

INTERMEDIATE 2 – Wanderlust, Study Skills

Track 5

- Narrator:** Wanderlust, Study Skills
Audio Track 5
A radio programme invites speakers to discuss the effects of the growing popularity of climbing Mount Everest.
- Mike:** Hello listeners and welcome to this week's edition of *Global Eye*. Climbing Mount Everest used to be something special that could only be done by the best mountaineers. However, now thousands of people are trying to climb to the top. As a result, the mountain is getting crowded and dangerous. In fact, in the first half of 2019, a total of 11 climbers died due to overcrowding and inexperience. We probably all saw the photos of people standing in a long queue, some of them literally freezing to death. So, let's hear from three experts today on who they think is responsible, and what should be done. I'm joined by Fran McGregor, a mountaineering guide, Maya West, an experienced mountaineer, and Geoff Lee, an outdoor sports journalist. So, Fran, why are we seeing so many people on Everest?
- Fran:** I strongly believe that the problem is the companies that offer expeditions to the top of the mountain because they will take anybody who has the money to pay them. But this is a dangerous mountain, and it is clear that the average reasonably fit person is not able to cope with that. At over 8,000 metres, you enter the 'death zone,' which means that your body is exposed to insufficient levels of oxygen. Amateur climbers really should not be going up there at all. They are a danger not only to themselves but to others, as they move very slowly and cause queues and bottlenecks. They just haven't got the technical skills, and by that I mean things like how to use crampons or secure a harness.
- Mike:** Do you agree, Maya?
- Maya:** Yes, I do. And in my opinion, the government of Nepal is also responsible as they are the ones that decide who can climb the mountain each year. If you want to climb Everest, you have to pay \$11,000 for a permit. This year, they issued 381 permits, which is a record number. That money goes to the government and I think it's pretty clear that they want to make as much money as they can.
- Mike:** Geoff, what do you think?
- Geoff:** Well, clearly, it's dangerous with so many people on the mountain. However, I believe it's important to remember that tourism is one of the main ways that the people of Nepal can make money. I don't think what they are doing is right, because people's lives are in danger, but it's also true that in Nepal the money is needed, and unfortunately, they seem to be issuing permits without checking if people's skills and experience are suitable. So it's really the responsibility of the tourists themselves to be aware of the risks and make an intelligent decision, do you see?

- Mike:** Yes, I see. So what should be done about the situation, Fran?
- Fran:** Well, I'm convinced that a lot of people only climb it because they want to tell their friends that they've done something extreme. They're not interested in climbing the mountain. They just want a photo to show they've been there. So perhaps the Nepalese government could provide some alternative experiences for these people. Do you know what I mean?
- Mike:** Can you give us an example?
- Fran:** Well, there could be a cable car that takes them to a good place to get a photograph with Everest in the background.
- Mike:** Maya, do you have any other suggestions?
- Maya:** Well, perhaps they should raise the fee for permits. Then only people who are really serious about climbing the mountain will want to pay.
- Mike:** Geoff, any other ideas?
- Geoff:** I would argue that permits should only be given to people who have a lot of mountaineering experience because, as we said, climbing Everest is incredibly dangerous. As a matter of fact, about 200 people have died on Everest in the last 20 years. Why don't the companies that sell expeditions to the top start offering training courses instead?
- Mike:** That's an interesting idea. Let's hear from ... [FADE OUT]

Track 6

PRONUNCIATION

Narrator: Wanderlust, Study Skills
Audio Track 6
Pronunciation

Adult female: used
crowded
died
experienced
exposed
decided
issued
needed
interested

Track 7

PRONUNCIATION

Narrator: Wanderlust, Study Skills
Audio Track 7
Pronunciation

Adult male: funded
believed
counted
described
disgusted
complained
picked
commanded

Track 8

Narrator: Wanderlust, Study Skills
Audio Track 8
Activity 6

Female: These days there is a lot of interest in extreme tourism. Do you know what I mean?

Male: No, what is that?

Female: It means trips to dangerous places, like mountains, jungles and caves. Do you see?

Male: Oh, yuck! I see. But why do people do that?

Female: Because doing something dangerous in an exotic location gives people an 'adrenaline rush'. That means they find it very exciting.

Male: Oh, right. Wow! So, what kinds of things can people do?

Female: Well, some people climb Everest, swim with sharks, or cycle along the 'Camino de la Muerte' in Bolivia, which means 'The Road of Death' because it's very narrow.

Male: No way! Incredible!