my board finally touched down, I bent my knees to soften the impact. It still made my spine shake and sent a shiver through my entire body. But at least I was on the ground. I hopped a couple of times to get going. Then I leaned into the downhill and pushed hard. I had never been up this high on a mountain before. I did two quick turns, dug in hard on my toe edge and settled in beside Bryce and Hope.

'What took you so long?' Hope asked. 'My board got caught on the door.' The little bit of Hope's face that wasn't covered by pink tuque, goggles or neck warmer screwed up in a familiar way. 'You mean you got scared.' I pointed at the front of my board. 'It got stuck on the doorframe. I had to get it out. I didn't want to scrape up the bottom.' 'Seriously, Alex, how many rails did you do yesterday?' she said. 'And now you want me to believe you're suddenly all concerned about the bottom of your board?' 'Believe whatever you want, Hope.'

Bryce was the best non-professional snowboarder I had ever seen. When the rest of us were making big, jumpy turns down the hill, Bryce was cutting smooth lines. He was good – great even. But it was nothing to him. Just something he could do. I had spent the last two weeks training with Dave, Hope and Bryce. Dave was arrogant, but he didn't have the skills to back up his talk. I knelt down on the ground, my board out behind me, and let the cool breeze rush across my face. The helicopter was pitching in the wind. It went forward, then back, then a little higher, then down so low that it almost touched the ground. Suddenly Dave dropped out of the side. A moment later he was beside us, wiping snow from his goggles. 'Nice one,' Bryce said. Dave nodded as though he already knew it had been a nice jump. The helicopter pitched back again, then lifted up another twenty feet off the ground. 'What's happening?' I asked. Sam, our instructor and only connection to the rest of the world, was still on board.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

31 Before he jumped out of the helicopter, Alex felt

A concerned about the worsening weather.
B grateful for his instructor's encouragement.
C pleased he understood the copilot's instructions.
D worried that there might be a problem with the helicopter.

32 Why does Alex use the words 'Never mind jumping out of one' in line 25?

A to justify Dave's lack of patience with him
B to explain why he was in the helicopter with Dave
C to emphasise how unusual the situation was for him
D to show he preferred to jump rather than stay in the helicopter

33 What does Alex suggest about his landing in the snow?

A It was a relief despite being unpleasant.
B It took him a while to recover from it.
C He had forgotten the correct technique to use.
D He was disappointed not to have done it better.

34 What does the conversation between Alex and Hope imply?

A Hope never took any notice of what Alex said.
B Hope was concerned for Alex's welfare.
C Alex took pleasure in teasing Hope.
D Alex did not get on well with Hope.

35 What do we learn about Dave in the final paragraph?

A He recognised the need to improve his snowboarding skills.
B He was more willing to take risks than the rest of the group.
C He wasn't as good a snowboarder as he claimed to be.
D He valued the compliments he received from Bryce.

36 How did Alex feel at the end of the extract?

A disappointed at the group's change of plan
B angry with Sam for not joining them
C impatient to get moving again
D anxious that they had been cut off

→ p. 121

LIVEWORKSHEETS