

5.1 Going solo

Grammar conditional structures (1)

Can do talk about real and imagined risky activities

Reading

1 a Work in pairs and discuss the questions.

- 1 Do you like to spend a lot of time on your own? Why/Why not?
- 2 Do you prefer working in a group or on your own? Why?
- 3 Do you prefer team or solo sports?

b Look at the woman in the photos. What challenges do you think she encountered?

2 Read the article and tick (✓) the topics mentioned.

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 Ellen's achievement | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2 her family background | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3 her feelings about being alone | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4 the qualities a solo sailor needs | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5 the costs of the voyage | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6 her charity work | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7 her future plans | <input type="checkbox"/> |

One woman's determination

Ellen MacArthur is possibly the greatest sailor Britain has ever produced. In 2005, at the age of 28, she risked everything and broke the record for sailing solo around the world, encountering terrible storms for much of the 44,000-kilometre journey. She finally completed her voyage in 71 days, 14 hours, 18 minutes and 33 seconds, breaking the existing record by 33 hours, set the previous year by Frenchman Francis Joyon.

Ellen's boat was 23m long and 15m wide, with a cabin no more than 2.5m by 1.5m. It contained a bunk, a table, navigational equipment and a tiny kitchen. That was it. No toilet (just a bucket) and no shower. She put up with this discomfort and isolation and never complained or got lonely. She said her boat was all the company she needed. The danger never seemed to bother her either; she just dealt with the risks. 'Often you don't know what's going to happen when there's a big storm coming so when you're actually in it, it's better,' she said.



Although Joyon broke the record again two years later, Ellen's achievement is still incredibly impressive. She is only the second person ever to sail solo non-stop around the world on a multi-hull boat. And four men, all great sailors, have tried and failed to match the feat of Joyon. Ellen, who is just 1.6m tall, was the first to succeed. It is a common misconception that size and muscle is all that matters. Single-handed sailing is really all about the mind. You need to be able to focus on the job completely, deal with things alone and have incredible levels of self-discipline and determination. Ellen probably wouldn't have survived, let alone broken the record, if she didn't have such extreme mental toughness. She also has her critics, however, who say that if previous sailors had had modern equipment, many of them would've broken records, too. It's speculation, however, and the fact is that it was Ellen who actually did it.

Nowadays, Ellen puts her mental and physical energy into different ventures. She continues to work for her charity, *The Ellen MacArthur Trust*. The charity takes young people sailing to help them on their way to recovery from cancer and other serious illnesses. Their challenges are clearly different from Ellen's challenges. But if she hadn't endured such tough experiences herself, she wouldn't understand nearly as much about what these young people have to face. In Ellen's words, 'I face challenges out on the water, but these are challenges that I choose to do. They, on the other hand, don't have this luxury. They battle against something harder than many of us could ever imagine and they do it with the biggest smiles on their faces.'

In 2009, Ellen decided to give up competitive sailing and put her efforts into saving the environment. While sailing, she realised the extent of the trouble facing the planet and set up *Team Ellen* to campaign for a more sustainable future. 'My life at sea has opened my eyes to things I did not expect – things which once I had learnt I could not ignore. This is why at present I am focusing on this,' she said. Would she go back to the sailing if she had the chance? 'If I manage to communicate what I have learned about the environment, I'll be the first person off to sea again! I miss the long periods at sea hugely, but for now I feel I have something more important to do.'



3 Read the article again. Write true (T), false (F) or not given (NG).

- 1 There were difficult weather conditions for a lot of Ellen's voyage.
- 2 The record that Ellen broke was set in 2005.
- 3 She found the lack of facilities in her boat very difficult to cope with.
- 4 Ellen held the record for two years.
- 5 According to the article, mental strength is more important than physical strength in solo sailing.
- 6 Some people have been critical of Ellen's achievement.
- 7 Ellen thinks teenagers with cancer have similar challenges to her.
- 8 She learned about environmental problems when she was sailing.

4 Work in small groups and discuss the questions.

- 1 From the article, what is your impression of Ellen MacArthur? In what ways do you think you are like her?
- 2 How would you feel about being alone on a boat like Ellen's for 71 days? What would you miss the most?
- 3 Which of Ellen's two projects, *The Ellen MacArthur Trust* or *Team Ellen*, interests you the most? Why?

Grammar | conditional structures (3)

- 5** a Complete the sentences (1-5) in the Active grammar box with *will*, *would*, *wouldn't* (x2) and *would've*.
- b Match the sentences (1-5) with the correct rules (A-E).

Active grammar

- 1 _____ she go back to the sailing if she had the chance?
- 2 If previous sailors had had modern equipment, many of them _____ broken records, too.
- 3 If I manage to communicate what I have learned about the environment, I _____ be the first person off to sea again!
- 4 If she hadn't endured such tough experiences herself, she _____ understand nearly as much about what they have to face.
- 5 Ellen probably _____ have survived if she didn't have such extreme mental toughness.

A We use the First Conditional: *if* + Present Simple/Continuous + *will/won't* to talk about future possibility.

B We use the Second Conditional: *if* + Past Simple/Continuous + *would/wouldn't* to talk about present or future imagined situations.

C We use the Third Conditional: *if* + Past Perfect Simple/Continuous + *would have/wouldn't have* to talk about imagined situations in the past.

We can use various Mixed Conditionals, e.g.

- D *if* + Past Perfect + *would/wouldn't* to talk about imagined past conditions and the probable results in the present.
- E *if* + Past Simple/Continuous + *would have/wouldn't have* to talk about situations that never happened because of conditions which are still true.

6 Find the mistakes in the sentences and correct them.

- 1 Before you go tomorrow morning, do you phone me if you need anything?
- 2 What you have done if a nearby boat hadn't picked up your distress call?
- 3 You had feel a lot better about things if you took a risk and left your job.
- 4 She wouldn't have finish the race if she wasn't such a determined person.
- 5 What you like to do if you had some free time and money?
- 6 If I didn't take a year off to cycle across Africa, I wouldn't have met my wife.
- 7 If he didn't have sailing lessons when he was young, he wouldn't be so confident in the water now.
- 8 If you'll see John, will you ask him if he wants to come parachuting with us?

7 Choose the correct words in *italics*.

- 1 If he had the chance to sail around the world, he *will/would* do it.
- 2 If she *is/was* brave enough, she'd have a go at parachuting.
- 3 If he *took/'d taken* a risk by applying for the job, he'd have a better job now.
- 4 If I decided to campaign for something, it *would be/would have been* for the environment.
- 5 If he *had/'d had* to be alone for long, he'd hate it.
- 6 If I have more time, I'll/'d go to the gym four or five times a week.
- 7 If I *will be/were* a different person, I'd like to be more self-confident.
- 8 If she'd had the opportunity when she was a child, she'd *like/'d have liked* to learn to swim properly.

Vocabulary | verb phrases about challenge

8 Work in pairs. Look at the underlined verb phrases and try to work out their meanings from the context.

- 1 She risked everything and sailed solo around the world.
- 2 She broke the existing record by 33 hours.
- 3 She put up with this discomfort and never complained.
- 4 The danger never seemed to bother her either; she just dealt with the risks.
- 5 You need to be able to focus on the job completely.
- 6 She endured tough experiences herself.
- 7 I face challenges out on the water.
- 8 They battle against something harder than many of us could ever imagine.
- 9 She decided to put her efforts into saving the environment.
- 10 She set up 'Team Ellen' to campaign for a more sustainable future.

9 a. Choose the correct words in *italics*.

- 1 What challenges do you think Ellen *battles/faces* now?
- 2 How do you think Ellen was able to *put/face* up with all the discomfort during the trip?
- 3 What do you know about how Ellen *campaigns/battles* for the environment?
- 4 Why do you think Ellen *puts/campaigns* her efforts into sustainable living?
- 5 How do you think sailing helped the teenage cancer patients *focus/battle* against their illness?
- 6 How would you feel if you *broke/put* a record in sport?
- 7 Do you think you could *deal/endure* with the dangers of sailing round the world?
- 8 How do you think people *focus/endure* the experience of being alone for a long time?
- 9 What do you think about people who *deal/risk* everything to do something dangerous for fun?
- 10 Are you good at *dealing/focusing* on things or do you get distracted easily?

b. Choose six of the questions from exercise 9a to ask and answer with a partner.

10 a. Work in pairs. Read the tips in the Lifelong learning box and discuss the pros and cons of each one.

b. Discuss the questions.

- 1 What other tips can you add to the Lifelong learning box?
- 2 What risks do you think you take in your learning at the moment?
- 3 What risks would you like to take more?

Taking risks

! In order to push your language learning to the next level, sometimes you need to take risks, challenge yourself and experiment with different ways of learning/practising English. You can ...

- 1 speak as much as possible inside/outside the classroom without worrying about mistakes.
- 2 read magazines/books etc., focusing on general understanding, not looking up unknown words in a dictionary.
- 3 watch TV/films without subtitles.
- 4 use new vocabulary and grammar in conversation, even when you're not completely sure it's correct.
- 5 write in English as much as possible without worrying about mistakes.

Speaking

11 **1.38** Listen to two people. What kind of risk is the man talking about?

12 a. Choose three of these sentences and rewrite to make them true for you.

- 1 If I were a different person, I'd like to be more of a risk-taker.
- 2 If someone asked me to sail around the world with them, I'd do it.
- 3 If I had to be alone for a long period, I wouldn't mind at all.
- 4 If I have more time, I'll try to do more exercise.
- 5 If I could choose a characteristic, I'd like to be more courageous.
- 6 If I'd had the chance as a child, I'd have learned to play a musical instrument.
- 7 If I decided to campaign for something, I'd probably choose something to do with animals.

b. Work in small groups. Compare and discuss your sentences.