

Mount Everest

Pre-Reading

A. Warm-Up Questions

1. Do you know where Mount Everest is located?
2. How high do you think Mount Everest is?
3. Do you know who the first people to climb to the top of Mount Everest were?
4. How many people do you think have reached the top of Mount Everest?
5. Do you think the local people welcome the many foreigners who come to climb Mount Everest?



B. Vocabulary Preview

Match up as many words and meanings as you can.

Check this exercise again after seeing the words in context on page 2.

- | | |
|------------------|--|
| ___ 1. range | a) a line separating two countries |
| ___ 2. explorer | b) in or of the area |
| ___ 3. height | c) a row or chain of mountains |
| ___ 4. border | d) goods, necessary things |
| ___ 5. conquer | e) the highest point, the top |
| ___ 6. guide | f) a measurement from top to bottom |
| ___ 7. summit | g) a person who shows others the way |
| ___ 8. tank | h) to defeat, to overcome |
| ___ 9. local | i) a container for liquid or gas |
| ___ 10. supplies | j) a person who travels to another country to learn about it |

Reading

1. Mt. Everest rises 29,035 feet (about 8,850 metres) above sea level, making it the tallest mountain on Earth. It is found in Asia in the Himalayan mountain **range** on the **border** between Nepal and Tibet.
2. Everest was named for Sir George Everest, the first person to record its **height** and location. Tibetans call it 'Chomolangma' (Goddess Mother of the Snows); the Nepalese call it 'Sagarmatha' (Mother of the Universe).
3. There are two main routes for climbing Everest: the northwest ridge in Tibet and the southeast ridge in Nepal. In 1921, British **explorers** investigated the Tibetan route. At that time, the Nepal border was closed to foreigners. In 1924, two British climbers attempted to reach the top of Everest, but they never returned. This route was tried until 1950 when China took control of Tibet and closed its borders.
4. When Nepal opened its border in 1949, climbers began using the southeast ridge. On May 29, 1953, Everest was finally **conquered** by Edmund Hillary of New Zealand and Tenzing Norgay, his Sherpa **guide**, using this route.
5. In 1975, Junko Tabei of Japan became the first woman to reach its summit. In 1978, Reinhold Messner of Italy climbed it without taking extra oxygen **tanks**, and in 1980 he climbed it alone. In 2003, 15-year-old Mingkipa Sherpa of Nepal became the youngest person to reach the top and 70-year-old Yuichiro Miura of Japan became the oldest. Miura summited again in 2013 at the age of 80. **Local** Sherpa guides have set many other records. By the 60th anniversary of Hillary's ascent, more than 3,500 climbers had reached the **summit**, and more than 200 people had died on the mountain. Many have died on the difficult descent, but new climbing technology makes death less likely.
6. The Sherpa people have benefitted economically from the many people who come to climb Everest. Most foreign climbers employ one or two Sherpa guides, and the average climbing team spends \$200,000 (about £155,000) on guides and **supplies** while in Nepal.

Comprehension

A. True or False?

Read the statements below.

If the statement is true, write T beside the sentence.

If it is false, write F and correct the information in your notebook.

- _____ 1. Sir George Everest was the first person to climb to the top of Mount Everest.
- _____ 2. Edmund Hillary used the Nepal route to reach the summit of Mount Everest.
- _____ 3. Hundreds of people have died trying to climb Mount Everest.
- _____ 4. In the '70s, Junko Tabei was the youngest person to climb Mount Everest.
- _____ 5. The Tibetan route to the top is now the route that is used most often.

B. Ask & Answer

Practise asking and answering the following questions with your partner. Then write the answers in complete sentences.

1. Where is Mount Everest?
2. How did Mount Everest get its name?
3. Why is Tenzing Norgay famous?
4. What are the two main routes for climbing Mount Everest?
5. Which route is used today and why?
6. What is the age range of people who have successfully climbed Mount Everest?
7. What does the Nepalese word 'Sagarmatha' mean?
8. How have the Sherpa people benefitted from the many climbers who come to the area?

Vocabulary Review

Choose the word(s) with the closest meaning to the underlined words in the following sentences.

- The northwest ridge is in Tibet.
 - border
 - mountain
 - a raised line where two sloping surfaces meet
- The border was closed to foreigners.
 - mountain climbers
 - people from another country
 - explorers
- Sir George Everest was the first person to record the height of the mountain.
 - write down
 - climb
 - conquer
- The Sherpa people have benefitted economically from the climbers.
 - been angry
 - received financial gain
 - explored
- British explorers investigated the Tibetan route.
 - studied carefully
 - climbed
 - liked a lot
- Sherpa guides have set many other records.
 - music
 - high points or scores not reached before
 - ridges of mountains
- Most foreign climbers employ one or two Sherpa guides.
 - lead or follow
 - hire or use
 - economic

Discussion

- Why do you think people like to climb mountains?
- What is the biggest challenge you have faced in your life? How did you deal with it?
- What personal characteristics do you think many explorers share?
- Do you ever participate in any kind of dangerous sports or other activities such as skydiving, mountain climbing, heli-skiing, bungee jumping, etc.? If so, describe the activity and the experiences you have had.
- Why do you think the Nepalese people call Mount Everest 'the Mother of the Universe'?

Critical Thinking

In 2019, a record number of climbers (381) was issued a permit to summit Everest. Approximately the same number of permits was also given to guides and Sherpas. Photographs of a traffic jam on Everest were all over the news.

The area where climbers were delayed in 2019 is sometimes described as 'the death zone'. In Everest's 2019 climbing season, 11 climbers died. The leading cause of death was inexperience.

Work in a small group and discuss the following questions. Then share your thoughts with your class.

1. Should the Nepalese government require proof of extensive climbing experience before issuing a permit to summit the world's highest mountain?
2. Do you think Nepal will ever completely close Mount Everest to climbers? If it does, will inexperienced climbers be partly to blame?
3. Despite the risks and costs, do you think there will always be humans wanting to climb Everest, or do you think adventurous humans will become more interested in going higher (space exploration)?