

Hawaiian surfer catches the wave of a lifetime

Level 1 • Elementary

1 Key words

Fill the gaps in the sentences using these key words from the text. The paragraph numbers are given to help you.

Jet Ski

tow

surfer

tsunami

amazing

1. A _____ is a person who rides on waves in the sea on a surf board. (title)
2. If you _____ someone or something, you pull them along using a rope or line. (para 1)
3. A _____ is a very small fast boat that you drive standing up. (para 1)
4. If something is _____, it is very surprising. (para 2)
5. A _____ is a huge wave caused by an earthquake under the sea. (para 3)

break

modest

cliffs

shore

6. The _____ is the land that is on the edge of the sea. (para 4)
7. _____ are the steep side of an area of high land, often next to a beach or the sea. (para 4)
8. In surfing, a _____ is where the wave reaches its highest point and starts to fall. (para 5)
9. A _____ person is someone who does not talk about his or her achievements or abilities, even if they are successful. (para 8)

2 Find the information

Find the following information in the text as quickly as possible.

1. When did McNamara surf the wave?
2. How high was the wave?
3. How many people have watched McNamara's ride on the internet?
4. Where is Nazaré?
5. How high are the cliffs at Nazaré?

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Surfer Garrett McNamara: 'It was only when I got in the wave that I saw the size. I was in awe'

Peter Beaumont
13 November, 2011

- 1 Garrett McNamara wasn't planning to surf on 1 November. "I didn't really feel like it," he says. But he agreed to tow his British friend and big wave surfer, Andrew Cotton, on his Jet Ski.
- 2 Then something amazing happened. His friends told McNamara that he should ride a wave and he found himself on a mountain of water 30 metres high. He was surfing one of the biggest waves ever ridden, probably the largest in Europe and the biggest recorded on film. Hundreds of thousands of people have watched the video of McNamara's ride on the internet. It shows a very small person dropping down a huge blue wave. It is even more extraordinary because the place where the waves break, an hour north of Lisbon, is very dangerous.
- 3 McNamara started surfing after his family moved to Hawaii. He has surfed tsunami waves and ridden some of the world's biggest waves.
- 4 "The government of Portugal invited us to Nazaré to investigate it for a big wave competition," he says. Usually, big waves are far from the shore, but at Nazaré they are very close to the cliffs.
- 5 "The harbour where we keep the Jet Skis is about five minutes' ride away. I can see it from my hotel window. You go out and the sea is almost flat as you drive along the coast. You start seeing the waves after about half a mile when you pass some rocks. Then you are in the break. It's unique. The waves break into cliffs 100 metres high. You can't come off your surf board because it would kill you."
- 6 On 1 November, McNamara had foot straps to keep him on his surf board, and five kilograms of extra weight to increase speed at the beginning of the ride. Catching big waves is different from

ordinary surfing. The speed of big waves makes it difficult to catch them, so Jet Skis are used to tow the surfer quickly to the top of the breaking wave and to collect him at the end of his ride.

- 7 McNamara said, "When we arrived at the break it did seem big but I was just going to tow Andrew. We still weren't expecting much. I didn't feel so good. Then the other guys were saying 'You've got to go, you've got to go' and – boom! – I was on the rope and on a giant wave. Even then I didn't realize how big it was. So I started and I kept going down and down and the drop seemed like forever. And I thought – wow! Usually I don't have time to look around but I looked around twice and then I was hit by the white water. I've never been hit by a wave that big and I've ridden big waves. I've seen waves pull a surfer's arms off.
- 8 "That's when I knew that it was really big. Andrew collected me. Everyone else was saying: 'It's huge.' When I saw the film, I was amazed." Although it was a world record-breaking wave, McNamara is modest. "I know it was not 30 metres so I'll let others say how big it really was.
- 9 "I'm not sure I want to ride a wave that big again", he said.

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3 Comprehension check

Match the beginnings and endings to make sentences about the text.

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| 1. Garrett McNamara wasn't ... | a. ... he wants to ride a wave that big again. |
| 2. The wave was ... | b. ... to reach the top of big waves. |
| 3. Surfers have to use Jet Skis ... | c. ... the biggest ever recorded on film. |
| 4. Garrett McNamara was amazed ... | d. ... when he saw the film. |
| 5. He is not sure if... | e. ... planning to go surfing that day. |

4 Chunks

Rearrange the words to make phrases from the text.

1. feel it really didn't I like
2. of thousands people of hundreds
3. five about ride away minutes'
4. half after mile a about
5. of the at ride beginning the
6. good I feel so didn't

5 Compound words

Match the words in the left-hand column with those in the right-hand column to make compound words from the text.

- | | |
|-------------|-------------|
| 1. feet | a. Ski |
| 2. extra | b. board |
| 3. breaking | c. straps |
| 4. Jet | d. wave |
| 5. surf | e. ordinary |
| 6. for | f. ever |

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6 Word stress

Put these words into two groups according to their stress.

surfer

arrived

mountain

thousand

increase (verb)

amazed

metres

harbour

unique

collect

o o	o o

7 Discussion

Would you like to surf a huge wave? Why? Why not?

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KEY

1 Key words

1. tow
2. surfer
3. Jet Ski
4. amazing
5. tsunami
6. shore
7. cliffs
8. break
9. modest

2 Find the information

1. 1 November, 2011
2. 30 metres
3. hundreds of thousands
4. in Portugal
5. 100 metres

3 Comprehension check

1. e
2. c
3. b
4. d
5. a

4 Chunks

1. I didn't really feel like it
2. hundreds of thousands of people
3. about five minutes' ride away
4. after about half a mile
5. at the beginning of the ride
6. I didn't feel so good

5 Compound words

1. c
2. e
3. d
4. a
5. b
6. f

6 Word stress

0 o	o 0
surfer	arrived
mountain	increase
thousand	amazed
metres	unique
harbour	collect

Teachers note:

You can watch Garrett McNamara surf the record-breaking wave online at www.youtube.com/watch?v=nd2jtwviyC8

Alternatively, type *Garrett McNamara world record* into a search engine to find the video.