

Name: _____

Class: _____ Date: _____

What a Stunt!

Millions of people visit Niagara Falls in America every year. Most people come to watch 5800 cubic metres of water plunge over the Falls every second and crash into the gorge 53 metres below. However, some people have come to try some amazing and dangerous stunts. Some of these adventurers crossed above the Falls in unusual ways. Other adventurers got into the river and went over the Falls in strange containers. One person even went over the Falls in a 2-metre rubber ball!



1 How can we tell Niagara Falls is a popular place to visit?

2 How high is the waterfall at Niagara Falls?

The record for stunts over the Falls is held by 'The Great Blondin'. In the mid-1800s, he walked over the Falls on a tightrope several times. The tightrope was strung across the gorge and the turbulent water far below. Rather than simply walking across, Blondin stopped halfway and did a back somersault. For his next crossing, he rode a bicycle. On one crossing, he stopped in the middle and cooked an omelette. Another time, he crossed the gorge with his hands and feet tied together. The last time he crossed, he carried a man on his back.

William Hunt crossed the Falls on a tightrope in 1860. He tried to out-do The Great Blondin by carrying a washing machine on his back. Washing machines in those days worked by hand. Halfway across, Hunt stopped, lowered a bucket into the gorge to collect water, pulled the bucket up, and poured the water into the machine. Then he did a load of laundry!

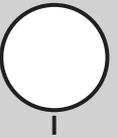
Annie Taylor tried a different sort of stunt. In 1901, the 63-year-old school teacher went over the Falls in an oak barrel. First, her assistants strapped her in and then closed the barrel tightly. They took the barrel out by boat and dropped it into the river above the Falls. Before long, the barrel shot over the Falls. It was pulled from the water 17 minutes later and, amazingly, Taylor was alive. Dazed, she climbed out of the barrel with a bleeding head. "No one ought ever do that again," she said. Her stunt made her famous for a while, but when she tried to make money giving talks about her adventure, she was not successful.

Blondin, Hunt and Taylor were lucky. Other stunt artists have died at the Falls. Today there are rules to stop risky stunts that are dangerous to the people who do them, and to the people who have to rescue them. Niagara Falls is amazing enough without them!

3

Look at the sentence: *The tightrope was strung across the gorge and the turbulent water far below.* What does the word 'turbulent' mean? Tick **one** box.

Cold Calm Rough Deep

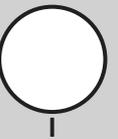


4

Blondin crossed the Falls on a tightrope doing different stunts. Which stunts did he do? Tick **two** boxes.

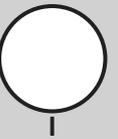
He crossed with his hands and feet tied together. He crossed riding a bicycle.

He crossed carrying a washing machine. He crossed carrying a dog.



5

Why did William Hunt choose to cross Niagara Falls carrying a washing machine on his back?

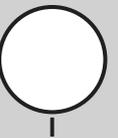


6

Look at the paragraph beginning: *Annie Taylor tried ...* Which of these sub-headings would make a good heading for this paragraph? Tick **one** box.

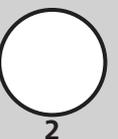
The Great Blondin Washing on a tightrope

The daredevil school teacher The amazing Niagara Falls



7

The author writes that Annie Taylor's barrel 'shot over the falls'. Why is 'shot' a good choice of word?



2

8 Name **two** different containers people have used to go over Niagara Falls.

9 When Annie Taylor climbed out of the barrel she said, “*No one ought ever do that again.*” Why do you think she felt no one else should do this?

10 Look at the final paragraph. Which **one word**, other than ‘dangerous’, is used to describe the stunts?

11 Why are there rules to stop people from doing dangerous stunts at Niagara Falls? Find **two** reasons.

12 Do you think it is fair that there are rules to stop people doing dangerous stunts at Niagara Falls?

For teacher use

Your mark	_____ out of 15
What went well	
How to improve	

