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## **First woman swims across the Atlantic**

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9th February, 2009

## THE ARTICLE

A 56-year-old has become the first woman to swim across the Atlantic Ocean. Jennifer Figge climbed out of the water in Trinidad on February the 5th to write her name in the record books. She left the Cape Verde Islands near Africa's west coast on January the 12th. Her original plan was to swim in a straight line to the Bahamas. However, bad weather forced her to change direction and she had to swim an extra 1,600 kilometres to Trinidad. She spent almost a month in the water, swimming for up to eight hours at a time. Her day started at 7.00am with a huge breakfast to keep her energy levels high. She burnt up to 8,000 calories a day during her epic adventure. Her team threw her energy drinks as she swam to keep her going.

Figge first decided to swim the Atlantic when she was a teenager. She was on a stormy flight to the USA and decided if the plane crashed, she could swim back to shore. She got inspiration from French swimmer Benoit Lecomte, who became the first man to achieve the feat a decade ago. She trained for her trans-Atlantic marathon in an outdoor swimming pool surrounded by snow. Figge said she was never afraid during her swim, even though she used a shark cage. She said she never saw any sharks, but did see lots of whales, dolphins and turtles. She thought a lot about her family and her pet dog while in the water and told the Associated Press news agency: "My dog doesn't know where I am. It's time for me to get back home to Hank."

# WARM-UPS

**1. SWIMMING:** Walk around the class and talk to other students about swimming. Change partners often. After you finish, sit with your partner(s) and share your findings.

**2. CHAT:** In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words from the article are most interesting and which are most boring.

*Atlantic Ocean / record books / west coast / change direction / breakfast / calories / teenagers / flights / inspiration / swimming pool / being afraid / dolphins / home*

Have a chat about the topics you liked. Change topics and partners frequently.

**3. FEATS:** What do you think of people doing these things in public places? Complete the table below. Change partners and share what you wrote.

Would you like to...	Yes / No (Why)?	How would you train?
swim the Atlantic?		
cycle the world?		
climb Everest?		
live with gorillas?		
walk across Africa?		

**4. MAD:** Students A **strongly** believe people who try and swim across the Atlantic are mad, crazy, nuts and bananas; Students B **strongly** believe people who try and swim across the Atlantic are inspirational. Change partners again and talk about your conversations.

**5. INSPIRATION:** Who inspires you most? Score these people from 10 (= unbelievably inspiring) to 1 (not at all inspiring). Discuss your scores with your partner(s). Change partners and talk about your conversations.

- |                                |                          |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------|
| _____ A trans-Atlantic swimmer | _____ An actor           |
| _____ A business leader        | _____ A friend           |
| _____ A charity worker         | _____ A world leader     |
| _____ A sports player          | _____ A religious leader |

**6. SWIM:** Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word 'swim'. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

# 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 American teenager has swum across the Atlantic Ocean.            | T / F |
| b. A woman swam from a Caribbean island to Africa.                     | T / F |
| c. The woman swam 1,600km farther than she thought.                    | T / F |
| d. The woman used around 18,000 calories a day on her swim.            | T / F |
| e. A plane crash inspired the woman to swim the Atlantic.              | T / F |
| f. A man swam the Atlantic for the first time around ten years ago.    | T / F |
| g. The woman swimmer trained in an outdoor pool for her Atlantic swim. | T / F |
| h. The woman wants to go home to her pet dog called Hank.              | T / F |

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

- |                |               |
|----------------|---------------|
| 1. woman       | a. drove      |
| 2. left        | b. influence  |
| 3. forced      | c. informed   |
| 4. huge        | d. female     |
| 5. epic        | e. rough      |
| 6. stormy      | f. enormous   |
| 7. inspiration | g. frightened |
| 8. trained     | h. departed   |
| 9. afraid      | i. heroic     |
| 10. told       | j. practiced  |

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

- |                                     |                           |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. write her name in the record     | a. straight line          |
| 2. swim in a                        | b. back home              |
| 3. bad weather forced her to        | c. huge breakfast         |
| 4. Her day started at 7.00am with a | d. from French swimmer... |
| 5. Her team threw her energy        | e. books                  |
| 6. She was on a stormy              | f. any sharks             |
| 7. She got inspiration              | g. flight to the USA      |
| 8. the first man to achieve         | h. drinks as she swam     |
| 9. She said she never saw           | i. the feat               |
| 10. It's time for me to get         | j. change direction       |

# WHILE READING / LISTENING

**GAP FILL:** Put the words into the gaps in the text.

A 56-year-old has \_\_\_\_\_ the first woman to swim across the Atlantic Ocean. Jennifer Figge \_\_\_\_\_ out of the water in Trinidad on February the 5th to \_\_\_\_\_ her name in the record books. She left the Cape Verde Islands near Africa's west coast on January the 12th. Her original plan was to swim in a \_\_\_\_\_ line to the Bahamas. However, bad weather forced her to change direction and she had to swim an \_\_\_\_\_ 1,600 kilometres to Trinidad. She spent almost a month in the water, swimming for up to eight hours at a time. Her day started at 7.00am with a \_\_\_\_\_ breakfast to keep her energy levels high. She \_\_\_\_\_ up to 8,000 calories a day during her epic adventure. Her team threw her energy drinks as she swam to keep her \_\_\_\_\_.

*burnt*  
*climbed*  
*extra*  
*become*  
*straight*  
*going*  
*write*  
*huge*

Figge first \_\_\_\_\_ to swim the Atlantic when she was a teenager. She was on a stormy flight to the USA and decided if the plane \_\_\_\_\_, she could swim back to shore. She got inspiration from French swimmer Benoitte Lecomte, who became the first man to \_\_\_\_\_ the feat a decade ago. She \_\_\_\_\_ for her trans-Atlantic marathon in an \_\_\_\_\_ swimming pool surrounded by snow. Figge said she was never afraid \_\_\_\_\_ her swim, even though she used a shark cage. She said she never saw any sharks, but did see lots of whales, dolphins and \_\_\_\_\_. She thought a lot about her family and her pet dog \_\_\_\_\_ in the water and told the Associated Press news agency: "My dog doesn't know where I am. It's time for me to get back home to Hank."

*during*  
*achieve*  
*outdoor*  
*decided*  
*while*  
*crashed*  
*trained*  
*turtles*

## **LISTENING:** Listen and fill in the spaces.

A 56-year-old has become the first woman to \_\_\_\_\_ Atlantic Ocean. Jennifer Figge climbed out of the water in Trinidad on February the 5th to \_\_\_\_\_ the record books. She left the Cape Verde Islands near Africa's west coast on January the 12th. Her original plan \_\_\_\_\_ straight line to the Bahamas. However, bad weather forced her to change direction and she had to swim an extra 1,600 kilometres to Trinidad. She spent almost a \_\_\_\_\_, swimming for up to eight hours at a time. Her day started at 7.00am with a huge breakfast \_\_\_\_\_ levels high. She burnt up to 8,000 calories a day during her epic adventure. Her team threw her energy drinks as she swam \_\_\_\_\_.

Figge \_\_\_\_\_ the Atlantic when she was a teenager. She was on a stormy flight to the USA and decided if the plane crashed, she \_\_\_\_\_ shore. She got inspiration from French swimmer Benoit Lecomte, who became \_\_\_\_\_ achieve the feat a decade ago. She trained for her trans-Atlantic marathon in an outdoor swimming pool surrounded by snow. Figge said she was never afraid during her swim, \_\_\_\_\_ used a shark cage. She said she never saw any sharks, but did see lots of whales, dolphins and turtles. She thought a lot about her family and her pet dog \_\_\_\_\_ and told the Associated Press news agency: "My dog doesn't know where I am. It's time \_\_\_\_\_ home to Hank."

# AFTER READING / LISTENING

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

<b>straight</b>	<b>line</b>
-----------------	-------------

- 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 activity. 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. TEST EACH OTHER:** Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall how they were used in the text:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• climbed</li><li>• west</li><li>• change</li><li>• spent</li><li>• huge</li><li>• threw</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• flight</li><li>• achieve</li><li>• outdoor</li><li>• afraid</li><li>• cage</li><li>• time</li></ul>
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# STUDENT SWIMMING SURVEY

Write five GOOD questions about swimming in the table. Do this in pairs. Each student must write the questions on his / her own paper.

When you have finished, interview other students. Write down their answers.

	STUDENT 1 _____	STUDENT 2 _____	STUDENT 3 _____
Q.1.			
Q.2.			
Q.3.			
Q.4.			
Q.5.			

- Now return to your original partner and share and talk about what you found out. Change partners often.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.



# SWIMMING DISCUSSION

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

- a) What did you think when you read the headline?
- b) What springs to mind when you hear the word 'swimming'?
- c) What do you think about the trans-Atlantic swim?
- d) Do you like swimming?
- e) Would you like to try a long-distance feat?
- f) What kind of person is it who swims across the Atlantic?
- g) What's the most difficult thing you've ever done?
- h) What do you think it's like to spend almost a month in the water?
- i) What kind of epic adventure would you like to go on?
- j) What do you eat and drink to keep going?

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# SWIMMING DISCUSSION

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

- a) Did you like reading this article?
- b) Did you decide to do anything as a teenager that you carried out later in life?
- c) Have you ever been on a stormy flight? What would you think about?
- d) Who do you get inspiration from?
- e) Have you ever trained hard for something?
- f) What would you be afraid of if you were swimming across the Atlantic?
- g) What would you think about if you spent a month in the water?
- h) What would you do in the first few days after a one-month swim?
- i) What three adjectives would you use to describe Jennifer Figge?
- j) What questions would you like to ask Jennifer Figge?

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# LANGUAGE

A 56-year-old has become the first woman to swim across the Atlantic Ocean. Jennifer Figge (1) \_\_\_\_\_ out of the water in Trinidad on February the 5th to write her name in the (2) \_\_\_\_\_ books. She left the Cape Verde Islands near Africa's west coast on January the 12th. Her (3) \_\_\_\_\_ plan was to swim in a straight line to the Bahamas. However, bad weather forced her to change direction and she (4) \_\_\_\_\_ to swim an extra 1,600 kilometres to Trinidad. She spent almost a month in the water, swimming for (5) \_\_\_\_\_ to eight hours at a time. Her day started at 7.00am with a huge breakfast to keep her energy levels high. She burnt up to 8,000 calories a day during her epic adventure. Her team threw her energy drinks (6) \_\_\_\_\_ she swam to keep her going.

Figge first decided to swim the Atlantic when she was a teenager. She was on a (7) \_\_\_\_\_ flight to the USA and decided if the plane crashed, she could swim back to shore. She (8) \_\_\_\_\_ inspiration from French swimmer Benoit Lecomte, who became the first man to achieve the feat a decade ago. She trained for her trans-Atlantic marathon in an outdoor swimming pool surrounded (9) \_\_\_\_\_ snow. Figge said she was never afraid (10) \_\_\_\_\_ her swim, even though she used a shark cage. She said she never saw any sharks, but did see lots of whales, dolphins and turtles. She thought a lot about her family and her pet dog (11) \_\_\_\_\_ in the water and told the Associated Press news (12) \_\_\_\_\_: "My dog doesn't know where I am. It's time for me to get back home to Hank."

## Put the correct words from the table below in the above article.

- |     |              |              |                |              |
|-----|--------------|--------------|----------------|--------------|
| 1.  | (a) climbing | (b) climber  | (c) climb      | (d) climbed  |
| 2.  | (a) record   | (b) records  | (c) recording  | (d) recorded |
| 3.  | (a) origins  | (b) original | (c) originally | (d) origin   |
| 4.  | (a) should   | (b) must     | (c) had        | (d) need     |
| 5.  | (a) down     | (b) across   | (c) up         | (d) in       |
| 6.  | (a) for      | (b) as       | (c) by         | (d) with     |
| 7.  | (a) storm    | (b) stormed  | (c) storms     | (d) stormy   |
| 8.  | (a) got      | (b) gave     | (c) grabbed    | (d) grew     |
| 9.  | (a) as       | (b) by       | (c) for        | (d) at       |
| 10. | (a) while    | (b) through  | (c) via        | (d) during   |
| 11. | (a) which    | (b) whine    | (c) while      | (d) white    |
| 12. | (a) agency   | (b) agents   | (c) ages       | (d) agenda   |



# 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 out more about Jennifer Figge's trans-Atlantic swim. Share what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

**3. RECORD FEATS:** Make a poster about different record feats. Write what you think is inspiring about them. Show your work to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all have similar things?

**4. SWIMMING:** Write a magazine article about the record swim. Include imaginary interviews with Jennifer Figge and her team.

Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Write down any new words and expressions you hear from your partner(s).

**5. THE SWIM:** Write an imaginary conversation between Jennifer Figge and some dolphins she met along the way.

Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Write down any new words and expressions you hear from your partner(s). Role play your conversation in front of the class.

**6. LETTER:** Write a letter to Jennifer Figge. Ask her three questions about her swim. Give her three suggestions on what she should do next. Read your letter to your partner(s) in your next lesson. Your partner(s) will answer your questions.

# ANSWERS

## TRUE / FALSE:

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

## SYNONYM MATCH:

- |                |               |
|----------------|---------------|
| 1. woman       | a. female     |
| 2. left        | b. departed   |
| 3. forced      | c. drove      |
| 4. huge        | d. enormous   |
| 5. epic        | e. heroic     |
| 6. stormy      | f. rough      |
| 7. inspiration | g. influence  |
| 8. trained     | h. practiced  |
| 9. afraid      | i. frightened |
| 10. told       | j. informed   |

## PHRASE MATCH:

- |                                     |                           |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. write her name in the record     | a. books                  |
| 2. swim in a                        | b. straight line          |
| 3. bad weather forced her to        | c. change direction       |
| 4. Her day started at 7.00am with a | d. huge breakfast         |
| 5. Her team threw her energy        | e. drinks as she swam     |
| 6. She was on a stormy              | f. flight to the USA      |
| 7. She got inspiration              | g. from French swimmer... |
| 8. the first man to achieve         | h. the feat               |
| 9. She said she never saw           | i. any sharks             |
| 10. It's time for me to get         | j. back home              |

## GAP FILL:

### First woman swims across the Atlantic

A 56-year-old has **become** the first woman to swim across the Atlantic Ocean. Jennifer Figge **climbed** out of the water in Trinidad on February the 5th to **write** her name in the record books. She left the Cape Verde Islands near Africa's west coast on January the 12th. Her original plan was to swim in a **straight** line to the Bahamas. However, bad weather forced her to change direction and she had to swim an **extra** 1,600 kilometres to Trinidad. She spent almost a month in the water, swimming for up to eight hours at a time. Her day started at 7.00am with a **huge** breakfast to keep her energy levels high. She **burnt** up to 8,000 calories a day during her epic adventure. Her team threw her energy drinks as she swam to keep her **going**.

Figge first **decided** to swim the Atlantic when she was a teenager. She was on a stormy flight to the USA and decided if the plane **crashed**, she could swim back to shore. She got inspiration from French swimmer Benoit Lecomte, who became the first man to **achieve** the feat a decade ago. She **trained** for her trans-Atlantic marathon in an **outdoor** swimming pool surrounded by snow. Figge said she was never afraid **during** her swim, even though she used a shark cage. She said she never saw any sharks, but did see lots of whales, dolphins and **turtles**. She thought a lot about her family and her pet dog **while** in the water and told the Associated Press news agency: "My dog doesn't know where I am. It's time for me to get back home to Hank."

## LANGUAGE WORK

- 1 - d    2 - a    3 - b    4 - c    5 - c    6 - b    7 - d    8 - a    9 - b    10 - d    11 - c    12 - a