

Hawaiian surfer catches the wave of a lifetime

Level 2 • Intermediate

1 Key words

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

crest

canyon

amplifier

break

freak

Jet Ski

tow

rip off

modest

hazardous

- If you _____ someone or something, you pull them along using a rope or line. (para 1)
- A _____ is a very small, fast boat that you drive standing up. (para 1)
- A _____ wave is one which is extremely large and unexpected. (para 2)
- If something is described as _____, it is dangerous, especially to people's health or safety. (para 3)
- In surfing, a _____ is an underwater obstruction that causes a wave to break. (para 3)
- A _____ is a long deep valley with very steep sides. (para 5)
- An _____ is a device that makes something louder or stronger. (para 5)
- A _____ is the white top of a wave. (para 7)
- If you _____ something, you remove it with violent force. (para 8)
- A _____ person is one who does not talk about his or her achievements or abilities, even if they are successful. (para 9)

2 Find the information

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

- How high was the wave?
- How many people have watched McNamara's ride on the internet?
- Where is Nazaré?
- How deep is the underwater canyon?
- How high are the cliffs at Nazaré?
- How much extra weight was McNamara carrying?

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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. He agreed, however, that he would tow his British friend, Andrew Cotton, who is also a big wave surfer, on his Jet Ski.
- 2 What happened next was sensational. McNamara was persuaded to ride a wave and found himself on a freak mountain of water 30 metres high, surfing one of the biggest waves ever ridden, probably the largest in Europe and the biggest recorded on film. The video and photographs of McNamara's ride have been viewed by hundreds of thousands on the internet. They show a tiny figure dropping down against a huge blue backdrop of water.
- 3 It is even more extraordinary because of the hazardous nature of the break, an hour north of Lisbon, where some of the world's biggest waves crash onto the shore.
- 4 McNamara is one of the world's best-known big wave riders. He took up surfing after his family moved to Hawaii. He has surfed tsunami waves and ridden some of the world's biggest waves.
- 5 "We'd been invited by the government of Portugal to Nazaré to investigate it for a big wave competition," he says. "There is an underwater canyon 300 metres deep that runs from the ocean to the cliffs. It's like a funnel. It's three miles wide but narrows as it gets closer to the shore and acts as an amplifier." Usually, surf breaks are offshore but at Nazaré they are very close to the cliffs.
- 6 "The harbour where the Jet Skis are kept is about five minutes' ride away. I can see it from my hotel window. You go out and it can be almost flat as you leave and ride along the coast. You start seeing the waves after about half a mile when you pass some rocks and turn a point. Then you are in the break. It's unique. The waves break into cliffs 100 metres high. You can't come off because it would kill you."
- 7 On 1 November, McNamara did not have an emergency air supply to improve his chances of survival if he was held down by water after coming off his board. His board has feet straps so he isn't thrown off, and five kilograms 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 to the breaking crest and to collect the surfer at the end of his ride.
- 8 "We went round and I just wasn't feeling it that much," McNamara said. "When we got round to the break it did seem big but I was just going to tow Andrew. But 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 just 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 you see me look round twice and then I get hit by the white water on the shoulder like a ton of bricks. I've never been held down by a wave that size and I've ridden big waves. I've seen waves rip a guy's arms off.
- 9 "That's when I knew that it was pretty damn big. Andrew picked me up. Everyone else is saying: 'It's a monster.' It's only when I got in that I saw the film. I was amazed. I mean, I felt it was big. But you can see it's three, six, nine metres higher." Although it was a world record-breaking wave, McNamara is modest. "I know it was not 30 metres so I'll leave others to say how big it really was.
- 10 "I'm not sure I want to ride a wave that big again", he admits.

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3 Comprehension check

Are these statements true (T) or false (F) according to the text?

1. Garrett McNamara was planning to ride the record-breaking wave.
2. The wave was the biggest one ever.
3. McNamara is well known as a big wave surfer.
4. The waves are big at Nazaré because the water passes through an underwater canyon like a funnel.
5. Big waves move so fast that surfers need a Jet Ski to tow them to the top of the wave.
6. McNamara definitely wants to ride the big wave again.

4 Find the word

Find the following words and phrases in the text.

1. a verb meaning to watch on TV or the internet (para 2)
2. a noun meaning everything that you can see behind the main thing you are looking at (para 2)
3. a two-word phrasal verb meaning to start doing something regularly as a habit or interest (para 4)
4. a noun meaning a tube that is wide at one end and narrow at the other (para 5)
5. an adjective meaning in the sea but near the coast (para 5)
6. a noun meaning a piece of land that stretches out into an area of water (para 6)
7. a five-word expression meaning like something very heavy indeed (para 8)
8. an informal three-word expression meaning very large (para 9)

5 Verb + noun collocations

Match the verbs in the left-hand column with the nouns or noun phrases in the right-hand column to make expressions from the text.

- | | |
|-------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. ride | a. your chances of doing something |
| 2. take up | b. speed |
| 3. increase | c. an experience |
| 4. break | d. a wave |
| 5. repeat | e. a record |
| 6. improve | f. surfing |

6 Word-building

Complete the tables with words from the text.

	verb	noun
1.	survive	
2.	compete	
3.	ride	

	noun	adjective
4.	sensation	
5.	hazard	
6.	giant	

7 Discussion

Would you like to surf a wave like this one? Why? Why not?

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KEY

1 Key words

1. tow
2. Jet Ski
3. freak
4. hazardous
5. break
6. canyon
7. amplifier
8. crest
9. rip off
10. modest

2 Find the information

1. 30 metres
2. hundreds of thousands
3. in Portugal
4. 300 metres
5. 100 metres
6. five kilograms

3 Comprehension check

1. F
2. F
3. T
4. T
5. T
6. F

4 Find the word

1. view
2. backdrop
3. take up
4. funnel
5. offshore
6. point
7. like a ton of bricks
8. pretty damn big

5 Verb + noun collocations

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

6 Word-building

1. survival
2. competition
3. ride
4. sensational
5. hazardous
6. giant

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.