

1 Read and complete the news story with the words from the box.

aviation cockpit efficiency emergency landing pilots  
refuelling solo tanks tyres windshield wingspan

February 18, 2006

## Fossett sets new long-distance flight record

The 61-year-old American millionaire Steve Fossett has set a new world record for a long-distance flight without (1) \_\_\_\_\_ after flying more than 26,000 miles. He set off from Florida last Wednesday, and circled the globe flying eastwards, before crossing the Atlantic a second time and (2) \_\_\_\_\_ on Saturday in Bournemouth, Great Britain. The flight took a total of about 80 hours and perhaps the most astonishing thing was that Fossett was alone in the (3) \_\_\_\_\_ all that time.

Fossett's plane, designed with maximum fuel (4) \_\_\_\_\_ in mind, took off with 18,000 pounds of fuel (six times the weight of the aircraft itself) in two huge (5) \_\_\_\_\_ suspended on each wing. It had a (6) \_\_\_\_\_ of 35 metres, three times its length. While the flight went well, it was not without problems, particularly at the end. He had originally intended to land in Kent but had to declare an

(7) \_\_\_\_\_ and divert at the last minute due to an electrical failure. He landed on battery power alone and burst two (8) \_\_\_\_\_ while landing. His (9) \_\_\_\_\_ was heavily-iced, seriously impairing visibility, and he had only 200 pounds of fuel left when he touched down. His friend and sponsor Richard Branson flew behind him during the final leg. He actually broke the record as he was crossing Ireland, just before his problems began.

The previous record stood at 24,987 miles and had been set by two (10) \_\_\_\_\_, Dick Rutan and Jeana Yeager back in 1986. This was also the first time anyone had flown around the world without refuelling. While it was to be expected that this record would be broken one day, nobody thought that it could be done by a pilot flying (11) \_\_\_\_\_. Fossett, with his taste for adventure, has once again taken the (12) \_\_\_\_\_ world by surprise.

2 Look at the following statements and decide if you agree or disagree. Work in pairs. Discuss your opinions.

- 1 Steve Fossett deserves our admiration for a fantastic achievement.
- 2 Too much money is spent on trying to set records like this.
- 3 The risks in a flight like this are too high for the pilot.
- 4 The pilot proved he has real courage to attempt this record.