

myself on top of the mountain. I felt a more urgent need to have photographic evidence that we had reached the summit, so quickly took shots down every major ridge. The view was most spectacular to the east, for here the giants Makalu and Kangchenjunga dominated the horizon and gave some idea of the vast scale of the Himalayas. Only a few miles away, Makalu, with its soaring rock ridges, was a remarkable sight. I could see all the northern slopes of the mountain and was immediately struck by the possibility of a feasible route to its summit. With a growing feeling of excitement, I took another photograph to study on returning to civilization—I was under no delusions that reaching the top of Everest would destroy my enthusiasm for further adventures.

The view to the north was a complete contrast—hundreds of miles of the arid Tibetan plateau. One scene was of particular interest. Almost under our feet it seemed, was the famous North Col and the East Rongbuk Glacier, where so many epic feats of courage and endurance were performed by the earlier British Everest expeditions. Part of the ridge up which they had established their high camps was visible, but the last thousand feet, which had proved such a formidable barrier, was concealed from our view as its rock slopes dropped away with frightening abruptness from the summit snow pyramid. It was a sobering thought to remember how often these men had reached 28,000 feet without the benefits of our modern equipment and reasonably efficient oxygen sets. Inevitably, my thoughts turned to Mallory and Irvine who had lost their lives on the mountain thirty years before. With little hope I looked around for some sign that they had reached the summit, but could see nothing.

feasible (fē' zə bəl) *adj.*
capable of being done;
possible

formidable (fôr' mə də
bəl) *adj.* causing fear or
dread

Sir Edmund Hillary

(b. 1919)



Few people can claim they have stood on top of the world—and only one person can claim to have been there

first. That person is Sir Edmund Hillary.

Hillary has said of himself, "I've moved from being a child who dreamed a lot and read a lot of books about adventure, to actually getting involved in things like mountaineering, and then becoming a reasonably competent mountaineer. . . ." These are humble words for a man who has conquered eleven different peaks greater than 20,000 feet in the Himalayas of Tibet and Nepal.

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Review and Assess

Thinking About the Selection

1. **Respond:** How did you feel when Hillary and Norgay finally reached the summit of Everest? Explain your reaction.
2. (a) **Recall:** Why does Hillary examine Norgay's oxygen equipment? (b) **Make a Judgment:** Do you think Norgay's oxygen situation was as critical as Hillary made it seem? Explain.
3. (a) **Recall:** What was the last big obstacle to reaching the summit? (b) **Infer:** Does Hillary think that he needed Norgay's help to surmount the obstacle? Explain.
4. (a) **Generalize:** After reading "View From the Summit," how would you describe the amount of effort and energy required to conquer Everest? (b) **Apply:** How does the difficulty of climbing Mount Everest lead people of such different backgrounds as Hillary and Norgay to work together to succeed?