

Hypothesizing Why People Take Risks

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Hypothesizing is putting forward a guess or theory to explain facts. A good hypothesis helps you understand these facts as you test it against further observations.

You hypothesize when you

- try to figure out what you may have done to make a friend angry
- think of a way to help your team play defense against a tough opponent
- guess the identity of the criminal in a mystery

What are some other situations when you might use the skill of hypothesizing?

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Cluster Question: Why do people take risks?

Directions: Note how a reader created a hypothesis statement after reading the selections in **Model A**. First, the reader noted the motivations for taking risks demonstrated in each excerpt. From these notes, the reader created the initial hypothesis.

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Model A

Zena pulled the collar out of her coat pocket and held it up above her head as she went down the last of the steps. She wagged it at the window. *That*, she thought, *should quiet Mom's nagging*. Not that she planned to wear the collar. Collars were for little kids out on their first Wildings. Or for tourist woggers. What did she need with one? She was already sixteen . . .

from "Wilding," page 14

Motivation for taking risks:
To demonstrate maturity and experience

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Model A

The banners now hanging from its door proclaimed WILD WOOD CENTRAL, and the fluttering wolf and tiger flags, symbols of extinct mammals, gave a fair indication of the wind. Right now the wind meant little to her, but once she was Wilding, she would know every nuance of it.

Zena sniffed the air. Good wind meant good tracking. If she went predator. She smiled in anticipation.

from “Wilding,” page 14

Motivation for taking risks: To feel the excitement of heightened senses

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Model A

Behind her she could hear the *tip-taps* of wogger high heels. The woggers were giggling, a little scared. *Well, Zena thought, they should be a little scared. Wilding is a pure New York sport. No mushy woggers need apply.*

from “Wilding,” page 14

Motivation for taking risks: To feel superior to others

Hypothesis Statement: People take risks to demonstrate their maturity and experience, to feel the excitement of heightened senses, or to feel superior to others.

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Directions: Now, “test” the hypothesis statement against the selections in **Model B**. Look for evidence that either verifies or disproves the hypothesis. Do these passages suggest other motivations to add to the hypothesis? Note these motivations; then expand or adjust the hypothesis accordingly.

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Model B

The guy went up alone, just to test himself in the snow. . . . His partner said he was the type of guy who pushed himself, who didn't give up. They'd come across some elk tracks in the snow two days ago, and our lost hunter thought he could run the animals down.

from "Search and Rescue," page 24

Motivation for taking risks:

To push and test oneself against the wilderness

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During my first years in the mountains, I did a lot of these imbecilic things. Obviously, I survived. That's why it's called dumb luck. I figure I owe something to the wilderness, and that something is called Search and Rescue.

from "Search and Rescue," page 26

**Motivation for
taking risks:**

To give
something
back to society
or repay a debt

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We live in a world in which nothing that happens is our own fault. Slapstick has outlived its day. A slip on a banana peel isn't funny anymore—it's a lawsuit. Take Chiquita Banana to court on that one. We have all become victims.

continued

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Which, I think, is why some of us venture into the wilderness. We do so because it's not safe, and there's no one to blame but ourselves. You can get hurt out there, which is precisely the point. Wilderness is a way of taking back control of our lives.

from "Search and Rescue," page 26

Motivation for taking risks:

To take responsibility and control for our own lives

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We found the young women and got them down to the trailhead before dawn. Two sets of very happy parents were waiting there, and I felt about as good as I ever have in my life.

from “Search and Rescue,” page 27

**Motivation for
taking risks:**

To help or save
others

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Corrected or expanded hypothesis:

People take risks to demonstrate their maturity and experience, to feel the excitement of heightened senses, to feel superior to others, to test or prove themselves, to help others, to repay a debt, or to take control of their lives.