

Mount Everest

1. Approximately how high is Mount Everest?
 - a) 6,600 metres
 - b) 7,700 metres
 - c) 8,800 metres
2. In what year did the first people manage to climb to the top of Mount Everest?
 - a) 1913
 - b) 1953
 - c) 1983
3. Which two words describe the top of a mountain?
 - a) peak, summit
 - b) finish, peak
 - c) end, reach
4. When Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay became the first two people to reach the top of Everest, why did they only stay there for fifteen minutes?
 - a) It was too cold.
 - b) They were running out of oxygen.
 - c) The weather was bad, so the view was not as good as they had expected.
5. Why did Tenzing leave some sweets and biscuits in the snow at the top of the mountain?
 - a) Because he wanted to give a small present to the gods of the mountain.
 - b) Because he wanted to leave some food for the next people who reached the top.
 - c) Because he was very tired, and wanted to carry less on the journey back down the mountain.
6. How long did it take Hillary and Tenzing to climb Everest?
 - a) Seven days
 - b) Seven weeks
 - c) Seven months
7. Which of the following statements about Hillary and Tenzing is true?
 - a) They did not listen to people who had tried and failed to climb Everest.
 - b) They took only three days to travel down the mountain after climbing it.
 - c) No one else helped them to climb the mountain.

8. Which of the following statements is false?

- a) A fifteen-year-old girl has climbed Everest.
- b) It was night when Hillary and Tenzing reached the top of Everest.
- c) Mount Everest is very slowly getting higher.

9. Which one of the following statements is true?

- a) Hillary and Tenzing didn't need extra oxygen to get to the top of Everest.
- b) Everest is in India.
- c) More than 2,000 people have climbed Everest.

10. Which one of the following statements is false?

- a) Edmund Hillary is British.
- b) From the top of Everest it is possible to see for more than a hundred miles.
- c) The best time to climb Everest is in the spring.

Mount Everest

Mount Everest, in Nepal, is the highest mountain on Earth. In Sanskrit, the ancient language of Nepal, it is known as *Sagarmatha*, or “Goddess of the Sky”.

Its peak is 8,847 metres above sea level, and the first people ever to reach it were Edmund Hillary (from New Zealand) and Tenzing Norgay (from Nepal), who arrived at 11.30am on 29th May 1953. Many mountaineers before them had failed to climb the mountain, and some had even died trying.

Hillary and Tenzing Norgay hugged each other with relief and happiness when they reached the summit, and then took some photographs. The view was incredible: the two men could see for at least a hundred miles in every direction. However, they only stayed at the top for fifteen minutes because they were running out of oxygen – they started to head back down after Tenzing Norgay, a Buddhist, had buried some sweets and biscuits in the snow as an offering to the gods. The climb to the summit from the camp at the bottom of the mountain had taken seven weeks, but the return journey, although also dangerous, took only three days.

Hillary and Tenzing were part of a large team of climbers, but the others did not try to get all the way to the peak: instead they waited in a camp a few hundred metres down. In the opinion of the leader of the team, John Hunt, there were four reasons why Hillary and Tenzing were successful: good advice from other mountaineers who had made the attempt before them, excellent planning, modern oxygen equipment, and good luck with the weather.

In the 53 years since Hillary and Tenzing’s achievement, more than 2,000 other mountaineers have managed to climb Everest. Most have done it in spring, when the weather is better. The first woman to reach the top was Junko Tabei in 1975, while the youngest person to climb the mountain was a fifteen-year-old Nepalese girl, Temba Tsheri, in 2001.

Today’s mountaineers have much better equipment than Hillary and Tenzing, and they can use the knowledge of other climbers, but in one small way it is now harder to climb Everest than it was before. Because of movements in the Earth’s surface, the summit is getting higher all the time – although only by 4 millimetres per year.