

# The World's Tallest Mountains

There has been much discussion by experts over which mountains should be named the tallest in the world. The Seven **Summits** is a list of the tallest mountains on each of the world's seven continents. In the Seven Summits Challenge, explorers strive to climb all of these mountains.



## Kilimanjaro (Africa)

Kilimanjaro is a type of mountain called a **stratovolcano**. There are three volcanic cones called Kibo, Shira and Mawenzi. The highest is Kibo at 5895 metres. The climb up this mountain is considered to be an easy one for hikers.

### Did You Know...?

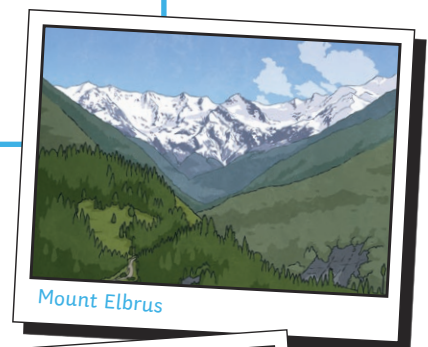
**Altitude sickness** can be caused by a lack of oxygen high up on a mountain, which can make people unwell.



## Mount Elbrus (Europe)

This mountain is part of a **range** called the Caucasus and can be found in Russia. It gets its name from its twisted shape and it is believed by various experts that ancient people called it 'Strobilus'. Akhia Sottaiev was the first person to reach the summit in 1874.

A cable car on the mountain helps to take climbers most of the way so this is thought to be an easy climb for many.



## Denali (North America)

This mountain is the third-highest mountain in the world and can be found in North America as part of the Alaskan Range, measuring around 6194 metres. Its name comes from the Koyukon, Athabaskan language and means 'The Tall One' or 'The High One'. Walter Harper was the first climber to reach the top of Denali on 7<sup>th</sup> June 1913. This climb is regarded as difficult because of poor weather conditions in the region and its sharp incline.



## The World's Tallest Mountains

### Mount Everest (Asia)

Mount Everest is the highest mountain in the world with a height of 8850 metres. It is also known as 'Chomolungma', meaning 'Goddess Mother of the World'. An explorer called Edmund Hillary and his **Sherpa**, Tenzing Norgay, were the first to climb this mountain range in the Himalayas. However, high altitude and expensive equipment make this a difficult mountain to attempt.



Mount Everest

### Mount Vinson (Antarctica)

Only around 1200 climbers have managed to reach the summit of Mount Vinson because it has extremely cold temperatures and a secluded location. This mountain has a height of 4829 metres and the peak was first reached by Nicholas Clinch in December 1966.



Mount Vinson

### Aconcagua (South America)

The two summits of this mountain in the south and north are joined by a ridge that is around 6962 metres high (the making it the second-highest mountain in the world). It is believed to be a strenuous climb because of unpredictable storms and high altitude.



Aconcagua

### Carstensz Pyramid (Oceania)

At 4884 metres, Carstensz Pyramid or Puncak Jaya is a snow-topped mountain found in Oceania. It is part of the Sudirman Range.



Puncak Jaya

## Glossary

**altitude sickness:** An illness caused by a lack of oxygen because of being high above sea level.

**range:** A line or group of mountains or hills.

**Sherpa:** A member of a Himalayan people, who often guide people in the mountains.

**stratovolcano:** A volcano with a steep, cone shape, consisting of hardened layers of ash, lava and rock.

**summit:** The highest point of something, especially the top of a mountain.

# Questions

1. The highest summit on Kilimanjaro is... Tick one.

- Shira
- Kibo
- stratovolcano
- Mawenzi

2. Number the mountains from 1-4 to show the order of height from tallest to shortest.

- Mount Everest
- Mount Vinson
- Carstenz Pyramid
- Denali

3. Fill in the missing words.

Altitude \_\_\_\_\_ can be caused by a lack of oxygen high up  
on a \_\_\_\_\_, which can make people unwell.

4. Look at the section called **Mount Elbrus**.

Find and copy one word which means the same as 'curled'.

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5. On what date was the peak of Denali first reached?

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6. Summarise what you have learnt about Kilimanjaro in 25 words or fewer.

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7. Do you think learning about the great explorers of the tallest mountains is important? Explain your answer.

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8. Which mountain was your favourite? Explain your answer.

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# Answers

1. The highest summit on Kilimanjaro is... Tick one.

- Shira  
 **Kibo**  
 stratovolcano  
 Mawenzi

2. Number the mountains from 1–4 to show the order of height from tallest to shortest.

- 1** Mount Everest  
**3** Mount Vinson  
**4** Carstensz Pyramid  
**2** Denali

3. Fill in the missing words.

Altitude **sickness** can be caused by a lack of oxygen high up on a **mountain**, which can make people unwell.

4. Look at the section called **Mount Elbrus**.

Find and copy one word which means the same as 'curled'.

**twisted**

5. On what date was the peak of Denali first reached?

**The peak of Denali was first reached on 7<sup>th</sup> June 1913.**

6. Summarise what you have learnt about Kilimanjaro in 25 words or fewer.

**Pupils' own responses, such as: Kilimanjaro is a stratovolcano in Africa, which has 3 volcanic cones called Shira, Kibo and Mawenzi and is 5895 metres in height.**

7. Do you think learning about the great explorers of the tallest mountains is important?

Explain your answer.

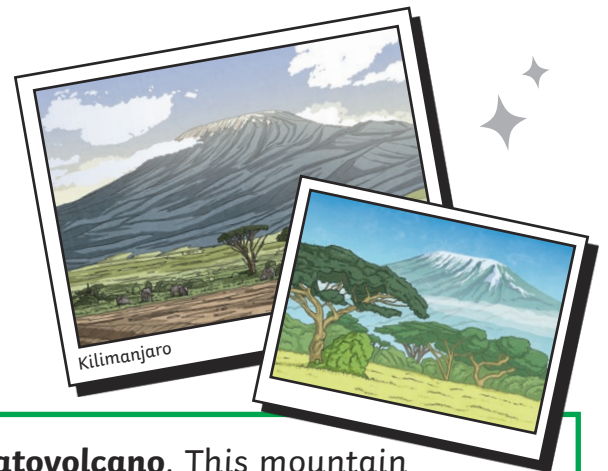
**Pupils' own responses, such as: I think it is important to learn about great explorers because you can find out about the mountains they have visited and learn about what it takes to climb them.**

8. Which mountain was your favourite? Explain your answer.

**Pupils' own responses, such as: My favourite was Mount Everest because it is the tallest mountain and I think the challenge would be great. I also like that its name means 'Goddess Mother of the World'.**

# The World's Tallest Mountains

There has been much discussion by experts over which mountains should be classified as the tallest mountains in the world. As a result of their height, the Seven **Summits** – one from each continent – have been identified as the victors. Every year, explorers from all over the globe try to climb these peaks in a feat that is widely known as the Seven Summits Challenge.



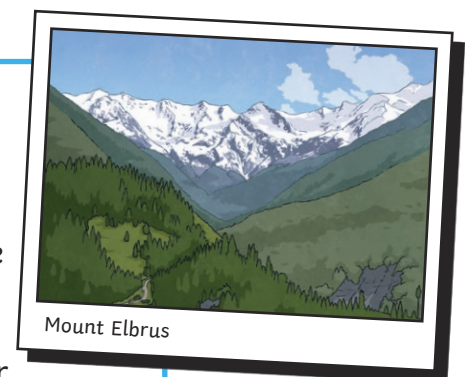
## Kilimanjaro (Africa)

Kilimanjaro is a type of mountain known as a **stratovolcano**. This mountain comprises of three volcanic cones; Shira and Mawenzi are extinct while Kibo (the tallest of the three at 5895 metres) is a dormant volcano. Many tourists and climbers visit Kilimanjaro due to its reputation of being easier to climb than most other known summits. Little experience and climbing gear are needed; however, it is not uncommon for climbers to have problems with **altitude sickness** caused by low oxygen levels.

## Mount Elbrus (Europe)

This mountain can be found in south-western Russia and is part of the Caucasus **Range**. It is believed by many that ancient people named this mountain 'Strobilus' after its twisted, cone-like shape. The first explorer to make it to the summit (5642 metres) was Akhia Sottaiev in 1874.

Popular with tourists, this climb has a convenient cable car that takes trekkers up to around 3658 metres, leaving less of the mountain to scale. As a result of the snowy climate, this location is also popular with skiers and hikers.



## Denali (North America)

Denali is the third-highest mountain in the world at 6194 metres. It is found in North America in the Alaskan Range. Formerly known as Mount McKinley, the name Denali originates from the Koyukon Athabaskan word meaning 'The Tall One' or 'The High One'. On 7<sup>th</sup> June 1913, Walter Harper made history by being the first explorer to climb the summit of Denali.



# The World's Tallest Mountains

## Mount Everest (Asia)

With a height of 8850 metres, Mount Everest is widely known as the tallest mountain in the Seven Summits and is indeed the highest point on Earth. Locals refer to this mountain as 'Chomolungma' – meaning 'Goddess Mother of the world'. This Himalayan mountain was first scaled in 1953 by explorer Edmund Hillary and his **Sherpa**, Tenzing Norgay. As well as low oxygen levels, the high cost of crucial equipment means this climb is only for the most experienced and those who can afford it.



## Mount Vinson (Antarctica)

Few climbers have made the climb up Mount Vinson (around 1200) due to its freezing temperatures and remote location in Antarctica. Its name comes from an American congressman who admired the exploration of Antarctica. Part of the Sentinel Range, this mountain rises 4829 metres above sea level and was first scaled by Nicholas Clinch in December 1966.



## Aconcagua (South America)

Located in Argentina, this mountain has two summits in the northern and southern regions that are connected by a ridge. This mountain is around 6962 metres high, making it the second-highest mountain in the world. It is believed to be a challenging climb because of its frequent storms and high altitude.



## Carstensz Pyramid (Oceania)

Carstensz Pyramid or Puncak Jaya, in the Sudirman Range, is a snow-topped mountain and stands at 4884 metres.



## Glossary

**altitude sickness:** An illness caused by a lack of oxygen because of being high above sea level.

**range:** A line or group of mountains or hills.

**Sherpa:** A member of a Himalayan people, who often guides people in the mountains.

**stratovolcano:** A volcano with a steep, cone shape consisting of hardened layers of ash, lava and rock.

**summit:** The highest point of something, especially the top of a mountain.

# Questions

1. Where is Kilimanjaro located? Tick one.

- Oceania  
 North America  
 Australia  
 Africa

2. Draw **four** lines and match each mountain to its location.

Denali

Mount Elbrus

Aconcagua

Mount Vinson

Europe

Antarctica

South America

North America

3. Fill in the missing words.

With a \_\_\_\_\_ of 8850 metres, Mount Everest is widely known as the tallest mountain in the Seven Summits and is indeed the \_\_\_\_\_ point on Earth.

4. What mountain range does Denali belong to?

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5. Look at the section called **Mount Vinson**.

Find and copy one word that means the same as 'approve' or 'appreciate'.

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6. Which mountain do you think would be the easiest to climb? Explain your answer.

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7. What are the similarities and differences between Mount Vinson and Mount Everest?

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8. Would you like the job of a Sherpa? Explain your answer.

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9. Which mountain would you like to climb? Explain your answer.

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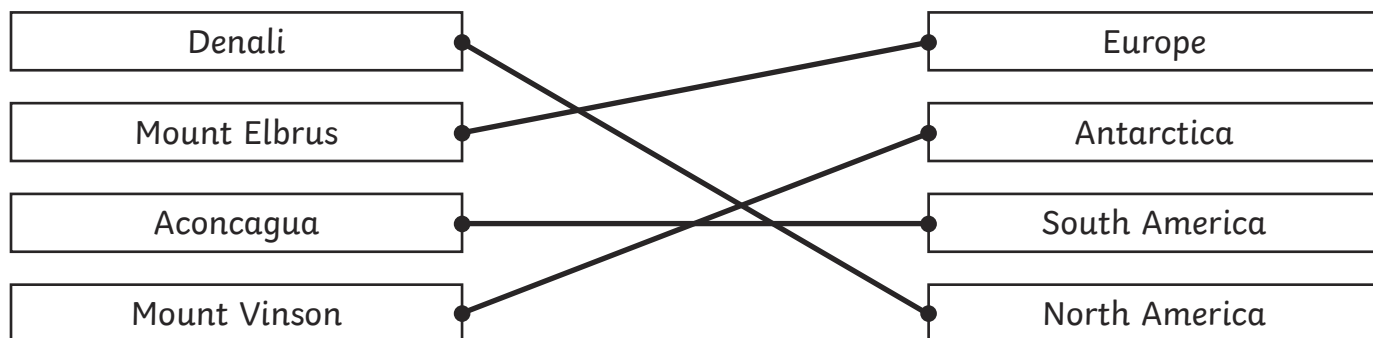
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# Answers

1. Where is Kilimanjaro located? Tick one.

- Oceania  
 North America  
 Australia  
 **Africa**

2. Draw **four** lines and match each mountain to its location.



3. Fill in the missing words.

With a **height** of 8850 metres, Mount Everest is widely known as the tallest mountain in the Seven Summits and is indeed the **highest** point on Earth.

4. What mountain range does Denali belong to?

**Denali belongs to the Alaskan mountain range.**

5. Look at the section called **Mount Vinson**.

Find and copy one word that means the same as 'approve' or 'appreciate'.

**admired**

6. Which mountain do you think would be the easiest to climb? Explain your answer.

**Pupils' own responses, such as: I think Kilimanjaro would be the easiest to climb as many people visit there and no guide is needed to get to the summit.**

7. What are the similarities and differences between Mount Vinson and Mount Everest?

**Pupils' own responses, such as: The mountains both contend with freezing cold temperatures, are a challenge to climb and have low altitudes. However, their heights are very different as Mount Everest stands at around 8850 metres whereas Mount Vinson is much smaller at 4829 metres.**

8. Would you like the job of a Sherpa? Explain your answer.

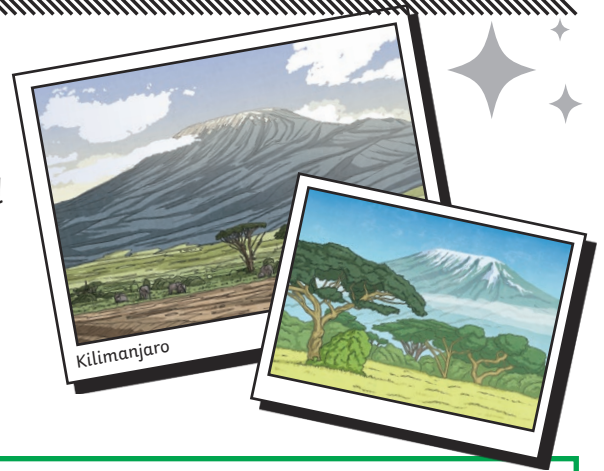
**Pupils' own responses, such as: I would love the job of a Sherpa as you could use your experience to teach others. You would also get to meet lots of fellow climbers and spend your time climbing.**

9. Which mountain would you like to climb? Explain your answer.

**Pupils' own responses, such as: I would love to climb Mount Elbrus because a cable car would take you halfway and I would like to view its twisted shape.**

# The World's Tallest Mountains

There has been much debate as to which mountains in the world should be known as the tallest. Several of these mountains have been listed in a unique group called the Seven Summits. Each one is located on a different continent of the world and added to the list based on their elevation. Many explorers strive to ascend these mountains, embarking on a venture known as the Seven Summits Challenge.



## Kilimanjaro (Africa)

Kilimanjaro is considered by many to be the largest free-standing mountain in the world. It comprises of three cone-like volcanic formations called Shira, Mawenzi and Kibo, making this a stratovolcano (a volcano with a steep, cone shape, consisting of hardened layers of ash, lava and rock).

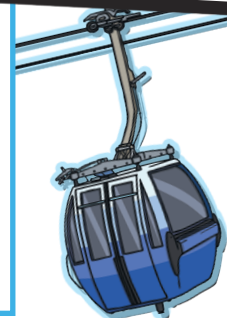
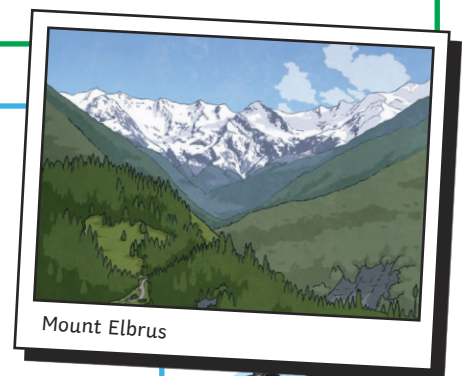
While Shira and Mawenzi are extinct volcanoes, Kibo is dormant and is the highest peak of the cones with a summit (the highest point of something, especially the top of a mountain) of 5895 metres.

Considered to be a relatively easy climb, Kilimanjaro is a popular choice for climbers of all abilities as little experience and equipment is needed to ascend; the only real problem is altitude sickness (an illness caused by a lack of oxygen because of being high above sea level).

## Mount Elbrus (Europe)

Located in south-western Russia, Mount Elbrus is part of the Caucasus Range (a line or group of mountains or hills). Formed over 2.5 million years ago, ancient people named this mountain 'Strobilus' because of its twisted, pinecone shape. The first explorer to ascend the peak of 5642 metres was Akhia Sottaiev (a Balkarian guide), who led a team of British and Swiss climbers.

This mountain, although high, has the advantage of a cable car which takes climbers to an altitude of around 3658 metres. As a result of glacial temperatures, this mountain is also popular as a hiking and skiing destination.

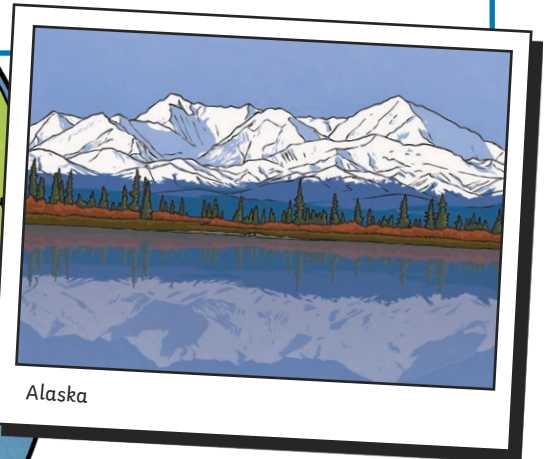


Disclaimer: We hope that you find the information on our website and in our resources useful. As far as possible, the contents of this resource are reflective of current professional research. However, please be aware that borders and capital cities may be disputed and information can quickly become out of date. The information given here is intended for general guidance purposes only and may have to be adapted to meet the needs of your learners.

## The World's Tallest Mountains

### Denali (North America)

Considered by many to be the third-largest mountain in the world, Denali is located in the Alaskan Range. This mountain measures 6194 metres and its name is derived from the Koyukon, Athabascan word - 'The Tall One' or 'The High One'. The first person to conquer this mountain was Koyukon Athabascan, Walter Harper, who reached the summit on 7<sup>th</sup> June 1913. Among the problems facing experienced climbers are: severe weather and sharp vertical climbs. Serious weather conditions and steep climbs make the trek a challenging one.

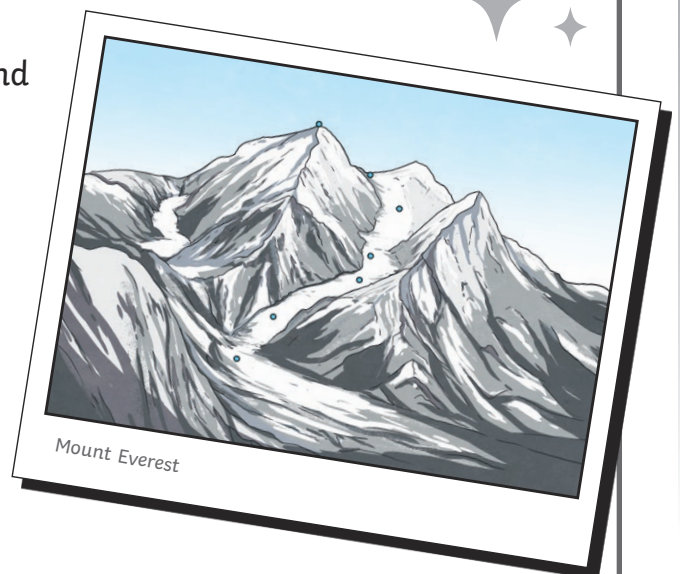


### Mount Everest (Asia)

Mount Everest is probably the most famous mountain of the Seven Summits. Its height is 8850 metres, allowing it to be recognised by many as the highest point on Earth. It is part of the Himalayan mountain range and locals refer to it by its Tibetan name, 'Chomolungma', meaning 'Goddess Mother of the World'.

Although there were many attempts to scale the peak in the 1920s, it was only officially conquered in 1953 by an explorer called Edmund Hillary and his Tibetan Sherpa called Tenzing Norgay. Tenzing was part of a group of local guides known as Sherpas (a member of the Himalayan people who often guide climbers up the mountains).

When climbing Mount Everest, there are many problems that climbers have to face, such as a limited climbing season, low altitude and expensive equipment; resulting in only well-prepared teams making the journey.



## The World's Tallest Mountains

### Mount Vinson (Antarctica)

It is believed that bitter temperatures and its remote location make this a difficult mountain to climb; recent studies show that only about 1200 climbers have attempted it. The name Vinson originates from an American congressman who championed explorers of Antarctica. At an elevation of 4829 metres, this mountain is part of the Sentinel Range and was one of the most recent mountains to be scaled. A group of American explorers, headed by Nicholas Clinch, achieved this glory when they ascended the summit in December 1966.



### Aconcagua (South America)

Being part of the Andes mountain chain, Aconcagua can be found in Argentina and comprises a connected northern and southern ridge. This impressive mountain, with volcanic origins, is second in height to Mount Everest. Standing at around 6962 metres, it has the potential for high winds and frequent storms and its high altitude can make any attempt to climb it a problematic one.



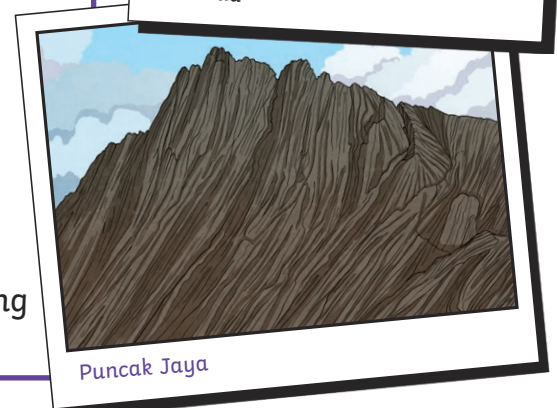
### Mount Kosciuszko (Australia)

### Carstenz Pyramid (Oceania)

These two mountains are often both climbed as part of the Seven Summits Challenge as some experts are unsure over which land mass makes up the continent of Oceania.

Mount Kosciuszko is found in New South Wales, Australia, and reaches a peak of 2228 metres. It was first climbed by Paul Strzelecki in 1840.

Experts believe that Carstenz Pyramid or Puncak Jaya (in the Sudirman Range) is one of the most difficult mountains to attempt due to its challenging terrain and its peak standing at 4884 metres.



# Questions

1. Which mountain is found in a remote location? Tick one.

- Mount Elbrus  
 Aconcagua  
 Mount Vinson  
 Kilimanjaro

2. Draw **four** lines and match each mountain to its height.

Mount Everest	6194 metres
Mount Elbrus	8850 metres
Denali	5642 metres
Kilimanjaro	5895 metres

3. Which **two** mountains are found in the land mass of Oceania?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_

4. Look at the section called **Mount Everest**.

Write a synonym for **conquered**.

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Fill in the missing words.

It is believed that bitter \_\_\_\_\_ and its remote \_\_\_\_\_  
 make this a difficult mountain to climb; recent studies show that only about 1200  
 climbers have attempted it.

6. Summarise what you have learnt about the Seven Summits in 25 words or fewer.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

7. Which mountain do you think would be the most challenging to climb?

Explain your answer.

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8. Compare Kilimanjaro with Mount Everest. Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

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9. Which mountain would you like to visit? Explain your answer.

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10. Tick one box in each row to show whether each statement is **true** or **false**.

	True	False
Mount Elbrus was formed over four million years ago.		
Carstensen Pyramid is part of the Sudirman Range.		
Skiing and hiking are popular on Denali.		
Kilimanjaro is a popular choice for climbers of all abilities.		
Chomolungma means 'freedom'.		

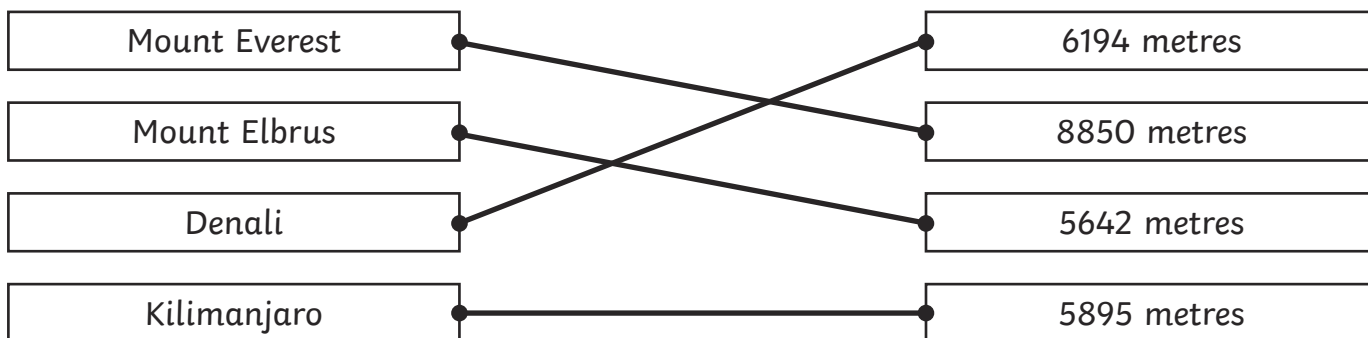


# Answers

1. Which mountain is found in a remote location? Tick one.

- Mount Elbrus  
 Aconcagua  
 **Mount Vinson**  
 Kilimanjaro

2. Draw **four** lines and match each mountain to its height



3. Which **two** mountains are found in the land mass of Oceania?

- Mount Kosciuszko**
- Carstensch Pyramid**

4. Look at the section called **Mount Everest**.

Write a synonym for **conquered**.

**Accept any correct synonym, such as: defeat; triumph; beat.**

5. Fill in the missing words.

It is believed that bitter **temperatures** and its remote **location** make this a difficult mountain to climb; recent studies show that only about 1200 climbers have attempted it.

6. Summarise what you have learnt about the Seven Summits in 25 words or fewer.

**Pupils' own responses, such as: The Seven Summits is a challenge that involves experienced climbers scaling all of the highest mountains across the world.**

7. Which mountain do you think would be the most challenging to climb?

Explain your answer.

**Pupils' own responses, such as: I think Mount Vinson would be the most challenging because it is so remote and the weather can be unpredictable.**

8. Compare Kilimanjaro with Mount Everest. Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

**Pupils' own responses, such as: Kilimanjaro is believed to be an easier climb whereas Mount Everest needs experienced climbers and specialist equipment. Kilimanjaro is a stratovolcano and Mount Everest is not. They both have local names which relate to the mountain.**

9. Which mountain would you like to visit? Explain your answer.

**Pupils' own responses, such as: I would visit Mount Elbrus because it has a cable car and you can do other activities, such as skiing. I would like to see the shape of the mountain as the twisted cone sounds interesting.**

10. Tick one box in each row to show whether each statement is **true** or **false**.

	True	False
Mount Elbrus was formed over four million years ago.		✓
Carstensz Pyramid is part of the Sudirman Range.	✓	
Skiing and hiking are popular on Denali.		✓
Kilimanjaro is a popular choice for climbers of all abilities.	✓	
Chomolungma means 'freedom'.		✓

**Award 2 marks for all five correct.**

**Award 1 mark for four correct.**