

NEWS LESSON

The Mountain with a Price List

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	**destination**	☐	A	an agreement to be paid money if something bad happens to you
2	**insurance**	☐	B	connected with making laws
3	**operators**	☐	C	companies that run a business or a service
4	**qualifying**	☐	D	something you must have or do because of a rule
5	**requirement**	☐	E	the money a worker is paid for their work
6	**wages**	☐	F	to compare things carefully before you decide
7	**legislative**	☐	G	needed to be allowed to take part in something
8	**weigh**	☐	H	a place that people travel to

3 Read

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

Nepal's lawmakers have discussed proof of experience, insurance and waste rules. None of it is law yet, and guides' wages depend on how it ends.

1 Reaching the summit of Mount Everest remains one of the world's most famous sporting achievements. Yet the mountain has also turned into a commercial destination, with climbers paying substantial sums for permits, equipment and organised expeditions. The question is whether the growing market for adventure has made an already dangerous activity unnecessarily risky. Everest, in other words, is no longer only a mountain. It is also a service with a price list.

2 Everest's extreme altitude creates serious difficulties. Oxygen levels are low, weather conditions are unpredictable and the safest opportunities to reach the summit may be very brief. When several expeditions set out on the same route during a suitable weather window, queues can build up in places where waiting is itself a danger. A climber held up for an hour near the top is burning through oxygen and body heat that cannot easily be replaced.

3 Nepal, whose mountain communities rely heavily on climbing tourism, has been looking at stricter rules. During 2026, lawmakers discussed measures including a requirement for Everest applicants to show that they had previously climbed a mountain above 7,000 metres in Nepal. Proposals also took in insurance, waste management and the responsibilities of expedition operators.

4 The distinction between a proposal and a law matters. Parliamentary discussions do not mean that every suggested restriction has already been brought in. Different lawmakers have backed different standards, and the final rules depend on how the legislative process turns out. Until a bill is passed, climbers and operators are planning around requirements that could still change.

5 Supporters believe stronger experience requirements could put off poorly prepared climbers and take some pressure off guides and rescuers. Critics may argue that previous climbs are no guarantee of good judgement. They also note that extra qualifying expeditions cost money, so only an even wealthier group of people could afford to climb Everest.

6 There are important local interests as well. International expeditions provide income for Nepali guides, transport providers and other businesses, often in areas with few other ways of making a living. Any new system has to weigh safety and environmental protection against the livelihoods of people who depend on the climbing season. Halving the number of permits would certainly ease the pressure on the mountain, but it would also halve somebody's wages.

7 The debate is ultimately about the difference between a challenging adventure and a commercial product. On Everest, the risks of that product are not confined to the paying customer. They are shared by everybody carrying the loads, fixing the ropes and coming to the rescue when a client runs into trouble.

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. Waiting in a queue near the summit can use up a climber's oxygen. T F NG
2. All the lawmakers support the same experience standard. T F NG
3. Nepal will pass the bill before the next climbing season. T F NG
4. Critics think a previous climb proves that a climber has good judgement. T F NG
5. Fewer permits would help the mountain but would also reduce some people's pay. T F NG

5 Vocabulary

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

altitude	applicants	commercial	confined	hesitant	livelihoods	rumour	substantial

1. The company spent a _____ amount of money on new equipment before the season began.
2. Many climbers suffer headaches and dizziness because of the extreme _____ .
3. Only _____ who can prove their experience will receive a permit.
4. Closing the route would cost thousands of mountain families their _____ .
5. The effects of a bad decision are not _____ to the climber who makes it.
6. Several companies now run _____ trips, charging clients a high price for guided ascents.

6 Verb forms

Write the correct form of the verb in brackets.

1. By the time the storm arrived, the group _____ the camp. (LEAVE)
2. If the bill passes, new rules _____ before next season. (INTRODUCE)
3. Over the years, many more tourists _____ to climb Everest. (TRY)
4. Supporters suggest _____ climbers to show proof of experience. (ASK)
5. If the price of a permit doubled, fewer people _____ able to afford it. (BE)

7 Language focus: prepositions

Complete the sentences with words from the box. Two words are not needed. Check the word before the gap. Verbs like rely, suffer and weigh take a fixed preposition, and so do nouns such as guarantee.

against	from	into	of	on	over	to

1. Many guides rely _____ the climbing season for most of their income.
2. Some climbers suffer _____ frostbite, even with the best clothing.
3. Any new system has to weigh safety _____ the interests of local workers.
4. A famous name is no guarantee _____ a safe trip.
5. Problems high on the mountain are not limited _____ the climbers themselves.

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

4 True, false or not given

1 T · 2 F · 3 NG · 4 F · 5 T

5 Vocabulary

1 substantial · 2 altitude · 3 applicants · 4 livelihoods · 5 confined · 6 commercial

6 Verb forms

1 had left · 2 will be introduced · 3 have tried · 4 asking · 5 would be

7 Language focus

1 on · 2 from · 3 against · 4 of · 5 to

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