


## 1 SPEAKING

- a  Do you (or anyone you know) do any outdoor sports or activities? Tell a partner.  
If no, would you like to do any outdoor sports?

## BORED OF BEING JUST A REGULAR HUMAN?

Look at these strange and fantastic sports!



### Swim like a fish: 'Mermaiding'

A mermaid is a sea creature in old stories, with a woman's upper body but the tail of a fish. Mermaids may be imaginary, but the sport of mermaiding is real. In this sport, you simply have to swim with your legs together in a big fishtail made of plastic. There's a skill to being a mermaid – you have to be able to swim like a fish. You also have to be able to go for a long time without breathing.

### Fly like a bird: 'BASE jumping'

For this sport, you need a 'wingsuit'. This is something you wear which can turn you into a bird. You just need to find a very high place to jump from. This can be out of a plane or from a mountaintop. It helps if you aren't too afraid of high places! When you're falling, you'll be able to open your arms and legs to make wings and fly away. It's a great feeling – there's nothing like it. But make sure you've got a parachute – if not, your flight won't end well!



### Go like lightning: 'Skeleton'

In this sport, you lie on a board and go down a hill or mountain on a road of ice, head-first at 130 km/h. The board, and the sport, is called a 'skeleton'. You wear a special hat and suit to make you go faster. You have to be brave, because when you start you can't stop. You go as fast as lightning, and there's no way of making the board go more slowly. Skeleton became an Olympic sport in 2002.

### Climb like a spider: 'Urban free climbing'

Our tallest buildings have walls of metal and glass – who could climb something like that? But there are people who can do it – Alain 'Spiderman' Robert, for example. This Frenchman can climb just about anything, and without the help of any special equipment. He is able to climb some of the most famous skyscrapers, including the world's tallest – the Burj Khalifa in Dubai. His main problem is that free climbing of buildings is not allowed in most countries, and the police are often waiting for him at the top!



## 2 READING

a Read the article on page 46. Match the sports with these pictures a–d.

- |                                       |  |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> mermaiding   | <input type="checkbox"/> skeleton            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> BASE jumping | <input type="checkbox"/> urban free climbing |



b Read the article again and answer the questions.

Which sport ... ?

- 1 can you do without having special clothes
- 2 doesn't take you to high places
- 3 is part of an international competition
- 4 starts with falling
- 5 do you usually do in winter
- 6 is *not* like anything an animal does
- 7 do people normally do in cities
- 8 takes you to a place with no air

c Find words in the article with these meanings.

- 1 animal \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 not real \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 taking air into your body \_\_\_\_\_
- 4 clothes which help you fly \_\_\_\_\_
- 5 the 'arms' of birds; they use them to fly \_\_\_\_\_
- 6 a piece of equipment to make you fall more slowly \_\_\_\_\_
- 7 with your head going before your body \_\_\_\_\_
- 8 strong, not afraid \_\_\_\_\_
- 9 connected to the city, not the countryside \_\_\_\_\_
- 10 very tall buildings \_\_\_\_\_



### BETTER READING: INTENSIVE READING

Sometimes we need to read a text very carefully in order to understand or remember as much detail as possible.

Read the first paragraph of the article very carefully. Note down everything you can remember about mermaids and mermaiding in as much detail as possible.

d Use your own ideas to answer the questions. Compare your ideas with a partner.

- 1 In mermaiding, why can't you breathe sometimes?
- 2 In BASE jumping, what happens if you don't have a parachute?
- 3 In skeleton, how do you stop?
- 4 In urban free climbing, why don't the police stop the climber before the top?

## 3 SPEAKING

a Ask and answer the questions with a partner.

- 1 Which of the sports in the text would you like to try?
- 2 What other dangerous sports do you know? Have you tried any of them?
- 3 Why do people do dangerous sports?