

Reading

B. Read the text quickly. What is the purpose of this text?

- to describe an important event in the history of skydiving
- to explain what extreme skydivers go through
- to compare the lives of Joe Kittinger and Felix Baumgartner
- to discuss the history and future of skydiving



Fearless Felix

On August 16th, 1960, a man named Joe Kittinger jumped from a height of 102,800 ft. (19.5 miles). He fell for 4 minutes and 36 seconds, reaching a top speed of 614 mph before opening his parachute at 18,000 ft. In a matter of minutes, Kittinger had made history. He set records for highest ascent*, highest parachute jump and fastest velocity*. 52 years later, Kittinger was first on the list of a highly-experienced crew when skydiver Felix Baumgartner decided to break the record and go even higher.

Felix Baumgartner was born on April 20th, 1969 in Salzburg, Austria. He is a professional BASE jumper and skydiver, and has accomplished many amazing **feats**. In 1999, he claimed the world record for the highest parachute jump from a building after **leaping** 1,479 ft. from The Petronas Twin Towers in Malaysia, which were the tallest buildings in the world at the time. In 2004, Felix jumped off the highest bridge in the world, the Millau Viaduct in France, from an **altitude** of 1,125 ft. In 2007, Felix jumped to the bottom of the world's second biggest cave, called "Seating of the Spirits," located in Oman. The depth of the cave (only 395 ft.) and its tube-like shape made this challenge seem impossible. Felix, however, jumped into pitch darkness and landed unhurt six seconds later with only two seconds to open his parachute! Before attempting the highest skydive on record, Felix had made two successful stratosphere* test jumps from 71,581 ft. and 96,650 ft. Weather conditions on October 14th, 2012 were perfect as the helium balloon and capsule* moved upwards into the sky. However, when it reached 62,000 ft., Felix reported that his visor heater wasn't working **properly**. The ground crew briefly considered **aborting** the mission, but decided to continue. It took him two and a half hours to climb to 127,851 ft. (over 24 miles) and as he prepared to jump, Kittinger told him via radio, "OK, we're getting serious now, Felix."

Along with the many dangers of skydiving, the main fear for Felix was what would happen to his body if he broke the sound barrier at 768 mph. No human had traveled faster than the speed of sound before without a vehicle. 8,000,000 people were watching the live stream on YouTube as Felix looked down at the Earth below him and said, "I'm coming home." Then he jumped. After 42 seconds of freefall, he reached a top speed of 843.6 mph. Soon after, the atmosphere became thicker and slowed him down a little. Approximately four minutes later, he opened his parachute and was safely back on the ground eleven minutes after leaving the capsule. Felix had once again succeeded, therefore proving his ability to achieve his goals. Felix broke three records and gained international fame. What will his passion make him do next?

* ascent = the act of climbing or moving upwards

* velocity = the speed of something that is moving

* stratosphere = the outer part of the air surrounding the Earth, from 32,808 ft. to 164,041 ft. above the Earth

* capsule = the part of a spacecraft in which people travel

L Read again and write T for True, F for False or NM for Not Mentioned.

1. Joe Kittinger held three world records for 52 years. ☐
2. Felix still holds the record for the highest parachute jump from a building. ☐
3. Felix's jump into the cave lasted 8 seconds. ☐
4. Felix was forced to cancel his jump on October 14th, 2012 because of a problem with his equipment. ☐
5. Felix had no contact with the ground crew when he reached 127,851 ft. ☐
6. Felix traveled faster than the speed of sound while falling. ☐
7. The Earth's atmosphere made Felix travel more slowly. ☐
8. Felix's jump from space lasted 11 minutes. ☐
9. Felix is now planning his next breathtaking feat. ☐