

A Frightening Escape

A few years ago, an American pilot was flying a small plane from Massachusetts to North Carolina when the engine failed. He jumped out of the plane with a parachute at 14,000 metres.

For the first few minutes after jumping out of the plane I just fell. I had my oxygen mask and helmet, but it was very cold and I was falling very fast. My left hand was completely numb. I couldn't open the parachute because I was too high and there was not enough air. At last there was more air and I began to go more slowly and suddenly the parachute opened. My nose was bleeding, my right hand was cut, and my left hand was still very cold, but I felt better.

Then I noticed that the clouds were getting dark and I realised I was going into a thunderstorm. All of a

sudden there was wind, rain, thunder, lightning and even hail. As I was falling, I closed my eyes to protect them from the lightning.

Slowly the weather got calmer and I was below the storm. I was probably about a hundred metres above the ground when I looked down and saw green fields and knew I was very near to landing. Then I crashed through some trees and landed on the ground. I lay there for a few seconds, cold but still conscious. Soon I was able to move my arms and legs. By some miracle I was all right.

1 Read

a) Read the text and guess the meaning of these words and phrases. Check your answers with your teacher or dictionary.

- pilot • jump • oxygen mask • helmet • numb
- nose • bleed • cut • thunderstorm • lightning
- hail • protect • below • crash • conscious
- arm • leg • miracle

b) Put the events in order to summarise the story.

1 c) *The engine of the pilot's plane failed.*

- a) The pilot jumped out of the plane.
- b) The parachute opened.
- c) The engine of the pilot's plane failed.
- d) He landed on the ground.
- e) He went through a storm.
- f) There was more air.
- g) He saw some fields.
- h) He hit a tree.
- i) His parachute didn't open.

2 Learn to learn

Dictionary skills: different parts of speech

You can use a dictionary to find out what part of speech a word is. Sometimes a word can be more than one part of speech e.g. a verb (v) as well as a noun (n).

hail¹ / heɪl / verb 1 **hail a taxi, hail a cab** to wave at a taxi to make it stop 2 if it hails, frozen rain falls from the sky

hail² noun 1 [no plural] frozen rain that falls from the sky 2 **a hail of bullets** a lot of bullets travelling through the air at the same time: *Bonnie and Clyde died in a hail of bullets.*

Use a dictionary to look up *hand, arm* and *land*. What do they mean in their different parts of speech?

3 Listen

Listen to two people discussing the pilot's experience.

- 1 Where did the pilot land?
- 2 When did he land?
- 3 What was the weather like?
- 4 Was he hurt?
- 5 Where did he go?
- 6 Did the first car stop?
- 7 Did he ever fly again?

4 Write

Write a story about an incident on the road or in the air.

- Say who was there and where he/she was.
- Say what went wrong.
- Say what happened afterwards.