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Survey shows Mt. Everest has shrunk

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Today's contents

The Article	2
Warm-ups	3
Before Reading / Listening	4
While Reading / Listening	5
After Reading	6
Discussion	7
Listening Gap Fill	8
Homework	9
Answers	10

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10 October, 2005

THE ARTICLE

Survey shows Mt. Everest has shrunk

BNE: Mount Everest is 3.6 meters shorter than we thought. This is according to a team of Chinese scientists who have just finished measuring the world's highest mountain. They say Everest stands at 8844.43 meters above sea level. This is lower than a measurement of 8,848 meters, which was taken in 1975. A Chinese spokesman Chen Bangzhu said the new height was accurate within a range of plus or minus 21 centimeters. His team used the latest technology in carrying out its survey, including GPS (Global Positioning System) satellite equipment.

The Chinese team wanted to find the actual height of the rock surface and not the ice. Mr. Chen explained that the latest survey did not measure the thickness of the ice on top of the mountain. Scientists did not want to include the depth of the ice for the mountain's height. It is uncertain whether other countries will accept the new data. A survey by American scientists in 1999 discovered the peak was 8,850 meters, five and a half meters higher than the Chinese calculation. China also has a different name for Mt. Everest. It uses the Tibetan name for the peak, Mt. Qomolangma.

WARM-UPS

1. MT. EVEREST: Find out as much as you can about Mount Everest. Walk around the classroom and talk to other students. After you have finished, sit with your partner(s) and share your information. Did you find out anything that was new or interesting?

2. WOULD YOU LIKE? In pairs / groups, ask each other whether or not you would like to do the following "Mount Everest" things:

- a. Climb it.
- b. Get married somewhere on it.
- c. Go hiking on it.
- d. Spend a two-week vacation at an Everest camp.
- e. Be buried or cremated on the summit.
- f. Take part in a one-year study of Mt. Everest's glaciers.
- g. Be a member of the naming committee to decide on Everest or Qomolangma.
- h. Take part in "Clean Everest Up" week.

3. CHAT: In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words are most interesting and which are most boring.

Highest mountains / four meters / being shorter / surveys / sea level / centimeters / GPS / Tibet / ice / rock / American scientists / Mt. Qomolangma

Have a chat about the topics you liked. For more conversation, change topics and partners frequently.

4. EVEREST: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with Mount Everest. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

5. ALL IN A NAME: In pairs / groups, talk about which of the following names you prefer and why:

- a. Mount Everest or Mount Qomolangma
- b. Burma or Myanmar
- c. Falkland Islands or Malvinas
- d. Sri Lanka or Ceylon.
- e. Ireland or Eire.
- f. Thailand or Siam.
- g. Beijing or Peking.
- h. Netherlands or The Netherlands

6. MY MOUNTAIN: Do you have a favorite mountain? In pairs / groups, talk about it. Why do you like it? What memories do you have of it? Do you often visit it?

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

1. TRUE / FALSE: Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- | | |
|---|-------|
| a. Mount Everest is 40 meters shorter than previously thought. | T / F |
| b. Mount Everest now stands 18,844 meters above sea level. | T / F |
| c. The measurement is accurate to within 21 centimeters. | T / F |
| d. GPS satellite equipment was used to measure the mountain. | T / F |
| e. Mount Everest is known to the Chinese by a Tibetan name. | T / F |
| f. A Chinese scientist said Everest had shrunk due to global warming. | T / F |
| g. All countries around the world have accepted the new height. | T / F |
| h. China's calculation is more than five meters different from America's. | T / F |

2. SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article:

- | | |
|-----------------|-------------|
| a. thought | mountain |
| b. mountain | precise |
| c. accurate | peak |
| d. range | found |
| e. carrying out | believed |
| f. actual | information |
| g. data | measurement |
| h. discovered | conducting |
| i. calculation | area |
| j. peak | real |

3. PHRASE MATCH: Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| a. Everest is 3.6 meters shorter | at 8844.43 meters above sea level |
| b. measuring the world's | was 8,850 meters |
| c. Everest stands | carrying out its survey |
| d. accurate within a range of | the ice |
| e. used the latest technology in | plus or minus 21 centimeters |
| f. find the actual height | than we thought |
| g. measure the thickness of | of the rock surface |
| h. uncertain whether other countries | calculation |
| i. discovered the peak | highest mountain |
| j. higher than the Chinese | will accept the new data |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

WORD ORDER: Put the underlined words back into the correct order.

Survey shows Mt. Everest has shrunk

BNE: Mount Everest is 3.6 meters than we thought shorter. This is a team according to of Chinese scientists who have just finished measuring the world's highest mountain. They say Everest stands at 8844.43 meters above sea level. This is a lower measurement than of 8,848 meters, which was taken in 1975. A Chinese spokesman Chen Bangzhu said the new height was a range within accurate of plus or minus 21 centimeters. His team used the latest technology out its in carrying survey, including GPS (Global Positioning System) satellite equipment.

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AFTER READING / LISTENING

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'sea' and 'level'.

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. WORD ORDER: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity.

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. STUDENT "MOUNT EVEREST" SURVEY: In pairs / groups, write down questions about millionaire teenagers.

- Ask other classmates your questions and note down their answers.
- Go back to your original partner / group and compare your findings.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

6. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall exactly how these were used in the text:

- shorter
- finished
- stands
- 1975
- plus
- GPS
- rock surface
- thickness
- uncertain
- American
- calculation
- Qomolangma

DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a. What did you think when you first saw this headline?
- b. Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- c. What do you know about Mount Everest?
- d. What do you think of people getting married on top of Mount Everest?
- e. Do you know who the first people to climb Mount Everest were?
- f. Why do you think Mount Everest has "shrunk"?
- g. What's the highest mountain in your country?
- h. Do you think it is important to know the exact height of Mount Everest to the nearest centimeter?
- i. Would you like to be part of a survey team that measures the height of mountains?

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a. Did you like reading this article?
- b. What do you think about what you read?
- c. Would you like to climb Mount Everest?
- d. Why do you think Mount Everest is so special to people in Tibet and Nepal?
- e. Do you think we should call Mount Everest by its Tibetan name of Mt. Qomolangma?
- f. What images do you have when you think of Mount Everest?
- g. Why do you think the Chinese and American measurements differ by more than five meters?
- h. Do you like mountain climbing?
- i. Did you like this discussion?

AFTER DISCUSSION: Join another partner / group and tell them what you talked about.

- a. What question would you like to ask about this topic?
- b. What was the most interesting thing you heard?
- c. Was there a question you didn't like?
- d. Was there something you totally disagreed with?
- e. What did you like talking about?
- f. Do you want to know how anyone else answered the questions?
- g. Which was the most difficult question?

LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

Survey shows Mt. Everest has shrunk

BNE: Mount Everest is 3.6 meters _____ than we _____. This is according to a team of Chinese scientists who have just finished measuring the world's highest mountain. They say Everest _____ at 8844.43 meters above sea level. This is _____ than a measurement of 8,848 meters, which was taken in 1975. A Chinese spokesman Chen Bangzhu said the new height was _____ within a range of plus or _____ 21 centimeters. His team used the latest technology in carrying out its _____, including GPS (Global Positioning System) satellite equipment.

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HOMEWORK

1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION: Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

2. INTERNET: Search the Internet and find more information on Mount Everest. Share your findings with your class in the next lesson.

3. QUIZ: Create a quiz in English about the world's geography. Give your quiz to your partners in your next class. Did you all think of similar questions?

4. LETTER: Write a letter to the World Mountain Naming Society. Tell the society whether you think the mountain should be called Everest or Qomolangma. Read your letter to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all write about similar things?

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

- a. F b. F c. T d. T e. T f. F g. F h. T

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|-----------------|-------------|
| a. thought | believed |
| b. mountain | peak |
| c. accurate | precise |
| d. range | area |
| e. carrying out | conducting |
| f. actual | real |
| g. data | information |
| h. discovered | found |
| i. calculation | measurement |
| j. peak | mountain |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| a. Everest is 3.6 meters shorter | than we thought |
| b. measuring the world's | highest mountain |
| c. Everest stands | at 8844.43 meters above sea level |
| d. accurate within a range of | plus or minus 21 centimeters |
| e. used the latest technology in | carrying out its survey |
| f. find the actual height | of the rock surface |
| g. measure the thickness of | the ice |
| h. uncertain whether other countries | will accept the new data |
| i. discovered the peak | was 8,850 meters |
| j. higher than the Chinese | calculation |

WORD ORDER:

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