

Peak Response to Reading Questions

Before Reading:

1. Look at the title, cover-art, and the back of the book. What could it mean that there might be “strings attached?”

Moleskine #1

Chapter 1:

1. How is Peak’s “literary mentor” similar to your Language Arts teacher?
2. Chapter one starts in the middle of the sequence of events. Why would an author choose to do this? What effect does it have on the reader?
3. Is Peak written in first person or third person narration? How can you tell?
4. In your opinion, what is Peak’s attitude towards school?

Chapter 2: The Hook

1. Evaluate Peak’s Hook.
2. Find an example of figurative language on page 4. Write it down and explain what type of figurative language is being used.
3. Which exact words help you figure out the meaning of the word “demoralizing” on page 4?

Chapter 3: A Couple of Stitches and the Slammer

1. Peak “tags” places with a blue mountain picture. Why do you think Peak does this?
2. Peak has a very unique name. Why do you think he is named “Peak?” How does he feel about it? How do you feel about *your* name?
3. When Peak is in the detention center, what does Vincent bring him? Why does Peak need this item?
4. Why does Peak’s mom say, “The city wants to make an example of you”?

Chapter 4: Circling the Drain

1. What kind of expression is “circling the drain?”
2. Describe Peak’s father using the elements of characterization.
3. How does Peak’s lawyer convince the judge to downgrade Peak’s punishment to probation?
4. How long has it been since Peak has seen his father? Why is this?

Chapter 5: The Twins

1. Why is this chapter called “The Twins?” Who are they and what do they mean to Peak?
2. What are some of the unintended consequences caused by Peak’s climbing of the Woolworth building?
3. Why didn’t Peak let Rolf adopt him legally after his mom married Rolf?

Chapter 6: Rock Rats

1. What do you think will happen when Peak leaves the country with his father?
2. What does Peak call himself, and how do you feel about that?
3. What are some of the highlights of Peak’s childhood? Which ones do you think have influenced him the most?

Chapter 7: Bangkok

1. Why does Peak call his father Josh instead of Dad?
2. At first, why did Josh say that Peak needed a physical? What turns out to be the real reason?
3. What do you think of Josh so far? Does it match your predictions from Chapter 4?

Chapter 8: The Summit Hotel

1. Describe acclimatization. Make sure to talk about HAPE and how it is treated.
2. Explain the pun in the second paragraph on page 48. "Women, men, trekkers, mountain climbers, old and young, gathered around Josh like he was a rock star (no pun intended)," (48).
3. Who is Zopa? Add him to your Character Log in your notebook.
4. What is the meaning of the word *auspicious* on page 49? Add it to your vocabulary log.
5. Why do YOU think Zopa agrees to take Peak to base camp?

Chapter 9: Gear of the Dead

1. Who is Sun-Jo? Add him to the Character log.
2. How did Sun-jo's dad die?
3. Why isn't Sun-jo in school?
4. Describe the temple in Kathmandu.

Chapter 10: Tibet

1. Find an example of figurative language on page 65. Add it to your figurative language page in your notebook.
2. Make a bulleted list of at least three things that you've learned about Sun-jo.
3. Why does Zopa make Peak and Sun-jo walk?
4. Describe the conflict between China and Tibet as presented in this chapter.

Chapter 11: Peak Experience

1. Why does one of Josh's clients try to punch him?
2. Who is Captain Shek? Add him to your character log.
3. Describe base camp.
4. Why is this chapter called Peak Experience?
5. *Who is Holly Angelo? Add her to the character log.*

Chapter 12: Rock Weasels

1. What was Josh's motivation for taking Peak to Mt Everest?
2. What's the difference between rock rats and rock weasels?
3. At this point in the story, does Josh seem like a good father? Explain.

Chapter 13: Gasp

1. There are three similes at the beginning of chapter 13. Add them to you figurative language log.
2. According to Peak, getting through the death zone depends on what?
3. What is a "self-arrest?"
4. What is a *puja* ceremony?
5. Why won't Josh wait for Peak or the filming crew?

Chapter 14: Latecomers

1. What are prayer flags and what does each color stand for?
2. Add the words *garish* and *auspicious* to your vocabulary log and define them.
3. Find the simile on page 94 and add it to your figurative language log.
4. What is Peak's opinion of Holly Angelo?
5. Find the hyperbole on page 95 and write in your figurative language log.
6. How does Zopa win a pot of money?

Chapter 15: Gamow Bag

1. How does a Gamow bag work?
2. Find the simile on page 102 and record it in your figurative language log.
3. Write a 5-10 sentence summary of this chapter.

Chapter 16: ABC

1. Why do YOU think that Sun-jo is wearing Peak's clothes?

2. Holly and Zopa leave two hours before Peak even wakes up. Why do they leave early?
3. Describe the relationship between most porters and climbers. How does Peak feel about this?
4. Why “climb high, sleep low?”
5. According to Zopa, what can kill you faster than the thin air?
6. Why does the film crew end up interviewing Sun-jo?
7. Describe the physical toll that this climb is taking on Peak’s body.
8. Why do climbers have to be careful about what they say over the radios?

Chapter 17: Letters from Home

1. Why does getting mail from his family put Peak into a bad mood?
2. Describe Sun-jo’s condition back at base camp.
3. What does Rolf’s card make Peak realize?

Moleskine #2

Chapter 18: Secrets

1. Why is the meeting a secret?
2. Why is Peak annoyed with Josh at the beginning of this chapter?
3. Why are second chance attempts at the summit “virtually unheard of”?
4. What are the reasons that Zopa could get arrested by the Chinese?
5. If you were Peak, would you want to “share the glory” with Sun-jo?

Chapter 19: Bear and Bull

1. What problems might get in the way of Josh’s plans for the A,B and C teams? (acclimatization, other climbers getting mad about waiting for summit chances, weather, Captain Shek...)
2. Why is Peak both confused and mad?
3. Why wouldn’t Zopa have climbed mountains if he didn’t get paid to?
4. Peak thinks Holly has changes since they got to ABC. Do you think anyone else has changed? (Use examples from the text).
5. What do you think of the idea that we don’t know what a story is about until we know how it ends? What do you think the story of Peak is about?
6. What is the metaphor Peak uses to describe the porters?

Chapter 20: Camp Four

1. Why does Peak have “ill feelings” towards Sun-jo and Zopa?
2. Why does Peak lie to Captain Shek?
3. What simile does Peak use to describe the landscape on the way to Intermediate Camp?
4. How does Sun-jo get to Camp Four?
5. What are two of the reasons that above Camp Five there is little chance of rescue?

Chapter 21: Arrest

1. Why is there no chance of rescue at Camp Five or Six?
2. What happened to the hay that Gulu’s yak was carrying? Why is this important to the plot?
3. What was the worst part of Captain Shek’s arrival and the arrest?
4. What do you think will happen to Zopa?

Chapter 22: Family History

1. What was one of the benefits for Sun-jo when Zopa got arrested?
2. What does Peak’s writing to his mother from Everest have to do with the letters he wrote to his dad when he was a kid?
3. What does Peak’s mom tell him was the reason she gave up climbing?
4. What happened in the past that makes Josh feel like he owes something to Sun-jo and Zopa?
5. Draw a diagram to show the relationship between Sun-jo, Peak, Zopa, Josh, and Sun-jo’s father.

Chapter 23: Unrest

1. Describe two situations in this chapter where someone bluffed. What were the bluffers hoping would happen?
2. What bluff did Peak decide *not* to try?
3. How did Peak learn about how Sun-jo feels?
4. How do climbers “tag” Everest when they climb?
5. What does Peak mean when he says that Josh will “blink” first?

Chapter 24: Blink

1. How does Peak feel when Josh tells him he’s not making the summit?
2. What do you think of Zopa’s plan?

Chapter 25: Shortcut

1. At this point, who seems like the stronger climber, Peak or Sun-jo? Support your answer with evidence from the text.
2. How do YOU think Sun-jo and Peak will get down the mountain without being discovered by Captain Shek?
3. What caused Sun-jo to be in such a dangerous situation on page 202?

Chapter 26: Camp 3 ½

1. Why is this chapter called “Camp 3 ½?”
2. Why does Zopa tell Sun-jo and Peak that they are going down a different side of the mountain than they came up?
3. “The O’s flowed into my body like some kind of magic elixir.” Explain this simile.

Chapter 27: Camps Five and Six

1. Describe the danger facing Peak and Sun-jo at this point in the story. In your opinion, what’s the biggest threat to their lives right now?
2. What do Peak and Sun-jo start seeing on the way up to camp 6?
3. Re-read page 118. Compare and contrast Peak’s and Sun-jo’s motivation for making it to the summit.

Chapter 28: Top of the World

1. What past experience may have prepared Peak for the danger he faces on Step 2?
2. How does Peak describe the top of the world?
3. Why does Peak stop when he is only thirty feet away from the summit?
4. What do you think of Peak’s decision? Would you have done the same thing?

Chapter 29: Down the Mountainside

1. What does Zopa’s note reveal about how much Zopa really knew about the summit attempt and how well he could anticipate Peak’s actions?
2. On page 237 Peak says, “Actually, it did work out.” What does he mean?
3. What does Peak give to Zopa on the road?

Chapter 30: Denouement

1. Why is Peak in such a hurry to get back to New York?
2. Who shows up at the loft apartment? What story does she say is going to “hit the streets?”
3. What key detail does one of the twins notice about the prayer flags on top of Everest?
4. What does Peak mean when he says, “The things that really matter lie far below?”