

# **PEAK**

**By Roland Smith**

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### Frontloading – Everest Research

1. With a partner(s), **develop** ten questions you have about climbing Mt. Everest. Record in your journal.
2. With your partner(s) **search and decipher** the Web for valid and reliable sites to gain answers to your questions and other important or interesting data. Also, **search and peruse** print text that will help you as well.
3. *On your own*, **record** three sites in different colors for a Bibliography (see page 3)
4. **Skim** over the questions as you **read** the information *on your own*. Try to focus on what you want to know and what other interesting information is shared.
5. **Bullet** information using short phrases. Each source should be recorded in your journal in a different color. If one source repeats information, simply place a + sign next to the original information with the different color. Do the same thing with the third source. If the information is different, bullet it with the appropriate color. This will save you time and help you check to be sure information is accurate. **Review** your questions every so often to see if you are getting the information you wanted. *HINT: You should always stay focused on the purpose of your research and the audience to whom you will present.*
6. **Compare** information with your partner(s). Are there any facts that don't match?? If so, **search and examine** one or two more sites to **verify** which information is correct – don't forget to record these in different colors, too.
7. **Organize** your information by creating five to six categories using note cards, such as, geographical features, human experiences, indigenous people, statistics, equipment, etc. This can be completed with your partner(s) or on your own.
8. **Reflect** on the information you have gathered. Decide if you would attempt the summit of Everest or not. *(This is to be completed on your own!)*
9. *On your own*, **write** a persuasive essay convincing your partner(s) to join you on a trip to climb Everest OR convincing them not to go. Do NOT discuss whether or not you would *like* to go to Everest with your partner(s).
- 10a. **Write** out a short paragraph (3-5 sentences) stating whether or not your partner(s) convinced you AND why.
- b. **Write** out a juicy paragraph (8-12 sentences) why you would or would not want to attempt the climb to the PEAK of Mt. Everest.

## Bibliography

Record your sites here. (Remember to use the different colored pens.)

Print Example:

Holowing, David. (2004). *Everest*. New York: Random House.

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
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2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
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Internet Example:

Retrieved: 3 April, 2007 <http://www.bielefeldt.de/everesthe.htm>

Web Manager: Hartmut Bielefeldt; Last Updated 22 July, 2002

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2. \_\_\_\_\_  
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## Frontloading Vocabulary

### PEAK Vocabulary List

**Create** one set of note cards with the vocabulary list below by **recording** the vocabulary word on the front of a 3x5 cards. (You will place the synonym or short phrase on the back after the next assignment.) This set is to take home and practice with your family. **Create** another set on 3x5 cards that your teacher has cut in half. These are to carry throughout the day at school and practice whenever you have an opportunity.

1. ascent p. 3
2. precarious p. 3
3. pelting p. 4
4. audacious p. 8
5. alleged p. 12
6. enunciating p. 13
7. elicited p. 16
8. demeanor p. 16
9. stupor p. 19
10. remorseful p. 19
11. incredulously p. 20
12. unwavering p. 20
13. duress p. 20
14. wherewithal p. 23
15. begrudgingly p. 24
16. concurred p. 25
17. mellowed p. 27
18. reevaluate p. 27
19. cringed p. 28
20. underestimated p. 29
21. undisclosed p. 39
22. concierge p. 41
23. pandemonium p. 48
24. auspicious p. 49
25. flourish p. 51
26. disheveled p. 62
27. surly p. 65
28. pristine p. 73
29. auspicious p. 93
30. poignant p. 114
31. cairn p. 93
32. balaclava p. 116
33. belligerently p. 133
34. garish p. 143
35. daunting p. 154
36. debilitated p. 170
37. vigil p. 175
38. disperse p. 175
39. blindsided p. 176
40. devastated p. 178
41. enmeshed p. 189
42. efficiency p. 189
43. elusive p. 189
44. blanch p. 206
45. denouement p. 131, 242

## Down and Dirty Sentences

1. **Select** twenty words from the vocabulary list and **write** them out on a separate sheet of paper.
2. **Find** the page and sentence the vocabulary word is used in and **write** it out with quotations since you are quoting part of the book. You may **use** the ellipsis if you want to shorten the sentence as well. You must have enough of the sentence to **determine** what part of speech the word is and don't forget to underline the word.

Example:

audacious-p. 8 "My little blue mountains were small, but I made up for their size by putting them in audacious places where they might never be seen..."

3. Before you research the word take a **guess** at what it means and whether or not you used the "context clues"= CC or the "word structure"= WS. Place ? around the word.

Example

audacious - ?important? – context clues

4. **Determine and record** the part of speech the word is and record a synonym or short phrase for the word:

noun=n

verb=v

adjective=adj

adverb=adv

Example:

audacious – adj., daring

5. **Check** your synonyms/short phrases and your parts of speech with the teacher's master list. **Make** corrections where necessary in red.
6. Now for the hard part, but fun, too!!! **Use** the new vocabulary word in your own sentence, remembering the part of speech it comes from and its synonym or short phrase. In addition, your sentence must have a prepositional phrase, (up the hill, after the dance, to the police station, on fire, over the fence, etc.) OR create a compound sentence (two simple sentences combined with a conjunction. You can remember all of your conjunctions by using the phrase FANS BOYS – F=for, A=and, N=nor, B=but, O=or, Y=yet, S=so). Please **underline** the vocabulary word.

Example:

*During the party the boy was an audacious dancer.*

*I enjoyed the audacious band and the pepperoni pizza.*

## Literary Devices – Figurative Language

**Similes** compare using like or as, usually with two very different things. They usually create a visual picture for the reader.

1. Below are five similes from the text. **Analyze and infer** what visual picture Roland Smith wants you to have as you read. HINT: You may have to go back and read before and after the actual simile.

*Example:*

*Page 14 ¶ 11 “They were six years old and looked up to the third “Pea” (me) like I was a god.”*

*This simile helps me picture how much his twin half-sisters love Peak and how much they idolize him. I can see them smile at him as if he can do anything.*

- a. Page 26 ¶ 2 – “...tearing the tie off his neck like it was an anaconda.”
  - b. Page 33 ¶10 – “They were thirty feet up the wall, free climbing. For rock rats like them, this was like strolling across a level parking lot.”
  - c. Page 43 ¶10 – “For a climber, saying that you are stopping by Everest is like saying you’re going to stop by and see God.”
  - d. Page 59 ¶7 - “It’s sort of like asking a magician to tell you how he does a trick.”
  - e. Page 63 ¶3 – “...Sun-jo who had picked a more difficult route, scrambled up the rock like a lizard, smiling as he climbed past...”
2. As you read the novel, **find** ten or more similes and **record** them (on a separate sheet) AND what visual picture Roland Smith wants you to have. Don’t forget to **record** the similes you found as I did, page and paragraph numbers, ellipsis and quotation marks.

Hint: There are three on the first page of the chapter “GASP.” ☺

**Metaphors** compare two unlike things *without* using like or as. They can give a stronger image or be used in a subtle, simple way.

Simile: She is like a rat.

Metaphor: She is a rat.

Simile: He went like a shadow into the forest.

Metaphor: He melted into the forest.

This novel uses metaphors to describe people, places, and events. **Locate** at least four metaphors and **interpret** what they are describing about a person, place, or event. Don't forget page and paragraph numbers, ellipsis and quotation marks.

HINT: There are three in the chapter "Rock Rats."

*Example: Page 27 ¶18 – "When you're at the end of your rope there's no one better than Joshua Wood. Unfortunately he doesn't pay much attention unless you're dangling."*

*Peak's dad is good in a crisis or when serious trouble comes but on a daily basis he doesn't seem interested or caring.*

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

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

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

\_\_\_\_\_

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**Personification** is when non-living things are given human characteristics to help the reader visualize the scene AND understand the story better. I like to remember this by breaking down the word personification to person. Non-person things are given person-like characteristics.

A simple example from the novel, **PEAK**, would be on page 56, paragraph 4. “...the motorcycle belched out a column of gray smoke so thick I thought it had burst into flames along with my new friend.” Motorcycles don’t usually belch but *you* do. It gives you an interesting and humorous picture of what the cycle was doing while the boys had to ride it. This section gives you the idea that Sun-jo does not have a great deal of money.

On page 133, Zopa states, “You can never tell who the mountain will allow and who it will not.”

**Answer** these questions with complete ideas and details.

How does this personification example help you visualize the mountain?

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How does this personification example help you understand the story better?

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How would it be possible for a mountain to choose who gets to climb and who does not?

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Peak uses this same phrase when he is climbing Everest with Sun-jo, p. 229. How has the meaning of this personification changed? What does it tell you now about the story; what scene does it paint for you?

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### “I” Poem

The narrator of an “I” poem can be a person, place, or object – such as Everest. Use the plot of the novel to help Everest talk through the poem. Make the mountain come alive as you assign strong, descriptive, and sophisticated words to each of the “I” lines of the poem. The poem can rhyme but it is not necessary. The most important characteristic is that the poem is written in the “first person” point of view. **Create** the rest of the prompt AND then **use** a new format to **create** a different type of “I” Poem at the bottom of this page.

I am... Everest  
I see...  
I want...  
I know...

I am...  
I wonder...  
I feel...  
I touch...

I am...  
I worry...  
I cry out...  
I understand...

I want...  
I understand...  
I say...  
I am...

**Example:**

*I am the cave,  
Cool and dark,  
Where she finds trouble, heartache, death  
As natural forces fight the Barons of Evil  
A crystal world weeping  
Sorrow seeping  
Yet hope flows through the stone  
Rescue?*

**You try:**

I am the mountain, Everest,

*Practice reading your poems aloud so you can share with  
a small group and the class.*



## Minor Characters

There are many other characters in *PEAK*. Minor characters are usually added to a story to help the reader understand the major character. They are also important to the story's plotline! Many times the minor characters are more memorable because they have quirky personalities. I love how Roland Smith describes the "Peas.". In the future, if I hear about Everest on TV or I overhear a conversation about mountain climbing, I am sure I will think of Peak first. Immediately after thinking about Peak though, I will think about the "Two Peas" and have a great big grin on my face.

To help you understand the minor characters and their interdependence with Peak, **create** a complete paragraph (4-8 sentences) about each minor character below, sharing:

- ✓ Who the minor character is
- ✓ Their relationship with Peak
- ✓ How they affect who Peak is and who he becomes

*Example:*

*Peak's Mom: Peak's mom was a Rock Rat herself but got hurt because she was worried about Peak. She is smart, beautiful, and most importantly, she understands why Peak wants to climb Everest. She loves Peak deeply because she lets him go with his father. It was painful for her to let him go but it was what was best for Peak. Peak loves his mom and actually idolizes her. He knows that home is a safe place but he wants to experience more. When Peak's mom calls him near the end of the story he begins to realize how important she is to him and how much he respects her advice and opinions. She changes how Peak feels about Everest and about himself.*

Other Minor Characters:

The "Two Peas", Patrice and Paula

Rolf

Sun-jo

Joshua Wood

Zopa

Holly Angelo

Vincent

## Elements of Literature - Setting

### Description Paragraphs and Sensory Details

When you share about the setting you do NOT tell what happens. You DO share what you see, hear, feel, taste, and smell so that your reader can picture what you experience.

Using sensory details (your five senses) and at least two similes AND two metaphors **write** a juicy paragraph, on a separate sheet, **describing** these different settings in the novel:

Take sensory detail notes in your journal as you discover these places in the novel.  
Courtroom    Kathmandu    Base Camp    ABC Camp    "Top of the World"

### Elements of Literature – Point of View

#### Character Flip

PEAK is written in first person. You know this because Peak is the one talking throughout the story. There is no narrator, third person, telling you about what he does or how he feels; Peak does that himself with all his "I" statements. He even tells you how other people are feeling. You see the word "I" over and over again as Peak shares.

*I like to think about first person and the word "I." I always remember that First Person is when the major character in the story is telling it. "I" reminds me of 1 and then 1 reminds me of First and then I remember the idea of First Person.*

By the end of the book we know exactly who Peak is and how he thinks. It is often interesting to speculate and predict how the story would change if a different character would have written a section of the story. What if a different character started to write one of the chapters?

**Select** any character and any section of novel and **examine** that section. **Determine** the changes that would occur if a different character wrote that section. **Rewrite** that section using the new character's first person's voice. How big a section? This is up to you. It can be a couple pages or an entire chapter.

**Write** your new section on a separate sheet of paper. **Title** the new section with the same title as the book, but place the name of the character after it, ex: ABC – Sun-jo.

## Elements of Literature – Conflict

### Major and Minor Conflicts

There are five types of conflicts in literature

Man vs. Man	One character against another
Man vs. Self	Character or characters against their own beliefs
Man vs. Society	Character or characters against the rules of society
Man vs. Nature	Character or characters against the forces of nature
Man vs. Fate (God)	Character or characters against their own destiny

There are major and minor plots just like there are major and minor characters. The novel *PEAK* includes all of these conflicts above depending on which character and which conflict you are thinking about.

**Compare** each conflict with a different character AND **explain** the connection. You may use any character twice but no more than that.

Man vs. Man	Peak's Mom
Man vs. Self	Zopa
Man vs. Society	Joshua Wood
Man vs. Nature	Sun-jo
Man vs. Fate (God)	

A quick example: The conflict of **Man vs. Nature** is represented by the sickness HAPE that comes from the lack of oxygen. The climbers who don't prepare or for some other reason get sick with HAPE as they climb. Next they have to use the Gammow Bag and be sent back down. It is as if the mountain (**nature**) is in conflict with the climber (**man**).

## Elements of Literature – Theme

### Life-Lessons and Morals

Theme is an interesting part of all literature. A theme is what the author wants you to know or what you gain from reading the novel. Stories can be life-changing.

Themes can be expressed in one word: Courage, Honesty, Relationships, Love, Sacrifice, etc. Themes are also life-lessons or morals: “Don’t put off until tomorrow what you can do today” “Live your life to the fullest,” or “A smile is the foundation of beauty.” *The theme or life-lesson can be something that you learn OR something that a character learned OR something that the author wishes each person could think about and learn from.*

What types of themes, life-lessons, and/or morals are there in the novel *PEAK*?

What does Roland Smith want you to learn about life or, at least, be reminded of as you live vicariously through the characters?

Hint: Don’t just think of Peak and themes but about the minor characters as well.

**Interpret and explain** how each of the themes listed connect with the story. **Use** at least three specific sections of the story to help you explain the connection to a theme. You will need to complete this on a separate sheet of paper and use complete paragraphs (4-8 sentences).

Relationships      Survival      Change      Courage      Interdependence

**Examine the story and choose** three more one-word themes or life-lessons (morals) that are represented in the story. **Use** at least one specific section of the story to help you **explain** the connection to the theme. Use complete paragraphs (4-8 sentences).

*Example:*

*Betrayal is a strong theme in this book. Joshua Wood is not loyal to his son. He never wrote Peak even though he received Peak’s letters. He also brought Peak to Everest to help his business not because he shows loyalty towards him. Peak feels that Sun-jo has not been loyal to him when it is revealed that Sun-jo is Zopa’s grandson and he will be trying for the peak of Everest himself. Joshua Wood also feels a bit betrayed by Zopa because he kept Sun-jo’s identity a secret. However, when Josh finds out that Sun-jo is the son of the man who saved his life, he shows loyalty toward Sun-Jo and Zopa by allowing Sun-jo to go and does everything in his power to help, even defying Captain Shek. Sun-jo shows loyalty to his family by working as hard as he can to help his sisters stay in school. Finally, if Peak had truly understood the value of loyalty to his mother and family, he would not have pulled all the “tagging” escapades.*

## Elements of Literature – Style

**Literary Devices** are used to make the book more interesting, to tell more about a person, place, or event, for emphasis, or to make the phrase or sentence have a pleasant sound. They are some of the techniques that authors use to transform good writing into great writing.

Roland Smith uses many types of literary devices in *PEAK*. **Find examples and share their significance.** Complete the following on a separate sheet of paper.

1. *Foreshadowing* - a word, sentence, or paragraph that hints at what is coming next in the novel.

**Record** five examples of foreshadowing and **predict** what will happen next.

2. *Flashback* - a sentence or paragraph that takes the reader back in time so that they may learn more about a character, place, or event

**Record** two examples of a flashback and **explain** what you learned from it.

3. *Sarcasm* - a word, sentence, or paragraph that intends to mock or highly exaggerate a person, place, or event  
The sarcasm in *PEAK* sets the whole tone for Peak's unique "voice."

**Record** six examples of sarcasm and **determine** what is being mocked or exaggerated and **explain** why you think so. ***There are a "ton" right in the beginning of the novel.*** 😊

4. *Word Choice* – a word is chosen because it gives the best meaning for the character/setting description or event in the story  
Many times one word can share a huge message. Roland Smith uses many small words to create a big meaning.

**Record** five examples of the "one word" which conveys a complex meaning and **explain** what the complex meaning is.

## Style continued

### Genre and Story Format

Style is also the genre an author chooses for developing a story, the specific way the book is formatted including chapter titles and any special features in the book such as maps, diagrams, letters, poetry, etc.

1. **Explain** which genres (at least two) *PEAK* fits into and why.

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2. **Name** any special feature and **explain** how they helped you.

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1. The Denouement - The word denouement is used to describe the last chapter. **Explain** why the author used this word AND its significance?

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## Journal Quest - Socratic Discussion Questions

In order to better understand the book *PEAK* answer each question in your journal as you read the story. **Answer with complete ideas and specific details from the story.** Write as much as you know about each question, **NOT only a bit of what you know.** Pretend your teacher has not read the story yet and this is her window into *PEAK*. Yes, you need to explain why when needed.

### Socratic Discussion Questions - Set One (pages 1-66)

#### Literal

1. What happened to Peak's cheek and ear when he was climbing the skyscraper?
2. What is "tagging?"
3. When did Peak truly feel regret and shame for having "tagged" the buildings?
4. How did Peak begin climbing?
5. Why was there a film crew on Everest?
6. What are three pieces of writing advice the author shares through Peak's teacher Vincent?

#### Inferential

1. Why does Peak think he was caught; what is his greatest disappointment in being caught?
2. What is a Moleskin and what's its significance in the story?
3. Why was Peak in such serious trouble for climbing and "tagging" skyscrapers in New York?
4. Why did the judge agree to Peak leaving with his Josh?
5. Why did Zopa make the boys walk up to the Base Camp AND carry extra gear instead of ride?
6. How does Roland Smith feel about the porters, herders, and yaks on Everest?

#### Evaluative

1. Do you think it was a wise decision for Peak to go with his father?
2. What types of regrets do you think about?
3. How do you avoid regret?
4. What or who affects your decisions – big or small?

**Socratic Discussion Questions - Set Two pages 67 - End**

**Literal**

1. How does the “brain function... at high altitudes?”
2. Why is climbing a “solo” sport? What does it take to get to the top of Everest?
3. Why is 26,000 feet considered to be the “death zone?”

**Inferential**

1. Why is Captain Shek such a threat?
2. What is the difference between a Rock Rat and a Rock Weasel?
3. Why can a Gamow Bag save a life?
4. What is significant about Roland Smith’s statement on p. 154, “You don’t have to be alone to feel alone?”
5. What did Rolf’s letter mean to Peak?
6. What types of changes did Holly Angelo experience?
7. What is the significance of Gulu’s story in the novel?
8. What types of changes did Peak experience physically, intellectually, emotionally and socially?
9. How are building a wall and building a story the same? Hint: p 144 should help you as Roland Smith shares the “wall” section of the comparison. Now, you share the “writing” part.
10. How does the phone call from Peak’s Mom change him?
11. What changed at the summit of Everest?
12. Will Peak ever go back to Everest?

**Evaluative**

1. Why did Josh bring Peak with him to Everest?
2. Why is climbing Everest not a competition between Peak and Sun-jo but a battle against life or death?
3. Peak has no grades at his school. If you did not get a grade for any of your work or your classes, what would change?
4. What does Roland Smith mean by, “The point is that we won’t know what the story is about until we know how the story ends.”

5. Zopa compliments Peak at the end of a climb and Peak says it was “a whole tank of O’s flowing into my bloodstream.” How do compliments make you feel? Why are they so important? Who do you most like to be complimented by?
6. Does Joshua Woods love Peak? Is he a good father?
7. What did Peak learn from his visit to Everest? Write this as if it is the moral of the story.
8. Which character is the most memorable?