



# Picture News

Advanced

1<sup>st</sup> February 2021

What's going on this week?



Stefanos Nikolovianis

A team of climbers from Nepal have become the first ever to summit the world's second highest mountain, K2, in winter.

The 10 climbers reached the summit of Pakistan's K2, more than 20 years after the first winter attempt to reach the 8611m summit. K2 is considered incredibly difficult to climb due to the high winds and sub-zero temperatures. On their final day of climbing, it took the climbers 16 hours to reach the summit. Shortly after reaching the summit, one of the climbers, Mr Purja posted the message, *'The impossible is made possible! K2 Winter – history made for mankind; history made for Nepal. A very special moment. The whole team waited 10m below the summit to form a group then stepped on to the summit together whilst singing our Nepalese National Anthem.'*

This week's news story: [www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-55684149](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-55684149)

This week's useful video: [www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/world-asia-55710125](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/world-asia-55710125)



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## Main question:

### Why do people choose to climb mountains?

#### Listen, think, share

- Read through this week's story and share your thoughts about the K2 climbers' recent achievement. Talk about some of the reasons why the climbers may have chosen to attempt the climb. What do you think may have been some of the hardest challenges that they faced along the way?
- What mountains are you aware of that people climb? These can be in the UK or internationally. Have you or anyone you know climbed a mountain? Where was it and how did you or they find it?
- Climbing K2 is incredibly dangerous, with many people having lost their lives attempting to summit. It has often been referred to as the *Savage Mountain*, following US mountaineer George Bell's attempt in 1953, 'It is a savage mountain that tries to kill you.' Why do you think people choose to risk their lives for challenges like this?
- Mountains are a common goal and challenge for many people, and the term 'climbing mountains' is a common analogy for achieving great things. Why do you think they have garnered such prestige in modern times and what do you think is the appeal?
- One of the climbers, Nirmal Purja, said of the exhibition, 'We are proud to have been a part of history for humankind and to show that collaboration, teamwork and a positive mental attitude can push limits to what we feel might be possible.' What do you think he meant by this and do you agree?
- Posted on his most recent blog, Purja added, 'K2 winter was a beast of a challenge. I firmly believe that a feat of such calibre is never possible if you don't have a purpose or if it is only aimed for your own self glory.' Discuss what you think he meant by this.
- Many of the climbers on the K2 expedition have spoken out to declare that they didn't use supplementary oxygen to support their climb (as often is the case in exceptionally high altitudes). Polish climber, Adam Bielecki, suggested that, "Oxygen climbing the 8,000'ers is like doing the Tour de France on an electric bike." (The 8000'ers refers to the 14 mountains whose heights exceeds 8,000m). Do you think that additional support such as using oxygen to support the climb undermines the achievement in some way? Or do you think the fact that the climbers achieved such a difficult feat is what the attention should focus on? Journalist and explorer Ash Routen said, 'Without its occurrence in winter, and by an all-Nepali team, there was nothing particularly interesting about last weekend's ascent. The point was simply to get their first. Oxygen or not. Fixed ropes or not. Suggesting otherwise is an irrelevant point.' Do you agree?

## Further questions for discussion

- Share the hardest challenge you have faced. Was it physical or psychological? Think about what made it so hard. How did you feel afterwards?
- Which do you think are harder, physical challenges or psychological ones?