
ENGLISH

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Paper 1 Non-fiction

October 2019

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1 hour plus 10 minutes' reading time



This document consists of **3** printed pages and **1** blank page.

Text A

Using the stage name Charles Blondin, Jean-Francois Gravelet rightly earned the reputation as the greatest 'funambulist' of his time. Upon first glance this term would seem to imply fun, but in fact it indicates activities involving great personal risk. Funambulist means tightrope walker, and Gravelet took that popular art form to previously unachieved heights.

The future tightrope walker and acrobat was born in France in 1824. At various times throughout his storied career, Gravelet was billed as 'The Great Blondin', 'The Daredevil Wire Walker' and 'The Prince of Manila', names that are as evocative of a highly specialised skill as they are of an era.

Gravelet became interested in high-wire acrobatics at a very early age. In 1829, a circus troupe performed near his home, and Gravelet became enthralled by the tightrope walker. It was the first time he had ever seen anyone attempting such stunts. As a result, he felt compelled to try to achieve the same kind of deeds. Almost immediately after he returned home from the circus, Gravelet erected a makeshift tightrope in his back yard, using two chairs as supporting structures, and tried to learn the skill of rope-walking.

Instead of discouraging this rather risky pursuit, which may have been an understandable reaction, Gravelet's father supported his son's ambitions. That same year, he enrolled his son in a school focused on physical education. Gravelet proved to be quite adept, and after only six months of training he made his amateur performance debut. Billed as 'The Little Wonder', Gravelet became a popular attraction, as his performances demonstrated surprising skill and originality.

Gravelet then toured America with an acrobat troupe that performed in New York City as part of 'The Greatest Show on Earth'. During this period, Gravelet changed his name to Charles Blondin, which he selected, in part, because of his blond hair.

In 1858, his itinerary took him to Niagara Falls, located near the border between the United States and Canada. Seeing this enormous natural wonder for the first time, he became obsessed with the idea of crossing the Falls on a tightrope.

When Blondin requested permission to cross the Falls, official roadblocks thwarted his ambition. The surrounding community felt that the stunt would somehow reduce the Falls' magnificent splendour to lowbrow entertainment. In addition, local officials feared the attempt would result in a horrifying accident. However, Blondin was eventually granted permission to string his rope across the Falls, and on 30 June 1859, a crowd of 100 000 people witnessed Blondin's historic triumph.

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Text B

Niagara has so much to see and do, you may be wondering where to begin!

Get up close and personal and be wowed by Niagara Falls. However you choose to view the Falls, it is a Canadian landmark that you must see, hear and feel.

In addition to the thundering wonder, Niagara offers nature lovers plenty of other awe-inspiring options. Hike along Canada's oldest and longest footpath, or spend a day of quiet discovery at one of our many beaches. Trade in your four wheels for two and experience Niagara in a whole new way. The region boasts miles of dedicated cycling trails and fantastic options for mountain biking.

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The secret's out! Niagara has become a culinary hotspot. Celebrity chefs have opened restaurants near the Falls and the area is Canada's number-one food destination. With many chefs featuring Niagara's rich bounty of local ingredients on their menus, you're guaranteed an unforgettable meal. If you're looking to unwind after a hearty meal, Niagara is home to some top-rated, open-air spas. Where else can you partake in unique treatments using the region's renowned grapes?

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Niagara is the place for family fun. Little travellers and teens alike will be impressed by our water parks, which are a popular attraction adjacent to the Falls. Adults will enjoy world-class museums and outdoor heritage sites that celebrate some of the most significant historical events that have shaped Canada.

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With a dedicated golf trail and 48 courses, Niagara has the greatest single concentration of golf facilities anywhere in Canada. That's over 850 different golf holes waiting for you!

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