

10 Descriptive compound adjectives with parts of the body

Activity A

A number of compound adjectives are composed of a part of the body and the *-ing* form of a verb. Match each of the adjectives below with a definition.

back-breaking ear-splitting eye-watering gut-wrenching hair-raising
lung-busting jaw-dropping mind-boggling nail-biting side-splitting
spine-chilling stomach-churning

- 1 so large or good that it amazes you _____
- 2 so high or extreme that it is difficult or painful to imagine it _____
- 3 (of a book, film/movie, etc.) frightening in an exciting way _____
- 4 making you feel very excited or anxious because you do not know what is going to happen _____
- 5 extremely frightening but often exciting _____
- 6 very unpleasant; making you feel very upset _____
- 7 making you feel ~~disgusted, worried or scared~~ _____
- 8 (of physical work) very hard and tiring _____
- 9 extremely funny; making people laugh a lot _____
- 10 extremely loud _____
- 11 ~~involving intense, extreme physical effort that makes you breathe hard~~ _____
- 12 very difficult to imagine or to understand; extremely surprising _____

Activity B

Complete the sentences with the adjectives in A.

- 1 I start my Saturday with a(n) _____ ten-mile run.
- 2 He was paid a(n) _____ sum for appearing in the movie.
- 3 The phone comes with _____ instructions that I couldn't be bothered to read.
- 4 The magazine published the Hubble telescope's latest _____ photos of Space.
- 5 Suddenly, a(n) _____ scream shattered the peaceful scene.
- 6 There were some _____ moments as we waited for the referee's decision.
- 7 I find his writing gently amusing rather than _____.
- 8 It took a whole day of _____ work to cut down all the trees.
- 9 This theme park has some of the most _____ rides I've ever seen.
- 10 I found a dead rat in the cupboard – it really was a(n) _____ sight.
- 11 You know that _____ moment when you realize you have locked your keys in the car.
- 12 This is a(n) _____ story of two children who go missing in a remote forest.

Activity C

Discuss the questions with a partner:

- 1 What physical feeling or action does each of these adjectives represent?
- 2 Choose three of the adjectives. For each one, tell your partner about an experience you had that could be described by that adjective.
- 3 Think of five adjectives or descriptive expressions in your language that involve parts of the body.