

B. Read the text quickly. What is the writer's attitude towards parkour and freerunning? Choose a, b or c. 07

- a. He/She has a positive attitude.
- b. He/She has a negative attitude.
- c. He/She does not express an opinion.

the URBAN playground



No doubt you've seen them somewhere, jumping over impossibly high walls, diving through gaps, falling from great heights, rolling over and carrying on. They look like they are being chased by someone, but in fact they are traceurs* and they are practising two of the fastest growing extreme sports: freerunning and parkour.

These sports were created in the 1980s by a couple of bored teenagers, David Belle and Sebastien Foucan, who were used to climbing, running and jumping around the streets of their Parisian neighbourhood. They shared a deep interest in learning how to go over, under or through any obstacles that they met in their urban environment. Slowly, their acrobatic running developed into real sports as more and more people joined them.

Although the basic techniques and moves of the two sports are similar and are commonly confused, some differences exist. Freerunning involves spectacular tricks and somersaults which are not really necessary. However, in parkour, traceurs try not to overdo it. For them, the important thing is to get past the obstacles. Parkour, more than freerunning, is not only a way to improve physical fitness, but is also a way of thinking. In a similar way to the philosophy behind martial arts, it gives you the ability to get over your fears and control your mind. There is no list of moves or techniques for parkour. Each traceur gets used to dealing with different obstacles in their own way, depending on their body type, weight, speed and strength. Parkour is not a competitive sport; there are no opponents to beat. It is about interacting with the environment around you, which, in the modern world, usually means the inner city.

No equipment is needed, but those practising the sports should wear suitable trainers and comfortable clothes. Any environment where there are obstacles, such as a park, playground or shopping centre, is appropriate for parkour or freerunning, but city councils are also beginning to provide young people with safe places to practise. Many schools in London used to offer only traditional sports, but they have more recently introduced parkour classes, which have become incredibly popular. And it's not only sporty kids who are keen. As the popularity of parkour and freerunning grows, more and more young people are becoming active and learning how to benefit from the urban playground.

* The word *traceur* comes from the French verb *tracer*, which means 'to trace'. In Parisian informal language it also means 'to go fast'.



C. Read again and write T for True or F for False.

1. Traceur means 'to be chased'. ☐
2. Parkour and freerunning were invented by two young people from Paris. ☐
3. Parkour and freerunning involve completely different moves. ☐
4. Parkour helps people control their body and mind. ☐
5. Parkour teaches people to interact with others as well as with the environment. ☐
6. Traceurs can practise parkour or freerunning anywhere there are obstacles. ☐
7. Parkour is only popular with sporty students. ☐

D. Look at the highlighted words in the text, and try to guess what they mean. Then match them with the definitions a-f.

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| 1. carry on | ☐ | a. suitable |
| 2. obstacle | ☐ | b. connected with a town/city |
| 3. urban | ☐ | c. to continue |
| 4. spectacular | ☐ | d. somebody who plays against you in a game, sport, etc. |
| 5. opponent | ☐ | e. very impressive |
| 6. appropriate | ☐ | f. something that stops you from going forward |