

Mount Everest (B2)

A - Before you start

Answer the questions with a partner.

1. Do you like mountain sports? If so, which ones?
2. Are there any mountains near you?
3. Have you ever been mountain climbing? If so, where?
4. What is the highest mountain in your country?

B – Listen and answer

Listen to the main article (without reading) and write T (true) or F (false) beside these statements.

1. In Tibet, Everest is called Chomo-Lungma, which means ‘Mother Goddess of the Snow.’
2. The summit of Everest rises over halfway up through the Earth’s atmosphere.
3. In 1921, the first recorded attempt to climb Everest failed because of bad weather.
4. It is known that George Mallory and Andrew Irvine died on Everest before reaching the summit.
5. Tenzing Norgay, who conquered Everest with Edmund Hilary, was from Pakistan.
6. Hundreds of climbers have died on Everest over the years.
7. It is more common for people to die on the way up the mountain than on the way down.
8. Sometimes the mountain is crowded and climbers have to wait in line to reach the summit.

C – Read and answer

Read the main article and answer the questions.

1. How did Everest get its English name?
2. What is the height of Everest compared to in the article?
3. What is the Khumbu Icefall and why is it dangerous to cross it?
4. How high up was Hillary and Tenzing’s last camp?
5. What is the ‘death zone’?
6. What are the most common causes of death among people who attempt to climb Everest?
7. What was the worst tragedy on the mountain caused by?
8. What macabre sights do climbers see all along the way?

D – Listen to the interview (Optional)

N.B. This interview is graded as C1, so don’t be discouraged if you find it difficult. Try to understand the main points.

Read these statements. Then listen to the interview with Jeff Bonaldi, without reading, and write T (true) or F (false).

1. Before starting his company The Explorer’s Passage, Jeff Bonaldi had an office job.
2. The company offers an eighteen-day trek to Everest Base Camp.
3. This trek is an adventure trip that anyone can go on.
4. The starting point for the trek to Everest Base Camp is a five-hour drive away from Kathmandu.
5. It takes 8 days to walk up to Base Camp and five days to walk down again.
6. There’s time for climbers to get used to the lower oxygen levels and time to visit historical sites.
7. Climbers taking part in the Base Camp trek spend one night at Base Camp.
8. Jeff says he has no intention of ever attempting to reach the summit of Everest.

E – Listen, read and check your answers

Listen to the interview while reading the text. (If you did Exercise D, check your answers while reading.)

F – Learn it! Use it!

Complete these sentences with words from the glossary. (You may have to adapt the expression in some way; e.g. change the verb tense or change from singular to plural.)

1. To get to the hotel, we had to walk up a _____ hill with our luggage. It was exhausting!
2. The airline said the flight delays were _____ the severe weather conditions.
3. This kind of toy isn't _____ for a child under the age of five.
4. Online shopping websites are popular because they offer a wide _____ of products.
5. After eating three ice-creams, Joseph unsurprisingly said he _____.
6. Belgium has _____ with the Netherlands, Germany, Luxembourg and France.

G – Ready for the FIRST Certificate in English? (Reading and Use of English, Part 2)

Read the text and think of the word which best fits each gap. Use only one word for each gap.

In May 2012, at the age of 22, Matthew Dieumegard-Thornton was one of the the youngest climbers to reach the ¹ _____ of Everest. In an interview, he reveals some of the scariest parts of his experience.

The average trek takes five or six weeks because of the need to ² _____ used to the thin air. Matthew says that ³ _____ he didn't suffer from altitude sickness, nothing can prepare you for the Death Zone where the air is ⁴ _____ thin that it makes you delirious. Then there are the wide crevasses that ⁵ _____ to be crossed on terrifying horizontal ladders.

Finally, on the last part of the climb, you can barely ⁶ _____ a light weight on your back and you realise that, if you die there, there's ⁷ _____ chance anyone will take your body down. Then you arrive at the top and the wind's howling, just ⁸ _____ the sound of a horror movie. It's not a nice place to be. You just want to get down again.

H – Write about it

Write about the highest mountain in your country. Mention:

- its height;
- its location;
- how to get there;
- the first person to climb it;
- what tourist facilities there are.

Answers

B – Listen and answer

1. F – It means Mother Goddess of the Land. 2. T 3. T 4. F – It is not known whether Mallory or Irvine reached the summit. 5. F – He was a Nepali-Indian Sherpa. 6. T 7. F – It's more common for them to die on the way down. 8. T

C – Read and answer

1. It was named after Sir George Everest, a 19th-century surveyor. 2. It's compared to the cruising altitude of a commercial flight. 3. It's a rapidly-moving section of the Khumbu Glacier. It's dangerous to cross it because deep crevasses open up in it and chunks of ice fall down the mountain. 4. It was at 8530 metres (7,920 + 610). 5. It's an area where there isn't enough oxygen for humans to survive. 6. They are avalanches, falls and collapses due to altitude sickness. 7. It was caused by an earthquake which, in turn, caused avalanches. 8. They see frozen bodies.

E – Listen, read and check your answers

1. T 2. T 3. F – It isn't for the faint-hearted. 4. F – After the five-hour drive, there's a fifteen-minute flight to where the trek begins. 5. T 6. T 7. F – Only those who are climbing to the summit are allowed to sleep at Base Camp. 8. T

F – Learn it! Use it!

1. steep 2. due to 3. suitable 4. range 5. felt sick 6. borders

G – Ready for the FIRST Certificate in English?

1. summit/top 2. get/become 3. although/though 4. so 5. have/need 6. carry 7. little/no 8. like