



Before You Read

A. Matching. Look at the photo and read the caption. Match the correct form of each word in **bold** with its definition.

1. not safe; able to cause harm or injury _____
2. to set on fire _____
3. an area of land that is 10,000 square meters _____
4. a fire that is out of control and moves quickly _____

B. Predict. Read the three questions in the headings on the next page. What do you think the answers are? Read the passage to check your ideas.

Thousands of **wildfires** occur around the globe every year. The fires **burn** millions of **hectares** of land. Hot, dry weather and fast-moving winds often make these fires more **dangerous**.

SMOKEJUMPERS

- 1 Every year, wildfires **destroy** millions of hectares of forest land. Homes are **damaged**, and thousands of people die. Smokejumpers help to stop this.

What is a smokejumper?

- 5 Smokejumpers are a special type of firefighter. They jump from planes or are lowered by helicopters into areas that are difficult to reach by car or on foot, such as the **middle** of a mountain forest. They **race** to put out fires as fast as they can.

What do smokejumpers do?

- 10 At a fire site, smokejumpers first examine the land and decide how to fight the fire. Their main goal is to stop a fire from spreading. Using basic **equipment** such as shovels and axes,¹ smokejumpers clear land of burnable² material, like plants and other dry material. They carry water with them, too, but only a **limited** amount.

Who can be a smokejumper?

- 15 Although the **majority** of smokejumpers are men, more women are joining. Most important are your **height** and weight. Smokejumpers **employed** in the U.S., for example, must be 120 to 200 pounds (54 to 91 kilograms) so they don't get blown away by the strong winds or get hurt when they land.

Smokejumpers must also be **capable** of surviving in the wilderness. In Russia, many smokejumpers know how to find food in the forest and even make simple furniture³ from trees.

- 25 The work is dangerous, and the hours are long. But for these firefighters, smokejumping isn't just an **occupation**. They love being able to jump out of planes, fight fires, and live in the forest. As 28-year-old Russian smokejumper Alexi Tishin says, "This is the best job for tough guys."

¹ A **shovel** is a tool used for digging earth; an **ax** is a tool used for cutting wood.

² If something is **burnable**, it can start a fire easily.

³ Objects such as chairs, tables, and beds are known as **furniture**.

"We face danger three times: one when we fly; two when we jump; three when we go to [the] fire."

*Valeriy Koroikov,
smokejumper*

Reading Comprehension

Multiple Choice. Choose the best answer for each question.

- | | |
|------------|--|
| Gist | 1. What is the reading mainly about?
a. the life of a Russian smokejumper
b. who smokejumpers are and what they do
c. the difficulties of being a female smokejumper
d. why people become smokejumpers |
| Detail | 2. Which of these is NOT true for smokejumpers?
a. They get to fires from a plane or a helicopter.
b. They put out fires in areas that are hard to reach.
c. They must learn to survive in the wilderness.
d. They must learn to fly planes and helicopters. |
| Detail | 3. When a smokejumper gets to a fire site, what is the first thing he or she does?
a. looks for water
b. clears the land
c. starts a small fire
d. studies the land |
| Detail | 4. If you want to be a smokejumper, you must be _____.
a. older than 28
b. male
c. within a certain weight range
d. a university graduate |
| Vocabulary | 5. In line 21, <i>surviving in the wilderness</i> means being able to _____.
a. live in the outdoors
b. jump out of planes
c. fight fires
d. make simple furniture |
| Inference | 6. In Alexi Tishin's opinion, why do people become smokejumpers?
a. for the money
b. for the excitement
c. to help their country
d. to work short hours |
| Main Idea | 7. What is the main idea of the last paragraph?
a. Smokejumpers like living in the forest.
b. Smokejumpers are tougher than firefighters.
c. Smokejumpers love what they do.
d. Smokejumpers work very long hours. |



Did You Know?

Russia has more than 20,000 wildfires each year and about 4,000 smokejumpers—the largest number in the world.



Paraphrasing Sentences

When you paraphrase a sentence, you rewrite it in your own words but keep the original idea. It's an important skill for many tests in English. To write paraphrased sentences, try to change both the words and the word order.

Original: Being a smokejumper is not easy. The work is not safe.

Paraphrased: It's difficult to be a smokejumper. It's dangerous work.

Words can have more than one synonym. If you use a synonym, be sure to choose the correct one.

Original: Smokejumpers know how to *find* food.

Paraphrased: Smokejumpers are able to *locate* food. ✓

Paraphrased: Smokejumpers are able to *notice* food. ✗

A. Multiple Choice. Choose the sentence that correctly paraphrases the first.

1. A smokejumper's main goal is to stop a fire from spreading.
 - a. One thing a smokejumper does is to end fires that spread.
 - b. The key job of a smokejumper is to keep a fire from spreading.
2. In Russia, there are more fires than anywhere else in the world.
 - a. The fires in Russia are the biggest on the planet.
 - b. Russia has more fires than any other place on Earth.
3. Fast-moving winds can make fires more dangerous.
 - a. Fires can become more dangerous when there are strong winds.
 - b. Fires that move quickly are a result of dangerous winds.

B. Completion. Complete the second sentence so that it paraphrases the first.

1. Smokejumpers have an unusual job.
A smokejumper's _____.
2. More men than women are smokejumpers.
There are more _____.
3. Many people were injured by the fire.
The fire _____.

Critical Thinking Discuss these questions with a partner. How would you describe someone who works as a smokejumper? Can you think of other jobs that are dangerous? Why do you think people decide to take these jobs?

Vocabulary Practice

A. Words in Context. Complete each sentence with the correct answer.

1. If something is **limited**, it is _____.
a. not enough b. more than enough
2. If you **destroy** something, it can _____ be used again.
a. now b. never
3. We measure **height** in _____.
a. kilograms / pounds b. centimeters / inches
4. If a book is in the **middle** of the table, it is _____ of the table.
a. in the center b. near the edge

B. Completion. Complete the information with words from the box.
One word is extra.

capable	employed	equipment	majority
middle	occupation	race	

During the week, eighteen-year-old student A.J. Coston lives with his family. But on the weekend, Coston lives and works at a fire station, where he is 1. _____ as a volunteer¹ firefighter. Several times each weekend, he has to 2. _____ to the scene of a fire.

To get the job, Coston had to take classes and learn different safety skills. He also had to learn to use different firefighting 3. _____—axes, special flashlights, and other tools. When Coston was 4. _____ of using these, he was allowed to work inside burning buildings.

Although firefighters spend the 5. _____ of their time putting out fires, they also help people who have had accidents. This, says Coston, is one of the most important parts of a firefighter's 6. _____.

¹ If you are a **volunteer**, you do work for free.

Word Link We can add **-ment** to some verbs to form nouns. These nouns often describe an action, a process, or a state of being (*employment, encouragement*) or an object or a place (*equipment, settlement*).

VIEWING Wildfire Photographer

Before You Watch

A. **Labeling.** Read the caption and label the items with the words in **bold**.



1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

^ Facing strong heat and thick **smoke**, *National Geographic* **photographer** Mark Thiessen has a tough hobby. Every summer, he takes his **camera**, drives out West, and spends his vacation photographing **wildfires**.

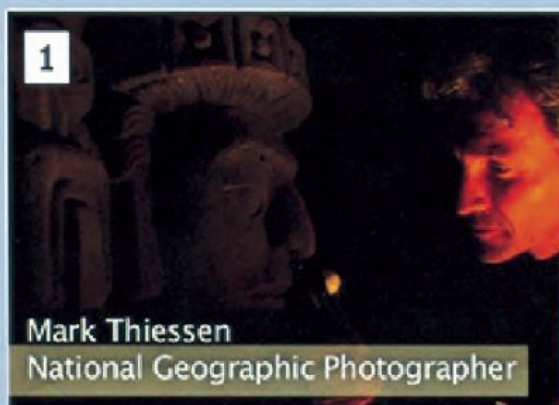
While You Watch

A. **True or False?** Read the statements below. As you watch the video, circle whether they are **T** (true) or **F** (false).

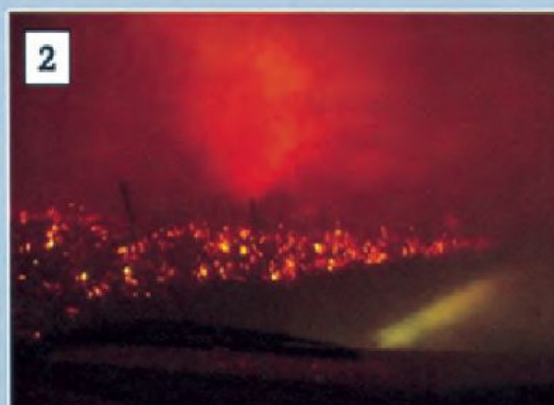
- | | | |
|--|----------|----------|
| 1. Thiessen usually takes photos of wild animals. | T | F |
| 2. Thiessen first wanted to become a photographer when he was in college. | T | F |
| 3. Thiessen is interested in fires because it's difficult to predict them. | T | F |
| 4. Thiessen is also a firefighter. | T | F |
| 5. Because it's so dangerous, Thiessen plans to stop photographing wildfires soon. | T | F |

Viewing 131

B. Matching. Check (✓) the caption that correctly describes each picture.



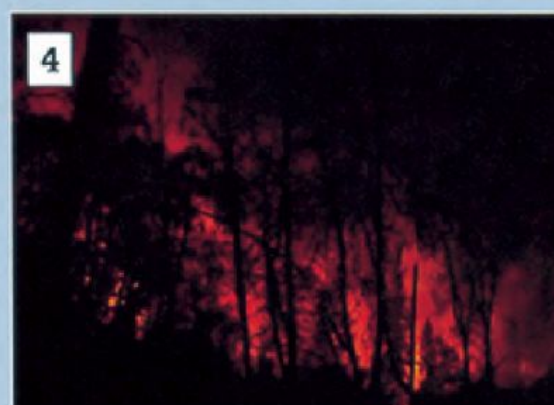
- ☐ Thiessen's job is not as exciting as you might think.
- ☐ Thiessen's job is more exciting than you might think.



- ☐ A powerful wind pushes against the truck.
- ☐ Thiessen needs to drive away from the fire immediately.



- ☐ A fire whirl happens when flames twist together.
- ☐ The fire spreads from the ground into the trees.



- ☐ The sight of trees damaged by fires can be quite beautiful.
- ☐ There are 100,000 wildfires in the U.S. every year.

After You Watch

Critical Thinking. Discuss these questions in a group.

1. What qualities do you think are important to have as a photographer?
How about as a firefighter?
2. Do you think you could be a wildfire photographer? Why or why not?