



2 Challenging Sports

1 Synopsis

April and Simone are trying to decide which is the most challenging sport – snowboarding or surfing? They watch a video about each sport to help them choose. Snowboarding has become more popular and has gained more respect as a sport in recent years, especially since 1994 when it became an official Olympic sport. Is it the most dangerous sport in the world, though? Is it more difficult than surfing? At the World Surfing Games in Durban, South Africa, people compete in three major divisions of surfing. There is bodyboarding and kneesurfing, but the most popular and the most difficult is surfboarding. How are April and Simone going to decide which is the most challenging sport?

Length of video: 3:37min

2 Target Language

Grammar: comparatives; *as ... as*; superlatives

Vocabulary: outdoor sports

Language points: *it's a lot harder than it looks, each movement is so ..., it looks like ..., it takes ..., anybody could do it ...*

3 Procedural Notes

A Before you watch

1 As a class. Write the title of the video on the board. Elicit or explain the meaning of “challenging sports” (difficult and dangerous sports). To set the scene, play the start of the video (with the sound off) to show some snowboarding [00:05–00:20].

In pairs. Have students work in pairs to label the illustrations, then check answers as a class. Check pronunciation.

Answer key: 1 snowboarding 2 bungee jumping
3 mountain climbing 4 surfing 5 parachuting
6 scuba diving

2 As a class. Ask students if any of them have tried any of these sports. Ask them what it felt like. If they haven't tried any of the sports, encourage them to discuss which ones they would like to try and why.

B While you watch

1 Individuals. Freeze the video at the beginning [00:05]. Explain that the video shows two girls who are trying to choose a sport for their TV show. Point out that the girl on the left is Simone, and the girl on the right is April.

Give students time to read the questions. Play the whole video and have students write down their answers. Have students check answers in pairs, then check answers as a class.

Answer key:

1 snowboarding and surfing 2 snowboarding
3 surfing

2 Individuals. Give the students time to read the fact files. Help with vocabulary as necessary. Encourage them to predict the answers. Play the section about snowboarding [00:05–00:38] and have students fill in the blanks in the first fact file. Check answers as a class. If necessary, play the segment again. Then, show the surfing section [01:36–03:10] and do the same. If students find this task difficult, write the answers on the board, in the *wrong order*. Have students guess which fact belongs where. Then, have them listen and check. Explain *reckless* (wild, taking too many risks).

Answer key:

Snowboarding: 1 fastest 2 skiing 3 reckless 4 1994
Surfing: 1 fans 2 South Africa 3 32 4 3

C After you watch

1 In pairs. Depending on your students, you may need to revise or even teach the grammar point (superlative or *as ... as*) before you begin. Have students read the texts, and help them with any vocabulary. Explain *stamina* (ability to continue without rest). Have students work in pairs to complete questions 1–7, using the superlative or *as ... as*. Have students form groups with another pair to check their answers. Alternatively, you can play the video (with subtitles on) and let students check their answers [02:03–02:44]. Finally, check answers as a class.

Answer key:

1 easiest 2 most difficult 3 as (important) as
4 smoothest 5 most precise 6 best 7 as (popular) as

2 In pairs. Tell students to imagine that they are Simone and April and need to choose one of the two sports for tonight's sports segment. Tell the pairs to choose one sport each to talk about, and give them time to prepare reasons why that sport is the right one. Then, have them role-play the conversation. Encourage them to use comparatives and superlatives in their role-play. Finally, invite pairs to role-play their conversation in front of the whole class.



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D Language points

1 Individuals. Have students work individually to match the sentence halves before checking answers as a class. Point out that 5 is a *negative* comment.

Answer key: 2 c 3 a 4 e 5 b

2 In pairs. Have students form pairs. Refer them back to the list of sports in Exercise 1 in *Before you watch*. Tell them to take turns giving their opinions of those sports, using the expressions above. Monitor, making sure students are using the expressions correctly.

E Your viewpoint

In pairs/In groups. Have students read the instructions. Refer them back to the six sports in Exercise 1 in *Before you watch*. Elicit two dangers for snowboarding (e.g., you can break a leg; you can crash into a tree). Put students into pairs and give them time to write two dangers for each sport. Monitor and help with vocabulary as necessary. When they are ready, have them discuss and rank the sports in order from 1 (the most dangerous) to 6 (the least dangerous). Encourage them to use the expressions in the exercise in *Language points*. Finally, conduct a brief class feedback and take a vote on the most and least dangerous sport.

4 Video Script

Simone: Whoa! You see that!?

April: It's dangerous. Oh, wow.

Presenter: Snowboarding is one of the world's fastest-growing sports. In the nineteen-eighties, however, it wasn't as acceptable as skiing. Snowboarders were not allowed on most slopes because they were considered too reckless, too wild. But respect for the sport, with its daring twists and turns and dynamic jumps, has grown enormously, especially since 1994, when it was named an official Olympic sport.

Simone: That was amazing.

April: Yeah. It looks like fun.

Simone: Snowboarding has to be the most exciting sport on the planet. That's what we should use for tonight's sports segment.

April: Wait a minute. I liked it, but it's not the most challenging sport in the world, is it? I mean, anybody with a fairly decent sense of balance could probably do it.

Simone: Did you see them flying through the air? Each movement is so precise, so complex. It takes incredible timing. It's a lot harder than it looks. Have you ever tried it?

April: No way. I'd be the worst.

Simone: So what do you think we should show tonight?

April: Umm, I vote for surfing.

Simone: Why surfing? It's so much easier than snowboarding.

April: I don't think so.

Simone: Snowboarding is much more dangerous. You can break a leg. You can crash into a tree.

April: Well, surfing is totally treacherous. You can hit another surfer; you can drown; and what about sharks? OK. Just watch this.

Presenter: Surfing is an international sport. It has huge numbers of fans around the world. The 19th World Surfing Games were held in Durban, South Africa. These Surfing Olympics hosted 32 countries. The games are a melting pot of many languages and cultures. But each surfer has the same goal: to catch the perfect wave and win the biggest surfing prize in the world. There are three major divisions of surfing: bodyboarding, kneeboarding, and surfboarding. In bodyboarding, the athlete lies flat on the board. It's the easiest surfing to learn, but one of the most difficult to perfect. It requires many hours of practice. Speed is as important as stamina. But the smoothest, most precise surfers usually win gold. Kneeboarding is surfing with both knees on the board. Again, speed is critical. The best kneeboarders know how to handle the waves and avoid the white water. This is the most popular event. It has the greatest degree of difficulty. Balance and style are much more important when making these complicated twists and turns. It doesn't get any better



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or wetter than this. This young Brazilian is taking home the gold. But even better, he's taking home wonderful memories of an event that truly promotes peace and good sportsmanship.

Simone: Wow. You were right. That was really good.

April: I'm glad you liked it, but ...

Simone: You know, surfing does look pretty hard.

April: I don't know, maybe surfing isn't challenging enough.

Simone: All right, let's flip a coin. Heads, we use snowboarding. Tails, we use surfing.