

Are you passionate about skateboarding? We talk to two skateboarding fans from LA.

Monica and Carl are teenagers from Los Angeles in the United States. They both love skateboarding. Read this interview with them and find out more about their favourite sport.

Who invented skateboarding?

Monica: Nobody knows who the first skateboarder was, but we know that skateboarding started in California in the 1950s. There were lots of surfers who wanted something to do when it wasn't windy and the ocean was calm, so they invented the skateboard and it was called 'land surfing' in the beginning.

Carl: The first skateboards were pieces of wood with wheels from rollerskates that people made at home. When skateboarding became popular, they started making skateboards in factories.

Where can you go skateboarding?

Carl: You can go skateboarding in public places like parks, pavements and city squares. Some skateboarders like 'freestyle' skateboarding, which is going fast along pavements or bicycle lanes. Other skateboarders like doing jumps and tricks on benches, stairs or railings. It's great fun, but you have to watch out for pedestrians.

Monica: There are also lots of skate parks in towns and cities. The good thing about skate parks is that you can practise jumps without disturbing anyone. You can meet other skaters at a skate park too.

When did you start skateboarding?

Monica: When I was a child, I used to go rollerskating with friends. When I was thirteen, I tried one of my friend's skateboards. I fell several times, but I loved it straight away. A couple of weeks later, I got my first skateboard. I haven't stopped rollerskating. I like both sports now.

Carl: I live in the city and there's a skate park near my house. I used to go to the park and watch the skateboarders. Then my dad gave me a skateboard for my eleventh birthday in July and I spent the summer skateboarding. I loved the sense of freedom and speed. I used to ride my bike a lot, but I never go on it now.

Is skateboarding dangerous?

Carl: We all fall off our boards and get hurt sometimes, but most injuries are minor cuts and bruises. Obviously, it's a good idea to wear a helmet and protect your head. It's important to protect your hands and wrists too. Hands and wrists are the part of the body that you're most likely to injure as you put out your hands to protect yourself when you fall. I always wear wristguards when I skate.

Are there skateboarding competitions?

Monica: Yes, there are. They usually take place in skate parks. Judges give skaters points for their jumps and tricks. In the United States and Europe, some skaters are professional and make money from taking part in skating competitions.

Carl: There was a campaign to get skateboarding included in the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro but unfortunately it wasn't successful. But who knows? Maybe, skateboarding will be in the 2020 Games!

Tell me about 'Go Skateboarding Day'.

Monica: 'Go Skateboarding Day' takes place on the 21st of June every year. It's a day when there are events for skateboarders like competitions, parties, barbecues or people just go out and skate with their friends. You can find out lots about it online.

What about fashion? Is there a skater look?

Carl: At the moment, the fashion is for skaters to wear tight jeans or black trousers and a hooded top, T-shirt or check shirt. Baseball caps and hats are popular too.

Monica: A lot of skateboarders, boys and girls, have long hair too. But fashion doesn't matter. For me, enjoying the sport is more important than someone's clothes.

What's a long board?

Monica: A long board is another type of skateboard, but it's longer and it's got bigger wheels. Skateboards are usually 70 to 80 centimetres long, but long boards are 90 to 120 centimetres long. It's difficult to do jumps on a long board, but they are good for going fast.

Carl: Here's an interesting fact about long boards. In 2006, a skateboarder went across Australia on a long board. That's 5,850 kilometres!

Robin Newton