



Comparing texts 1

What does it mean to compare two texts?

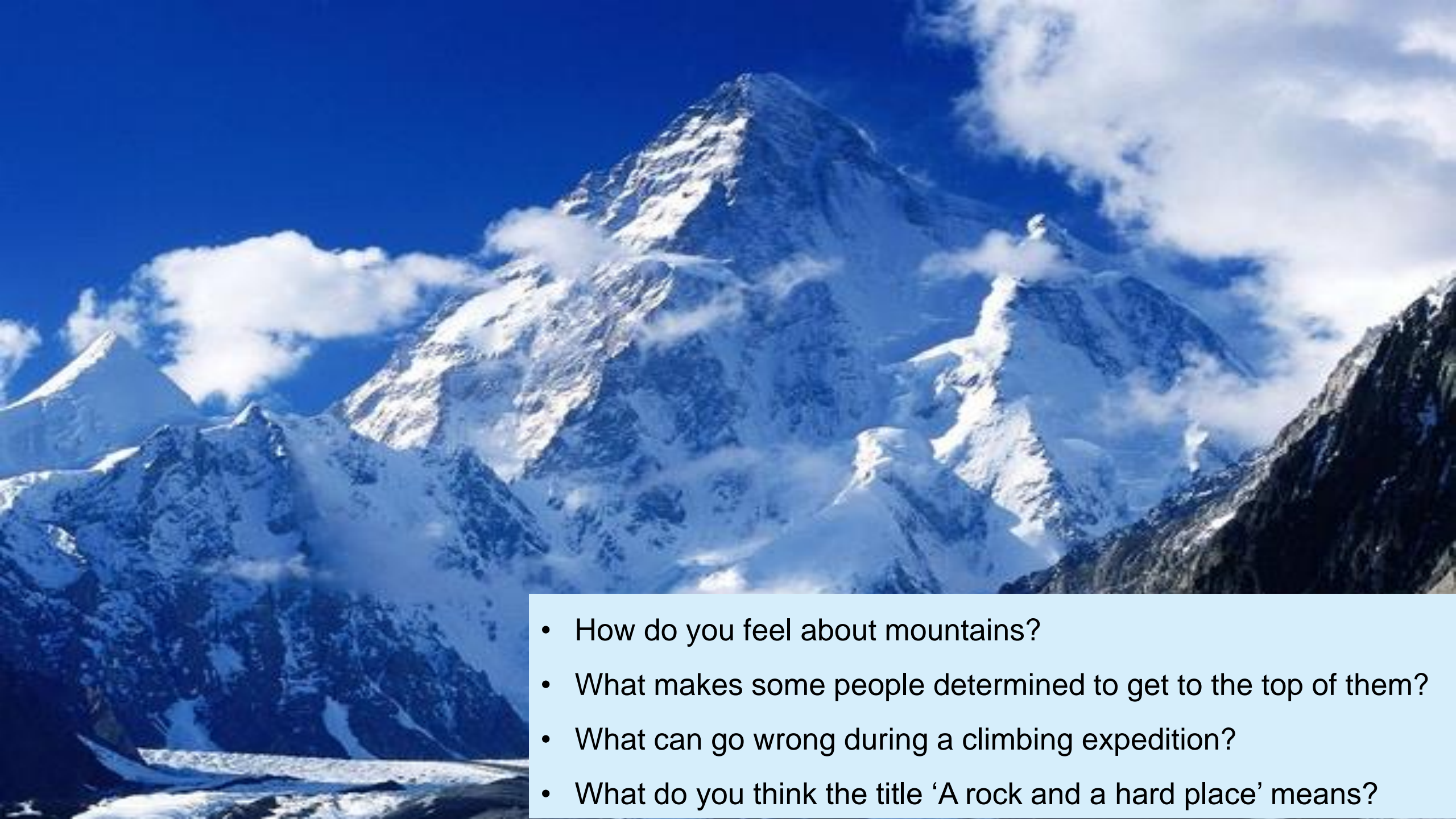
Comparing involves directly linking **texts** through their similarities and differences. It **is** important to move equally between the **two texts**, and write about them together, not separately.

Why do we compare texts?

Compare & Contrast improves comprehension by highlighting important details, making abstract ideas more concrete, and reducing the confusion between related concepts.

How can I compare text in English?

When **comparing texts**, consider what they have in common AND what is different about them. If they have the same main purpose: Do they use similar methods? For example, a letter and a news article could use persuasive methods to present completely different viewpoints of the same topic.



- How do you feel about mountains?
- What makes some people determined to get to the top of them?
- What can go wrong during a climbing expedition?
- What do you think the title 'A rock and a hard place' means?

Alison Jane Hargreaves (17 February 1962 – 13 August 1995) was a British mountain climber. Her accomplishments included scaling Mount Everest alone, without supplementary oxygen or support from a Sherpa team, in 1995. She soloed all the great north faces of the Alps in a single season—a first for any climber.



Read the article below, from a Sunday newspaper magazine, which concerns the death of a mountain climber on the Himalayan mountain of Kanchenjunga (K2).

- Alison Hargreaves faced the toughest decision of her career. It was August 6: she had spent six weeks on K2 and had already failed in two summit bids. Now, should she stay and give it one more try? Or call it a day and go home?
- The situation was as bleak as could be. Alison was back at base camp, its cluster of red and yellow tents pitched unevenly among the ice and boulders of the Godwin-Austen Glacier. Towering 12,000 ft (3657.6 metres) above was K2 itself, shrouded in grey, wind-tossed clouds. It was bitterly cold and raining and, says the American climber Richard Celsi, Alison was in tears.
- By Celsi's account, Alison had changed her mind a dozen times. Now she was utterly torn. She wanted to fulfil her dream of climbing K2, adding it to Everest to become the only British woman to have reached the world's two highest summits. And she desperately wanted to be back with her children, Tom, six, and Kate, four.
- The previous night she seemed to have made up her mind to leave. She had parked her equipment and said goodbye to the climbers who were staying. Her porters were due to leave at 7 a.m. and Alison had a flight booked from Islamabad in a week's time. 'It was done,' says Celsi. 'She was going home.'

- But early that morning, Alison reopened the question once again, drinking endless cups of coffee with Celsi as she turned it over and over in her mind. 'It was a very emotional thing for her,' says Celsi. 'She really went through a lot of things.' Finally, just 15 minutes before the porters were due to depart, she told Celsi she had decided to stay, reasoning that, since she had been away for so long, one more week wouldn't matter. 'She said it was logical to give the weather a chance to clear.'
- Alison hugged Celsi and thanked him profusely for his help. In some haste, her equipment was retrieved. Celsi himself was leaving, and Alison gave him some letters and a fax saying she had decided to give K2 'one more try'. As he set off down the glacier, Celsi turned to look back at Alison, and saw her waving to him through the drifting rain.
- 'She seemed in good spirits,' he recalls. 'She had made her decision.'
- Four days later Alison and a group of climbers left base camp for their summit bid. By August 12, they had reached Camp Four on a sloping snowfield known as the Shoulder, 2,000 ft (609.6 metres) below the summit. They set off before dawn the next morning, climbing a steep gully called the Bottleneck, passing beneath an unstable wall of ice pinnacles and finally emerging on the summit ridge.

- At 6.30 p.m. the climbers in base camp received a radio call from the summit. Alison and three others had reached the top, and another two were about to arrive. The caller, a Spanish climber, added that there was no wind but it was bitterly cold, and they were about to start their descent. There was no further word.
- An hour later the upper reaches of K2 were hit by hurricane-force winds. As they edged their way back down the summit ridge, Alison and her companions stood no chance. She was plucked from the ridge by the wind and hurled down K2's monumental South Face.
- The next morning two Spanish climbers, Pepe Garces and Lorenzo Ortas, who had survived the storm at Camp Four, were descending the mountain suffering from frostbite and exhaustion. Some 3,000 ft (914.4 metres) below the summit they found a bloodstained anorak lying in the snow. They also saw three slide-marks leading towards the edge of an ice cliff. But above the cliff, some 600 ft (182.88 metres) away, they saw a body resting in a hollow. 'I recognised the red clothing,' Ortas says. 'I knew it was Alison.'
- At 33, after a mercurial climbing career, Alison had become an icon - a symbol of what women could achieve. For some her death represented a betrayal of motherhood, for others a paradigm of the dilemmas faced by mothers seeking a career.

- Alison had been bemused by the publicity her Everest climb attracted, saying: 'The whole thing is much bigger than I can handle.' But she was worthy of her acclaim. Her Everest ascent in May - alone and without using supplementary oxygen or porters - was a supreme moment of the sport. Just 5 ft 4 in (162cm) and with an easy smile, she impressed people with her friendliness, modesty and charm. Some, accustomed to the ruthless egos of some leading male mountaineers, were relieved to find her so normal.
- Yet Alison was far more complex than her image revealed. The climber who exulted in her triumph on Everest could be racked with doubt. She could be talkative and outgoing - or reticent and closed. She was eager to show that she was self-sufficient, yet ardent for approval and acclaim.
- The most profound contradiction lay in her replies when asked the perennial question of why she climbed. She said she did so because she had something to prove - then added that, after summit, she felt she had to prove herself again. So what was Alison trying to prove, and why was she never satisfied? And is it true that her ceaseless quest led inevitably to a reckless death?

Adapted from an article by Peter and Leni Gillman, The Sunday Times, 3rd December 1995.

1. Make list of the similarities and differences between the experiences of those on board the Karluk and those of the K2 climbers.

Similarities:

Differences:

2. Work on the following tasks:

a Think of and list adjectives of your own which you could use to describe the character of Alison Hargreaves.

b Agree on and list the characteristics of the style commonly used for informal letters to relatives and close friends.

3. Write Alison Hargreaves' last letter to her parents after deciding to stay. Use an appropriate style, and write about 300 words. Begin Dear Mum and Dad. Mention the following:

- her difficult decision and how she made it
- conditions on K2
- her ambitions and expectations
- her feelings about climbing
- her feeling about her fellow climbers
- her feelings about her family.



Please Read Carefully!

And write creatively



**STAY SAFE &
STAY HEALTHY**

