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Indian breaks hot-air balloon record

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27 November, 2005

THE ARTICLE

Indian breaks hot-air balloon record

A daredevil Indian businessman has flown into the record books by almost touching the edge of space. Vijaypat Singhania, 67, set a new altitude record in a hot-air balloon by rising to 21,336 meters above sea level. Mr. Singhania joked about his achievement, stating: "It was said that the existing record...would never be broken. I suppose it took an Indian". He excitedly dedicated his flight to the Indian people. He encouraged them to copy him and aim high in life. He said: "We are certainly among the best in the world. This is a proud moment for India. I am proud in achieving an almost impossible feat. So will every Indian."

Mr. Singhania also gave a special message to India's old and young people. He told them: "If I can do such a thing at the age of 67, I am sure you can also attain such feats. I also hope that many young boys and girls would like to venture into sports and other activities which would bring them international fame." He spoke of his record-breaking flight: "It has been a very slow journey for me. I have been [flying] for 46 years...It is the first time [I] decided to gamble on hot-air balloons." Mr. Singhania has a passion for flying and won the International Around the World Air Race in 1994. He said he has flying in his blood.

WARM-UPS

1. INDIAN PEOPLE: Walk around the class and talk to other students about Indian people. Talk about the images you have of them, the Indians you've met and famous Indians. Talk also about Indians of the past and Indians of the future. What role will they play in the world in the future?

2. RECORDS: Which of these world records would you like to break and why? Talk about how people might feel after breaking them.

- Height in a hot-air balloon
- The 100-meter-sprint
- Length of time in space
- Long distance swimming
- The number of children in your family
- Eating hamburgers
- The number of English words known
- Sleeping

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

Daredevils / India / businessmen / world records / space / hot-air balloons / success / pride / sports / international fame / journeys / passion / flying / blood

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

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

5. PRIDE: Are you proud of your country? Why? Are there things about your country you are not so proud of? Talk about this with your partner(s). Use the things below to help your conversations. Are you proud of your country's...?

- People
- History
- President / prime minister
- Social system
- Culture
- Position in the world
- Food
- National sportsmen, women and teams
- Transport system
- Biggest companies

6. 2-MINUTE DEBATES: Have the following (for-fun) 2-minute debates. Students A take the first argument, students B the second. Change partners often.

- Breaking world records is great. vs. There are more important things in life.
- We must all be proud of our country. vs. There's often no reason to be proud.
- The 100-meters record is the greatest. vs. The record for the marathon is best.
- Hot-air balloons are more exciting than bungee jumping. Vs. Other way round.
- India will not become a superpower. vs. India will become a superpower.
- Old people should stay at home. vs. Old people should find big, new ambitions.
- Exploring space is most exciting. vs. The ocean is more exciting.
- We need heroes for inspiration. vs. Inspiration comes from inside us.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

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

- | | |
|--|-------|
| a. An Indian became the fastest to fly across the Atlantic in a balloon. | T / F |
| b. The balloonist joked about his achievement. | T / F |
| c. The balloonist, Mr. Singhanian, wants people to copy him. | T / F |
| d. The balloonist said a few Indians would be proud of his feat. | T / F |
| e. The balloonist had a special message for India's thirty-year-olds. | T / F |
| f. Mr. Singhanian encouraged young Indians to find international fame. | T / F |
| g. Mr. Singhanian took a big risk by deciding to fly hot-air balloons. | T / F |
| h. He said he has the spirit of the Atlantic Ocean in his blood. | T / F |

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

- | | |
|--------------|-------------|
| a. daredevil | gave |
| b. edge | love |
| c. altitude | achievement |
| d. dedicated | height |
| e. feat | go |
| f. special | adventurer |
| g. attain | particular |
| h. venture | take a risk |
| i. gamble | achieve |
| j. passion | fringe |

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

- | | |
|---|---------------------------|
| a. almost touching | old and young people |
| b. set a new altitude record in | an almost impossible feat |
| c. It was said that the existing record | a hot-air balloon |
| d. aim high | and other activities |
| e. I am proud in achieving | in life |
| f. gave a special message to India's | the edge of space |
| g. I am sure you can | for flying |
| h. venture into sports | in his blood |
| i. Mr. Singhanian has a passion | would never be broken |
| j. he has flying | also attain such feats |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

GAP FILL: Put the words in the column on the right into the gaps in the text.

Indian breaks hot-air balloon record

A daredevil Indian businessman has _____ into the record books by almost touching the _____ of space. Vijaypat Singhania, 67, set a new altitude record in a hot-air balloon by rising to 21,336 meters above sea _____. Mr. Singhania joked about his achievement, stating: "It was said that the _____ record...would never be broken. I suppose it took an Indian". He excitedly dedicated his flight to the Indian people. He encouraged them to _____ him and aim high in life. He said: "We are certainly among the _____ in the world. This is a _____ moment for India. I am proud in achieving an _____ impossible feat. So will every Indian."

best
level
copy
flown
existing
almost
edge
proud

Mr. Singhania also gave a _____ message to India's old and young people. He told them: "If I can do _____ a thing at the age of 67, I am sure you can also _____ such feats. I also hope that many young boys and girls would like to venture into _____ and other activities which would bring them international fame." He spoke of his record-breaking flight: "It has been a very _____ journey for me. I have been [flying] for 46 years...It is the _____ time [I] decided to gamble on hot-air balloons." Mr. Singhania has a _____ for flying and won the International Around the World Air Race in 1994. He said he has flying in his _____.

such
first
sports
special
blood
attain
slow
passion

LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

Indian breaks hot-air balloon record

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Mr. Singhania also gave a special _____ to India's old and young people. He told them: "If I can do such a thing at the age of 67, I am sure you can also _____ such feats. I also hope that many young boys and girls would like to _____ into sports and other activities which would bring them international fame." He spoke of his record-breaking _____: "It has been a very slow journey for me. I have been [flying] for 46 years...It is the first time [I] decided to _____ on hot-air balloons." Mr. Singhania has a passion for flying and won the International Around the World Air Race in 1994. He said he has flying in his _____.

AFTER READING / LISTENING

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

- 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 "INSPIRATION" SURVEY: In pairs / groups, write down questions about inspiration, aiming high, achievements and world records.

- 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:

- | | |
|-------------|-----------|
| • books | • message |
| • set | • attain |
| • level | • venture |
| • never | • slow |
| • dedicated | • gamble |
| • proud | • blood |

DISCUSSION

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

- a. Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- b. Would you like to touch the edge of space?
- c. Is there a daredevil inside you?
- d. What world record would you like to break?
- e. Where would you like to fly in a hot-air balloon?
- f. What does "aim high in life" mean?
- g. Do you think Mr. Singhania is an inspirational person?
- h. Are there any people from your country who are similar to Mr. Singhania?
- i. Should there be more people like Mr. Singhania in the world?
- j. In what ways do you try to be successful?

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 message would you give the young people of your country?
- d. What is your proudest moment / achievement?
- e. Do you think the people from your country are among the best in the world?
- f. Do you think it's good to encourage youngsters to "venture into sports and other activities which would bring them international fame"?
- g. Have you experienced any slow journeys in life?
- h. What gambles have you taken in your life?
- i. What is in your blood?
- j. Did you like this discussion?

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

- a. What was the most interesting thing you heard?
- b. Was there a question you didn't like?
- c. Was there something you totally disagreed with?
- d. What did you like talking about?
- e. Which was the most difficult question?

SPEAKING

MR. SINGHANIA: You must prepare for and make a speech. The title is "Success in Life". Use Mr. Singhania as the inspiration for your speech. In pairs / groups, look at the pieces of information below about Mr. Singhania. Use them to make bigger and better ideas for your speech. Explain what is important about each piece of information. What can we learn? Be inspirational!

PIECES OF INFORMATION	IMPORTANCE	WHAT WE CAN LEARN	MORE INSPIRATION
Mr. Singhania is a daredevil.			
Mr. Singhania jokes about his achievements.			
He is proud of his country.			
He tells young and old people to aim high.			
He keeps going along slow journeys.			
He takes risks.			
There is passion in his blood			

- Change partners and compare and share your ideas. Give each other feedback. How can you help make each other's ideas more inspirational?
- Give your speeches.
- In pairs / groups, discuss the speeches and vote on the one you thought was best.
- Talk about your successes. Have the speeches changed your aims in life?

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 Vijaypat Singhania and his new world record. Share your findings with your class in the next lesson. Did you all find out similar things?

3. LETTER: Write a letter to Vijaypat Singhania about his new world record. Ask him about his feelings on breaking the record. Tell him what you think of his words to the people of India. Read what you wrote to your classmates in your next lesson. Did you all have similar ideas?

4. DAREDEVIL ME: You are a daredevil. Write a plan for your next adventure. Write also about what inspiration you think young and old people can take from your adventure. Show what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all write about similar things?

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

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

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|--------------|-------------|
| a. daredevil | adventurer |
| b. edge | fringe |
| c. altitude | height |
| d. dedicated | gave |
| e. feat | achievement |
| f. special | particular |
| g. attain | achieve |
| h. venture | go |
| i. gamble | take a risk |
| j. passion | love |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|---|---------------------------|
| a. almost touching | the edge of space |
| b. set a new altitude record in | a hot-air balloon |
| c. It was said that the existing record | would never be broken |
| d. aim high | in life |
| e. I am proud in achieving | an almost impossible feat |
| f. gave a special message to India's | old and young people |
| g. I am sure you can | also attain such feats |
| h. venture into sports | and other activities |
| i. Mr. Singhanian has a passion | for flying |
| j. he has flying | in his blood |

GAP FILL:

Indian breaks hot-air balloon record

A daredevil Indian businessman has **flown** into the record books by almost touching the **edge** of space. Vijaypat Singhanian, 67, set a new altitude record in a hot-air balloon by rising to 21,336 meters above sea **level**. Mr. Singhanian joked about his achievement, stating: "It was said that the **existing** record...would never be broken. I suppose it took an Indian". He excitedly dedicated his flight to the Indian people. He encouraged them to **copy** him and aim high in life. He said: "We are certainly among the **best** in the world. This is a **proud** moment for India. I am proud in achieving an **almost** impossible feat. So will every Indian."

Mr. Singhanian also gave a **special** message to India's old and young people. He told them: "If I can do **such** a thing at the age of 67, I am sure you can also **attain** such feats. I also hope that many young boys and girls would like to venture into **sports** and other activities which would bring them international fame." He spoke of his record-breaking flight: "It has been a very **slow** journey for me. I have been [flying] for 46 years...It is the **first** time [I] decided to gamble on hot-air balloons." Mr. Singhanian has a **passion** for flying and won the International Around the World Air Race in 1994. He said he has flying in his **blood**.