

TOUCHING THE VOID – EXTRA

Level 3

This level is suitable for students who have been learning English for at least three years and up to four years. It corresponds with the Common European Framework level B1. Suitable for users of TEAM magazine.

SYNOPSIS

In 1985, mountain climbers Joe Simpson and Simon Yates went to the Cordillera Huayhuash in Peru to climb Siula Grande. At 6344 metres, it is the second highest mountain in the range and it is also the most difficult. Joe and Simon wanted to be the first people to climb it. They left their friend, Richard, at base camp to guard their things and set off. They took very few gas and water supplies, because they wanted to travel quickly. After a fast, successful ascent, disaster struck when Joe broke his leg. Simon tried to lower his injured friend down Siula Grande. Near the bottom of the mountain, they were caught in a storm. Unable to see or hear clearly, Simon accidentally lowered Joe over an ice cliff. Suspended in mid-air, Joe couldn't climb back up and his weight was slowly pulling Simon off the mountain. Simon decided to cut the rope. The next morning, Simon, believing Joe had died, returned to camp.

Incredibly, Joe survived the fall. He landed inside a large crevasse, but he managed to escape through a hole in the ice. For three days, with no food, very little water, and a badly-broken leg, Joe dragged himself across a dangerous glacier and barren moraines almost all the way back to their original camp. Luckily, Simon and Richard were still there and they heard Joe shouting for help. After a night in the camp, the three of them began the long and difficult journey to Lima. Joe was admitted to hospital there and the doctors operated on his leg. The book finishes with Joe explaining why he wrote *Touching the Void*.

THE BACK STORY

When Joe Simpson and Simon Yates returned to the UK after their adventure on Siula Grande, some people in the climbing community were critical of Simon's decision to cut the rope. Joe did not agree. He wrote *Touching the Void* partly because he wanted to express how grateful he was to Simon for saving him on the mountain. If he were Simon, he writes, he would have done the same thing.

Joe has now written six books. He has continued climbing. Simon gives lectures on climbing all over the world and runs his own expedition company. He is also an author and has written two books.

Touching the Void has become a mountaineering legend. Later, it was made into a docudrama film. It is so famous that today it is possible to go on a guided walking holiday in the Cordillera Huayhuash and visit Simon and Joe's original base camp.

MEDIA LINKS

DVD: *Touching the Void* is available on DVD, produced by Channel 4 Films.

CD: A recording of *Touching the Void* is available to accompany the Scholastic ELT reader.

Internet: Joe Simpson's official website is: www.noordinaryjoe.co.uk

Books: This reader is adapted from *Touching the Void* by Joe Simpson, published by Vintage Books.

HOW TO USE YOUR SCHOLASTIC MEDIA READER

Choosing and motivating

Is this the right story for your class? Do they want to read *Touching the Void*? If not, choose another book! Motivate students by telling them some background information and by reading aloud the first page of the story with dramatic atmosphere and emotion.

Organising

Plan a class reading schedule. Have class feedback sessions each week. Talk and ask about the story so far. Get students to ask each other questions. Select exercises from the back of the reader and extra activities from this resource sheet to go with each section of reading. (All answers on page 4.)

Using the DVD and CD

Try to get the English language version DVD (with or without subtitles) of the film. Watch it yourself first in case there are scenes or language that are not suitable for your class. Show the film in parallel with the class reading schedule or in two longer sessions. There are other ideas for using the DVD in class on page 4.

Students can listen to the CD and follow in their books. They can listen and then read or read and then listen. All these options will enhance their understanding and speed up their reading.

Glossary

Go to 'New Words' on the inside back cover of the reader. Translate the words with the class or get students to find meanings at home.

Book exercises

Show students the Self-Study Activities on pages 62–64. These are divided into sections. They complete some exercises before they read a section, and some after. Check the answers with the whole class.

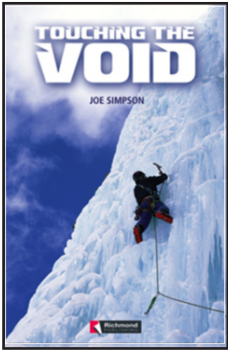
Fact Files

After the story, there are three Fact Files. Set these as self-study or use for whole class work. The files explore the themes of the story, including information about the making of the film, the history of climbing Everest and looking at the hobby of climbing. They include student activities. Project ideas are on page 4.

What did they think?

Get everyone to do a written or verbal review of the book. Compare opinions. Will they go and see the film? Did you like it? Let us know at readers@link2English.com.

RESOURCE SHEET STUDENT ACTIVITIES



TOUCHING THE VOID

- EXTRA

People and places

1 Answer the questions.

Who ...

- a) is from Sheffield, England? Joe Simpson
- b) is also from the north of England?
- c) stayed at the camp while Simon and Joe climbed?

Where ...

- d) is Siula Grande?

How ...

- e) high is Siula Grande?

Chapters 1-3

1 Are these sentences true (T), or false (F)? Correct any mistakes.

- a) Joe was asleep in a tent beside Richard.
F-Joe was asleep in a tent beside Simon...
- b) Simon and Joe found Bomb Alley on their third practice climb.
.....
- c) The ice was thin on parts of the West Face.
.....
- d) At the end of the second day, Simon dug a snow hole.
.....
- e) You cannot put ice screws in powder snow.
.....
- f) The climb up the widest gully was the worst climb Joe had ever done.
.....

2 You are standing at the top of Siula Grande with Simon and Joe. A storm is coming. What can you see, hear and feel? Describe it.

3 Which words go with Joe (J)? Which words go with Simon (S)? Which words go with Richard (R)? Write J, S or R next to each word.

- | | | | | | |
|---------|---------------------------------------|-------|--------------------------|------------|--------------------------|
| worried | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> J | funny | <input type="checkbox"/> | optimistic | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| serious | <input type="checkbox"/> | joke | <input type="checkbox"/> | fear | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Chapters 4-6

1 Make sentences.

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| a) Joe felt nervous as Simon climbed | i) the safe side of the ridge. |
| b) There would be no more water until | ii) he was fighting so bravely. |
| c) Joe saw the north ridge through | iii) for the pain. |
| d) The way up to the summit was | iv) an easy climb. |
| e) Joe told Simon to move to | v) to the top of the gully. |
| f) Simon gave Joe some pills | vi) a hole in the clouds. |
| g) Simon couldn't leave Joe while | vii) they got to the lakes. |

2 Complete the sentences with the adjectives.

dark	steep	thin	straight	thick
------	-------	-----------------	----------	-------

- a) The air was very thin and it was hard to breathe.
- b) Climbing up the ridge was very tiring.
- c) You couldn't see through the clouds.
- d) We decided to go east in a line.
- e) By the time it got we were still 6,000 metres above the ground.

3 Why is Siula Grande a dangerous mountain to climb? Work with a partner and write a list of five reasons.

Chapters 7-9

1 Who said these things? In what situation?

- a) 'What a terrible place to die.'
Joe. After he had fallen into the crevasse.
- b) 'Stupid.'
.....
- c) 'It's good to see you. I was worried.'
.....
- d) 'You look terrible.'
.....
- e) 'There was nothing I could do.'
.....

2 Complete the sentences with the words.

before	for	so	because	since
--------	-----	----	--------------------	-------

- a) Simon and Joe couldn't melt any snow because they had no gas.
- b) Joe's fingers were cold he couldn't feel them.
- c) Simon dug a hole in the snow lowering Joe.
- d) It was 8.30. Joe had been hanging in space 7.30. Exactly one hour.
- e) Simon waited Joe to take his weight off the rope.

RICHMOND MEDIA READERS

RESOURCE SHEET STUDENT ACTIVITIES

3 What do the numbers and times refer to in the story?

- a) 100 metres *When Joe and Simon tied their ropes together they had 100 metres of rope.*
- b) 1½ hours
- c) 25 metres
- d) 26 metres
- e) 5 hours

Chapters 10–12

1 Put the sentences in the correct order.

- a) Joe fell down a steep hole.
- b) It started to snow.
- c) Joe got lost in the dark.
- d) Richard went for a wash.
- e) Joe escaped from the crevasse.
- f) Simon and Richard burnt Joe's clothes.

2 Complete the sentences with the correct name, Joe, Simon or Richard.

- a) *Joe* felt he was losing a race.
- b) shaved in the warm sun.
- c) woke up screaming.
- d) lost his sunglasses.
- e) had breakfast with Simon.
- f) took pills for his frostbite.

Chapters 13–16

1 Complete the sentences with the correct time expression.

a few minutes later ~~for two days~~ by 4 o'clock
hours went by two-day journey

- a) Simon had been back *for two days*
- b) I crawled down the gully and I had reached the lakes.
- c) and my head was full of strange thoughts.
- d) I can't do a now.
- e) I found my money bag under a rock

2 Answer the questions.

- a) How does Richard get the mules?
- b) What idea filled Joe with fear?
- c) How did the voice inside Joe's head save him?
- d) What were the strange thoughts inside Joe's head?
- e) Why did Joe think he might die on the journey to Lima?
- f) Who travelled in the truck from Cajatambo to Lima?

FINAL TASKS

1 *Touching the Void* is about an adventure which went wrong. Write about an adventure in your life. It can be a holiday, a journey, an activity, or just an interesting thing that happened to you. Did anything go wrong? If you did the same thing again would you do it in a different way?

2 Imagine you are Richard. It is one year after your trip to Siula Grande with Simon and Joe. Write about what happened from your point of view. Use the first person 'I'.

VOCABULARY BUILDER

1 Find 'New Words' at the back of the book for each of these definitions.

- 1. You often feel like this after you've done something that you think was wrong.
- 2. A kind of animal which is used to carry things.
- 3. You do this to snow by making it hot.
- 4. The shape of someone's foot in the ground after they have walked there.
- 5. This is something you sleep on in a tent.
- 6. An empty space.
- 7. The top of a mountain.
- 8. A river of ice that moves very, very slowly.
- 9. The side of a hill or mountain.
- 10. A large rock.

2 Look at pages 6–7 and complete the sentences with the correct word.

helmet	boots	moraines	harness	cooker	knot
		ridge	sleeping bag		

- 1. The rocks and earth which are carried down a mountain by a glacier are called
- 2. You sleep inside a to keep you warm when you are in a snow hole or tent.
- 3. You can tie a in a rope or tie two ropes together using one.
- 4. A is the line where two sides of a mountain meet.
- 5. You use a and gas to melt water.
- 6. When you are climbing, you should wear a to protect your head.
- 7. You attach your to your rope when you are climbing. It holds you.
- 8. You wear special climbing on your feet to help you climb.

TOUCHING THE VOID: MAKING THE FILM (pages 56–7)

Discussion

Students work in groups. Each group thinks of a true story that was in the news. It must be a story where something happened to people either because of dangerous weather or because it was a dangerous adventure. If students can't think of a true news story then they can think of a film or book, e.g. *Castaway* or *Journey to the Centre of the Earth* (Jules Verne).

The students are making a film based on their stories and must have a meeting to decide on a director for the film, the location, and the actors they think are best for the main parts.

CLIMBING EVEREST (pages 58–9)

Presentation

Students work in pairs or groups. Explain to students that Hillary and Tenzing are an example of a famous 'first' involving humans against nature. Tell them they are going to research another famous 'first' and write about it. It can be historical or more modern, for example, Amundsen's journey to the South Pole, John Speke's discovery of the source of the Nile, Ellen MacArthur's solo sailing trip around the world etc. After gathering all the information the students can design a poster about the event. Encourage them to include information about the dangers the people encountered. Using the poster as a focus point, each group or pair gives a short talk to the rest of the class.

I WANT TO BE A CLIMBER (pages 60–1)

Interview

Students work in pairs, Student A and Student B. Student A is an experienced climber from a climbing club. Student B is an applicant who wants to join the club. First, Students A learn the information in the fact file and prepare to answer questions about climbing. Students B write down reasons why they would like to join the club, their past experience with any similar activity, and what qualities they have which would help them become successful climbers. Then, in pairs, Student A interviews Student B and decides if he/she is a suitable person to join the club.

Alternatively, the interviewers could be interviewing candidates for a climbing expedition.

DVD/CD FOLLOW-UP

If you plan to show the film in class, watch it yourself. Check that it is suitable. Identify good places to pause. Explain that students shouldn't be discouraged if they can't understand everything at first.

What happens next?

Freeze-frame a scene just before a dramatic moment. Students say what is about to happen and what has just happened.

Observing

Choose a scene before class and prepare questions on it. Tell the students to watch carefully and note down details about clothes, people in the scene, objects etc. Play the scene a couple of times and then ask questions, e.g. *Why does Joe fall over the cliff? What does he try to do first? What happens to the small pieces of rope? Why is Simon getting desperate? How does he cut the rope?* etc.

Put it in context

Play short sections of the story. After each one, ask students to describe the sequence of events. This could be a written quiz with students writing down the answers.

ANSWER KEY

Self-Study Activities (pages 62–4)

Chapters 1–5

- 1 a) rope b) axe c) camp d) glacier e) frostbite f) boulder g) alley
- 2 a) exhausted b) melt c) dig
- 3 a) i b) i c) i
- 5 a) Because he doesn't want to worry so much. b) Because they found Bomb Alley. c) They had to climb over thin ice with water under it. d) Because it is too soft to put ice screws in. e) Joe worries that always wanting new and more difficult climbing adventures will lead to a serious accident. f) He falls.
- 6 a) Because he could now see all the way to the bottom of the mountain and he felt unsafe. b) Simon: Joe describes him as 'optimistic' in chapter one. c) Because the climb down was going to be more difficult than they had thought.

Chapters 6–10

- 7 a) knot b) head torch c) guilty d) crawls e) slope f) hop g) lower
- 8 a) ii b) iii c) i
- 10 a) Joe isn't waiting. He's hopping across the snow on his good leg. b) When the storm came, Simon continued lowering Joe through the storm. c) After falling, Joe can't reach the walls of the cliff with his axe. They are too far away. d) Joe doesn't fall to the bottom of the crevasse. He lands on bridge of ice half-way down. e) Richard doesn't give an opinion. f) Joe crawls across the glacier.

Chapters 11–16

- 13 a) If you crawl you are unable to see what is ahead of you. b) He tried to keep going in the dark and lost his way. c) He thinks that he has killed Joe. d) Richard is worried that Simon will feel guiltier if he doesn't leave the camp. e) Joe thinks that Simon and Richard might have left the camp.

Resource Sheet Activities

People and Places

- 1 b) Richard Hawking c) Simon Yates d) Joe Simpson e) In the Cordillera Huayhuash in the centre of Peru. f) 6344 metres.

Chapters 1–3

- 1 b) F (It was the second climb.) c) T d) F (The hole was already there.) e) T f) T
- 3 worried (J), serious (J), fear (J), optimistic (S), joke (R), funny (R)

Chapters 4–6

- 1 b) vii c) vi d) iv e) i f) iii g) ii
- 2 b) steep c) thick d) straight e) dark
- 3 *Possible answers:* powder snow; sudden storms; cornices; hanging ice cliffs; thin air

Chapters 7–9

- 1 b) Joe, when he is in the crevasse. c) Richard, when he first sees Simon. d) Richard, when he realises that something is wrong. e) Simon, when he is telling Richard what happened.
- 2 b) so c) before d) since e) for
- 3 b) The time Simon waited after Joe had fallen over the cliff before cutting the rope. c) The distance down to the ice floor in the crevasse. d) The length of the rope that Joe had in the crevasse. e) The time it took Joe to climb out of the crevasse.

Chapters 10–12

- 1 The correct order is: e, b, a, d, f, c.
- 2 b) Simon c) Joe d) Joe e) Richard f) Simon

Chapters 13–16

- 1 b) by 4 o'clock c) hours went by d) two-day journey e) a few minutes later
- 2 a) He borrows them from Spinoza. b) He was scared that Richard and Simon had left camp. c) It always told him to do sensible things. d) Joe couldn't stop thinking of a song he didn't like. His head was also full of pictures of people laughing, screaming, and crying. e) He couldn't hear the voice inside his head which had saved him before. f) Five: the driver, an old man with two broken legs, Joe, Simon and Richard.

Vocabulary builder

- 1 1. guilty 2. mule 3. melt 4. footprint 5. sleeping mat 6. void 7. summit 8. glacier 9. slope 10. boulder
- 2 1. moraines 2. sleeping bag 3. knot 4. ridge 5. cooker 6. helmet 7. harness 8. boots