**Unit 3 REAL-LIFE HEROES**

**Section 1 The Summit Within**

**Reading 1**

a. The two paradoxical emotions that the narrator felt as he conquered the Everest were

humility and sadness. Humility because the narrator was glad that the ordeal was over. On the other hand instead of being ecstatic and jubilant the narrator felt a tinge of sadness. He thought that for him, there remained no higher summit to climb.

b. According to the narrator there are three basic qualities which are very important in a climb. They are endurance, determination and will power; these had played a very important role in the narrator’s climb as well.

c. According to the narrator the experience of climbing changes a climber completely. A man who has climbed the mountains is changed for life. He learns how to be humble and realizes how small he is in this vast universe. He becomes conscious of his loneliness in this immeasurable universe and therefore, learns the value of those around him. Climbing

mountains is a very enriching experience and a man gains a lot from it.

d. The narrator talks about the ‘other summit’—the summit which is there in our own minds. Every human being carries their own mountain peak, their own height to climb as well. Climbing the Everest helps the narrator gain fuller knowledge about himself, but a climb up a mountain is done with the help of one’s team, but this particular climb within the mind is more difficult and fearful. One has to do it on one’s own, in one’s own head, in one’s own heart.

e. The narrator had decided to ascend the Everest because it was the highest and the mightiest,and had defied many previous attempts by various mountaineers. It was a challenge which the narrator took; the challenge of putting one’s life at stake and accomplishing the task of climbing the highest peak on earth. Climbing the Everest was a struggle with rock and ice. It took the last bit of energy left in him to complete the climb and come back safe. But the joy and exhilaration that one feels after the summit had been conquered was worth it.

f. The narrator found that reaching the summit was a spiritual experience. The moment he saw the peak in the distance, he felt transported to another world. The narrator experienced a change within himself. He calls it a spiritual experience because the beauty, aloofness, ruggedness and the difficulties he had encountered on the way had drawn him closer to the Everest. For the narrator it was a challenge difficult to ignore.

g. To look down from the peak of the Everest was an ennobling and enriching experience for the ascenders. It made them realize how lucky they were to have achieved this difficult feat. They automatically bowed down to the gods they worshipped. The narrator left there a picture of Guru Nanak, Rawat left a picture of Goddess Durga and Phu Dorji a relic of the Budhha. Edmund Hillary had buried a cross under a heap of rocks and stones. They left these symbols as marks of reverence and not of conquest or victory.

h. When the narrator says ‘climbing the mountain within’ he actually refers to the climb up the summit that is present within us, in our heads. The impact both the climbs have on us are the same; whether it is a physical, or an emotional and spiritual summit, only the methods of scaling these two summits are rather different. The experience changes us completely.