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Survey shows Mt. Everest has shrunk

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10 October, 2005

THE ARTICLE

Survey shows Mt. Everest has shrunk

BNE: The world's highest mountain has just been discovered to be nearly four meters shorter than previously thought. According to the latest survey, carried out by teams from the Chinese Academy of Sciences and China's State Bureau of Surveying and Mapping (SBSM), Mount Everest stands precisely 8844.43 meters above sea level. This is 3.7 meters lower than its previous measurement of 8,848 meters, which was taken in 1975. The SBSM's Director General Chen Bangzhu stated that the accuracy of the measurement was 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.

Mount Everest is known in China as Mt. Qomolangma, the Tibetan name given to the peak and the surrounding area. Mr. Chen said the region was a place where the earth's crust is constantly moving, which may explain the decrease in the mountain's height. He explained that the latest survey accounted for the thickness of the ice to get a reading of the actual height of the rock surface. While the latest measurement utilized state-of-the-art equipment, the reading taken 30 years ago entailed thrusting a steel rod into the ice to calculate its depth. It is uncertain whether the new data will gain acceptance from other countries. A similar survey by American scientists in 1999 ascertained the peak to be a height of 8,850 meters, five and a half meters higher than the Chinese calculation.

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. What did you find out 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 in the foothills.
  d. Spend a two-week vacation at a base 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 / state-of-the-art equipment / American scientists

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, give or take 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.	Everest was measured in 1975 by sticking a steel rod into the ice.	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.	mountain	outer layer
b.	thought	preciseness
c.	precisely	established
d.	accuracy	conducting
e.	carrying out	believed
f.	crust	measurement
g.	reading	required
h.	state-of-the-art	peak
i.	entailed	cutting edge
j.	ascertained	exactly

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

a.	four meters shorter	carried out by teams from…
b.	the latest survey,	decrease in the mountain's height
c.	Mount Everest stands	crust is constantly moving
d.	within a range of	acceptance from other countries
e.	used the latest technology in	plus or minus 21 centimeters
f.	a place where the earth's	precisely 8844.43 meters
g.	which may explain the	for the thickness of the ice
h.	the latest survey accounted	than previously thought
i.	the latest measurement utilized	carrying out its survey
j.	uncertain whether the new data will gain	state-of-the-art equipment

WHILE READING / LISTENING

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

Survey shows Mt. Everest has shrunk

BNE: The world's highest mountain has <u>been just to be discovered</u> nearly four meters <u>thought shorter previously than</u>. According to the latest survey, carried out by teams from the Chinese Academy of Sciences and China's State Bureau of Surveying and Mapping (SBSM), Mount Everest <u>precisely 8844.43 meters stands above</u> sea level. This is 3.6 meters lower than its previous measurement of 8,848 meters, which was taken in 1975. The SBSM's Director General Chen Bangzhu stated that the accuracy of the measurement was <u>of a plus range or within minus</u> 21 centimeters. His team used the latest technology <u>survey out in its carrying</u>, including GPS (Global Positioning System) satellite equipment.

Mount Everest is known in China as Mt. Qomolangma, the Tibetan name given to <u>the area and surrounding the peak</u>. Mr. Chen said the region was a place where the <u>moving crust is earth's constantly</u>, which may explain the decrease in the mountain's height. He explained that the <u>thickness for the survey accounted latest</u> of the ice to get a reading of the actual height of the rock surface. While the latest measurement utilized state-of-the-art equipment, the reading taken 30 years ago <u>thrusting steel entailed a rod</u> into the ice to calculate its depth. It is uncertain whether the <u>gain acceptance data will new</u> from other countries. A similar survey by American scientists in 1999 <u>peak to be the ascertained</u> a height of 8,850 meters, five and a half meters higher than the Chinese calculation.

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:

- just
- latest
- precisely
- 1975
- plus
- GPS

- Qomolangma
- crust
- accounted
- state-of-the-art
- gain
- ascertained

DISCUSSION

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

a. What were your initial thoughts on 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 spring to mind when you think of Mount Everest?
g. Why do you think the Chinese and American teams differ in their measurements 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: The world's highest mountain has just been discovered ___ ___ _____ four meters shorter than previously thought. According to the latest survey, _____ ____ ___ teams from the Chinese Academy of Sciences and China's State Bureau of Surveying and Mapping (SBSM), Mount Everest stands _____ 8844.43 meters above sea level. This is 3.7 meters lower than its previous measurement of 8,848 meters, which was _____ ___ 1975. The SBSM's Director General Chen Bangzhu stated that the _____ of the measurement was within __ _____ ___ plus or minus 21 centimeters. His team used the latest technology in carrying out its survey, including GPS (Global Positioning System) satellite equipment.

Mount Everest is known in China as Mt. Qomolangma, the Tibetan name given to the _____ and the surrounding area. Mr. Chen said the region was a place where the earth's _____ is constantly moving, which may explain the decrease in the mountain's height. He explained that the latest survey _____ _____ the thickness of the ice to get a reading of the actual height of the rock _____. While the latest measurement _____ state-of-the-art equipment, the reading taken 30 years ago _____ thrusting a steel rod into the ice to calculate its depth. It is uncertain whether the new data will _____ acceptance from other countries. A similar survey by American scientists in 1999 _____ the peak to be a height of 8,850 meters, five and a half meters higher than the Chinese calculation.

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. T   h. T

SYNONYM MATCH:

a.	mountain	peak
b.	thought	believed
c.	precisely	exactly
d.	accuracy	preciseness
e.	carrying out	conducting
f.	crust	outer layer
g.	reading	measurement
h.	state-of-the-art	cutting edge
i.	entailed	required
j.	ascertained	established

PHRASE MATCH:

a.	four meters shorter	than previously thought
b.	the latest survey,	carried out by teams from…
c.	Mount Everest stands	precisely 8844.43 meters
d.	within a range of	plus or minus 21 centimeters
e.	used the latest technology in	carrying out its survey
f.	a place where the earth's	crust is constantly moving
g.	which may explain the	decrease in the mountain's height
h.	the latest survey accounted	for the thickness of the ice
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WORD ORDER:

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