

The grand title of surveyor general of india english literature essay

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They have been symbols for godly worship, places of challenge and conquest, even protective refuges in times of conflict. There is one mountain of course which stands dominant, literally, above the rest - Mount Everest. During an expedition fundraising tour in 1923, a New York journalist once asked the English mountaineer George Mallory, who died in his final attempt to scale the world's largest mountain the following year, why climb Everest? " Because it's there," replied Mallory. Those brief words appropriately sum up the fascination Everest has held for those who would dare to try and conquer the killer giant, which was only ' officially' discovered by a young surveyor Andrew Waugh in 1856. The giant was listed on Waugh's chart as simply ' Peak 15' and, perhaps rather sycophantically, he urged his military boss that it should be named after him. Now, Colonel Sir George Everest, being the sort of modest chap he was, even though he held the grand title of Surveyor-General of India, pooh-poohed the suggestion. Regardless of his protest, the Royal Geographical Society adopted Waugh's idea and made it official in 1865. However, the actual English pronunciation of the mountain does not match George Everest's last surname. The colonel was an Eve-rest as opposed to how history has since called the lofty monolith - all 29, 029 feet of it. By the way, Mallory wasn't being flippant in his brevity. In fact he qualified his retort with: " Everest is the highest mountain in the world, and no man has reached its summit. Its existence is a challenge. The answer is instinctive, a part, I suppose, of man's desire to conquer the universe." At the time of its discovery, Everest and the Himalayas were completely unexplored, unmapped and unknown. Not even the indigenous people, Nepalese and Tibetan, had explored this vast mountain range and most of

the peaks were nameless. But from its first the discovery, it was to be almost another 100 years before Everest was thoroughly charted and finally climbed in 1953. Every schoolboy at that time and since will have known the names of its conquering heroes - New Zealander Edmund Hillary and his faithful Sherpa, Tensing Norgay. The legendary pulling power that is Everest has not lost its potency today. Does man - and woman for that matter - still go there out of ego or arrogance? Or is it the sheer wonder and beauty of this majestic, unmoving beast that attracts? Never before has there been available to ordinary pilgrims, mere mortals like you and I, so many opportunities to travel to the Himalayas to view the breath-taking landscape, Everest itself and even ascend the mountain which, by the way, is also known as Sagarmatha by the Nepalese - forehead in the sky - and Chomolungma - goddess, mother of the world - by the Tibetans. So, I guess in terms of gender identification, that makes Everest a grand lady. Perhaps the more Freudian believers among you might identify that as reason enough why so many men have wanted to scale it! Seen from an appreciative distance on the Nepal side, Everest stands haughty and proud, an enormous glacier fills the valley in front and in the foreground and, giving scale to the scene, can be seen little yellow dots - folk in brightly-coloured hi-tech safety gear, milling about the South Base Camp. For your own real perspective of this amazing sight, it's certainly worth going online taking a look at the GlacierWorks website - [www. glacierworks. org](http://www.glacierworks.org) - where you'll find some truly astounding panoramic views, including a 360 degree one of Everest with her nearby smaller sister, Pumori. The name means unmarried daughter in Sherpa language. Let's face it Everest, in the early and mid 20th

century, was mainly for 'the chaps.' Those went to see and conquer all knew each other - they were from Winchester, Cambridge, Oxford or others in the public school and college network. They could afford to take several months off from their jobs, if they actually had them, and they came inappropriately dressed in wool and tweed and most probably had some inappropriate attitudes towards the locals who carried their 'stuff' for them. They wandered around the Himalayas, smoking their pipes, collecting specimens and naming things after each other. Nowadays it's different. Anyone of perceptive age, with a sense of adventure and perhaps looking to fill a lifetime ambition to discover for themselves this must see Holy Grail of places 'to see before you die,' can visit and see for themselves the startling beauty of the Everest experience. The Himalayas are not just for expert mountain climbers and experienced hill walkers. There's a range of treks on offer through the various travel and tourist companies servicing this part of the globe (see listings below) to suit all ages and abilities. This can be from a gentle hike in the lush foothills to more challenging high-altitude ventures in the peaks, rising to over 6000m - that's 19,685 feet in old money. Anyone who lives an active life and is in good health will enjoy a Himalayan trek. With a travel company like World Expeditions, the emphasis is in providing you with "a rewarding trekking experience." Tourists to the region usually come in from the south, from Nepal, which was not an option in past times, only from the Tibet side. Apart from that, the landscape has changed little from the days when the Old Etonians paced the slopes. The big mountain, named after the double glazing company - only joking of course - sits in the middle of it all, commanding homage. In the tourist high season - which is

xxxxc - 10, 000 visitors on average enter through the surrounding Sagarmatha national park. The trail to here is north from the tiny airstrip at Lukla, always teeming with trekkers, and is at times it's more like a queue than a walk. Brits always show politeness and a keen sense of wonder and purpose though puff a lot on the slopes, Aussies exchange 'matey' banter and eager Germans with trekking poles overtake everyone else on the straight runs. The French, well they're invariably dressed in all the stylish but practical gear for the environment, shrugging indifferently often. Meanwhile, the air above is buzzing with helicopters full of ever-in-a-hurry Japanese tourists, probably on some frantic tour of Asia, cameras snapping everything in sight. It's all worth the effort however, as the valley you're in is absolutely stunning. A tumbling, frothing river runs through it and its green, tree-massed slopes run down to where everyday local folk are tending their fields. They have little to do with this marching throng - but their lives are affected by them. It's all a matter of attractive presentation for the tourists. Their dwellings are lovingly clean and decorated, the obligatory ethnic 'prayer wheels' colourfully painted to stand out even from a distance and modern technology is in evidence. All but the very elderly have mobile phones. Mountains and mobiles, in terms of getting a signal, usually don't really go too well together. But here, the phones used by the indigenous are not just for show. If you wanted some peace, quiet and escape from life back home for a week or so and thought you would be call-free, a break here is not so I'm afraid. Surprisingly, there are very few places you can't get a signal in this part of the mountain range. One thing hasn't changed since the days of the college guys. Sherpa folk will still carry your belongings for you.

Something you may be very grateful for if you find you've been a bit zealous in the baggage department and that back pack is taking its toll. Remember, by letting them do the honours for a modest charge, you'll also be contributing to the local economy. It poses perhaps a bit of a dilemma for the modern trekker. He has to choose between the weight on his back or the weight of guilt from letting someone else take the burden. The Sherpa porters are usually paid according to what they carry, so they don't shirk when it comes to big loads because the more they carry the more cash they make. Tips are on top, naturally. There are some scary sights, enough to make you wince. These tough but short guys on the trails carry heavy and well-stacked up loads. They're yaks in human form! World Expeditions imposes a 30kg (just over 60 lbs) weight limit on its Sherpas. The sensible trekker should really need no more than half that maximum of baggage, which if you're going the distance, is still a good weight. It's about equal to carrying an average three-year-old around with you. There are a number of overnight lodges available but World Expeditions has some new permanent campsites in the area. By using the latter you can avoid some of the busier tourist places and the campsites have the advantage of being located in more secluded spots, away from the main trail. Remember, you're beating a close path to the biggest mountain on earth, so don't expect five star hotels. But you won't be really be roughing it - the campsites have capacious tents with campbeds complete with mattresses. Everything is kept clean and hygienic, even the loos which are of the 'green' composting type. Trekking groups are usually of eight to ten people and you'll have no fear of not been supervised and looked after properly. For such a small lot, there are usually

up to a couple of dozen professional escort guides and support staff for each group. Yes, you did read that correctly - as many as 24 men and women catering for your needs. One or more are cooks, who produce some amazing meals - chicken specials, curries, pizzas, a variety of puddings and cakes, all cooked on a paraffin stove. Yak dung is used for heating. If you still have the wherewithal and are not too tired after supper, you can play cards into the night with the Sherpas. One game's called Goo Kha Tauko - which affectionately translates as shithead in Nepali, and when it gets too cold you can retire to your tent and zip up for the night, as snug as the proverbial bug. You're greeted in the morning with a mug of tea and heated water to do your ablutions, before a porridge breakfast. Then it's a case of getting your gear together before heading off for another day of adventure. On the way closer to the majestic goal, you cross bridges generously decorated with prayer scarves streaming in the breeze. The bridges are suspended high over a river but your fears are fast overcome as you walk on by the incredible vista to be had. Then once you've penetrated a steep wooded area you reach a clearing and there it is - your first nearish view of the towering lady herself, Everest. But there'll be opportunity to see it even better and closer later on from the Everest base camp itself. Not all choose to make it their destination. There is a choice with the World Expeditions itineraries, and you can take the trail to the popular Gokyo with its picturesque lakes and hills. Climb these and you get an excellent view over to Everest but it does take six days to get there. Whichever you chose, you are getting higher all the time and it is essential to acclimatise for at least a couple of nights, which is usually Namche Bazar. You'll start to get a bit light-

headed. This near township is itself at 3, 440m and whilst your heartbeat rate and breathing should pretty much as normal, you may get some mild headaches. It's during sleep that odd things occur, like having very intense and quite vivid and dreams. They're almost extra dimensional and will often, when you wake, make you feel still tired. It is said that these dreams, when in full flight, can actually make you feel, well, how can I put it? A bit perky perhaps! Again, apparently, this happens whatever you age. So there you go. A sort of mountain air aphrodisiac! Well, you could always try and concentrate after the experience on a bit of souvenir hunting. Namche has a quaint Tibetan market selling all sorts of things - including a roaring trade in fake designer stuff from across the Chinese border - an Irish pub, would you believe, and a German bakery and of course plenty of yaks to bump into, also resting and taking a break. Journeying on from Namche, the landscape starts to open up. Leaving the valley behind, the scenery becomes more expansive, spectacular and on a larger scale as you arrive in the bosom of the mountains... and there's Everest again, still a little way off yet and part secluded by its neighbour, Lhotse. But it's grander as you marvel at the steep and glistening sides, as is another companion, Ama Dablam. At this point you understand why the magnetism and magic of Everest has drawn so many over the years. At 4, 000m - that's two and a half miles high - trekkers pass through the village of Mong, with its people going about their daily business and then branch off from the main route up to the base camp. Having come so far, you'll be amazed at the number of travellers about. The terrain at Gokyo is no longer a wilderness devoid of humans. It's a focal point of popularity with those who have a single purpose. That is to take in and

saviour the extraordinary natural beauty and spectacle of the place. You are reminded in no uncertain terms that this is the highest mountain in the world. Gokyo's lakes are pea green, their waters chill. After a good night's sleep, trekkers climb Gokyo Ri, the hill above the village, for that view of their lives, no clouds allowing. But clouds or not, the feeling of elation runs through each and every pilgrim. They've made it. On the return to Namche, should the fancy take you, you could go and see the yeti scalp proudly displayed in a monastery in neighbouring Khumjung, or back to the market to buy more souvenirs - like yak bells in. For those with a sense of history for the place, Namche also has a small museum with photographs and artefacts held for posterity from the many expeditions to Everest, including those of Mallory's 1921 team. One picture shows him with his men and the first thing that hits you is the way they're dressed. All in Tweed wool outfits, totally inappropriate for the mountain environment. More like a salmon fishing party in the Highlands of Scotland. Mallory died on Everest in 1924, as mentioned earlier, and it is a marvel in itself how he managed to ascend the giant or something. Seated on the left of the photo is George Mallory who as mentioned, would die on Everest in an expedition three years later. There are 700 trekking companies in Nepal registered with the government of the country. One of the best known is Himalayan Glacier Trekking. Kul Prasad Dhital - or 'KP' as he's affectionately known - has been a professional trekking guide for 14 years, most of that time with HGT." Trekking is my passion," he told La Dolce Vita. " I have always found my task exciting. It has huge liability, but there have been times when I feel a bit challenged in my responsibility but I stay cheerful in order to face whatever the job throws at

me, otherwise you can lose respect with clients very quickly." KP was somewhat daunted last year when a call from his boss informed that he was to be chief guide to a group of 40 trekking to the base camp on the Nepal side of Everest. It was the biggest group he'd ever handled." I can't exactly figure out how many hundreds even thousands of trekkers I have guided through the various routes to Everest, through the Annapurna and Langtang regions and many more others in Nepal. As years go by, I've lost count of the times I've been the Everest Base Camp. When I was told about this especially large group I was feeling the moment. It was a milestone in my career." Fortunately for KP, the management of Himalayan Glacier Trekking that he needed two other senior guides as back up, eight assistant guides, 13 Sherpa porters and five yaks. The main reason was the number of more mature folk destined for the trip, including several British pensioners. Again, the office generously decided to provide us with eight assistant guides except 13 porters and 5 yaks for this project. KP recalls that after a day's sightseeing in Kathmandu by the group soon after their arrival, he introduced himself to each member. The youngest was an 18-year-old American female and the eldest was a great-grandmother from Plymouth in Devon, aged 84. Edna, as her name was, was accompanied on the adventure by her son Keith, a Devonshire businessman and retailer and her daughter-in-law Janice, both in their early sixties. Adds KP: " I had taken a 75-year-old gentleman to the Everest base camp, very successfully, but with an extra 10 years in the case of this lady, it was obviously this was going to be a challenge for us." The next day, they flew to the small airstrip at Lukla and assembled everything that was needed for the trek. Before starting the hike,

KP decided to divide the 40 into three sub groups to be led by him and the other three senior guides. " Everything went as scheduled and without any major problems each day, except some of the trekkers had some minor symptoms of altitude sickness being at the at higher altitude," KP explained. The group were fortunate enough to also have an experienced mountaineer in their midst, a 58-yearold German engineer, Rudi Werner. According to KP, he encouraged every member to carry on after some rest despite some of the group experiencing AMS (Acute Mountain Sickness). " Of course, we were fully prepared for any problems we might possibly face during the trip. We had all medical kits, oxymeters, oxygen, Gamow bag, and even a horse for in case of emergency. The equipment was vitally if we were to achieve our goal." If you were wondering, a Gamow is an inflatable pressure bag big enough to fit a person inside. It simulates the conditions at lower altitudes in order to help alleviate the symptoms of AMS. A week after leaving Lukla, the entire entourage reached Everest Base Camp, including Edna. " Arrays of satisfaction ran in our faces and I looked at each of the participants. They all were singing and dancing for joy," enthused KP. " If I were to be honest, the other guides and me did not expect a 100 per cent success with this trip. I just felt so proud of myself, my team colleagues, and for Himalaya Glacier Trekking. To take and manage 40 people in a group together in the mountains is quite a challengeable, let alone getting them all safe and well to the base of Everest." Other Brits on the trip included Phil who, at 55, runs a small electronics firm in Doncaster. " It was just beyond anything one could hope for. My wife and I have been on many guided trips in remote areas and nothing we experienced can compare or is even close to this experience. The

service from the company was amazing. The attention and support given to Edna was superb. The knowledge of KP and his team was first rate and the 'special knowing' they had of everyone's condition day to day was totally professional. It was an honour to trek with these guys. We loved them all."

Derek from Bromley, a retired architect, added: " I have to hand it to them for getting everyone to the base camp goal. That was quite an incredible feat and they obviously knew what they were doing. My only knock on their services doesn't make much sense for the group as a whole, but for me personally, I would have enjoyed more freedom, more time to myself on the trails to appreciate the scenery. It seems that we spent far too much time in a tight line in our own groups and there wasn't much time for solitary trekking. Again, that is my personal style and the reason I probably wouldn't sign on for another group trek." Praise too for the guides and their team from Penny, a 56-year-old head teacher from Kirkcaldy in Fife. " It was so well organised, we had enough support for the group size and they knew their business very well. We had people who educated us along the way. They deserve a medal for getting 40 people both to and from base camp. KP is not only an outstanding guide he is a conscious human being. His love for Nepal, its indigenous cultures, the mountains and environment, shows through his sparkling eyes and giant heart. This set the tone for everyone, porters, trekkers, et al - the entire team."" I'm confident that Himalayan Glacier Trekking is by far, the most superior trekking company in Nepal," offered senior business banker James, 58, from Weybridge in Surrey. " Words cannot express how impressed I was by the HGT team. Simply put, I have never received such immense customer support from any company in any country.

Also, I have never seen a team of individuals who value their customer's satisfaction in the way this does. It was truly incredible adventure and I honestly believe that they are a shining example of how all client-based businesses should be run." Which all goes to prove that more advanced years can defy the universal challenges to the body a week-long trek to the Everest base camp, and provide an exhilarating experience into the bargain. There have of course been those of more mature years who have gone further in the demands and physical defiance of Everest. Last year, a Japanese woman, aged 73, stunned the mountaineering world by successfully climbing the world's tallest mountain. It has set a formidable record for someone of her age that could stay unchallenged for decades. Tamae Watanabe made her ascent from the north ridge route that begins in Tibet. She had left Katmandu for the mountain a month previous but had to reschedule her summit plans twice because of erratic weather that was plaguing the upper slopes of the mountain. Tamae was among 30 climbers to reach the top a week behind schedule. Several and much younger experienced climbers abandoned the challenge but Tamae, undeterred by the season's foul weather elements, kept on going to conquer Everest. This wasn't her first achievement on Everest. When Tamae, a retired office worker from Yamanashi Prefecture was 63 (in 2002), she scaled it from the southeast ridge route in Nepal, setting up a previous record for a woman her age. Watanabe, a retired office worker from Yamanashi Prefecture, is one of two Japanese women who have set records on Mount Everest. Junko Tabei, a member of the Japanese Women's Everest Expedition team, secured her spot in mountaineering history in 1975 by becoming the first woman ever to climb

the mountain when she was 36. In 2008, two male septuagenarians climbed to the summit of Everest within two days of each other. The first was Nepal-born Min Bahadur Sherchan, 76, to be followed by Japan's Yuichiro Miura, at the age of 75. It was our own Sir Ranulph Fiennes who, in 2009, reached the summit of Everest on what his third attempt at conquering the Himalayan giant and, at 65, the oldest Briton ever to reach the peak. Arriving at the summit just before 1am BST, the veteran explorer became the first man to cross the north and south poles and climb the world's highest peak, all in the name of charity. During his 2005 attempt, Sir Ranulph had a heart attack at 8,500 metres and in 2008 was forced to turn back at 8,400 metres after suffering from exhaustion. The record-breaking adventurer raised £3 million for the Marie Curie Cancer Cure appeal after achieving what he called his "personal goal." His incredible triumph came six years after a triple heart bypass operation following a heart attack. For the record, the first Brits to climb to the top of Everest by gender are Nottingham's Doug Scott in 1975 and journalist and TV presenter Rebecca Stephens from London, in 1993. A specialist in exercise science, Michael Joyner, told *La Dolce Vita*: "" My guess is that as more people 'age up' and who have been active their whole lives and are really committed, we will see more interesting things from people in the 60-to-80 age range. Maybe they will inspire a nation where many sit all day in front of a computer." While few of us, at any age, may never come close to the exceptional levels of fitness shown by Wantanabe, Sherchan, Fiennes and their peers in achieving their goals, inactivity doesn't help. Exercise physiologist Barbara Bushman says a quarter of adults over 65 are totally inactive, while less than 40 per cent meet the basic recommendations

for exercise to stay healthy. These are 150 minutes a week of moderate physical activity, such as brisk walking, or 75 minutes of vigorous activity, such as jogging or swimming." The short answer is that most of society is not pushing itself hard enough," says Joyner s. " However, at the same time, there is this emerging subgroup of fit or super-fit middle-aged and older people who are redefining things." He adds: " There have been isolated examples of exceptional feats by people in their 40s and 50s for many years. These are happening more often and are more widely noticed." When Bushman heard about Watanabe, she laughed and said: " Now, that is successful aging! Although not everyone has interest or ability to achieve a feat like climbing Everest, people of all ages can take steps today to develop a complete exercise program." She concluded: " No one is too old, or too young, to invest in their future health." The Himalayas are still forming, rising into the skies of the sub continent at a rate of a few millimetres per year. Climate change affecting everest...***World Expeditions (0800 0744135, worldexpeditions. co. uk), which provided the trip, offers more than 15 itineraries to the Nepali Himalayas, including Everest Base Camp and Kala Pattar, Everest Circuit, Gokyo Lakes and Everest High Passes. Prices from £1,050pp with all meals, but not international flights. No extra local payments required. Oman Air (omanair. com) flies from Heathrow to Kathmandu from £650 return.***Himalayan Glacier Trekking Pvt Ltd. Paryatan Marga, Thamel, Kathmandu, Nepal, P. O. Box 20062Tel : 977-1-4411387, 4411631 Email: mail@himalayanglacier. com