

Read the passage below. Then answer the questions.

The Man Who Walked Through the Sky

On August 13, 1974, people in New York City were flabbergasted to see a man walking across a 3/4-inch-wide wire 1,368 feet above them. For 45 minutes, French citizen Philippe Petit captured the attention of an incredulous city as he walked, bounced, sat, and laid down on a high-wire stretched between the twin towers of the World Trade Center. Amazingly, Petit had planned and executed his stunt without notifying anyone in the city—including the police. As soon as he stepped off the wire, the police abruptly put him in handcuffs and took him to jail. People around the world were left wondering, “Who is Philippe Petit, and how did he accomplish his spectacular feat?”

When Petit was released from jail a few hours later, he shared his story with the press. The seeds of the stunt had been planted when Petit was afflicted by a toothache at age 18. While sitting in the dentist’s office, he came across an article about the World Trade Center, which was just being built. As soon as he saw the picture of the towers, the accomplished wire walker knew that he would have to walk between them someday. He ripped the article from the magazine and left the dentist’s office. Although his tooth continued to throb for days afterward, Petit was happy to have found his life’s dream.

For the next six years, Petit learned everything he could about the World Trade Center. He built a team to help him plan the technical details of the walk. The most important part of the plan was making sure their measurements were precise; one trivial mistake in the laying of the wire could lead to grim consequences.

The night before the walk, Petit’s team snuck up to the top floor of the World Trade Center. They stayed awake all night, working under the cover of darkness. Finally, at 7:15 a.m., Petit’s six-year dream became a reality. On the streets below, thousands of people stopped to gape up at the abnormal scene. For those who were lucky enough to see it, Petit’s stunt remains an incredible moment in New York City history.

1. How did the people of New York respond to Petit’s walk?

- (A) They were angry.
- (B) They were uninterested.
- (C) They were amazed.
- (D) They were frightened.

2. Why did the police arrest Petit after his stunt?

- (A) Petit had not gotten permission to walk across the towers.
- (B) Petit was staying in the country illegally.
- (C) Petit had arranged the arrest to draw attention to his stunt.
- (D) Petit had not taken proper safety precautions.

3. How much time did Petit spend planning his walk?

- (A) One night
- (B) Two years
- (C) Six years
- (D) 18 years

4. Read this sentence from the passage:

“The seeds of the stunt had been planted when Petit was afflicted by a toothache at age 18.”
The author means that, while suffering from a toothache,

- (A) Petit first decided to become a street performer.
- (B) Petit felt as if a plant were growing in his mouth.
- (C) Petit first thought about walking across the towers.
- (D) Petit decided to take up gardening.

5. Read this sentence from the passage:

"As soon as he saw the picture of the towers, the accomplished wire walker knew that he would have to walk between them someday." Based on this sentence, you can tell that

- (A) Petit had walked on wires between other buildings in the past.
- (B) Petit decided to learn how to walk on wires after seeing the picture of the towers.
- (C) Petit had heard of the twin towers before he saw a picture of them.
- (D) Petit learned how to walk on wires before seeing the picture of the towers.

1E Pick the Winner

Circle the word that best fits into the sentence. Then write a sentence below that uses the word you didn't pick in a meaningful way.

- 1. Rion knows a lot of (**trivial OR incredulous**) facts about reality television shows.

- 2. _____
- 3. The man screamed when he saw the (**robust OR grim**) expression on the monster's face.

- 4. _____
- 5. I always (**accelerate OR wince**) when I hear the earsplitting sound of fingernails on a chalkboard.

- 6. _____
- 7. The library called to (**notify OR perceive**) you that you have an overdue book.

- 8. _____
- 9. I stubbed my toe this morning and it still (**abates OR throbs**).

- 10. _____

1H Thinking Creatively

Answer each question below. Don't be afraid to think creatively.

- 1. What is an **abnormal** talent that you wish you had?

- 2. Describe a situation in which you learned something that made you feel **flabbergasted**.

- 3. What is one thing people do that makes you **wince**?
