

Reading Explorer 2, Unit 12: Sky Shooter

Narrator:

At the World Freefall Convention, 5,000 participants are ready to dive right in. Official photographer Tom Sanders can't just sit and watch. He has to follow the skydivers up into the sky, and jump with them back to earth, in order to get the perfect shots.

This helicopter is taking a dozen skydivers over 1500 meters into the air. That will give Sanders less than 30 seconds to film the thrill of free fall.

Tom Sanders:

"Yeah! Nice skydive!"

Narrator:

Sanders has filmed thousands of skydives. But this time, he's about to do something he's never tried before.

This is a 727 jet. Jumping from this jet, skydivers will fly and fall at a speed of up to 260 kilometers per hour. It takes a lot of courage. The jump can be terrifying, but many are eager to try it.

Paul Waschak is one of those ready to 'jump the jet', and Sanders is going to film the feat. It will be quite a challenge. For the 5 minute ride up, the two men join 180 other skydivers, all tightly packed into the plane.

The skydivers are nervous and excited. Sanders and Waschak must go first, and jump relatively close together, which can be dangerous. Finally, at over 4,000 meters, above the noise of the engines, they get the signal to jump.

Moments later the other jumpers follow.

Within seconds, Sanders's camera is focused on Waschak as he seems to fly high above the countryside.

Tom Sanders:

"I don't think it's possible to capture on film what it's like to be in a free fall. I think you can capture some incredible images and you can get people's imaginations inspired, but I don't think unless you do it you can appreciate the beauty and the thrill and the freedom of flying through the air."

Narrator:

The fall is picture perfect. Although Sanders' landing is less than perfect. Photographer and subject are exhilarated.

Tom Sanders:

"Nice jump, man."

Paul Waschak:

“Ah, man, that was great!”

Narrator:

For photographer Tom Sanders – it’s all part of a day’s amazing work.