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Russian breaks time-in-space record

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18 August, 2005

THE ARTICLE

Russian breaks time-in-space record

BNE: Veteran Russian cosmonaut Sergei Krikalev has set a new record for the most cumulative time spent in space. The current International Space Station commander chalked up his 748th day in orbit on August 16. He will celebrate his record-breaking feat by embarking on a six-hour space walk to undertake routine maintenance and upgrades outside the space station. Krikalev, 46, arrived at the platform in April for a six-month stint. His first voyage into space was in November 1988 on a sojourn to the now-defunct Mir space station. In 1994, he was the first Russian to ride on the space shuttle and he was on the inaugural mission to assemble the International Space Station in 1998.

Krikalev said his profession was a “challenge”. He explained his reasons for choosing to spend so much time in space: “Why do people climb mountains? — It’s cold, it’s windy, it’s difficult to haul up all of the equipment, but then it’s exciting. You overcome some difficulties. You see some new sights. You do things that other people cannot.” He said living in the heavens was the most exhilarating endeavor he could ever imagine. Neither does he mind being used as a guinea pig by scientists back on Earth. His repeated exposure to the rigors of extended periods of time in space has provided volumes of precious data on the physical and psychological stresses on the body.

WARM-UPS

1. I'M A COSMONAUT: Imagine you are a Russian cosmonaut on the International Space Station. You have been in space for six months. Float around the class and talk to the other "cosmonauts" about life on the space station, space and the lack of space.

2. RECORDS: In pairs / groups, talk about the difficulties involved in breaking the following "longest time" records. Which ones would you like to try and why?

- Being in space
- Kissing
- Not sleeping
- Being alone
- Being married
- Speaking English only
- Being away from your country
- Other

3. CHAT: In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words are most interesting and which are most boring.

Russians / cosmonauts / astronauts / space / chalk / record breaking / voyages / professions / challenges / climbing mountains / overcoming difficulties / guinea pigs

Have a chat about the topics you liked. For more conversation, change topics and partners frequently.

4. CHALLENGE: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word "challenge". Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

5. TWO-MINUTE DEBATES: Debate these fun arguments for just two minutes each. Student A agrees with the first argument, Student B, the second.

- a. Living in space would be crazy. vs. Living in space would be awesome.
- b. Weightlessness would be wonderful. vs. Weightlessness would be boring.
- c. Being on Earth is more beautiful. vs. Looking at the earth is more beautiful.
- d. An astronaut is the best job in the world. vs. There are better jobs.
- e. Living in space is bad for your health. vs. Living on Earth is bad for your health.
- f. A holiday in space would be exciting. vs. A holiday in space would be stressful.
- g. We will have to live in space one day. vs. We will always be able to live on Earth.
- h. China will be the leader in space exploration. vs. America will always be first.
- i. Space exploration is a waste of money. vs. Space exploration is money well spent.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

1. TRUE / FALSE: Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- | | |
|---|-------|
| a. A cosmonaut broke the record for the longest time spent in space. | T / F |
| b. A Russian has spent 748 days in space. | T / F |
| c. He will celebrate his record-breaking feat with a champagne party. | T / F |
| d. His unfulfilled dream is to ride on NASA's space shuttle. | T / F |
| e. He said his profession wasn't such a challenge. | T / F |
| f. He talked about the difficulties of hauling equipment into space. | T / F |
| g. He said living in the heavens was the most exhilarating endeavor. | T / F |
| h. He has provided scientists with lots of data about stress on the body. | T / F |

2. SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article:

- | | |
|-----------------|--------------|
| a. cumulative | maiden |
| b. chalked up | journey |
| c. sojourn | test subject |
| d. defunct | space |
| e. inaugural | logged |
| f. haul | hardships |
| g. the heavens | obsolete |
| h. exhilarating | drag |
| i. guinea pig | accumulated |
| j. rigors | invigorating |

3. PHRASE MATCH: Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| a. the most cumulative time | up all of the equipment |
| b. chalked up his | by scientists back on Earth |
| c. embarking on a | mission |
| d. a sojourn to the | of extended periods of time in space |
| e. inaugural | six-hour space walk |
| f. difficult to haul | most exhilarating endeavor |
| g. overcome some | spent in space |
| h. living in the heavens was the | difficulties |
| i. being used as a guinea pig | now-defunct Mir space station |
| j. the rigors | 748th day in orbit |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

GAP FILL: Put the words in the column on the right into the correct spaces.

Russian breaks time-in-space record

BNE: Veteran Russian cosmonaut Sergei Krikalev has set a new record for the most _____ time spent in space. The current International Space Station commander chalked up his 748th day in _____ on August 16. He will celebrate his record-breaking _____ by embarking on a six-hour space walk to undertake routine maintenance and _____ outside the space station. Krikalev, 46, arrived at the platform in April for a six-month _____. His first voyage into space was in November 1988 on a _____ to the now-_____ Mir space station. In 1994, he was the first Russian to ride on the space shuttle and he was on the _____ mission to assemble the International Space Station in 1998.

Krikalev said his _____ was a "challenge". He explained his reasons for choosing to spend so much time in space: "Why do people climb mountains? — It's cold, it's windy, it's difficult to _____ up all of the equipment, but then it's exciting. You _____ some difficulties. You see some new sights. You do things that other people cannot." He said living in the _____ was the most _____ endeavor he could ever imagine. Neither does he mind being used as a _____ by scientists back on Earth. His repeated exposure to the _____ of extended periods of time in space has provided _____ of precious data on the physical and psychological stresses on the body.

defunct
feat
stint
cumulative
inaugural
sojourn
orbit
upgrades
haul
volumes
guinea pig
overcome
profession
exhilarating
rigors
heavens

AFTER READING / LISTENING

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'space' and 'record'.

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. GAP FILL: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the gap fill. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. STUDENT "TIME IN SPACE" SURVEY: In pairs / groups, write down questions about living in space.

- Ask other classmates your questions and note down their answers.
- Go back to your original partner / group and compare your findings.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

6. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall exactly how these were used in the text:

- | | |
|--------------|-------------|
| • cumulative | • challenge |
| • chalked | • haul |
| • feat | • heavens |
| • platform | • imagine |
| • defunct | • rigors |
| • assemble | • stresses |

DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a. What were your initial thoughts on this headline?
- b. Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- c. What are your thoughts on this new record?
- d. Would you like to spend a long time in space?
- e. What do you think would be the highlights of living in space?
- f. What do you think astronauts and cosmonauts who live in space miss most about life on Earth?
- g. What kind of person do you think Sergei Krikalev is?
- h. Do you think the USA would like to break this record?
- i. What do you know about Mir and the International Space Station?
- j. What is the purpose of the International Space Station?

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a. Did you like reading this article?
- b. What do you think about what you read?
- c. What do you think are the challenges of being a cosmonaut and astronaut?
- d. What feelings do you think first-time space travelers experience?
- e. Do you think living in the heavens would be the most exhilarating endeavor?
- f. What psychological and physical stresses do you think Mr. Krikalev would suffer?
- g. What question would you most like to ask Mr. Krikalev?
- h. How do you think Mr. Krikalev would answer that question?
- i. What are the biggest difficulties you have overcome?
- j. Did you like this discussion?

AFTER DISCUSSION: Join another partner / group and tell them what you talked about.

- a. What question would you like to ask about this topic?
- b. What was the most interesting thing you heard?
- c. Was there a question you didn't like?
- d. Was there something you totally disagreed with?
- e. What did you like talking about?
- f. Do you want to know how anyone else answered the questions?
- g. Which was the most difficult question?

SPEAKING

SPACE SCHEDULE: Your teacher will tell you how much time you have to complete the following table. In pairs / groups, use that time to fill in as many details as you can about the daily schedule of a cosmonaut on the International Space Station.

TIME	ACTIVITY	PURPOSE
00:00		
01:00		
02:00		
03:00		
04:00		
05:00		
06:00		
07:00		
08:00		
09:00		
10:00		
11:00		
12:00		
13:00		
14:00		
15:00		
16:00		
17:00		
18:00		
19:00		
20:00		
21:00		
22:00		
23:00		

Find a new partner and compare your schedules. Discuss which of the activities you wrote down you would most like to do.

LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

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Krikalev said his _____ was a “challenge”. He explained his reasons for choosing to spend so much time in space: “Why do people climb mountains? — It’s cold, it’s windy, it’s difficult to _____ all of the equipment, but then it’s exciting. You _____ some difficulties. You see some new sights. You do things that other people cannot.” He said living in the _____ was the most _____ endeavor he could ever imagine. Neither does he mind being used as a _____ by scientists back on Earth. His repeated exposure to the rigors of extended periods of time in space has provided _____ of precious data on the physical and psychological stresses on the body.

HOMEWORK

1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION: Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

2. INTERNET: Search the Internet and find more information on the International Space Station (ISS). Share your findings with your class in the next lesson.

3. LETTER: Write a letter to Russian cosmonaut Sergei Krikalev. Tell him what you think of his record-breaking achievement. Ask him a few questions about life on the space station. Read your letters to your classmates in your next lesson. Did you all have similar thoughts and questions?

4. DIARY / JOURNAL: Imagine you are on the International Space Station. Write your diary / journal entry for one day. Write about what you feel and miss about Earth. Read your entry to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all write about similar things?

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

- a. T b. T c. F d. F e. F f. F g. T h. T

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|-----------------|--------------|
| a. cumulative | accumulated |
| b. chalked up | logged |
| c. sojourn | journey |
| d. defunct | obsolete |
| e. inaugural | maiden |
| f. haul | drag |
| g. the heavens | space |
| h. exhilarating | invigorating |
| i. guinea pig | test subject |
| j. rigors | hardships |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| a. the most cumulative time | spent in space |
| b. chalked up his | 748th day in orbit |
| c. embarking on a | mission |
| d. a sojourn to the | now-defunct Mir space station |
| e. inaugural | six-hour space walk |
| f. difficult to haul | up all of the equipment |
| g. overcome some | difficulties |
| h. living in the heavens was the | most exhilarating endeavor |
| i. being used as a guinea pig | by scientists back on Earth |
| j. the rigors | of extended periods of time in space |

GAP FILL:

Russian breaks time-in-space record

BNE: Veteran Russian cosmonaut Sergei Krikalev has set a new record for the most **cumulative** time spent in space. The current International Space Station commander chalked up his 748th day in **orbit** on August 16. He will celebrate his record-breaking **feat** by embarking on a six-hour space walk to undertake routine maintenance and **upgrades** outside the space station. Krikalev, 46, arrived at the platform in April for a six-month **stint**. His first voyage into space was in November 1988 on a **sojourn** to the now-**defunct** Mir space station. In 1994, he was the first Russian to ride on the space shuttle and he was on the **inaugural** mission to assemble the International Space Station in 1998.

Krikalev said his **profession** was a “challenge”. He explained his reasons for choosing to spend so much time in space: “Why do people climb mountains? — It’s cold, it’s windy, it’s difficult to **haul** up all of the equipment, but then it’s exciting. You **overcome** some difficulties. You see some new sights. You do things that other people cannot.” He said living in the **heavens** was the most **exhilarating** endeavor he could ever imagine. Neither does he mind being used as a **guinea pig** by scientists back on Earth. His repeated exposure to the **rigors** of extended periods of time in space has provided **volumes** of precious data on the physical and psychological stresses on the body.