

NEWS LESSON

Queues at the Top of the World

BEFORE YOU READ

1 Warm up

Talk about these questions with a partner.

1. Would you still want a summit photo if you had to queue for it?
2. What makes an adventure feel like an achievement?
3. Is a famous challenge more appealing because many people want to do it?

2 Key words

These words are in the article. Write the letter of the meaning (A to H) in each box.

1	**queues**	☐	A	able to kill you
2	**deadly**	☐	B	with very little of something in it, like air high up
3	**expeditions**	☐	C	long, organised trips to a faraway place
4	**restrictions**	☐	D	ideas that people suggest for a group to decide on
5	**porters**	☐	E	people who carry heavy bags for climbers
6	**proposals**	☐	F	rules that stop you from doing something
7	**thin**	☐	G	lines of people waiting for their turn
8	**lifelong**	☐	H	lasting for the whole of your life

3 Read

Read the article and underline the key words from task 2. The paragraphs are numbered.

Nepal is discussing stricter rules for Everest climbers. One idea is that you must first climb another Nepali mountain above 7,000 metres.

1 Mount Everest is the highest mountain in the world. For many climbers, reaching its top is a lifelong dream. But the journey can be extremely dangerous. There is very little oxygen, the weather can change quickly and climbers sometimes have to wait in long queues near the summit. Standing still in the freezing cold, high above the clouds, can be deadly.

2 Everest is in the Himalayas, on the border between Nepal and China. Many climbers set off from the Nepali side and pay large amounts of money for permits, equipment and professional support. Taking on experienced local guides is an important part of most expeditions.

3 Some people worry that Everest has become too popular. Tourists may try to climb it without enough experience, even when they have the money to book a trip. High mountains test skills such as breathing in thin air and judging the weather, and those skills take years to learn. If something goes wrong high on the mountain, guides and rescue teams end up in danger too. They may have to climb back into the same thin air and bad weather to bring somebody down.

4 In 2026, politicians in Nepal discussed stricter rules for people who want to climb Everest. One idea was that climbers should first have got to the top of another Nepali mountain higher than 7,000 metres. Other proposals dealt with better insurance and with the rubbish that expeditions leave behind on mountains.

5 These ideas were still being discussed as part of a new law, so they should not all be treated as rules already in force. Supporters believe that experience requirements could cut down the number of avoidable accidents. Critics worry that new restrictions would make climbing even more expensive and harder to organise.

6 Everest also brings important income to Nepal, including work for guides, porters and local businesses. Many families in the mountain areas live on what they earn during the short climbing season. The challenge is to keep climbing possible without putting visitors, workers and the mountain itself at unnecessary risk. Adventure may involve danger, but should there be a limit to how much danger people are allowed to buy?

Sources: Kathmandu Post. Picture: AI illustration.

4 True, false or not given

Circle **T** (true), **F** (false) or **NG** (the article does not say).

1. Everest is on the border between Nepal and China. T F NG
2. All of the ideas that politicians discussed are already rules. T F NG
3. Guides and rescue teams may have to go back into bad weather to help a climber. T F NG
4. Most people who try to climb Everest reach the top. T F NG
5. Supporters think that experience rules would make climbing cheaper. T F NG

5 Vocabulary

Complete the sentences with words from the box. Two words are not needed.

equipment	income	insurance	oxygen	Permits	rubbish	summit

1. _____ are official papers that give you permission to climb.
2. If a climber is hurt, _____ can pay for the cost of a rescue.
3. Reaching the _____ means getting to the very highest point of the mountain.
4. Many families in the mountain areas depend on the _____ they earn from climbers.
5. Bags of _____ , such as empty food packets, are often left on the mountain.

6 Verb forms

Write the correct form of the verb in brackets.

1. In 2026, politicians in Nepal _____ stricter rules for climbers. (DISCUSS)
2. Some people worry that Everest _____ too popular. (BECOME)
3. They may have to climb back into the thin air _____ somebody down. (BRING)
4. Other proposals _____ with the problem of waste. (DEAL)
5. Yesterday the guide _____ his team up to the next camp. (LEAD)

7 Language focus: prepositions

Complete the sentences with words from the box. Two words are not needed. Small words go with certain verbs and nouns. Learn the whole phrase: pay for, worry about, live on, in the Himalayas.

about	at	for	from	in	on	to

1. Many young people are interested _____ climbing high mountains.
2. Many climbers pay a lot of money _____ permits.
3. Critics worry _____ the cost of new rules.
4. Visitors and workers should not be put _____ risk without a good reason.
5. Many families live _____ what they earn during the short climbing season.

SPEAK

8 Talk about it

Discuss in pairs or small groups. Give reasons for your answers.

1. Who should be able to decide how many climbers a mountain receives?
2. Would you choose a less famous mountain for a better experience?
3. What should a visitor owe the people who make a dangerous trip possible?

9 Role-play: who should climb Everest?

Work in pairs. Read your card, then have the conversation. Swap roles and do it again.

Student A · a mountain guide

Nepal may ask climbers to prove their experience first. You think this is a good idea because rescues are dangerous for guides. Explain your worries and ask the climber about their experience.

Student B · a keen climber

You've saved for years to climb Everest, but you've never climbed a 7,000-metre mountain. You think the new rule is unfair. Explain why you should be allowed to go, and look for a compromise.

Useful phrases

I'm worried about the risks for the guides.
Have you ever climbed above 7,000 metres?
I've been saving for this trip for years.
That's not fair, because I'm very fit.
What if I did a training course first?
Let's find a solution we're both happy with.

Afterwards, tell the class: did the guide agree to take the climber, and what was the compromise?

ANSWER KEY

2 Key words

1 G · 2 A · 3 C · 4 F · 5 E · 6 D · 7 B · 8 H

4 True, false or not given

1 T · 2 F · 3 T · 4 NG · 5 F

5 Vocabulary

1 Permits · 2 insurance · 3 summit · 4 income · 5 rubbish

6 Verb forms

1 discussed · 2 has become · 3 to bring · 4 dealt · 5 led

7 Language focus

1 in · 2 for · 3 about · 4 at · 5 on

This lesson is free. If it saved you time, you can support johnplusnews at **ko-fi.com/johnplusenglish**