

Bicycle motocross

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BUSTER**

Decide what you think. Write an opinion essay. Extremely Dangerous Extreme Sports: Extreme sports are high-intensity activities that involve both speed and stunts. For kids, these activities include snowboarding, snowmobiling, skateboarding, BMX biking, skiing, and motocross. These sports pack big thrills. But they have also caused more than 4 million injuries since 2000. Many of these are simple fractures and cuts, but more serious injuries are disturbingly common. Two winters ago, snowmobiles Caleb Moore was killed after a horrific crash.

In 2009, Olympic-bound snowboarder Kevin Pearce suffered a permanent brain injury after a fall during a practice run. These sports are dangerous at any age. But experts worry that young extreme athletes face special hazards. Part of the problem is that young people are less likely than adults to consider risks. "Kids tend to think about what is an hour from now," says psychologist Jesse Matthews. Inspired by video games or YouTube clips, many beginners attempt stunts that are way beyond their skill level. Little wonder that one third of all skateboarding injuries happen to kids who have been skateboarding for just a few weeks or less.

Unlike team sports, many extreme athletes Some kids have a need for speed. But is the thrill worth it? They fly down mountains on BMX bikes, flip and twist in the air on their skateboards, and soar off ski jumps on their snowboards. They are extreme athletes—and there are more of them than ever before. There's no doubt that extreme sports are thrilling for many young athletes. The problem is that the thrills come at a high price: danger. In fact, a growing number of experts feel that some of these sports should be off-limits to kids. But would that be going too far? 28 story works

Mike McGill/courts (Skater); ILLUSTRATION BY Lance Alexander Too

Dangerous for Kids? Practice without the guidance of coaches, in skate parks and on mountains far from adult eyes. Another problem is that helmets, which are routine in some extreme sports, are not required for skateboarders. As a result, these athletes are far more likely to suffer serious head injuries in a fall. Worth the Risk When so much could go wrong, why would Of course there are the obvious thrills of flying down a mountainside at 60 miles an hour, or soaring high on a trusted skateboard. But it's not all about the thrills.

Extreme sports offer opportunities to millions of kids who What Think YES don't enjoy team sports. According to Matthews, extreme sports can let kids be more imaginative than sports like football or soccer. They are free to experiment and invent stunts of their own. Extreme sports can also build confidence and discipline. And like any sport, these activities help kids stay fit. Experts emphasize ways to make these sports less risky. Wearing proper helmets and pads is critical. So is learning from skilled experts and not attempting to become Tony Hawk on the first run down the half-pipe.

The OTTOMH line: The right precautions could make extreme sports a little less extreme, especially for young athletes. N Should kids participate in extreme sports? Go back to the article and find information to support each side. Write the information on the lines below. They're great activities! NO They're too dangerous! 2 3 Study the points on both sides of the argument? and think about your own opinion. State your opinion in one sentence below. It can become the thesis statement for an opinion essay on this topic. Find

an activity sheet online! Storybooks. Scholastic. Com; 29 November/
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