

Passage #2—Mount Everest

Mount Everest, a mountain peak located in Asia, is the highest mountain in the world. It is named after George Everest, the scientist who first mapped the area. Climbers have made many attempts to reach the mountain's peak. One of the first of these expeditions occurred about eighty years ago. However, it was not until thirty years later that two men finally conquered Mount Everest. By the end of the century, more than six hundred climbers had climbed to the top. The climb is very dangerous, though. More than one hundred people have died while attempting the climb.

Climbing to the top of Mount Everest is a dream of many explorers. One of them was once asked why the mountain holds such an attraction for so many people. He replied simply, "Because it is there." Other climbers have other reasons for making the climb, but most would probably agree that the climb presents a tremendous challenge. To climb to the peak, climbers must battle ice, snow, and howling wind. They must cross hazardous gaps as big as canyons in the ice. Climbers sometimes lose fingers and toes to frostbite.

The lack of oxygen is one of the biggest problems that climbers face. A lack of oxygen to the brain can cause climbers to lose interest in eating and drinking and to become confused. It can also affect their sleep. Because of the harsh conditions during the climb, people who make it to the top do not stay there long. They immediately turn around and head back down the mountain.

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