

Penguin Random House

TEACHERS' RESOURCE KIT

First to the Top: Sir Edmund Hillary's Amazing Everest Adventure

**By David Hill,
illustrated by Phoebe Morris**

Up on the world's highest mountain, the sky is tinged the black colour of space and the air is almost too thin to breathe.

How did Edmund Hillary, a small, shy boy from the tiny town of Tuakau in New Zealand become the world's most famous mountaineer and adventurer? How did he climb Everest, and do so many other astonishing things?

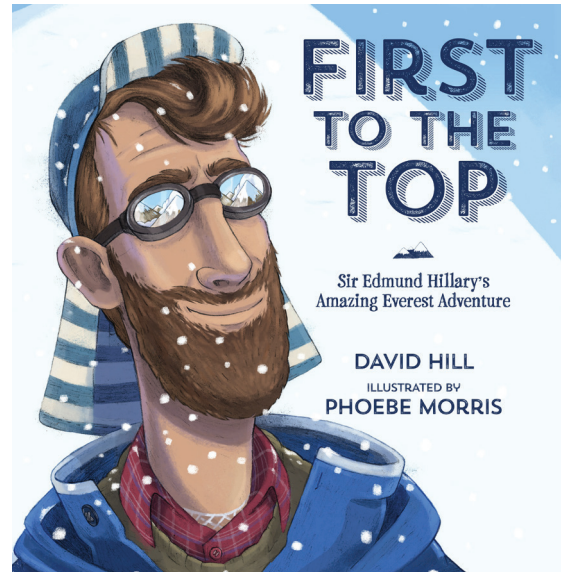
RESOURCE KIT CONTAINS:

- Before Reading
- Themes
- Comprehension Questions
- Language and Style
- Illustrations
- Research and Creative Responses

Price (GST inclusive) and author details are correct at the time of writing but are subject to change without notice.
Visit www.randomhouse.co.nz for up-to-date information.

SPECIFICATIONS:

Classifications: Children's Book
Publication: August 2015
ISBN: 9780143506874
RRP: \$25.00
Format: Hardback
Extent: 32 pages
Readership: 5+



The Author:

David Hill spent most of his childhood and teenage years in Napier. He studied at Victoria University of Wellington and became a high school teacher, teaching in both New Zealand and the UK. He became a full-time writer in 1982 and is one of New Zealand's most highly regarded authors for children and young people. David's books have been published internationally and his short stories and plays for young people have been broadcast here and overseas.

David was made a Member of the New Zealand Order of Merit in 2004. Most recently *My Brother's War* (2012) won the Junior Fiction and the Children's Choice Junior Fiction awards in the 2013 New Zealand Post Book Awards for Children and Young Adults.

The Illustrator:

Phoebe Morris always dreamed of becoming a zoo-keeper and working with animals. However, persistent allergies meant that she ended up drawing them instead. Phoebe now spends her time drawing a range of things – either on paper, or on her custom PC named the 'Millennium Falcon'. Without Wellington's endless coffee supply, it is unlikely the illustrations for this book would ever have been completed!



Before Reading

1. Before reading the book, look at the cover image and title. What do you think the book might be about?
2. Brainstorm and discuss as a class any facts and events you already know relating to Sir Edmund Hillary and Mount Everest.
3. What genre do you think this book belongs to? Why do you think this?

Themes

There are several themes in this exceptional picture book, which tells the story of Sir Edmund Hillary and his climb to the top of Mount Everest.

Themes of courage, skill and determination in the face of adversity are all explored – in his effort to reach the summit of the tallest mountain in the world, Edmund Hillary displays each of these qualities.

Heroics, friendship, teamwork and loyalty are also important themes. After Tenzing Norgay saves Edmund Hillary's life, the two men face the challenge of climbing Mount Everest together with full confidence in each other.

Two further themes are those of remaining humble and 'giving back' after attaining success and recognition. When the Queen of England bestows a knighthood on the mountaineer and adventurer in recognition of his achievement, Sir Edmund Hillary jokingly reminds his friends that he's still just a beekeeper. In later years he also demonstrates his love and loyalty to Nepal and its people by returning to build schools and hospitals.

Comprehension Questions

1. What clues from Edmund Hillary's early life might indicate that he was to become a famous mountaineer and adventurer (pp. 3–5)?
2. Before Mount Everest was conquered what were the obstacles and challenges the two expeditions encountered (pp. 6–9)?
3. Who saved Edmund Hillary's life? How did his rescuer achieve this and how did this event affect their relationship (pp. 10–11)?
4. What stopped the British climbers who were initially chosen to climb Mount Everest from

reaching the summit (p. 12)?

5. How did Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay stop their tent from blowing away at Camp Nine (p. 15)?
6. Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay roped themselves together for the final ascent (p. 16). Why do you think they did this?
7. Describe what Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay did when they reached the summit of Mount Everest (p. 23).
8. What was Sir Edmund Hillary's response to being knighted (p. 26)? What does this tell you about his personality and character?
9. How did Sir Edmund Hillary help the people of Nepal when he went back to the Himalayas (p. 29)?

Language and Style

1. Question marks, speech marks, ellipses, full stops and commas are all types of punctuation found in the book. Find an example of each from the book and explain their grammatical purpose.
2. Find the adjectives that are used to describe Edmund Hillary as a boy and a young man (p. 4). Think of four adjectives to describe yourself.
3. Throughout the book the author has used different font sizes for certain words or phrases, such as 'every step was a huge effort' (p. 16). Why has he done this? What do they help tell the reader about the text or action? Have they been used effectively? Find some more examples of this technique in the book.
4. Some of the text has been set out on the pages almost as if it is part of a concrete poem (pp. 10, 12, 19, 21, 24). Research what a concrete poem is. Write a concrete poem inspired by an interesting subject from the book; for example, glaciers or bee-keeping.
5. There are many language features in the book; for example, metaphors, idioms, personification, alliteration and onomatopoeia. Find the definition for each and then match each definition with one of the examples below.
 - a. 'Ed held his breath' (p. 12)
 - b. 'scraped sleeping places on the steep slope' (p. 15)
 - c. 'hiss of oxygen' (p. 18)
 - d. 'moan of wind' (p. 18)
 - e. 'the roof of the world' (p. 23)

6. When describing Edmund Hillary's expedition the author uses a lot of verbs; for example, 'crossed', 'plodded', 'cut' and 'carried' (pp. 8–9). What effect do they have on the pace of the narrative?
7. The author makes use of ellipses (pp. 19, 21) and short sentences (p. 21). What effect do these language features have on the tone of the book and the reader's emotions or reactions?
8. Think about the writing style and the genre of the book. Discuss as a class whether you believe the author has successfully managed to blend facts and an exciting story? If so, find examples from the book.
9. The narrative of the book is in the third person. Why do you think the author chose to do this? Choose a passage about one of the main events of the book. Re-write the passage as a first person narrative, as a monologue, diary entry or a letter written by a person featured in the book to a loved one, for example, Edmund Hillary writing to his parents or Tenzing Norgay to his daughter. Present your monologue or read your diary entry or letter aloud to your class.

Illustrations

1. Examine the illustrations by Phoebe Morris. Do you like the style? Why or why not? What colours are used? What kinds of lines and textures are used? Design your own illustrations for the cover and/or one page of text.
2. Study the illustrations on the first pages of the story (pp. 3–4). How do illustrations let the reader know the geographical locations and the era in which the book is set?
3. Do the illustrations give you any information that is extra to the text? Give examples of details you have learnt from the illustrations.
4. In pairs, each choose an illustration from the book and write a description of it. Read your written description to your partner and each draw a picture based on your partner's descriptions; for example, the picture of the mountaineers looking for a way to the top of Mount Everest (p. 7). How do your drawings compare with the drawings in the book? Are they composed in a similar way? Are they as detailed?
5. Choose your favourite moment from the book and create your own illustration or artistic interpretation of it; for example, a diorama, painting, model, poem, cartoon strip, movie storyboard, video, etc. Write a brief artist's statement to accompany your interpretation.
6. Look at the illustration of the face in the snow (pp. 18–19). Why do you think Phoebe Morris chose to depict this? Do you think this illustration helps support and further explain the text? Why or why not?
7. The book is based on real people. Find a photograph of Sir Edmund Hillary and compare this image with the illustrations from the book. Then choose a photograph of another notable person, or of yourself, and create an illustration of that person.

Research and Creative Responses

1. Edmund Hillary 'felt thrilled to be near the world's highest peak' (p. 6). Write a descriptive paragraph or a poem about a time you have felt thrilled. Illustrate your work.
2. The author describes the journey that the expedition party undertook (pp. 8–9). Think of a journey you have made; for example, how you get to school every day. Write a description of this journey. Think about the language you could use to make it exciting; for example, verbs, adverbs and adjectives.
3. In the book several facts are included, such as the height of the camps on Mount Everest (p. 12) and the height of the black wall of ice that Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay ascended (p. 19). In groups, find the heights of five famous man-made structures, such as the Eiffel Tower in Paris or the Burj Khalifa in Dubai, to see how they compare with the heights mentioned in the book.
4. Complete one of the following tasks inspired by the book:
 - Many place names are mentioned in the book; for example, New Plymouth, France and the Pacific region (p. 5). In pairs, list all the place names found in the book. Next race each other to see how quickly you can locate them on a map of the world.
 - Mount Everest is located in Nepal. Find Nepal on a map of the world. Research and then create an entry for a travel book about Nepal as it is today. Include information such as population size, geography, history, things of interest,

- weather, religions, the 2015 earthquake, etc. Research and compare these details with how Nepal would have been in 1953.
- Find and research an interesting figure, natural phenomenon and/or event mentioned in the book, such as Sherpa Tenzing Norgay (p. 10), glaciers (p. 6) or the knighthood ceremony (p. 26). Present your findings in a PowerPoint presentation or poster.
 - Edmund Hillary loved to go tramping and mountain climbing (p. 4). He also taught Nepalese people how to play rugby (p. 29) and worked as a bee-keeper (p. 8). Create a manual, rule book or instructional pamphlet to help explain to a novice the key points and essential information about one of these topics.
 - Choose another of Edmund Hillary's adventures that are mentioned in the book, such as crossing Antarctica on tractors (p. 29). Use it as inspiration for a short non-fiction piece of writing. Write, illustrate, bind and publish your own children's picture book of your account. Read your book aloud to a younger class.
 - Sir Edmund Hillary features on the New Zealand five-dollar note (p. 31). Imagine you have been given the task to design a new five-dollar note featuring another notable person of your choice. Create your new note design and then write a one-page essay, to accompany your design, on your notable person and why you chose them.
 - Look at the illustrated timeline of Sir Edmund Hillary's life (pp. 32–33). Either create an illustrated timeline of your own life and achievements, or choose one of the events from Sir Edmund Hillary's timeline on which to write an article for a social media website or your local newspaper in a current journalistic style. Think about the type of language, sentence and paragraph structure, headings and so on, that you would use. Research and list the main stylistic differences between today's style of journalism and that of the era in which your chosen event took place.
 - The book describes the objects Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay leave on the summit of Mount Everest (p. 24). Write and illustrate a list of what you would have taken, and your reasons for choosing them.
 - The illustration of the night spent at Camp Nine features four objects that symbolise aspects of Edmund Hillary's life (pp. 14–15). Choose four objects to draw that have symbolic meaning from your life. Write a short explanation about what they symbolise and why you chose them.
 - When Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay reach 400 metres below the summit the air was thin and 'every step was a huge effort' (p. 16). Research why exercise takes more effort at a high altitude. Present your scientific findings in PowerPoint to your class.
5. After reading the book, choose and discuss your favourite moment or page. List five reasons for your choice.
 6. In pairs, list what you feel are the main points of the book. Compare these with your other classmates. Do you agree or disagree with their choices? Why or why not? Next, write a short plot summary based on your choices.
 7. In groups, imagine you are film producers attempting to gain financial backing to turn *First to the Top* into a feature film. Write up your proposal and include one or two scenes from the book in film script form, your choices for the soundtrack, casting, location, costumes, etc. Also, design advertising posters for the movie.
 8. Review the book for your favourite magazine or website. What did you like about the book? Why? What did you dislike about the book? Why? Give it a rating, such as stars or a number out of ten. Consider the following questions when writing your review:
 - How did the story make you feel as it unfolded?
 - What ideas in the book did you find interesting?
 - Was there anything about it that you disliked, or found boring?
 - Do you think this is a significant book? Explain why you think this book is or is not important for today's readers.
 9. Davis Hill is an award-winning author. Research and write a short biography about him and his other books, such as *My Brother's War* (published in 2012).