



Listen!

# Mounting the Insurmountable Mounts

**R: Ray      B: Benjamin**

## Let's Think!

1. What benefits do you think people may get from hiking?
2. What difficult things do you want to do to challenge yourself?

## More to Take Away

Rebecca Lee Lok-Sze is the first Hongkonger who has completed all the Three Poles (North Pole, South Pole and Mount Everest). Alongside her own scientific research in and about the poles, she has devoted a great deal of time to training a new generation of researchers in the field.

**R:** Welcome, Ben. Thanks for accepting my invitation. I'm not sure about our students, but I really want to know more about how you have become such a great adventurer.

5 **B:** Thanks for inviting me, Ray. And thanks for the kind words. Do ask me anything you'd like to know.

**R:** We all know you are the youngest Hongkonger who has succeeded in climbing to the top of Mount Everest. We also know how difficult conquering the world's highest mountain must have been. Just think about the large number of people who have, so woefully, lost their lives below the summit over the years. What we don't know is how you prepared yourself for this task. Can you tell us a little more about it?

15 **B:** Sure. I spent most of my time gaining the kind of knowledge and experience that would enable me to cope with unexpected situations outdoors. This means practising daily on Lion Rock, Beacon Hill and other trails, with a 20 kg pack on my back every time.

20 **R:** That sounds tough! Now I know why you are so muscular. What, may I ask, first awoke your interest?

25 **B:** I became interested in hiking at the age of thirteen. On my first hike, I injured one of my arms seriously after jumping off a waterfall, and my arm had seventeen stitches. Strangely, I wasn't even afraid the entire time. Instead, from that I felt more deeply my passion for hiking. I wanted very badly to live the life of an  
30 adventurer—a life full of explorations. I kept searching for the next trail, and went for it as soon as I found one.



**R:** It's rare to know so early in life what kind of person you want to become. So, what are your further plans for the future?

35 **B:** To complete the Explorers Grand Slam, which involves reaching both the North and South Pole, and reaching each continent's highest point, that is, the Seven Summits.

**R:** Wow! Is there a reason why you aim so high?

40 **B:** Marin Minamiya, a Japanese adventurer, is the reason. She has sustained me spiritually with her experience and encouragement. She has also given me the most professional advice. For me, she is someone to look up to: the youngest person who has completed the feat. I envisaged her climbing next to me, looking so determined and hopeful, as I was climbing up Mount Kilimanjaro and Mount Aconcagua, the tallest in Africa and South America respectively.  
45 Ascending Mount Everest was an uphill battle with the body and the mind, but once I reached the top, I knew all the hard work had been worthwhile—I was so touched. I thought to myself, 'I will never stop pursuing my dreams!'

**R:** It is very heartwarming! Thanks for sharing your story with us, Ben. It will surely be the highlight of our next magazine issue!

~480 words

### Looking into Grammar

Uncountable nouns are things that cannot be quantified but are seen as a whole (*advice, milk, rain, furniture, homework*). They are used neither with the articles 'a' or 'an', nor in plural. As subjects, they take a singular verb.

✓ **Snow** (✗ Snows / A snow) **has** (✗ have) been falling all day.

? Circle TWO uncountable nouns in Ben's second response.

## Part A Multiple Choice Questions

Answer the following questions based on the information provided in the interview. Choose the best answer by blackening the appropriate circle.

1. Ray is \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. a young man who admires hikers
- B. a hiker who wants to complete the Explorers Grand Slam
- C. an editor of an international magazine
- D. a reporter of a school magazine

2. Which of the following may NOT be one of Benjamin's regular training sites?

- A. Lion Rock
- B. Sha Tin Pass Road
- C. Mount Everest
- D. Beacon Hill

**2** Pay attention to the geographic positions of these mountains.

3. Ray thinks there is a link between Benjamin's \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. body shape...his training
- B. success...his age
- C. passion for hiking...Marin
- D. experience...his family

4. What had happened on Benjamin's first hike made him \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. permanently injured
- B. begin to have mixed feelings about hiking
- C. more interested in adventures
- D. an immature adventurer



5. Which of the following adjectives best describe Benjamin?

- I. aimless
- II. determined
- III. courageous
- IV. trustworthy

- A. I and II
- B. I and III
- C. II and III
- D. II, III and IV



6. Which of the following is the best alternative title for this interview?

- A. Green Hiking
- B. A Young Man in Love with Mountains
- C. Climb Safely before Embracing Our Nature
- D. The World's Highest Mountains

**6** Think about which of these best fits with what Benjamin says of himself.

### Self-evaluation Checklist (✓/✗)

- |  |                          |
|--|--------------------------|
| 1. I understood most of the information provided in the passage.                         | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. I guessed the meaning of unknown words or phrases correctly.                          | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. I managed to answer questions by drawing inferences.                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. I identified and understood the writer's / characters' feelings.                      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. I could identify and summarise the main idea of the passage.                          | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. The two reading strategies taught in this module enabled me to read more effectively. | <input type="checkbox"/> |

## Part B Pre-HKDSE Questions

Answer the following questions based on the information provided in the interview.  
For question 2, answer in a complete sentence.



1. What did Benjamin NOT do to prepare himself for a challenging hike?

- A. spend a lot of time on physical training
- B. spend time learning about hiking
- C. practise swimming by jumping off waterfalls
- D. talk to other adventurers for professional advice

1 Notice which action is not intended for the preparation of a challenging hike.

2. Why did Benjamin practise every day before climbing Mount Everest?

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3. Look for words in the interview to match the definitions below.

- (i) \_\_\_\_\_ (lines 1-14) (*adv.*) in a very sad way
- (ii) \_\_\_\_\_ (lines 15-32) (*n.*) pieces of threads used to sew the edges of a wound
- (iii) \_\_\_\_\_ (lines 33-49) (*adj.*) needing great effort



4. Which of the following are TRUE about Marin Minamiya?

- I. She and Benjamin know each other.
- II. She has completed the Explorers Grand Slam.
- III. She is a better adventurer than Benjamin.
- IV. Her job is to offer professional advice to adventurers.

- A. II and III
- B. I and II
- C. III and IV
- D. I, III and IV

4 Pay special attention to the meaning of the word 'feat'.

5. In each statement, there MAY be a wrong word. If there is one, underline it and write a word that expresses the correct idea in the right-hand column. If not, put a tick (✓).

- (i) Benjamin is the oldest man in Hong Kong to have climbed to Mount Everest's top. youngest
- (ii) He fell in love with hiking despite his injury on his fifth hike. \_\_\_\_\_
- (iii) Now, he is exploring different mountains around the world. \_\_\_\_\_
- (iv) His last goal is to complete the Explorers Grand Slam. \_\_\_\_\_
- (v) He was inspired to do so by Marin, an adventurer from Africa. \_\_\_\_\_

## Part C Vocabulary Bank

Label the photos below with the names of the Seven Natural Wonders of the World from the word box.

Great Barrier Reef

Paricutin Volcano

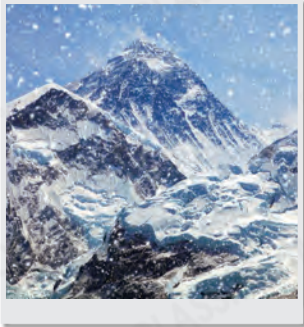
The Harbour of Rio de Janeiro

Grand Canyon

Mount Everest

the aurora borealis

Victoria Falls

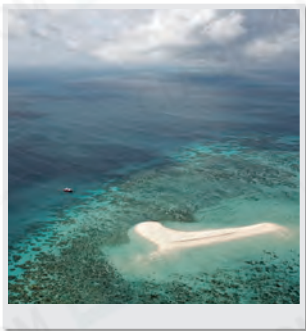


1. \_\_\_\_\_

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

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_



5. \_\_\_\_\_

6. \_\_\_\_\_


7. \_\_\_\_\_

### Let's Discuss!

1. Do you want to complete the Explorers Grand Slam challenge? Why or why not?
2. Do you think it is good to be like Benjamin, spending your youth to realise your dreams?

## Part D Cloze Passage

Complete the e-mail below with the appropriate nouns introduced on the previous page.

To	emily_lovelylikealily@mail.com	<b>Reminder</b>  A proper noun may consist of more than one word. Remember to capitalise every first letter in it.
From	markthemarvellous@mail.com	
Subject	Our next trip	

Dear Emily,

I hope your life in New York is going great. I read an article about the Seven Natural Wonders in a magazine today, and I thought we could visit some of them when we go on a vacation.

Have you visited (1) \_\_\_\_\_ before? I was stunned when I saw the pictures of those countless deep gorges. They were simply breathtaking. Perhaps we should plan a visit there soon. If they do not interest you, we could go to (2) \_\_\_\_\_, the most magnificent waterfall in the world. I bet it would be a thrilling experience if we try bungee jumping there! Oh, speaking of water activities, scuba diving in the (3) \_\_\_\_\_ would also be fun, considering that we are big fans of water sports! The mesmerising coral reefs are not to be missed!

If you want to do something less adventurous, I'd recommend seeing (4) \_\_\_\_\_ underneath the stars. We will be absorbed in nature's magic if we can witness the coloured night sky with our own eyes. Alternatively, we could enjoy the views of the (5) \_\_\_\_\_ from Sugarloaf Mountain nearby, and admire the imposing statue of Jesus Christ, which is named 'Christ the Redeemer', there.

I don't think we could climb (6) \_\_\_\_\_ any time soon, though. It's too challenging for amateur mountaineers like us, so climbing it may mean risking our lives! Instead, we could try (7) \_\_\_\_\_ in Mexico. It would be a trip to the past to see the ruins left by the volcanic eruption that happened nearly 80 years ago.

I can't wait to see you soon! Please write back to plan our trip.

Best wishes,  
Mark