
Surfing

WORKSHEET A

Surfing is something people often get hooked on after trying it a few times. For many surfers it is much more than a hobby – they would probably agree with the American professional surfer Kelly Slater when he said ‘Once you’re in, you’re in. There’s no getting out.’

Surfing, of course, means riding on waves in the ocean using a surfboard. Many surfers stand up on their boards, which requires good balance and is therefore difficult for most beginners to learn, but some lie down (‘bodyboarding’).

The history of surfing probably began with the Polynesian people of the Pacific Islands. One of the first white people to see anyone surfing was the British explorer Captain Cook, when his ship arrived in Hawaii in 1778. He watched many Hawaiians riding waves on large pieces of wood, and saw that ‘they seem to feel a great pleasure’.

When surfing started to become very popular in the United States in the 1950s and 60s, surfers used large wooden boards (often more than 3 metres long) that were quite heavy. Boards today are almost always shorter and also much lighter, because they are made of artificial materials instead of wood.

For anyone who wants to try surfing, the only essential things are waves and a board. There are a few other things, however, that most surfers find important: a cord to attach one of their ankles to the board and therefore stop the board going a long way away when they fall off; wax, which they put on the surface of the board to help their feet stick to it; and a wetsuit to help them keep warm in cold water. The south-west of England is an example of a place where surfers usually need wetsuits, even in summer.

Surfing has been a professional sport for many years and the very best surfers are able to make a living from it. Most of the best professional surfers in the last 30 years, both men and women, have been American or Australian, but surfers from Brazil, Peru and South Africa have also won important competitions.

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WORKSHEET B

Exercise 1

Decide whether the following statements are true (T) or false (F), or if the text doesn't say (D).

1. Surfboards today are almost always made of wood.
2. Surfing recently became a professional sport.
3. Most surfboards today are shorter than in the 1950s and 60s.
4. Captain Cook went surfing in Hawaii in 1778.
5. Most surfboards in the 1950s and 60s were lighter than they are today.
6. Most surfboards today are about 2 metres long.
7. Wax is essential for surfers.
8. Many of the best professional surfers in the last 30 years have been American or Australian.
9. Kelly Slater has won some important surfing competitions.
10. American or Australian surfers have won all the important competitions in the last 30 years.

Exercise 2

Answer the questions about the text on Worksheet A.

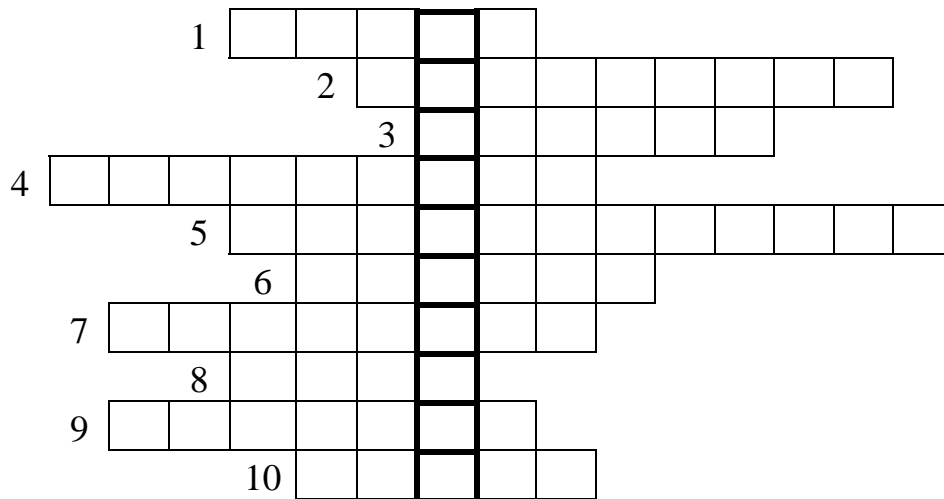
1. In what part of the world did surfing probably begin?
2. What part of their bodies do surfers attach the cord to?
3. According to the text, in what part of the world do surfers usually need wetsuits?
4. What were the Hawaiians using to surf when Captain Cook saw them in 1778?
5. Why do most beginners find it difficult to stand up on the board?
6. What do surfers use wax for?
7. When did surfing start to become very popular in the United States?
8. What do you think Kelly Slater means by 'There's no getting out'?

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WORKSHEET C

Exercise 3

Complete the crossword below. If all the words are correct, a part of the world where surfing is very popular will read from top to bottom.



1. Putting wax on a surfboard helps the surfer's feet to _____ to it.
2. Most surfboards today are made of _____ that are lighter than wood.
3. Kelly Slater makes a _____ from surfing.
4. If you want to surf, having a board is _____.
5. Kelly Slater is a _____ surfer.
6. Lots of people quickly get _____ on surfing.
7. Captain Cook was an _____.
8. Bodyboarders usually lie _____ on their boards.
9. Most people don't go surfing in south-west England without a _____.
10. Learning to _____ up on a surfboard is not easy.