

## Mount Everest

Mount Everest is one of the most famous mountains in the world. It may surprise you to know that we may be pronouncing its name incorrectly. The mountain was named in 1856 after the British surveyor George Everest. The problem is, he pronounced his name *Eve-rest*. He also never saw the mountain and was a bit embarrassed by the honour.

Mountains have two different important measurements. The height of a mountain measures how high the peak is above sea-level. How tall a mountain measures is taken from the base to the tip. Mount Everest is the highest mountain. It is 8,848m (29,035 feet) high. The tallest mountain in the world is Mauna Kea in Hawaii. Its peak is only 4,205m above sea-level, but over half of it is underwater. From the base to the summit is over 10,000m!

Geologists estimate that it has taken Mount Everest over 60million years to reach its current height. That means it didn't exist when the last dinosaurs became extinct. It is still growing though at a speed of about half an inch a year. The rocks that make up the mountain are hundreds of millions of years old.

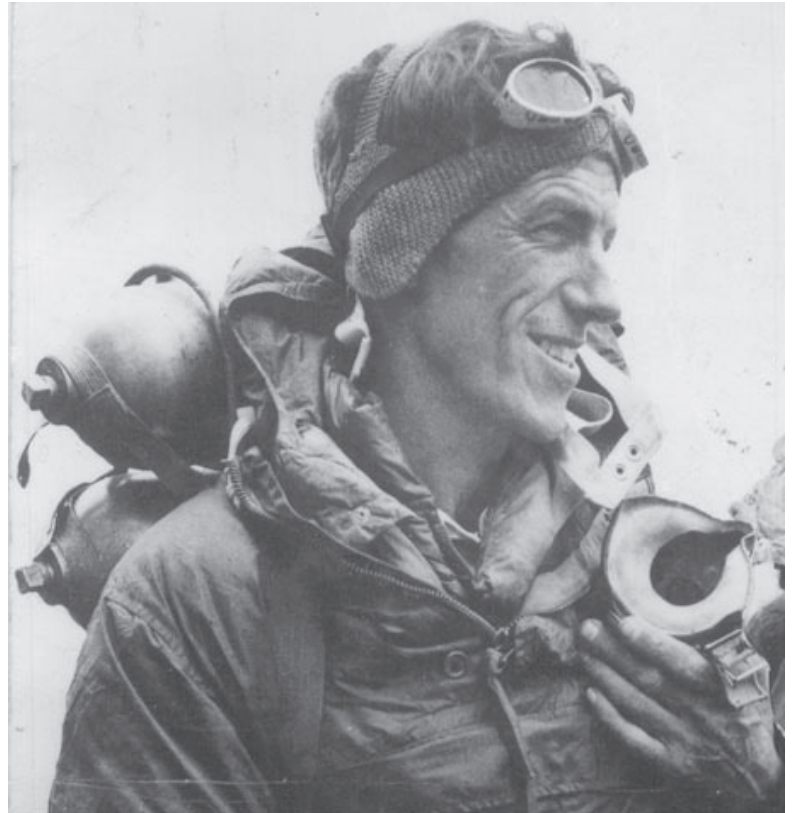
One of the things that makes Mount Everest so hard to scale is the weather. The peak is constantly covered in a deep layer of snow. The wind at the summit regularly reaches nearly 200mph. It is not uncommon for temperatures to drop below -50°C. There are only two periods each year where the mountain is safe enough to climb. These are in May and November. Each window is roughly one week long.

Over 5,700 different people have reached the summit of Mount Everest, but the first person didn't make it until 1953. Sir Edmund Hillary from New Zealand and Tenzing Norgay reached the peak on 29th May. Since then, the youngest person to complete the expedition was Jordan Romero. He reached the top aged 13 years and 11 months in 2010. The oldest person was 80-year-old Miura Yuichiro in 2013. The first woman to scale the mountain was Junko Tabei in 1975.

Climbing Mount Everest is a dangerous business. By the time you reach the peak, each breath

contains 66% less oxygen than at the base. Nylon ropes and spikes on a climbers shoes mean not many people fall, but the weather and lack of oxygen remain dangerous. Over 300 people have died since 1924. Over 80 of those have died on the descent once they've reached the peak. Over 100 of the deaths were Sherpas which shows how dangerous the mountain is, even for experts.

One thing remains true to this day, climbing Mount Everest remains a dream and a challenge for many people. As Sir Edmund Hillary said, "I am a lucky man. I have had a dream and it has come true, and that is not a thing that happens often to men"



Edmund Hillary on 29 May 1953 after reaching the summit

## RETRIEVAL FOCUS

1. How cold can it get at the peak?
2. What has taken 60million years?
3. Where was Sir Edmund Hillary born?
4. What happened in 1975?
5. How many times a year is it safe to climb?

## VIPERS QUESTIONS

**S**

What is the difference between the height of a mountain and how tall it is?

**V**

Why might Mount Everest be considered infamous?

**I**

What was the dream that Sir Edmund Hillary mentioned in the quote at the end?

**V**

Find a synonym in the text for "climb".

**S**

Summarise why climbing Mount Everest is dangerous.

Answers:

1. -50°C
2. Mount Everest to reach its current height
3. New Zealand
4. The first woman reached the peak
5. Twice

S: The height is how high above sea-level it is. How tall it is, is from the base to the peak.

V: It is famous for being very difficult and lots of people failing or dying

I: Climbing Mount Everest

V: Scale

S: The high winds, cold temperature, lack of oxygen

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