

*HighWire*  
MAGAZINE

# DON'T TRY THIS AT HOME

## Stronger than We Know

Mind-boggling stunts

## Guinness Me!

Making the record books

## The Sky Was the Limit

The world of  
wing walkers



Volume 7, Issue 5 Teacher Guide



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## High Wire Magazine – Don't Try This at Home Teacher Guide

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# Don't Try This at Home

## Teacher Guide

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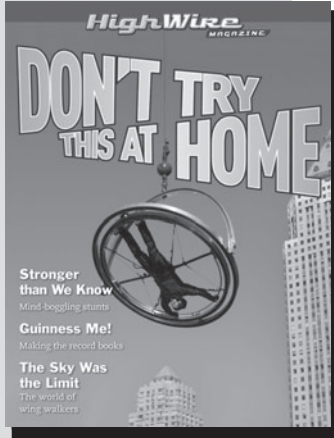
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The lesson plans in this Teacher Guide are supported by the *High Wire Magazine* Program and Assessment Guide. The Program and Assessment Guide contains:

- an overview of the components and features of *High Wire Magazine*
- a scope and sequence chart that outlines the key reading strategies that are highlighted in each issue of *High Wire Magazine*
- supporting information about the needs of adolescent readers
- descriptions of the instructional strategies, approaches, and activities used in the lesson plans
- assessment masters for the key reading strategies.

Brief explanations of instructional strategies are provided in the sidebar of the lesson plans alongside the first use of each strategy.



# Don't Try This at Home

## Key Reading Strategy: *Asking Questions*

The lesson plans in this issue of *High Wire Magazine* highlight the reading strategy Asking Questions. Opportunities to practice this strategy are indicated by the symbol ★. For more information on this strategy, see page 7. **Assessment Master 3** in the Program and Assessment Guide can be used with this strategy.

**Curriculum Links:** social studies, science

## Introducing the Magazine

### Setting the Scene

Tell the students that this issue of *High Wire Magazine* is about strange, dangerous, and wonderful stunts performed and attempted by people who have an ultimate goal of being recorded in history.

### Making Connections

Explain to the students that the magazine looks at a variety of stunts that push human endurance to extremes. Encourage a discussion by asking questions such as the following:

- Have you ever heard the expression “Don’t try this at home”? If so, explain what was happening at the time.
- What kinds of things do you know not to try at home? Why wouldn’t you try them at home?
- What stunts do you know about? Share your ideas with a partner.

## Lesson Focus

Visualizing  
Asking questions  
Monitoring for meaning

## About This Selection

This article describes the dangerous feats of stunt performers such as David Blaine. It suggests reasons why these performers choose to risk their lives and describes how a person can build a career from a desire for thrills.

## Word Talk

Glossary words:  
*submerged, hypothermia, endurance, Middle Ages*  
Other vocabulary:  
*sphere, bizarre, extreme, somersaults, daredevils, preparation, perks, motivation, catapult*



## Teaching Tip

Explain to the students the importance of rereading the text to find the meaning and clarify their understanding.



## Assessment Tip

Look for the students who are able to pose questions during reading specifically to clarify their understanding or further their knowledge on the topic.

## Extra Help

Have a number of *Guinness World Records* books and the website available for the students to explore further.

# Stronger than We Know

page 2

## Before Reading

### Visualizing

Read aloud the title and the introductory paragraph on page 3. Have the students close their eyes and visualize the scene. Ask questions such as the following:

- What pictures did you create in your mind?
- What do you think the man is doing? Why is he doing this?
- How has he shown that he is stronger than we know?

### ★Asking Questions

Use a K-W-L chart to encourage questioning with the students. Discuss what they already know about stunt performers and record this information in the first column, “What I Know.” Ask the students what they want to know and record these questions in the second column, “What I Want to Know.” Model using the five Ws (who, what, where, when, why) as well as how to help them compose their “What I Want to Know” questions.

## During Reading

### Guided Reading

Explain to the students that as they read, they will have opportunities to pause and clarify vocabulary and concepts. Read aloud page 3 and ask questions such as the following:

- What is hypothermia? How does this relate to the title “Stronger than We Know”?

Read aloud page 4 and ask questions such as the following:

- What does “endurance” mean? Which of Blaine’s stunts show endurance? How do they show endurance?
- People argue that Blaine’s stunts don’t achieve anything. What do you think?

Now turn to Living on the Edge on page 5. Explain to the students that this heading has more than one meaning. Ask:

- How does this meaning apply to Charles Blondin’s career as a tightrope walker?

In the box on page 6 titled When Stunts Backfire, two stunts are discussed. Ask questions such as the following:

- What does “backfire” mean?
- How could you fix the problem so that a record could be attempted?

Finish reading the article, then revisit any of the above questions that require further discussion. Ask the students to discuss their answers with a peer and then share these with the class.

### Scales

A Likert scale asks students to rate their level of agreement with a statement on a range from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.”



### Reflection and Metacognition

Ask the students to reflect on how their experience of asking questions using Think Aloud and a K-W-L chart affected their understanding of the text. Did it make reading more enjoyable?

## Think Aloud

Model Think Aloud by reading the text aloud, pausing occasionally to share your thinking, ask questions, and note what triggered your thinking. Have the students try this with a partner.

## After Reading

### Scale

Write on separate charts “strongly agree” and “strongly disagree” and place these on opposite sides of the classroom. Ask the students to respond to the following statements by standing on an imaginary line between the charts according to how strongly they agree or disagree. Record the results on chart paper.

- You have to be really strong to be a stunt performer.
- People shouldn’t try to do these stunts.
- You can get very rich being a stunt performer.
- Anybody can perform a stunt.
- Stunts show how crazy a person is.

Ask the students to use evidence and information from the text to support their views. Discuss their views after each statement.

### K-W-L Chart

Ask the students to complete their K-W-L chart by filling in the third column, “What I Learned.” They could add extra information using the *Guinness World Records* books or website. Have them share their responses with the class.

## Key Reading Strategy: Asking Questions

Asking questions is a skill that good readers use before, during, and after reading. The overriding question is, “Does this make sense to me?” Before reading, questions focus on the title, illustrations, and the reader’s prior knowledge. During reading, readers monitor their understanding of the text by asking questions, making predictions, and making connections. After reading, the reader discusses questions with another person or researches to find out more. Sometimes, readers return to the text for further clarification.

### Reading and Discussing the Page

Ask the students to read the introduction on page 8. In pairs, they can discuss the questions. Ask questions such as the following:

- Are there any questions in this introduction that you remember thinking as you read “Stronger than We Know”? If so, which ones.
- Why are questions important? How do they help us?

On chart paper, record a summary of the students’ responses.

Read aloud the second paragraph Asking Questions and ask questions such as the following:

- Did you identify the same ideas?
- Are there other questions you didn’t think of?

Read aloud Try It Out as the students follow along. To check that they understand what they have to do, have a volunteer paraphrase the instructions. Ask the students to share their questions about each section and whether they were able to answer them. For unanswered questions, the students could brainstorm places to find this information, such as a library or the Internet.

Have the students read the For Real section. Recap on the importance of asking questions. Explain that many questions are unanswered because people such as scientists are still searching for the answers.

Use **BLM 1**, Asking Questions, to practice asking questions before, during, and after reading.



## Lesson Focus

Asking questions  
Monitoring for meaning

## About This Selection

Eduardo has an ambition to make the *Guinness World Records* book. He is undeterred by a number of unsuccessful attempts and eventually gets his name in print – but not in the way he had imagined.

## Word Talk

Glossary words:  
*aerodynamics, amateurs*  
Other vocabulary:  
*gross, mortals, inspiring, scorpions, seized, spasm, charred*

## Anticipation Guide

An Anticipation Guide contains several statements that relate to the text topic or theme. Students use the guide to prompt their thinking before they read a text.



### Teaching Tip

Encourage the students to retell what they have read in their own words to monitor their understanding of the text.



### Assessment Tip

Look for the students who are able to ask questions during reading specifically to clarify their understanding or further their knowledge on the topic.

# Record Attempts

page 10

## Before Reading

### Anticipation Guide

Hand out copies of **BLM 2**, Anticipation Guide. Read through each statement together. Discuss the four possible responses in the Response before Reading column: “strongly agree,” “agree,” “disagree,” or “strongly disagree.” Have the students turn to a partner and discuss and justify their responses, then write them on the guide.

### ★Asking Questions

Explain to the students that to help them concentrate on reading and focus their thinking, it is important to ask questions. Refer them to the title of the story and the illustrations. Discuss what they think the story might be about and what they would like to find out about it. Write their questions onto chart paper or a transparency.

## During Reading

### Monitoring for Meaning

Discuss strategies that the students can use to help them understand what they read. Remind them of strategies for reading unknown words. For example:

- Think about which word would make sense and sound right in the sentence. Remember to reread and read on.
- Analyze the word. Do you know part of it? Do you know a word that is similar to this word?
- Can you break it into sound groups and read the word?

Explain that it is important that the students self-check their understanding of the text by continually asking themselves, “Does this make sense?” Write these strategies onto chart paper or a transparency.

Have the students read the story independently. They should pause at specific points to write down any difficulties they had and the strategy they used to solve them.

At the end of the reading, have the students retell the story in their own words to a partner. Did both partners have the same interpretation?





### **Reflection and Metacognition**

Ask the students to reflect on how their experience of asking questions affected their understanding of the text. Did it make reading more enjoyable? How?

## **After Reading**

### **Anticipation Guide**

Have the students complete the Anticipation Guide. Ask for volunteers to share any changes to their responses or explain why their responses stayed the same.

### **★Asking Questions**

Have the students refer back to the questions they had before reading. Discuss their responses to these questions and/or search for answers. Discuss any new questions.

### **Graphic Organizer**

Ask the students what they might suggest to Eduardo if he were to attempt this stunt again. Ask them what he might do to bring about a more successful outcome. Have the students draw an ideas web. Share and discuss the ideas as a class.

## Lesson Focus

Making connections  
Asking questions  
Summarizing and note taking

## About This Selection

On this FAQ page, Sky the stunt person explains what goes on behind the action in a blockbuster movie.

## Word Talk

Vocabulary: *addiction, skyscraper, airbag, decelerator, harness, descent, fireball, extinguishers, silicone*

## Say Something

Students work in pairs, taking turns to read sections of the text aloud. The reader pauses occasionally to say something about the text, for example, a prediction, question, comment, or connection.



## Teaching Tip

Remind the students to use key reading strategies when they come across difficult words, sentences, or ideas. These include rereading, reading on then returning, chunking letters together or looking for words in words, taking note of punctuation, reading more slowly, using illustrations, and asking for help.

## Extra Help

Before searching the Internet or a library, ask the students to select a “key word” from each of their questions to make the search narrow and more specific.

# Ask an Expert: Stunt Secrets

page 18

## Before Reading

### Making Connections

To access the students’ prior knowledge, ask questions such as the following:

- Where have you seen pages similar to those on pages 18 and 19?
- What do you know about FAQ pages? Have you ever used one or know somebody who has? What does FAQ stand for?
- Do you know of any tricks that stunt people use to make the actions in movies seem real? Describe them.

## During Reading

### Say Something

Remind the students that good readers are constantly thinking about what they are reading. They make predictions, ask questions, and make connections with information in the text and other sources.

Read the online message to Sky on page 18 and model making a connection using Say Something. Ask the students to work in pairs, using Say Something, as they read page 19. They should stop after each paragraph to share a question, prediction, comment, or connection.

After reading, discuss the students’ connections. Ask questions such as the following:

- Which parts of the text need to be clarified?
- Did you come across any difficult words or sentences? What strategies did you use to solve the problem? Did they help?
- What do you think “decelerator” means? What might happen if Sky did not use this trick?
- How might Lindsay use the decelerator trick to explain to Jason how they can ride a motorcycle off the top of a skyscraper?

## After Reading

### ★Asking Questions/Research

When the students have finished reading, ask:

- What questions about stunt secrets would you like to ask Sky?

Have the students write their questions onto a T-chart with the headings “Questions” in one column and “Answers” in the other. Have them use a library, the Internet, or an expert to search for the answers.

## **Summarizing and Note Taking**

Summarizing means reducing information to its most important ideas. The best way to summarize is to take short notes about the main ideas in a text.

Explain to the students that they will perform a role-play in pairs to summarize the information in this FAQ page. Before they perform the role-play, have them reread the text to find the most important points. Ask them to write these onto a two-columned chart under the headings “Key Words” and “Notes.”

Explain that one person will play the character of Jason and the other will play Lindsay. The student playing Lindsay must first tell Jason about the online message and then, using his or her own words, retell the information he received from Sky. The student playing Jason must predict what Jason’s reaction might be. The students can then switch roles and repeat the role-play. Those students who are feeling confident can share their role-play with the class.

## Lesson Focus

Making connections  
Text features  
Determining importance

## About This Selection

This article discusses the phenomenon of the *Guinness World Records* and how it has given rise to a competitive, wacky culture of record making and breaking, from the greatest number of hopscotch games to the largest pecan pie.

## Word Talk

Glossary words: *ambition, capacity, game bird, verify, shot put, coax*  
Other vocabulary: *unicycle, muscle-bound, plover, grouse, trivia, ferocious*



## Teaching Tip

Remind the students to reread a paragraph, sentence, or phrase if the message is unclear.

## Marking the Text

Students can use sticky notes or plain paper bookmarks to mark their thoughts, questions, predictions, or comments.

# Guinness Me!

page 20

## Before Reading

### Making Connections

Tell the students that they will be reading an article called “Guinness Me!” Ask questions such as the following:

- What does the title of this article bring to mind?
- What comes to mind when you look at the photographs and hear the word “Guinness”?

Read aloud the first paragraph and ask questions such as the following:

- What incredible talents do you know about? Share them with a partner.
- Do you know of any strange talents that have become Guinness world records? Share and discuss them.

### Text Features

Ask the students to skim pages 20 to 23 and take note of the photos, headings, graphics, and text layout. Ask questions such as the following:

- Do the colors help you to find information? How?
- What do the photographs tell you? How do they help you to predict what this article is about?
- Why do you think the designer used subheadings, dots, and arrows? How would the article change if these features weren’t included?
- Which text features are important in this article? Why?

## During Reading

### Determining Importance

Finding the main idea often means sorting out what is important from what is simply interesting. Explain to the students that throughout “Guinness Me!” the interesting facts are easier to spot than the important ideas. Tell the students to pause at the end of each paragraph to note the important idea. Draw a T-chart onto chart paper or a transparency, using the headings “Important/Main Idea” and “Interesting.”

To check the students’ understanding of the instructions, read the first paragraph together. Ask the students to share what they think are the interesting or important facts. Write these onto the chart and ask the students to continue reading independently or in pairs.

### Marking the Text

As the students read through the text, ask them to place sticky notes next to words, sentences, or paragraphs that they find difficult or have any thoughts and questions about. Share, discuss, and clarify these at the end of the reading.

### Extra Help

For the students who struggle to find words for each letter in the ABC chart, particularly X and Z, allow them to choose a word that contains the letter within it. Alternatively, they could write a sentence that contains the letter.

## After Reading

### ABC Chart

An ABC chart is a tool that helps the students to make connections while broadening their vocabulary and thinking. Ask the students to write the letters of the alphabet down the side of a page. For each letter, they must write a word that relates to “Guinness Me!” Have available copies of *Guinness World Records* books, and a thesaurus.

### Creative/Aesthetic Response

The students could:

- invent a new world record, writing an explanation of the rules for making an attempt;
- research an unusual world record and write a newspaper report about a successful attempt at breaking it.

## Featured Graphic Organizer: Plus-Minus-Interesting Chart

A Plus-Minus-Interesting (PMI) chart is a helpful way to make a decision by taking into consideration the positive, negative, and interesting aspects of a statement, proposal, or argument. It allows readers to see the “whole picture” and to think about points they might not have originally contemplated.

### Reading and Discussing the Page

Read aloud the description of a PMI chart. Ask questions such as the following:

- What is a Plus-Minus-Interesting chart?
- Why is it useful?
- What do you think a PMI chart is best used for?

Explain that this PMI chart debates the statement: “It would be incredible to hold a Guinness world record.” Ask the students to share whether they agree or disagree with the statement.

Read aloud each of the columns in the chart and return to the statement. Discuss any changes in the students’ opinions and ask them whether this graphic organizer helped them to make that decision.

Ask the students to choose one of the following ideas to enter in **BLM 3**, Plus-Minus-Interesting Chart:

- spending forty-four days in a box;
- choosing special-effect stunt work as a career;
- setting a new record for the world’s largest pecan pie;
- standing in an ice closet for sixty-one hours.

Have them complete the chart and exchange their work with a partner. Explain that the partner must read the statements and add some further ideas under at least one column.

## Lesson Focus

Visualizing  
Asking questions

### About This Selection

Barnstormers were pilots who performed daring stunts in mid-flight. This historical article discusses the feats and attitudes of barnstormers of the 1920s and features the pioneering wing walker Ormer Locklear.

### Word Talk

Glossary words:  
*barnstorming, aerialists*  
Other vocabulary:  
*biplane, daring stunts, stunt pilots, leap, fear, imaginative, somersault, daredevils, death defying, parachute, archery, trapeze, accidents, safety regulations, legacy, motto*

### Extra Help

Have dictionaries and thesauruses available, and help the students find the meanings of unfamiliar words.

### Word Splash

Key words or vocabulary from the text are “splashed” or placed onto a transparency or chart paper. Students use the words to predict the content of the text.

### Double/Triple Entry Journal

Two- or three-column charts are used for students to record parts of the text and their inferential or critical thinking about each part.

# The Sky Was the Limit

page 26

## Before Reading

### Word Splash

Write the words from Word Talk onto strips of paper. Have the students work in small groups to find the meanings of several of the words. Share, discuss, and clarify their definitions. Have the students sort the words into groups, then ask:

➤ What do you think this article will be about?

Hand out copies of **BLM 4**, Probable Passage, and have the students complete the passage using the words in the list.

### Visualizing

Tell the students that you will be reading aloud the first paragraph on page 26, while they close their eyes and visualize. Explain that afterward they will use a Double Entry Journal. In the first column, they will sketch their mental image of the man standing on a wing of the airplane. In the second column, they will write a quotation from the text. Encourage the students to share their journals and make predictions about the article.

## During Reading

### ★Asking Questions

Read aloud the following passage to the students:

“You are a risk-taking daredevil in the 1920s, and you are desperate to become an aerialist. You’ve seen aerialists at air shows, but don’t know much about what this career involves.” Ask questions such as the following:

- What do you need to know before beginning a career as an aerialist?
- What questions would you need to ask?

Make a Triple Entry Journal using the headings “Question,” “Answer,” and “Extras.” Have the students write their questions in the first column, then share and discuss them.

Explain to the students that as they read, they will need to write their answers in the second column. Add any extra information that they think is important in the third column.

Model one example, filling in all three columns.





### Reflection and Metacognition

Have the students reflect on how the graphic organizer (PMI chart) helped them to make a decision.

## After Reading

### ★Asking Questions

Refer the students back to the statement about wanting to become an aerialist. Ask questions such as the following:

- Did you answer all of your questions?
- What unexpected information did you find?
- Do you have any questions that you would still like to ask? What resources could you use to find the answers?

### Graphic Organizer

Ask:

- Would you like to be an aerialist? Why/why not?

Have the students practice using their organizational skills by drawing a Plus-Minus-Interesting chart about being an aerialist. Have them make a decision using the information in the columns.

### Creative/Aesthetic Response

The students could:

- create an advertisement for a barnstorming event;
- write a poem describing an aerialist's feelings before and after performing a successful stunt.

## Featured Project: Write a Mini-bio

Read the introductory paragraph on page 32. Explain to the students that they will be writing a mini-bio about a stunt person or daredevil. Ask:

- What do you think a mini-bio is?

Discuss and clarify the meaning of this term.

Read through the instructions on page 32. Hand out copies of **BLM 5**, Mini-bio Fact Sheet, and ask the students to choose a stunt person. Explain that, to fill in the mini-bio fact sheet, they will need to find information using the Internet or a library.

After they have gathered information, ask the students to share their information with another person. They should explain why they chose this stunt person and give at least one interesting fact about him or her.

Before beginning a draft copy, focus the students on the introductory sentence in “The Sky Was the Limit.” Ask questions such as the following:

- What words has the author used to make this piece of writing interesting?
- What words or sentences could you use to make your opening sentence grab the reader’s attention?

Have the students work in pairs to brainstorm and discuss the points on page 32 to plan their mini-bio. Ask them to listen carefully to other ideas and offer feedback. Their feedback should be positive and constructive so that the writing is enhanced. Continue using this Think-Pair-Share strategy until the mini-bio draft is complete.

Have the students publish the finished drafts. Compile their work as a book for the class library.

# Asking Questions

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

What to do:

- Scan each section of “Guinness Me!” (*Don’t Try This at Home*, pages 20–23) and write down any questions you have before reading.
- Read each section of “Guinness Me!”
- Add any further questions you have during and after reading. Place a check mark beside the questions you can answer and a question mark beside those you have yet to answer.

Section Heading	Questions					
	Before Reading		During Reading		After Reading	
The Business of the Guinness						
Ground-breaking Ideas						

# Anticipation Guide

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

What to do:

- Before reading “Record Attempts” (*Don’t Try This at Home*, pages 10–17), read the statements in the table below. In the first column, write your response: agree, strongly agree, disagree, or strongly disagree.
- Read the article, then look back at the statements in the first column. Have you changed your ideas? Write your new response, or rewrite your original response, in the final column.

Response before Reading	Statement	Response after Reading
	No one should attempt to break a world record – it’s too dangerous.	
	The only way to impress someone is to break a world record.	
	Achieving your personal best is better than achieving a world record.	
	You can become famous simply by attempting a world record.	
	You need to have a lot of money to break a world record.	

# Plus-Minus-Interesting Chart

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

What to do:

→ Choose one of the ideas below.

- Spending forty-four days in a box
- Choosing special-effect stunt work as a career
- Setting a new record for the world's largest pecan pie
- Standing in an ice closet for sixty-one hours

→ Fill in each of the columns in the chart. Include your reasons. (Find the information by rereading pages 3–23 of *Don't Try This at Home*.)

Idea: \_\_\_\_\_

Plus	Minus	Interesting

# Probable Passage

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

What to do:

- Read and discuss the following words from “The Sky Was the Limit” (*Don’t Try This at Home*, pages 26–31).
- Write the words from the list into the passage below. Check that the passage makes sense with the words you’ve added.

fear  
dismissed  
attract  
stunts

death  
trailing  
warning  
flying

leap  
risking  
business  
loop-the-loops

Barnstomers were either stunt pilots or aerialists. Stunt pilots performed spins, dives, \_\_\_\_\_, and barrel rolls. They could make death defying \_\_\_\_\_ look effortless. Aerialists were people who would stride, dance, or somersault along the top wings of a \_\_\_\_\_ airplane. Some would \_\_\_\_\_ from the wing of one plane to the wing of another.

Throughout Central and North America, barnstormers often arrived in small, sleepy towns without \_\_\_\_\_. They’d fly over the town \_\_\_\_\_ banners to advertise their upcoming performance. To \_\_\_\_\_ attention, they would do a few spins, loops, and dives. When word got out that barnstormers had come to town, day-to-day \_\_\_\_\_ would stop. Stores closed, school was \_\_\_\_\_, and everyone rushed to see the show.

From the ground, all you could see were the heroes \_\_\_\_\_ their lives to put on a show. If they were shaking with \_\_\_\_\_ up there, you couldn’t see it. If there was a high wire between life and \_\_\_\_\_, barnstormers could walk across it with their eyes closed.

# Mini-bio Fact Sheet

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

What to do:

- Read the instructions on page 32 of *Don't Try This at Home*. Complete the fact sheet below by taking notes from the Internet and/or a library. Use this information to complete your mini-bio.

	Notes
<b>Introduction</b> (Exciting words or sentences to describe my stunt person or daredevil and their stunts)	
<b>Who?</b>	
<b>What?</b>	
<b>When?</b>	
<b>Where?</b>	
<b>Why?</b>	
<b>How?</b>	
<b>Conclusion</b> (One sentence to bring the mini-bio to a strong close)	