

Name _____ Date _____

Directions: Read the passage and answer the questions.
Write your answers on separate paper or on the back of this page.

Breathing on Mount Everest

- 1 Mount Everest is the highest mountain in the world at 29,029 feet. Two people first climbed to the top of Everest in 1953. Since then, about 4,000 have scaled the summit. But hundreds of others have died trying.
- 2 Why is climbing Mount Everest and other tall mountains so dangerous? One reason is the air. People need oxygen to live and function. But at a high altitude, there is less air to breathe. For this reason, people have difficulty breathing in enough oxygen.
- 3 Our atmosphere consists of layers of gases surrounding Earth. These layers apply pressure to air. The pressure is greatest at the lowest parts of the atmosphere, so more air stays there. At the top of very high mountains, the pressure is less. Because there is less air, people don't get the same amount of oxygen from respiration.
- 4 A lack of oxygen can cause many health problems. People lose the ability to perform basic physical tasks. They get headaches and feel extremely tired. They can't eat or sleep properly and are unable to keep warm. They often make poor decisions and put themselves in danger.
- 5 To climb very high mountains, people usually use bottled oxygen to help them breathe. They climb slowly to give their bodies time to adjust. But temperatures on Mount Everest are very low, and the weather is unpredictable. Even if people use oxygen and the best techniques, climbing Mount Everest can be very dangerous.



Comprehension Questions

1. Circle the sentence in paragraph 2 that shows a cause and effect structure.
2. Underline the sentence in paragraph 3 that shows cause and effect.
3. Give three reasons to explain why climbing Mount Everest is dangerous.