

Expedition¹

Listen to an interview with a climber who has recently returned from an expedition to the Himalayas.



Before you listen

Vocabulary

Match the words and phrases in the table to their definitions.

1. porter	2. trek	3. assumption	4. to scale
5. border	6. summit	7. to hire	8. load

Definitions

- | | | |
|---|-------|-------------|
| A. Something that you accept as true without question or proof. | _____ | Word |
| B. The amount of weight carried, especially by a vehicle, or an animal. | _____ | |
| C. The line that divides one country from another. | _____ | |
| D. The highest point of a mountain | _____ | |
| E. To pay to use something for a short period of time. | _____ | _____ |
| F. A person whose job is to carry things. | _____ | |
| G. To climb a steep surface, such as a wall or the side of a mountain. | _____ | |
| H. A long walk over land such as hill, mountains, or forests. | _____ | _____ |

After you listen

General listening: true or false

Decide if the questions below are **TRUE**, **FALSE** or **NOT GIVEN**. If false, please correct the wrong information.

- Sherpas used to live in caves in Nepal. _____
- They used to work as porters and guides before Europeans arrived. _____
- Sherpas found jobs in a British military post in the 19th century. _____
- Edmund Hillary and his Sherpa porter reached the summit of Everest in 1935. _____
- Trekking and mountaineering attracted many people to the Himalayas. _____
- Sherpas usually carry loads on tourist treks. _____
- There was an all-Sherpa expedition to Everest. _____

Listening for specific information: cloze test

Listen again and fill in the gaps with the suitable word or words.

- The Sherpas are an _____ of about 35,000 Buddhists.
- They usually work as _____ porters for mountain expeditions.
- People think that Sherpas have been _____ for generations.
- Great Britain _____ India in the 1800s.
- Sherpas usually work as _____, cooks and _____ assistants.
- The Sherpas who climb on dangerous expeditions are the _____ now.

¹ Source: Sue Kay & Vaughan Jones, *Inside Out Level III Student's Book*, MacMillan, p. 188.

Answer key

Vocabulary

D-6

A-3

B-8

C-5

H-2

E-7

G-4

F-1

General listening: true or false

1. NOT GIVEN
2. FALSE – They used to raise yaks, trade and work the land.
3. TRUE
4. FALSE – It was in 1953.
5. TRUE
6. FALSE – They rarely do this.
7. TRUE

Listening for specific information: cloze test

1. ethnic group
2. high-altitude
3. mountain climbers
4. colonised
5. guides, camp
6. elite

Transcript

Interviewer: Many people may wonder who the Sherpas are. Can you tell us?

Climber: Yes, of course. The Sherpas are an ethnic group of about 35,000 Buddhists living mainly in Nepal. They work as high-altitude porters for mountain expeditions and also as guides for tourist treks.

Interviewer: The general assumption is that Sherpas have been mountain climbers for generations. Is that correct?

Climber: Well, no. In fact, until Europeans created a job market in the early 1900s, Sherpas had never scaled mountains.

Interviewer: What did they use to do then?

Climber: They raised yaks and traded, and they also worked the land.

Interviewer: How did they become porters?

Climber: Mmm ... After Great Britain colonized India in the 1800s, many Sherpas migrated to find work at a military post in Darjeeling, India, just across the border from Nepal. And in the 1920s, the British started hiring them as porters for pioneering Everest explorations. Then, in 1953 a New Zealander, Edmund Hillary, and a Sherpa, called Tenzing Norgay, became the first to reach the summit of Everest.

Interviewer: And after that, I suppose the tourist-trekking business became more and more important ...

Climber: Right. And of course their life was changed forever.

Interviewer: Yes, I can imagine. Tell me, what's their job in an expedition?

Climber: Well, they're guides, cooks, and camp assistants. But they rarely carry loads on tourist treks. They hire porters from other Nepalese ethnic groups, people who would like to become 'sherpas', a term now used for a mid-level camp assistant. The Sherpas who climb on dangerous high-altitude expeditions are the elite now.

Interviewer: Has ever been an all-Sherpa expedition?

Climber: Yes, in 1991 the first all-Sherpa expedition reached Everest. It was a matter of national pride. In fact, 73 Sherpa men had already reached the summit.