

< INTRODUCTION >

At 11.30 in the morning on 29th May 1953, a beekeeper and a former yak herder took a final few weary steps on to a snowy dome.

Exhausted and breathing hard, they could go no further – there was nowhere further to go. It was then that Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay realised they had done it. They had climbed on to the roof of the world. Satisfied – and perhaps a little surprised – the pair gazed down on the earth below from a height at which no person had stood before.

The sun shone in the piercing blue sky and a gentle breeze was blowing. The gods of Mount Everest were smiling on them. Their incredible success had come after months of painstaking preparation, years of training and a lifetime of ambition and dreaming. Along the way they had battled perilous physical conditions, illness and intense fear.

This book tells their story – the story of two unlikely heroes from humble backgrounds whose grit, determination and modesty captured the hearts and imaginations of the world; two ordinary men who battled against the odds to be the first to achieve an extraordinary feat. But as brave, resourceful and determined as they were, success, when it came, did not belong just to Hillary and Tenzing.

This was a hard-won victory built on the experience, knowledge and efforts of hundreds of people from around the world.

< *This is their story too.* >



1. Read the first paragraph. How did Hillary and Norgay know that they had reached the top of Everest?
2. Read the first paragraph. How does the author tell us that Hillary and Norgay were the first people to have reached the top of the world's highest mountain?
3. Read the second paragraph. How does the author tell us that they had got lucky with the weather conditions on the mountain?
4. In the third paragraph, it says that Hillary and Norgay were 'unlikely heroes'. Read the introductory sentence at the beginning of the text. Why were they unlikely heroes?
5. Read the fourth paragraph. How do you think the experience knowledge and efforts of other people helped Hillary and Norgay with their achievement?