



Exercise 4

Read the article about a young snowboarder, and then answer the questions.



Gemma Noble: UK snowboarder

20-year-old Gemma Noble is one of the UK's snowboarding stars. Born in the north of England, she started snowboarding at a centre near her home – one of only a handful in the UK. Now, as this part of the world is not known for having huge amounts of snow, the snowboarding centre relies on using artificial surfaces for teaching snowboarding. While of course you might imagine that learning to snowboard in the snow high in the French mountains, for example, might be preferable, Gemma says that the surface at the centre meant she could practise in conditions which didn't change according to the weather. And that, combined with the fact that all the instructors were so willing to help her achieve her best, went a long way to helping her learn quickly.

Gemma describes how she had always been known as a sporty child, and in fact, she was already very good at gymnastics even before she tried snowboarding. She had taken part in a few competitions for younger age groups, and discovered that she responded well to the pressure of having to compete. It's also true that one skill a gymnast needs to have is a really good idea of where you are in the air, when you are jumping and turning. This is essential in snowboarding as well, and so already having that ability proved to be a real plus when Gemma started learning on the slopes at the snowboarding centre.

When she and her instructors felt she was ready, Gemma began entering snowboarding competitions. She worked hard on getting better until eventually she came first in an event for under-eighteens in 2020. For this, she won a huge silver cup, which she is incredibly proud of! Now, you'll probably think that it's on display in her home, right? Well actually, she explains, 'It's still hidden carefully away in the presentation box it came in, as I can't help imagining how I'd feel if anything happened to it.' But naturally, she's always more than happy to show it off to anyone who is eager to see it!

There's a risk involved in doing any kind of sport, especially the more extreme sports, and snowboarding is no exception. In 2021, Gemma unfortunately had an accident in which she damaged her ankle. Although the injury wasn't too bad and there were no concerns from her medical team about her getting over it, the timing couldn't have been worse. She'd been planning to compete as part of a team in an international event, but instead she ended up supporting her teammates via videocalls and messages – not the same experience at all! But Gemma isn't one to feel sorry for herself, so she focused on improving her fitness, under the strict supervision of her doctors.

Now Gemma is very happy to be back on the snow where she feels most comfortable, travelling all over the world in order to take part in events. She's becoming very well known in the sport partly due to the fact that she's entering competitions again after her injury. This is a new development, and something that she's enjoying much more than she ever expected to! After all, being asked to appear on TV and give interviews might sound pretty scary, especially for someone as young as Gemma. But she's finding it all really exciting, and is delighted with the attention!



Question 10

What does Gemma say about the place where she learned to snowboard?

- A** The staff at the centre were very encouraging.
- B** The centre was part of a large chain covering the country.
- C** Having real snow at the centre would be an advantage.

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