

The World's First Double Arm Transplant



Reading Worksheet — Level I | tahricteaches.com

Guðmundur Felix Grétarsson worked as an **electrician** in Reykjavík, Iceland. On January 12, 1998, he was repairing a power line when disaster struck: 11,000 volts of electricity surged through his body.

The shock burned both of Guðmundur's arms and fractured bones in his back. He fell into a **coma** that lasted three months. While he was unconscious, surgeons amputated both of his arms to save his life. In his first year of recovery alone, he underwent 54 separate operations.

For the next 23 years, Guðmundur lived without arms. He could not hold his two young daughters, Rebekka and Dilja, or complete ordinary daily tasks without help. In September 2016, he was finally placed on a **transplant** waiting list, hoping that a matching donor would someday be found.

Five years later, on January 13, 2021, that call finally came. A **surgical** team at Edouard Herriot Hospital in Lyon, France, performed a 15-hour operation, giving Guðmundur a complete set of new arms and shoulders from a donor. He became the world's first person to receive a successful double arm-and-shoulder transplant.

Recovery did not happen overnight. Guðmundur spent months in **rehabilitation**, slowly learning to feel and control his new limbs. More than a year after the surgery, he was able to hug his grown-up daughter for the first time since she was a baby — a moment that showed just how far his recovery had come.

A. Vocabulary

1. electrician ____	a. a person who provides an organ, tissue, or limb for transplant
2. surge ____	b. a person who receives something, such as a transplant
3. coma ____	c. to surgically remove a limb or body part
4. amputate ____	d. to come together again after being apart
5. transplant ____	e. a sudden, powerful increase, such as in electrical current
6. donor ____	f. a prolonged state of deep unconsciousness caused by injury or illness
7. surgical ____	g. the medical procedure of moving an organ or body part from a donor to a reci
8. rehabilitation ____	h. relating to or involving surgery
9. recipient ____	i. the process of helping someone recover function after an injury or illness
10. reunite ____	j. a tradesperson trained to install and repair electrical systems



B. True or False

1. Guðmundur was an electrician working in Reykjavík when his accident happened. ___

2. The electrical surge that injured him was 11,000 volts. ___

3. He lost consciousness for three months after the accident. ___

4. Only one of his arms was amputated. ___

5. Guðmundur had 54 operations in the year after his accident. ___

6. He was placed on the transplant waiting list in 2016. ___

7. The transplant surgery took place fewer than 10 years after the accident. ___

8. The transplant surgery was performed in Lyon, France. ___

9. The operation lasted 15 hours. ___



C. Fill in the Blanks

Word Bank: electrician, coma, amputate, transplant, donor, surgical, rehabilitation, recipient

1. Guðmundur worked as an _____ before his accident.

2. After the shock, Guðmundur fell into a _____ that lasted three months.

3. Surgeons had to _____ both of his arms to save his life.

4. In 2021, Guðmundur underwent a double arm _____ in France.

5. After surgery, Guðmundur spent months in _____, learning to use his new arms.

D. Comprehension Questions

1. Why was Guðmundur placed on a transplant waiting list in September 2016?

2. How long did Guðmundur wait between being placed on the waiting list and receiving his transplant?

3. What made Guðmundur's January 2021 surgery medically significant?

4. Why did Guðmundur's recovery take more than a year?

5. What moment showed how far Guðmundur's recovery had progressed?

E. Discussion Questions

1. What do you think is the hardest part of waiting years for an organ or limb transplant?
2. Why might rehabilitation after a transplant take longer than the surgery itself?
3. What responsibilities do you think come with being an organ or limb donor's family?





Answer Key

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A. Vocabulary: 1-j, 2-e, 3-f, 4-c, 5-g, 6-a, 7-h, 8-i, 9-b, 10-d

B. True/False: 1-T, 2-T, 3-T, 4-F, 5-T, 6-T, 7-F, 8-T, 9-T

C. Fill Blanks: 1-electrician, 2-coma, 3-amputate, 4-transplant, 5-rehabilitation

D. Comprehension:

1. He had lived without arms since his 1998 accident and hoped a matching donor would eventually be found so he could receive a transplant.
2. About five years — from September 2016 to January 2021.
3. He became the world's first person to receive a successful double arm-and-shoulder transplant.
4. He needed extensive rehabilitation to learn to feel and control his new limbs before he regained meaningful movement.
5. Being able to hug his grown-up daughter for the first time since she was a baby.

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