

## IELTS Reading Passage - The Birdmen

### The Birdmen

Since the beginning of recorded history, people have fantasised about flying. Leonardo da Vinci produced extensive drawings for human flying machines in the 1400s. You'd think that the development of mechanised flying would put such notions to rest. Not at all. The jet pack, a small piece of equipment worn on your back that allows you to soar vertically into the air and fly forwards, backward, and spin, is the ultimate flight fantasy for many fans. Eric Scott worked as a stuntman in Hollywood for over a decade, strapping jet packs to his back more than 600 times and flying hundreds of metres.

He now works for an energy drink firm, which pays him to tour the world in his jet pack. 'I get to do what I love, and I promote Go Fast beverages wherever I go,' Scott explains. Existing packs last less than 30 seconds, but designers are working on ideas that will allow you to fly for up to 20 minutes. 'That would be incredible,' Scott says.

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Another passionate paramotorist had a close call while in the air recently. Patrick Vandenbulcke adds, "I started to receive a warm feeling in my back." I assumed I was just perspiring. But then I started to feel a burning sensation and understood I needed to get to the ground as soon as possible. Following a later inspection of the engine, I discovered that the exhaust pipe had moved during the flight and the harness had begun to melt. 'This hasn't deterred Vandenbulcke, and he's eager to get others to try paramotoring as well.' However, he cautions, "While it may

appear to be less expensive to try to educate yourself, you will regret it later because you will not have a proper technique."

A training course will set you back over £1,000, and the necessary equipment will set you back a few thousand pounds. Secondhand equipment, on the other hand, maybe less expensive. One pre-owned kit was advertised on a website, with some damage to the cage and propeller tips owing to a harsh landing. 'I was scared to death, which is why I'm selling,' the seller explained.

Paramotoring is a lot of fun, but it's not on the same level as Yves Rossy's acrobatics. He's always loved being a daredevil entertainer. He reportedly parachuted from a plane above Lake Geneva and fell to the lake, skimming the top of a fountain as he landed. He then grabbed some water ski equipment and began waterskiing while the crowd looked on, mouths gaping.

Rossy, sometimes known as "the Birdman," was born in Switzerland in 1959. He worked as a pilot for a commercial airline from 1988 to 2000 after flying planes with the Air Force from the ages of 20 to 28. 'The most beautiful office in the world is a plane cockpit,' he recalls, 'but I didn't have any interaction with the air surrounding me.' It seemed like I was in a box or a submarine submerged.' As a result, he focused his efforts from that point forward on becoming the first jet-powered flying man.

## **The Birdmen IELTS Reading Questions**

### **Question 1 - 5**

Choose the correct letter, A - D.

1. The jet pack, a small piece of equipment worn on your

A. jacket

B. front

- C. back
- D. backpack

2. Designers are working on ideas that will allow you to fly for up to

- A. 10 minutes
- B. 2 hours
- C. 30 minutes
- D. 20 minutes

3. A training course will set you back over £1,000, and the necessary equipment will set you back a few

- A. dollars
- B. thousand pounds
- C. rupees
- D. hundred pounds

4. Rossy grabbed some water ski equipment and began waterskiing while the crowd looked on,

- A. at his face
- B. on the top
- C. on the top of the water
- D. mouths gaping

5. It seemed like I was in a box or a submarine

- A. submerged
- B. landed

C. rest

D. floated