Read 3-03

These two texts describe Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay's historic climb to the top of Mount Everest on May 29, 1953. Before that year, no one had reached Mount Everest's summit. The first text is from Edmund Hillary's memoir about the climb. It's considered a *primary source*, since Edmund Hillary was there.

View from the Summit:

The Remarkable Memoir by the First Person to Conquer Everest

By Sir Edmund Hillary

Ahead of me loomed the great rock step which we had observed from far below and which we knew might prove to be a major problem. I gazed up at the forty feet of rock with some concern. To climb it directly at nearly 29,000 feet would indeed be a considerable challenge. I looked to the right, there seemed a chance there. Clinging to the rock was a great ice cornice hanging over the mighty Kangshung Face. Under the effects of gravity, the ice had broken away from the rock and a narrow crack ran upward. Nervously, I wondered if the cornice might collapse under my pressure. There was only one way to find out!

Although it would be relatively useless, I got Tenzing to establish a belay[1]; then I eased my way into the crack, facing the rock. I jammed my crampons[2] into the ice behind me and then wriggled my way upward using every little handhold I could find. Puffing for breath, I made steady height – the ice was holding – and forty feet up, I pulled myself out of the crack onto the top of the rock face. I had made it! For the first time on the whole expedition, I had a feeling of confidence that we were going to get to the top. I waved to Tenzing and brought in the rope as he, too, made his way laboriously up the crack and dragged himself out beside me, panting for breath.

We didn't waste any time. I started cutting steps again, seeking now rather anxiously for signs of the summit. We seemed to go on forever, tired now and moving rather slowly. In the distance I could see the barren plateau. I looked up to the right and there was a rounded snowy dome. It must be the summit! We drew closer together as Tenzing brought in the slack on the rope. I continued cutting a line of steps upward. Next moment I had moved onto a flattish exposed area of snow with nothing but space in every direction. Tenzing quickly joined me and we looked around in wonder. To our immense satisfaction, we realized we had reached the top of the world!



[1] **belay** noun an anchor for a person or rope



[2] **crampon** noun a plate with spikes that attaches to shoes to prevent slipping on ice or snow

LIVEWORKSHEETS

The second text is from a book about the climb, by author Joy Masoff. Since she didn't climb Mount Everest, her book is considered a *secondary source*. As you read, imagine the climbers' excitement. They're going where no person has ever gone. The summit of Mount Everest has never been reached!



Everest: Reaching for the Sky

By Joy Masoff

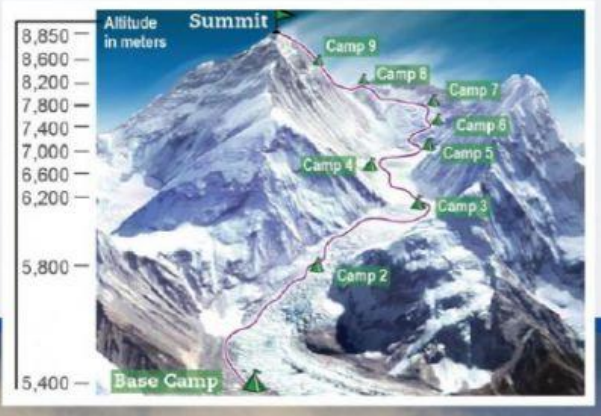
For the next few weeks, the team keeps moving higher up the mountain, setting up camp at greater altitudes. Finally, they reach Camp 8 – the highest camp for the team. They are almost there!

John Hunt, the team leader, picks his two strongest climbers to try to reach the top of Everest first. Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay are not chosen to go.

Then disaster strikes. The oxygen tanks don't work, and the first two climbers have to turn back. Hillary and Tenzing are told that they will have a chance to reach the summit after all!

Hillary and Tenzing feel excited, yet calm, as they begin their climb to the top. After spending the night perched on their little ledge, they are ready to make the final climb. It is minus 17°F (minus 27°C), and they have pulled on eight layers of clothing and three pairs of gloves. Their backpacks weigh 40 pounds (18 kilograms) each.

Think What are some differences between this text and the first one?



The two men move slowly, carefully hacking steps into the ice with their axes. Parts of the climb are really scary – ridges that are only as wide as a diving board. There are places where the mountain falls off 2 miles (3 kilometers) straight down. One wrong step could mean death.

Still, up they go, higher and higher, until they come to a rocky wall – 40 feet (12 meters) high. Now what?

Hillary sees a slim crack in the rock. He jams a foot into it and begins to wiggle up, grabbing at any handhold he can find. Tenzing follows. They haven't come this far only to give up!

It takes almost half an hour to inch up using the crack. They can barely catch their breath. What else can happen?

The two men keep going up. They move from rock to snow, and soon they can climb no more because there is no more mountain left.

They have summitted – they have reached the top! Their tiredness quickly gives way to joy as they look out at the awesome sight all around them.

Think What are some similarities between this text and the first one?

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Understand



Comprehension

Think Which of the two texts felt more real to you? Why?

A Which important details do these texts share? Which details are different? Fill in the organizer and discuss it with your partner.

Text 1: View from the Summit

Text 2: Everest

Details That Are the Same	Details That Are Different

B Work with your partner to answer the questions.

1 Which text covers a longer period of time?

2 How do Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay feel when they reach the top of Mount Everest?

3 If Tenzing Norgay had written about Mount Everest, would it be a primary or a secondary source?

4 If you wrote about Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay's climb, which kind of source would it be?

5 Why do you think Edmund Hillary wrote about this climb?

6 Why do you think Joy Masoff wrote about this climb?

C **Words in Context** complete the short sto

considerable panting exposed satisfaction disaster perched

Nancy and Mike had been following the trail all day and were ____(1)____ by the time they stopped. The top of the plateau, where they stood, was windy and ____(2)____. They looked down and saw the valley a ____(3)____ distance below them. "Be careful, Mike," said Nancy. "It would be a ____(4)____ if one of us fell." Then Nancy ____(5)____ on a large rock so that Mike could take her picture. They felt ____(6)____ at having reached the top, but it was getting dark, and they had a long walk ahead of them.

LIVEWORKSHEETS