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Ready-to-use ESL / EFL Lessons

## **Russian breaks time-in-space record**

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**18 August, 2005**

## **THE ARTICLE**

### **Russian breaks time-in-space record**

**BNE:** Veteran Russian spaceman Sergei Krikalev, 46, has set a new record for the longest time spent in space. Krikalev recorded his 748th day in orbit on August 16. He will celebrate his record-breaking achievement by going on a six-hour space walk to do routine maintenance and upgrades. His first journey into space was in November 1988 on a visit to the Mir space station. In 1994, he was the first Russian to ride on the space shuttle. He was also on the first mission to assemble the International Space Station in 1998.

Krikalev said his profession was a “challenge”. He explained his reasons for choosing to spend so much time in space: “Why do people climb mountains? — It’s cold, it’s windy, it’s difficult to haul up all of the equipment, but then it’s exciting. You overcome some difficulties. You see some new sights. You do things that other people cannot.” He said living in the heavens was the perfect job. His lengthy periods of time in space have also provided precious scientific data on the physical and psychological stresses on the body.

## WARM-UPS

**1. I'M A COSMONAUT:** Imagine you are a Russian cosmonaut on the International Space Station. You have been in space for six months. Float around the class and talk to the other "cosmonauts" about life on the space station, space and the lack of space.

**2. RECORDS:** In pairs / groups, talk about the difficulties involved in breaking the following "longest time" records. Which ones would you like to try and why?

- Being in space
- Kissing
- Not sleeping
- Being alone
- Being married
- Speaking English only
- Being away from your country
- Other

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

*Russians / cosmonauts / astronauts / space / space walk / record breaking / journeys / professions / challenges / mountains / overcoming difficulties / stress*

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

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

**5. TWO-MINUTE DEBATES:** Debate these fun arguments for just two minutes each. Student A agrees with the first argument, Student B, the second.

- a. Living in space would be crazy. vs. Living in space would be great.
- b. Weightlessness would be wonderful. vs. Weightlessness would be boring.
- c. Being on Earth is more beautiful. vs. Looking at the earth is more beautiful.
- d. An astronaut is the best job in the world. vs. There are better jobs.
- e. Living in space is bad for your health. vs. Living on Earth is bad for your health.
- f. A holiday in space would be exciting. vs. A holiday in space would be stressful.
- g. We will have to live in space one day. vs. We will always be able to live on Earth.
- h. China will be the leader in space exploration. vs. America will always be first.
- i. Space travel is a waste of money. vs. Space travel is money well spent.

## BEFORE READING / LISTENING

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

- |   |       |
|---|-------|
| a. A cosmonaut broke the record for the longest time spent in space.      | T / F |
| b. A Russian has spent 748 days in space.                                 | T / F |
| c. He will celebrate with a champagne party on the space station.         | T / F |
| d. His biggest dream is to ride on NASA's space shuttle.                  | T / F |
| e. He said his profession wasn't such a challenge.                        | T / F |
| f. He talked about the difficulties of hauling equipment into space.      | T / F |
| g. He said living in the heavens was the perfect job.                     | T / F |
| h. He has provided scientists with lots of data about stress on the body. | T / F |

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

- |                |              |
|----------------|--------------|
| a. veteran     | career       |
| b. set         | feat         |
| c. achievement | put together |
| d. routine     | beat         |
| e. assemble    | established  |
| f. profession  | space        |
| g. haul        | information  |
| h. overcome    | regular      |
| i. the heavens | long-time    |
| j. data        | carry        |

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

- |                                  |                                 |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| a. set a                         | and upgrades                    |
| b. Krikalev recorded his         | difficulties                    |
| c. celebrate his record-breaking | of time in space                |
| d. routine maintenance           | the International Space Station |
| e. the first mission to assemble | stresses on the body            |
| f. difficult to haul             | new record                      |
| g. overcome some                 | up all of the equipment         |
| h. living                        | achievement                     |
| i. lengthy periods               | 748th day in orbit              |
| j. physical and psychological    | in the heavens                  |

## WHILE READING / LISTENING

**GAP FILL:** Put the words in the column on the right into the correct spaces.

### Russian breaks time-in-space record

**BNE:** \_\_\_\_\_ Russian spaceman Sergei Krikalev, 46, has \_\_\_\_\_ a new record for the longest time spent in space. Krikalev recorded his 748th day in \_\_\_\_\_ on August 16. He will celebrate his record-breaking \_\_\_\_\_ by going on a six-hour space walk to do \_\_\_\_\_ maintenance and upgrades. His first \_\_\_\_\_ into space was in November 1988 on a visit to the Mir space station. In 1994, he was the first Russian to \_\_\_\_\_ on the space shuttle. He was also on the first mission to \_\_\_\_\_ the International Space Station in 1998.

Krikalev said his \_\_\_\_\_ was a “challenge”. He explained his reasons for \_\_\_\_\_ to spend so much time in space: “Why do people climb mountains? – It’s cold, it’s windy, it’s difficult to \_\_\_\_\_ up all of the \_\_\_\_\_, but then it’s exciting. You \_\_\_\_\_ some difficulties. You see some new sights. You do things that other people cannot.” He said living in the \_\_\_\_\_ was the perfect job. His \_\_\_\_\_ periods of time in space have also provided \_\_\_\_\_ scientific data on the physical and psychological stresses on the body.

*routine*  
*set*  
*assemble*  
*ride*  
*veteran*  
*orbit*  
*journey*  
*achievement*  
  
*lengthy*  
*overcome*  
*equipment*  
*choosing*  
*precious*  
*profession*  
*heavens*  
*haul*

## AFTER READING / LISTENING

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

- 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 "TIME IN SPACE" SURVEY:** In pairs / groups, write down questions about living in space.

- 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:

- |             |             |
|-------------|-------------|
| • set       | • challenge |
| • recorded  | • haul      |
| • celebrate | • heavens   |
| • upgrades  | • perfect   |
| • journey   | • lengthy   |
| • assemble  | • stresses  |

## **DISCUSSION**

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

- a. What did you think when you first read this headline?
- b. Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- c. What are your thoughts on this new record?
- d. Would you like to spend a long time in space?
- e. What do you think would be the highlights of living in space?
- f. What do you think cosmonauts miss most about life on Earth?
- g. What kind of person do you think Sergei Krikalev is?
- h. Do you think the USA would like to break this record?
- i. What do you know about Mir and the International Space Station?
- j. What is the purpose of the International Space Station?

### 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 do you think are the challenges of being a cosmonaut and astronaut?
- d. What feelings do you think first-time space travelers have?
- e. Do you think living in the heavens would be the perfect job?
- f. What psychological and physical stresses do you think Mr. Krikalev would suffer?
- g. What question would you most like to ask Mr. Krikalev?
- h. How do you think Mr. Krikalev would answer that question?
- i. What are the biggest difficulties you have overcome?
- j. Did you like this discussion?

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

- a. What question would you like to ask about this topic?
- b. What was the most interesting thing you heard?
- c. Was there a question you didn't like?
- d. Was there something you totally disagreed with?
- e. What did you like talking about?
- f. Do you want to know how anyone else answered the questions?
- g. Which was the most difficult question?

## SPEAKING

**SPACE SCHEDULE:** Your teacher will tell you how much time you have to complete the following table. In pairs / groups, use that time to fill in as many details as you can about the daily schedule of a cosmonaut on the International Space Station.

TIME	ACTIVITY	PURPOSE
00:00		
01:00		
02:00		
03:00		
04:00		
05:00		
06:00		
07:00		
08:00		
09:00		
10:00		
11:00		
12:00		
13:00		
14:00		
15:00		
16:00		
17:00		
18:00		
19:00		
20:00		
21:00		
22:00		
23:00		

Find a new partner and compare your schedules. Discuss which of the activities you wrote down you would most like to do.

## **LISTENING**

Listen and fill in the spaces.

### **Russian breaks time-in-space record**

**BNE:** \_\_\_\_\_ Russian spaceman Sergei Krikalev, 46, has set a new record for the longest time \_\_\_\_\_ in space. Krikalev recorded his 748th day in orbit on August 16. He will \_\_\_\_\_ his record-breaking achievement by going on a six-hour space walk to do \_\_\_\_\_ maintenance and upgrades. His first \_\_\_\_\_ into space was in November 1988 on a visit to the Mir space station. In 1994, he was the first Russian to ride on the space shuttle. He was also on the first \_\_\_\_\_ to assemble the International Space Station in 1998. Krikalev said his \_\_\_\_\_ was a “challenge”. He explained his reasons for \_\_\_\_\_ to spend so much time in space: “Why do people climb mountains? — It’s cold, it’s windy, it’s difficult to \_\_\_\_\_ up all of the equipment, but then it’s exciting. You \_\_\_\_\_ some difficulties. You see some new sights. You do things that other people cannot.” He said living in the \_\_\_\_\_ was the perfect job. His lengthy periods of time in space have also provided \_\_\_\_\_ scientific data on the physical and psychological \_\_\_\_\_ on the body.

## **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 the International Space Station (ISS). Share your findings with your class in the next lesson.

**3. LETTER:** Write a letter to Russian cosmonaut Sergei Krikalev. Tell him what you think of his record-breaking achievement. Ask him a few questions about life on the space station. Read your letters to your classmates in your next lesson. Did you all have similar thoughts and questions?

**4. DIARY / JOURNAL:** Imagine you are on the International Space Station. Write your diary / journal entry for one day. Write about what you feel and miss about Earth. Read your entry to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all write about similar things?

## ANSWERS

### TRUE / FALSE:

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

### SYNONYM MATCH:

- |                |              |
|----------------|--------------|
| a. veteran     | long-time    |
| b. set         | established  |
| c. achievement | feat         |
| d. routine     | regular      |
| e. assemble    | put together |
| f. profession  | career       |
| g. haul        | carry        |
| h. overcome    | beat         |
| i. the heavens | space        |
| j. data        | information  |

### PHRASE MATCH:

- |                                  |                                 |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| a. set a                         | new record                      |
| b. Krikalev recorded his         | 748th day in orbit              |
| c. celebrate his record-breaking | achievement                     |
| d. routine maintenance           | and upgrades                    |
| e. the first mission to assemble | the International Space Station |
| f. difficult to haul             | up all of the equipment         |
| g. overcome some                 | difficulties                    |
| h. living                        | in the heavens                  |
| i. lengthy periods               | of time in space                |
| j. physical and psychological    | stresses on the body            |

### GAP FILL:

#### Russian breaks time-in-space record

**BNE: Veteran** Russian spaceman Sergei Krikalev, 46, has **set** a new record for the longest time spent in space. Krikalev recorded his 748th day in **orbit** on August 16. He will celebrate his record-breaking **achievement** by going on a six-hour space walk to do **routine** maintenance and upgrades. His first **journey** into space was in November 1988 on a visit to the Mir space station. In 1994, he was the first Russian to **ride** on the space shuttle. He was also on the first mission to **assemble** the International Space Station in 1998.

Krikalev said his **profession** was a “challenge”. He explained his reasons for **choosing** to spend so much time in space: “Why do people climb mountains? — It’s cold, it’s windy, it’s difficult to **haul** up all of the **equipment**, but then it’s exciting. You **overcome** some difficulties. You see some new sights. You do things that other people cannot.” He said living in the **heavens** was the perfect job. His **lengthy** periods of time in space have also provided **precious** scientific data on the physical and psychological stresses on the body.