MT. EVEREST

Overview and Background to
Within Reach
A Day to Die For
Into Thin Air
In May 1996 the media scrambled to document the gripping story of sixteen-year-old Mark Pfetzer's expedition to Mount Everest. Not only was he the youngest climber ever to attempt the summit, he also witnessed the tragedy documented in Jon Krakauer's Into Thin Air, in which eight climbers perished in a sudden storm. Within Reach is Mark's extraordinary account of this experience and of his triumphs over several other challenging peaks. At once triumphant and tragic, this story is an inspiration to climbers, athletes, and armchair enthusiasts alike.
Mt. Everest

Height: 29,029 feet
Approximately 5.5 miles high
Equivalent of approximately 20 Empire State Buildings
Mt. Everest is located on the border between Nepal and Tibet amid the Himalayan Mountains that extended through South Asia.
Location
Facts about Mt. Everest

- Tallest mountain in the world.
- Number of people to attempt to climb Mt. Everest each year: approximately 800
- Number of people to successfully climb Mt. Everest: 4000+ since 1953
- Number of people who have died trying to climb Mt. Everest: 280+
- Named for: Sir George Everest, a British surveyor-general of India.
- Age: approximately 60 million years old.
- Other names: called "Chomolungma" by Tibetans and Sherpas, which means "Mother Goddess of the Earth."
- Countries visible from the summit: Tibet, India, and Nepal.
- First to climb to summit: Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay on May 29, 1953.
In the autobiographical text *Within Reach* by Mark Pfetzer, a teenager attempts several very dangerous climbs to the summits of the world’s tallest mountains.

Based on your current knowledge, predict some of the risks and dangers he may have faced on his climbs.
Life or Death Choices

In this autobiography, Mark’s second attempt to summit on Mt. Everest occurs during a storm that resulted in the most deaths in two days on Mt. Everest.

Famous mountaineer and expedition leader from another climbing team, Rob Hall, died near the summit during the storm in May of 1996 because he wouldn’t leave one of his teammates/clients behind.

How far would you go to save your friend?

Would you risk your life for your friend?

Could you live with yourself if you left your friend to die?
Listen to this interview by Dr. Ken Kamler, one of the climbers who experienced the 1996 storm and disaster. He was not on Mark Pfetzer’s climbing team; however, in base camp, all climbing teams know each other and work together. Mark Pfetzer, age 16, knew all of the individuals who were killed on Everest during those two days. This interview gives a better understanding of what it was like on the mountain.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bgqc2m7aBzs
Route Map for South Summit Attempt (Most Common)
Everest Base Camp
Khumbu Ice Fall
Camp 1
Camp II
Camp III
Advanced Base Camp
Camp IV
Hillary Step
Summit
1996 Everest Disaster

- Refers to the events of May 10-11, 1996
- Eight people died on Mount Everest during summit attempts
- In the entire season, fifteen people died trying to reach the summit, making it the deadliest single year in Mount Everest's history until 2014 when an avalanche killed 16 Sherpas in the Icefall.
- Then in 2015, 22 climbers were killed in Base Camp when an avalanche hit during an earthquake that ultimately killed almost 9000 people across Nepal.
- The disaster in 1996 gained wide publicity and raised questions about the commercialization of Everest.
Lives Lost

Mark Pfetzer did not summit as anticipated on May 10-11. He knew all of the people who did not survive the storm.

These individuals were from two teams:
- New Zealand Team
- U.S. Team

Three border patrol members also died during the rescue attempts.

Amazingly, Beck Weathers was left for dead on the mountain and stumbled into Camp IV after over one day of being exposed to the elements on the mountain.
New Zealand Team

Lives Lost:

Andrew Harris (Guide)

Doug Hansen (Client)

Rob Hall (Guide)

Yasuko Namba (Client)
U. S. Team

Lives Lost:

Scott Fischer (Guide)
Andrew Harris and Doug Hansen
- Unknown; believed to have fallen during the descent from the summit during the storm

Rob Hall, Yasuko Namba, Scott Fischer, and the three Border Patrol Rescue Agents
- Exposure; extreme cold; lack of oxygen; hypothermia