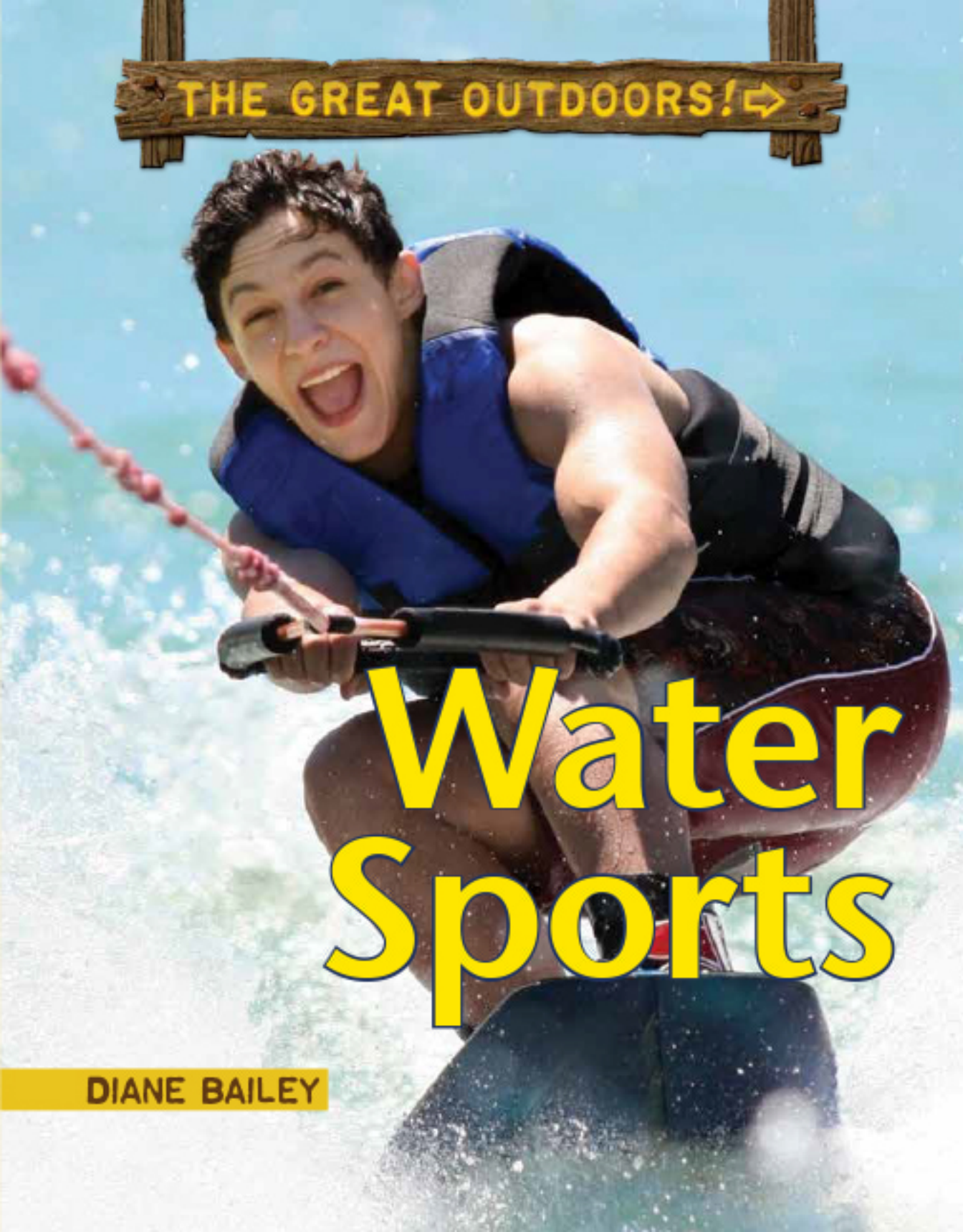

Water Sports

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CONTENTS

KEY ICONS TO LOOK FOR

Words to Understand: These words with their easy-to-understand definitions will increase the reader's understanding of the text, while building vocabulary skills.

Sidebars: This boxed material within the main text allows readers to build knowledge, gain insights, explore possibilities, and broaden their perspectives by weaving together additional information to provide realistic and holistic perspectives.

Research Projects: Readers are pointed toward areas of further inquiry connected to each chapter. Suggestions are provided for projects that encourage deeper research and analysis.

Text-Dependent Questions: These questions send the reader back to the text for more careful attention to the evidence presented here.

Series Glossary of Key Terms: This back-of-the-book glossary contains terminology used throughout this series. Words found here increase the reader's ability to read and comprehend higher-level books and articles in this field.

Educational Videos: Readers can view videos by scanning our QR codes, providing them with additional educational content to supplement the text. Examples include news coverage, moments in history, speeches, iconic sports moments and much more!

Into the Great Outdoors!

hen the weather heats up, lots of people can't wait to jump in the water and splash around. It doesn't take much planning to put on a swimsuit and blow up a beach ball. But there are some people who like to bump things up a notch. They stay cool by grabbing their skis and sails, hooking up to their boats and boards, and heading out for some *serious* water fun.

Swimming is a water sport that's just about using your body. Others, like boating, are more about technical skills and equipment. Then there are some that are the

WORDS TO UNDERSTAND

aerial in the air

fiberglass a type of plastic strengthened with small threads of glass

wake the waves produced by the movement of a boat

perfect balance between the two. Maybe you're a chill surfer, your toes gripping your board as you ride the curl of a wave to shore. Maybe you're an adventurous windsurfer, letting the wind lift you off the surface of the water. Or maybe you're a thrill-seeker, getting a rush as you zip through the water at 30 miles (48 km) per hour on water skis or a wakeboard.

Whatever your style, many basic skills can be picked up quickly and used in a variety of water sports. With the sun on your back and a spray of water in your face, they are an exciting way to get outside. Get ready to dive in!

Getting in Deep

ater sports have been around for thousands of years. In the last century, they have gotten a lot more sophisticated. The first surfers probably just used their bodies to ride the waves. Next they climbed on top of a wooden board. This let them float longer and catch even larger waves. By the 1400s, surfing was a royal sport. The tribal kings of Hawaii had surfing competitions to show their strength and power.

Surfing fell out of fashion for a while, but it started to get popular again in the early 1900s. By the 1930s, surfing was getting some big improvements. People tried different shapes of boards. They added fins on the bottom of the boards to help them steer. Instead of wood, they tried lighter materials, such as foam. Later they used **fiberglass**. Surfing was developing into a modern sport.

Some people like to try big-wave surfing. This is much more difficult than regular surfing. The waves can be 20 feet (6 m) tall or more. The biggest wave ever surfed (so far!) is 78 feet (23.8 m)!

Surfers and sailors have always shared the water. By the 1960s the two sports were beginning to merge. Using a sail attached to a surfboard, people combined the skills of sailing and surfing into a new sport called windsurfing. Windsurfing is also called sailboarding. Some windsurfers say the sport is less like sailing or surfing than it is like

For many people, water skiing is the most accessible water sport.

flying. Windsurfers often get enough air that they can rise several feet over the water. A similar sport is kiteboarding, where, instead of a sail, the board is powered by a high-flying kite that catches the wind.

Give it Some Gas

Water sports really took off in the 20th century. The gasoline engine had been invented. It made going fast much easier. Regular boats became motorboats! People did not have to depend on the wind or their muscles to move through the water. Instead, they had a much more reliable and powerful source of energy. It was

SKIP THE SKIS

Want to try water skiing without skis? That's what barefooters do. They still get pulled by a boat, but they use their bare feet to skim through the water. It takes faster speeds to stay up on bare feet, because there is less surface area to float on the water. The boats usually go about 40 miles (63 km) per hour. Barefooting can be pretty hard on the feet, but these athletes are tough. If they get a cut, they just use fast-acting glue to patch it up. Just as in regular water skiing, barefooters also do tricks and jumps. Professionals can jump 90 feet (27.4 m) or more!

fun to ride in a boat zipping along at 25 miles (40 km) an hour, but it might be even more fun to ride behind it. If it was possible to ski on snow, then why not on water?

In 1922, a teenager named Ralph Samuelson decided to give it a try. He made some water skis using pieces of wood from barrels. Then his brother pulled him behind a boat on a lake in Minnesota, where they lived. A few years later, Ralph also performed a ski jump in the water.

He even tried speed skiing, reaching 80 miles (129 km) per hour! Water skiing caught on. Today, about 20 million people in the United States enjoy water skiing.

Wakeboarding combines water skiing and surfing. When a motorboat cuts through the water, it churns it up into a **wake**. Wakeboarders then ride through these waves on a board. A wakeboard is similar to a surfboard or snowboard, but shorter and wider. It's also possible to be towed from an overhead cable. Several high towers are installed at various points around a lake. Then cables are strung between them to pull riders. The big difference with cables is that there is no boat to create a wake. This makes a different—but no less fun—kind of ride. For example, cable wakeboarders have the advantage of having extra lift provided by the cable. That makes it easier to do tricks.

Getting Your Feet Wet

ou can't do water sports without water, but that does not mean you have to live just a few steps from the ocean. Water skiing, wakeboarding, and windsurfing can all be done on lakes. Some large lakes even have good-sized waves for surfers. Also, many larger cities now have indoor wave pools. In those, machines create the surf. Indoor surfing isn't the same experience as being in the ocean. Still, it's great for extra practice or when it's cold outside.

Most water sports are individual, not team, sports. However, water skiing and wakeboarding are at least two-person jobs. Someone has to drive the boat! Pulling a skier or boarder requires certain skills, so it's important to get someone with experience. The quality of the pull can mean the difference between a good run and a bad one. Fortunately, there are many places at beaches and lakes that rent equipment, offer lessons, and have people to operate the boat.

It's not necessary to be a star athlete to try water sports. People who are reasonably fit with average strength should have what it takes. They just won't be trying **aerial** tricks or tackling 30-foot (9 m) waves—not at first, anyway!

This surfer is ready for action with a wetsuit, helmet, and leash.

The most important thing to consider with water sports is safety. It's likely that the first few times you try a new water sport, you won't get it quite right. Even though these sports are done on the water, you'll probably spend quite a bit of time in it. You'll fall off the skis or board. The surf will go over your head instead of under your feet. It's important to be comfortable in the water. If you do not know how to swim, that's the first thing to learn. Also, always wear a life vest, and never attempt to try something alone. Always take a buddy so you can watch out for each other.

TEXT-DEPENDENT QUESTIONS

1. What two sports are combined in windsurfing?
2. Besides using a boat, what is another way to enjoy wakeboarding?
3. Why do barefoot water skiers have to go faster?

RESEARCH PROJECT

Surfing is one of the oldest water sports. Wakeboarding is one of the newest. Pick your favorite water sport and look up its history. What are some of the major milestones in its development?

Try Barefoot Water Skiing!

Getting It Done Right

If you asked someone who is experienced at water sports for some tips, you might get the answer: "Know what you're getting into." One of the best ways to do that is to take a lesson or two. Spending a little time up front can save you a lot of time later on. A professional can point out what you're doing wrong, and give you advice on how to fix it. That way, you don't waste hours making the same mistakes.

WORDS TO UNDERSTAND

kit all the parts of a windsurfing craft, including the board, sail, mast, and other equipment

planing skimming across the surface of the water at a high speed

rip current a powerful current that flows away from the shore

throttle a device that controls how much gas goes into an engine

Before entering the water, observe the conditions of wind, wave, and tide.

Before You Go

You've put on your swimsuit (or your wetsuit) and stocked a cooler with drinks and snacks. Don't hit the water just yet, though. Take some time to watch it first. If you are surfing, note how big the waves are. What direction are they coming from? Where are they breaking?

Windsurfers will need to know what direction the wind is coming from, and how hard it's blowing. A steady breeze is ideal, but that does not always happen. A hard, gusting wind can easily blow a beginner off course. It also can produce large waves that are hard to handle. On the other hand, if there is no wind at all you might get stranded!