Name: _____ Date: _____

# The Ball That Fell 856 Feet

Reading level 8 (4th grade) · 662 words

Can you drop a basketball into a hoop from 856 feet up? In 2023, a group of friends tried it in Las Vegas. They stood at the top of a tall tower, and the hoop was far below. From up there, it looked tiny. This book follows that one shot, and how the group got there.

The group is called Dude Perfect, and it has five members. They met as roommates at Texas A&M University. They make videos of trick shots and put them on YouTube. In autumn 2026, more than 62 million people had subscribed to their main channel. A subscriber is a person who follows a channel.

It began with a hoop in a backyard in 2008. The friends bet each other sandwiches that they could make hard shots, and another student filmed them. On one video, that friend said, "Dude, perfect." The group took its name from that comment. In April 2009, they put their first trick-shot video online.

In September 2009, one of the five stood on the third deck of Kyle Field. That is the football stadium at Texas A&M. He told the camera it was the world's longest basketball shot. Then he threw. The ball went through the net far below. The video went viral, which means a lot of people shared it.

Next, the group went after Guinness World Records. Guinness keeps the lists of records. In 2016, a judge from Guinness watched the group's tries in Fort Worth, Texas, on March 30 and 31. The group set records for shots made blindfolded, shots made sitting down, and a shot that bounced.

One record was about height. Storms put off the first try, so the group moved to Oklahoma City. On April 28, 2016, one of them shot from the top of a tall building. The ball started 533 feet above the hoop. It went in. That year, Guinness reported eleven new records for the group.

In 2023, the group picked a taller place. It is a tower in Las Vegas called the Strat. The plan was to shoot from about 856 feet up. The resort said its staff met often. They planned the job and how to keep everyone safe. A shot like this is not something to try at home.

Think about the hoop. A hoop is 18 inches wide. A basketball is about 9.5 inches wide. From 856 feet up, that ring is tiny. Gravity pulls a falling ball faster and faster. The ball has to land in a small ring, and the air can push it.

The resort said the group worked on the shot for 22 hours over three days. One report said the group made it in the last hour of filming. A short video can hide a lot of work. Texas Monthly once wrote that the group's videos need a great deal of preparation before the

camera starts.

Then the moment came. Reports give the height as 854 to 856 feet. Sports Illustrated said that one of the five, known as Beardo, dropped the ball, and that it swerved into the hoop. The resort said it bounced off the backboard first.

How long did the ball fall? Here is this book's math. With no air, a ball would fall 856 feet in about seven seconds. But air pushes back hard on a basketball. The real fall takes much longer, perhaps twice as long. Count to seven, then keep counting.

A record needs a judge, and records can change. In May 2023, news reports said the group was waiting for Guinness to confirm the shot. In November 2026, Guinness still listed a 2018 shot of about 660 feet. Records change. Guinness's website is the best place to check one.

Today the group works in Frisco, Texas. Its building has a full-size basketball court. Editors work there too. On one wall, some hoops move, for trick-shot challenges. All of it began with a backyard hoop and a bet about sandwiches.

## Questions

**1. What did the friends bet each other when they began?**

A. Sandwiches
B. Video games
C. Basketballs

**2. Why did the group go to Oklahoma City in 2016?**

A. It was closer to home
B. Storms put off the first try
C. A judge asked them to

**3. Why does the book tell you to count to seven and then keep counting?**

A. Seven seconds is the world record
B. The ball needed seven tries to go in
C. Air makes the real fall longer

**4. In the sentence "The video went viral," what does viral mean?**

A. Very short
B. Shared by a lot of people
C. Made at night

**5. How far above the hoop was the ball when it was dropped in Las Vegas?**

A. 533 feet
B. 18 inches
C. 856 feet

**6. About how long would the ball fall with no air?**

A. One second
B. Seventy seconds
C. Seven seconds

## Words to know

subscriber: a follower
viral: widely shared
gravity: pulls things down
record: best mark

# Answer key: The Ball That Fell 856 Feet

1. A. Sandwiches
2. B. Storms put off the first try
3. C. Air makes the real fall longer
4. B. Shared by a lot of people
5. C. 856 feet
6. C. Seven seconds