

# www.**Breaking News English**.com

Ready-to-use ESL/EFL Lessons by Sean Banville

**"1,000 IDEAS & ACTIVITIES FOR LANGUAGE TEACHERS"**

**The Breaking News English.com Resource Book**

<http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/book.html>

## **British man to live with venomous snakes**

<http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/1004/100417-snakes.html>

### **Contents**

The Article	2
Warm-ups	3
Before Reading / Listening	4
While Reading / Listening	5
Listening Gap Fill	6
After Reading / Listening	7
Student Survey	8
Discussion	9
Language Work	10
Writing	11
Homework	12
Answers	13

17th April, 2010

# THE ARTICLE

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1004/100417-snakes.html>

A British man is hoping to break the world record for living with dangerous snakes. David Jones, 44, hopes to spend 121 days in a room with 40 of the world's deadliest snakes. His slithery companions will include deadly adders, cobras and green and black mambas. Mr Jones starts his record attempt on April 24th in Johannesburg, South Africa. He aims to beat the current record of 113 days set by South African Martin Smit. The big difference between Smit and Jones is that Smit is an experienced snake handler. The last person to go for the record was bitten by a puff adder and nearly lost his leg. Mr Jones wants to raise money for charity. All money raised will go to a hospice in his hometown of Crawley, near London.

Mr Jones told reporters he was not too scared of spending so long in a room with venomous snakes. He did admit he was concerned for a number of reasons. He is worried that "there is a very real possibility of ending up in hospital". He is fully aware of the dangers, saying: "These are wild animals. They're unpredictable and of course they do bite, and they bite with serious consequences." Jones expressed reservations about spending such a long time away from his family: "I'm also leaving a wife, I'm leaving a son and I'm leaving my family for four and a half months." Mr Jones explained the reasons behind his challenge: "I have always been interested in snakes and I thought now is the time to do something slightly out of the ordinary in my life."

# WARM-UPS

**1. SNAKES:** Walk around the class and talk to other students about snakes. Change partners often. Sit with your first partner(s) and share your findings.

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

*world records / dangerous snakes / companions / big differences / raise money / reporters / concerned / wild animals / serious consequences / challenges / ordinary*

Have a chat about the topics you liked. Change topics and partners frequently.

**3. WORLD RECORDS:** Which would you like to break? Complete this table and share what you wrote with your partner. Change partners and share what you heard.

World record	What	Why?
English		
Computers		
Telephone		
Eating		
Games		
Animals		

**4. CRAZY:** Students A **strongly** believe anyone who spends 4 months in a room with deadly snakes is crazy; Students B **strongly** believe the opposite. Change partners again and talk about your conversations.

**5. COMPANIONS:** Which of these make the best companions? Rate them and share your rankings with your partner. Put the best at the top. Change partners and share your ratings again.

- a snake
- a tarantula
- a fish
- a tortoise
- an iguana
- a tiger
- a 100-year-old relative
- a parrot

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

# BEFORE READING / LISTENING

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1004/100417-snakes.html>

**1. TRUE / FALSE:** Read the headline. Guess if a-h below are true (T) or false (F).

- |  |       |
|--|-------|
| a. A man from England has moved into a snake-filled jungle cave.       | T / F |
| b. The man is hoping to break a snake-cohabitation world record.       | T / F |
| c. The man is an experienced snake handler.                            | T / F |
| d. The last person to attempt the record lost a leg from a snake bite. | T / F |
| e. The guy attempting the record is afraid of snakes.                  | T / F |
| f. The man said it's easy to understand what snakes will do next.      | T / F |
| g. The guy isn't so happy at being away from his wife and kids.        | T / F |
| h. He wanted to do something a bit different in his life.              | T / F |

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

- |                         |              |
|-------------------------|--------------|
| 1. dangerous            | a. existing  |
| 2. companions           | b. different |
| 3. deadly               | c. afraid    |
| 4. current              | d. friends   |
| 5. raise                | e. totally   |
| 6. scared               | f. concerns  |
| 7. venomous             | g. collect   |
| 8. fully                | h. hazardous |
| 9. reservations         | i. lethal    |
| 10. out of the ordinary | j. poisonous |

**3. PHRASE MATCH:** (Sometimes more than one choice is possible.)

- |                                |                           |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. hoping to break             | a. go to a hospice        |
| 2. 40 of the world's           | b. the record was bitten  |
| 3. The big difference          | c. behind his challenge   |
| 4. The last person to go for   | d. too scared             |
| 5. All money raised will       | e. deadliest snakes       |
| 6. he was not                  | f. aware of the dangers   |
| 7. he was concerned for a      | g. the world record       |
| 8. He is fully                 | h. out of the ordinary    |
| 9. Jones explained the reasons | i. between Smit and Jones |
| 10. something slightly         | j. number of reasons      |

# WHILE READING / LISTENING

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1004/100417-snakes.html>

**GAP FILL:** Put the words into the gaps in the text.

A British man is \_\_\_\_\_ to break the world record for living with dangerous snakes. David Jones, 44, hopes to \_\_\_\_\_ 121 days in a room with 40 of the world's deadliest snakes. His slithery companions will \_\_\_\_\_ deadly adders, cobras and green and black mambas. Mr Jones starts his record \_\_\_\_\_ on April 24th in Johannesburg, South Africa. He aims to beat the \_\_\_\_\_ record of 113 days set by South African Martin Smit. The big difference between Smit and Jones is that Smit is an experienced snake handler. The \_\_\_\_\_ person to go for the record was bitten by a puff adder and nearly \_\_\_\_\_ his leg. Mr Jones wants to raise money for charity. All money \_\_\_\_\_ will go to a hospice in his hometown of Crawley, near London.

*lost*

*spend*

*last*

*hoping*

*attempt*

*raised*

*include*

*current*

Mr Jones told reporters he was not too \_\_\_\_\_ of spending so long in a room with venomous snakes. He did \_\_\_\_\_ he was concerned for a number of reasons. He is worried that "there is a very real \_\_\_\_\_ of ending up in hospital". He is fully aware of the dangers, saying: "These are wild animals. They're unpredictable and of course they do bite, and they \_\_\_\_\_ with serious consequences." Jones expressed reservations about spending such a long time away from his family: "I'm also \_\_\_\_\_ a wife, I'm leaving a son and I'm leaving my family for four and a half months." Mr Jones explained the \_\_\_\_\_ behind his challenge: "I have always been interested in snakes and I thought now is the time to do something \_\_\_\_\_ out of the \_\_\_\_\_ in my life."

*reasons*

*bite*

*admit*

*slightly*

*scared*

*ordinary*

*leaving*

*possibility*

## LISTENING – Listen and fill in the gaps

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1004/100417-snakes.html>

A British man \_\_\_\_\_ the world record for living with dangerous snakes. David Jones, 44, hopes to spend 121 days in a room with 40 of the \_\_\_\_\_. His slithery companions will include deadly adders, cobras and green and black mambas. Mr Jones \_\_\_\_\_ on April 24th in Johannesburg, South Africa. He aims \_\_\_\_\_ record of 113 days set by South African Martin Smit. The big difference between Smit and Jones is that Smit is an experienced snake handler. The last \_\_\_\_\_ record was bitten by a puff adder and nearly lost his leg. Mr Jones wants to raise money for charity. All money \_\_\_\_\_ hospice in his hometown of Crawley, near London.

Mr Jones told reporters \_\_\_\_\_ of spending so long in a room with venomous snakes. \_\_\_\_\_ concerned for a number of reasons. He is worried that "there is a very real possibility of ending up in hospital". He is fully aware of the dangers, saying: "These are wild animals. They're unpredictable and \_\_\_\_\_, and they bite with serious consequences." Jones expressed reservations about spending \_\_\_\_\_ from his family: "I'm also leaving a wife, I'm leaving a son and I'm leaving my family for four and a half months." Mr Jones explained \_\_\_\_\_ his challenge: "I have always been interested in snakes and I thought now is the time to do something slightly \_\_\_\_\_ in my life."

# AFTER READING / LISTENING

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1004/100417-snakes.html>

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

world	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 activity. 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. TEST EACH OTHER:** Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall how they were used in the text:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 44</li><li>• 121</li><li>• 24</li><li>• 113</li><li>• leg</li><li>• London</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• scared</li><li>• real</li><li>• bite</li><li>• wife</li><li>• challenge</li><li>• ordinary</li></ul>
--	--

# STUDENT SNAKES SURVEY

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1004/100417-snakes.html>

Write five GOOD questions about snakes in the table. Do this in pairs. Each student must write the questions on his / her own paper.

When you have finished, interview other students. Write down their answers.

	STUDENT 1 _____	STUDENT 2 _____	STUDENT 3 _____
Q.1.			
Q.2.			
Q.3.			
Q.4.			
Q.5.			

- Now return to your original partner and share and talk about what you found out. Change partners often.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.



# SNAKES DISCUSSION

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

- a) What did you think when you read the headline?
- b) What springs to mind when you hear the word 'snake'?
- c) What do you think of this man?
- d) Why do you think people want to do such crazy things?
- e) How would you deal with being in a room of 40 deadly snakes for 3 months?
- f) Do you think this is a real world record?
- g) Would you prefer to stay in a room full of snakes or tarantulas?
- h) Would you do what Mr Jones is doing if you could raise a lot of money for charity?
- i) What charity would you love to raise money for and why?
- j) What do you think of snakes?

*British man to live with venomous snakes – 17th April, 2010*  
More free lessons at [www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com](http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com)

---

# SNAKES DISCUSSION

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

- a) Did you like reading this article?
- b) What are you most scared of?
- c) What concerns would you have about spending days in a snake-filled room?
- d) What three adjectives would you use to describe Mr Jones?
- e) Do you think he's irresponsible because he has a family?
- f) What do you think his wife thinks about this record attempt?
- g) How do you think Mr And Mrs Jones' conversation went when he first announced his aim?
- h) What was the last challenge you tried?
- i) What would you like to do that's out of the ordinary?
- j) What questions would you like to ask Mr Jones?

*British man to live with venomous snakes – 17th April, 2010*  
More free lessons at [www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com](http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com) - Copyright Sean Banville 2010

# LANGUAGE – MULTIPLE CHOICE

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1004/100417-snakes.html>

A British man is hoping to (1) \_\_\_\_ the world record for living with dangerous snakes. David Jones, 44, hopes to spend 121 days in a room with 40 of the world's deadliest snakes. His slithery (2) \_\_\_\_ will include deadly adders, cobras and green and black mambas. Mr Jones starts his record (3) \_\_\_\_ on April 24th in Johannesburg, South Africa. He aims to beat the current record of 113 days (4) \_\_\_\_ by South African Martin Smit. The big difference between Smit and Jones is that Smit is an experienced snake (5) \_\_\_\_\_. The last person to go for the record was bitten by a puff adder and nearly lost his leg. Mr Jones wants to raise money for charity. All money raised will (6) \_\_\_\_ to a hospice in his hometown of Crawley, near London.

Mr Jones told reporters he was not (7) \_\_\_\_ scared of spending so long in a room with venomous snakes. He did admit he was concerned for a (8) \_\_\_\_ of reasons. He is worried that "there is a very real possibility of ending (9) \_\_\_\_ in hospital". He is fully aware of the dangers, saying: "These are wild animals. They're unpredictable and of course they do bite, and they bite (10) \_\_\_\_ serious consequences." Jones expressed reservations about spending such a long time away from his family: "I'm also leaving a wife, I'm leaving a son and I'm leaving my family for four and a half months." Mr Jones explained the (11) \_\_\_\_ behind his challenge: "I have always been interested in snakes and I thought now is the time to do something slightly (12) \_\_\_\_ of the ordinary in my life."

**Put the correct words from the table below in the above article.**

- |     |               |               |                |                |
|-----|---------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|
| 1.  | (a) fix       | (b) break     | (c) knock      | (d) twist      |
| 2.  | (a) companies | (b) companion | (c) companions | (d) comparison |
| 3.  | (a) attempt   | (b) tempting  | (c) temper     | (d) temptress  |
| 4.  | (a) let       | (b) get       | (c) met        | (d) set        |
| 5.  | (a) header    | (b) backer    | (c) handler    | (d) footer     |
| 6.  | (a) go        | (b) stay      | (c) come       | (d) visit      |
| 7.  | (a) un-       | (b) not       | (c) as         | (d) too        |
| 8.  | (a) numerical | (b) number    | (c) numeral    | (d) numb       |
| 9.  | (a) down      | (b) over      | (c) across     | (d) up         |
| 10. | (a) at        | (b) for       | (c) with       | (d) by         |
| 11. | (a) up        | (b) behind    | (c) back       | (d) front      |
| 12. | (a) out       | (b) up        | (c) at         | (d) in         |



# 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 out more about David Jones' record attempt. Share what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

**3. RECORDS:** Make a poster about crazy world records. Show your work to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all have similar things?

**4. SNAKES:** Write a magazine article about David Jones' record attempt. Include imaginary interviews with him and some snakes.

Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Write down any new words and expressions you hear from your partner(s).

**5. LETTER:** Write a letter to David Jones. Ask him three questions about snakes. Give him three ideas on what other things he can do to raise money for charity. Read your letter to your partner(s) in your next lesson. Your partner(s) will answer your questions.

# ANSWERS

## TRUE / FALSE:

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

## SYNONYM MATCH:

- |                         |              |
|-------------------------|--------------|
| 1. dangerous            | a. hazardous |
| 2. companions           | b. friends   |
| 3. deadly               | c. lethal    |
| 4. current              | d. existing  |
| 5. raise                | e. collect   |
| 6. scared               | f. afraid    |
| 7. venomous             | g. poisonous |
| 8. fully                | h. totally   |
| 9. reservations         | i. concerns  |
| 10. out of the ordinary | j. different |

## PHRASE MATCH:

- |                                |                           |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. hoping to break             | a. the world record       |
| 2. 40 of the world's           | b. deadliest snakes       |
| 3. The big difference          | c. between Smit and Jones |
| 4. The last person to go for   | d. the record was bitten  |
| 5. All money raised will       | e. go to a hospice        |
| 6. he was not                  | f. too scared             |
| 7. he was concerned for a      | g. number of reasons      |
| 8. He is fully                 | h. aware of the dangers   |
| 9. Jones explained the reasons | i. behind his challenge   |
| 10. something slightly         | j. out of the ordinary    |

## GAP FILL:

### British man to live with venomous snakes

A British man is **hoping** to break the world record for living with dangerous snakes. David Jones, 44, hopes to **spend** 121 days in a room with 40 of the world's deadliest snakes. His slithery companions will **include** deadly adders, cobras and green and black mambas. Mr Jones starts his record **attempt** on April 24th in Johannesburg, South Africa. He aims to beat the **current** record of 113 days set by South African Martin Smit. The big difference between Smit and Jones is that Smit is an experienced snake handler. The **last** person to go for the record was bitten by a puff adder and nearly **lost** his leg. Mr Jones wants to raise money for charity. All money **raised** will go to a hospice in his hometown of Crawley, near London.

Mr Jones told reporters he was not too **scared** of spending so long in a room with venomous snakes. He did **admit** he was concerned for a number of reasons. He is worried that "there is a very real **possibility** of ending up in hospital". He is fully aware of the dangers, saying: "These are wild animals. They're unpredictable and of course they do bite, and they **bite** with serious consequences." Jones expressed reservations about spending such a long time away from his family: "I'm also **leaving** a wife, I'm leaving a son and I'm leaving my family for four and a half months." Mr Jones explained the **reasons** behind his challenge: "I have always been interested in snakes and I thought now is the time to do something **slightly** out of the **ordinary** in my life."

## LANGUAGE WORK

- 1 - b    2 - c    3 - a    4 - d    5 - c    6 - a    7 - d    8 - b    9 - d    10 - c    11 - b    12 - a