



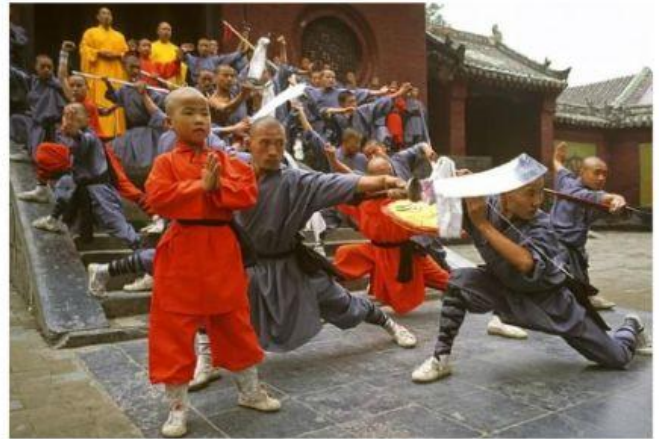
Read again and match the sentences (1-6) to the gaps (A-E). There is one extra sentence.

## Training with the Shaolin Monks

By Joseph Barnes

I watched in awe as the man threw himself into the air and spun across the stage. He landed gently and crouched down like a tiger ready to attack, with his sword held out in front of him. It was impressive, but nothing prepared me for what came next: a man balancing his body on tips of spears! I gasped in amazement all the way through this incredible performance of the Shaolin monks. Trained in the art of Kung Fu at the world-famous Shaolin Temple in China, these monks are so strong that they can break bricks on their bodies and so skilled that they can fight blindfolded without getting hurt!

**A** \_\_\_\_\_. So I did a little research and then last summer I travelled high into China's Yuntai Mountains, where the stunning scenery takes your breath away, for a month of training at a real Shaolin school.



I arrived late at night, exhausted by my long journey, but the next day I was woken up by a bell at 5:40 for a run to the top of a nearby mountain! I struggled slowly upwards, and by the time I reached the top, the Chinese students had crawled back down on their hands and knees to build their muscles and were back at the academy, warming up I looked on in horror as students practised doing the splits! **B** \_\_\_\_\_.

To my relief, I soon learnt that foreigners don't train with the Chinese students. And when my new 'Shi Fu', or teacher, Master Jin Long arrived, he was calm and patient, not fierce and proud, like I had imagined. We began by practising 'mabu', a basic Kung Fu position. For this, you stand with you: legs bent as if sitting on a chair. **C** \_\_\_\_\_. I felt like a failure. Master Jin Long came over and told me that I would learn little by little. After the class, he told me that a key secret to Kung Fu was repetition and that I would improve greatly after a lot of practice.

An hour later, we finally got breakfast: large bowls of rice and vegetables. Afterwards, it was straight back to the gym to practise basic punches and kicks. In the afternoon, I chose to study Tai Chi - a martial art which focuses on controlling energy. Physical training finished at 6 pm, after an exhausting 8 hours. Fortunately, evenings were a time to work out our minds: with two hours of either Mandarin Chinese, or meditation classes. **D** \_\_\_\_\_. By the time the first day was over, I felt almost sick from exhaustion.

But as I showered, to my disappointment, in a cold shower (there is no hot water at the school!), I told myself that if Shaolin monks could train from 5 am until late in the evening under much harsher conditions with many of them beginning at the age of five, then I could survive a month here! Well, the month flew by and by the end, I felt incredible. **E** \_\_\_\_\_. The monks constantly told us that we would build character and learn humility through hardship and discipline and that's exactly what I experienced. Although I couldn't quite break bricks on my head. I left the academy with a new inner strength and determined to work hard to achieve my goals in life. Still, upon my return, I couldn't wait for a hot shower and a relaxing sleep in my comfortable bed.

1. I couldn't have imagined what a life-changing experience it would be.
2. It looks simple but I couldn't do it for more than a few seconds!
3. I could easily hold the 'mabu' position for a few minutes and I felt full of energy.
4. "How will I survive a whole month here?" I remember thinking.
5. Building mental strength and control is an essential aspect of Kung Fu, too.
6. After the performance, I just knew I had to learn more about them.

A	B	C	D	E