

1. **hardened** (adjective) – experienced, accustomed, habituated.
2. **inherent** (adjective) – intrinsic/innate; basic/fundamental, implicit.
3. **scale** (verb) – climb up, ascend, go up.
4. **tilt at** (noun) – attempt on, bid for.
5. **fetch** (verb) – yield, make, earn.
6. **summit** (noun) – high point, peak, mountaintop.
7. **manifold** (adjective) – many, numerous, multiple.
8. **recklessly** (adverb) – rashly, carelessly, thoughtlessly.
9. **on account of** (phrase) – because of, owing to, due to.
10. **spell** (noun) – session, period, stretch.
11. **rarefied** (adjective) – (of air at high altitudes) less dense (oxygen) than usual.
12. **altitude** (noun) – height, elevation, distance above the ground/sea.
13. **fatal** (adjective) – deadly, lethal, mortal.
14. **frostbite** (noun) – injury suffered due to freezing (as a result of extreme cold weather) of some part of the body, typically fingers, toes or the nose.
15. **exhaustion** (noun) – extreme tiredness, fatigue, weariness.
16. **dehydration** (noun) – the loss of too much water in the body.
17. **amid** (preposition) – in the middle of, surrounded by; during.
18. **amateur** (noun) – non-professional, non-specialist, layman.
19. **make up for** (phrase) – offset, counterbalance/neutralize; compensate for.
20. **fallout** (noun) – adverse results; after-effects, repercussions.
21. **hold up** (phrasal verb) – withstand; stand up to; survive/remain strong.
22. **in harm's way** (phrase) – be in a dangerous situation.
23. **discard** (verb) – abandon, dispose of, throw away.
24. **deter** (verb) – prevent, stop, block/check.
25. **hypnotic** (adjective) – mesmerizing, spellbinding, fascinating.
26. **lure** (noun) – temptation, enticement, attraction.
27. **intact** (adjective) – undamaged, unimpaired; complete/whole.
28. **perish** (verb) – die, be killed, expire.
29. **pull** (noun) – attraction, lure, enticement/temptation.
30. **optimum** (adjective) – most appropriate, ideal, perfect.

Mt. Everest: learn from tragedy, tighten safety measures

It's obvious why so many try to scale Everest — but the safety protocol must be tightened

Mount Everest, the world's highest peak at 8,848 metres, draws adventurers from all over. But the mountain on the Nepal-China border is fast becoming a dangerous place to visit even for the hardened mountaineer. The inherent risks were this month **highlighted with a photograph by Nirmal Purja**, a Gorkha ex-soldier. The image, which went viral and

altered the manner in which people worldwide imagine what it is to scale Mt. Everest, showed a long queue awaiting a final tilt at the summit, with all the dangers such a wait holds. This season, at least 10 climbers have died or gone missing, including four Indians. Experts have been calling for Nepal to restrict the number of permits. It awarded a record 381 for this spring, each fetching \$11,000 (climbing from the Tibet side is more expensive). On Wednesday, 200 climbers ascended the summit, a new record for a single day. Last year, 807 managed to reach the summit. In 2012, the United Nations estimated that there were more than 26,000 visitors to the Everest region, and this figure has grown manifold since then. Nepal officials argue that permits are not issued recklessly, and that jams such as this year's near the summit are on account of spells of bad weather, which result in mountaineers being compelled to summit within a narrow time-frame. Waiting in sub-zero temperatures at the rarefied altitude can be fatal — this season's deaths were mostly due to frostbite, exhaustion, dehydration and lack of oxygen.

This year's drama has caught the public imagination, as happened in 1996 when eight persons died in a single day amid an unexpected storm — events of and around that day were the subject of Jon Krakauer's bestselling book, *Into Thin Air*. The adventure industry that is built around the human desire to scale the peak has meant many amateurs take up the challenge, confident that support teams and specialised equipment will make up for their lack of adequate mountaineering experience. The fallout is that in case of a disaster not only are some of them unable to manage, but they hold up others, putting them in harm's way. The commercial operations have led to the Everest being called the world's highest garbage dump as many climbers discard non-critical gear and fail to clean up the mess. It is unlikely, however, that this season's tragedies will deter future summiteers, as the hypnotic lure remains intact. As George Mallory, the English mountaineer who perished in the attempt to scale Everest, reportedly said of its pull, "Because it's there." But the authorities must learn from this year's tragedies and work out an optimum number of climbers and strengthen safety measures.