This always proves one of the most successful units of work, and is especially good to generate interest with a Year 7 group, although the nature of the lessons make it also suitable for older students. Students are fascinated by the Mallory and Irvine story and I have students still tell me their theories years later. There is potential to take this unit as slow as you like. With a hard-working motivated class I have spent plenty of time on the debates and the Mallory/Irvine lesson and also given them lessons at the end to work on their own stories and watch some of Tintin in Tibet! One of my favourite units to teach.

**Introduction to the Himalayas (2 Lessons):** Start by showing a simple short video from you tube showing footage of the Himalayas, get students to jot down key words, or their favourite image and ask them to be ready to explain why. Where are the Himalayas? How accurate can students be? Locate on google earth. Get students to write a description – discuss what would make a description good. i.e. the difference between ‘in Asia’ and giving accurate information about countries and using compass bearings and longitude/latitude. This lesson also give the chance to discuss Pangaea (link or link back in future when doing Tectonics), show short video animation of 250 million years in 30 seconds! (available on youtube via link on icgeography.com)

Longitude and latitude – do some atlas work. What longitude/latitude are we at? Get students to write some questions for a class quiz. Mapping activity is a tricky one and will need plenty of practice so students are clear on how to do it. Two are off the map, discuss how you can show this. E.g. with an arrow etc. Overall the introduction is likely to be 2 lessons, even if lessons are 1 hour there is too much to squeeze in for one lesson.

**The impact of the Himalayas on Bangladesh:** This can either be an activity to accompany the next lesson, or can be a lesson in itself. There is a surprising amount you can do with it if you want. The simple point is to say melting snow causes flooding in Bangladesh. You could extend further and look at deforestation and other issues in India causing the problem. The photo activity can be a rewarding one. With strong classes I have then got them to use their headlines and research and write a newspaper article about the flood event.

**Why are the Himalayas important?:** A very simple activity, students have to create a diamond ranking of the key points about the importance of the Himalayas. With a good class this can lead to a lot of spirited debate. It works well to get students to do their own individual rankings, then get them in pairs and then groups and then bigger groups to try and agree on one single factor. I often combine this with an activity about the impact of the Himalayas on Bangladesh. Then get them to write a paragraph.

**What’s it like at the top of the world? (1 Lesson):** This worksheet should be pretty self-explanatory, a mix of some thinking and also independent research which I find the students really get into. As an added fun activity the class can vote on the best new fact found out. The videos are available on the icgeography youtube channel.

**The story of George Mallory and Andrew Irvine (2-4 Lessons possible):** The amount of time you spend on this depends very much on the class. This is quite a significant challenge for students. There is a differentiated worksheet, but teachers may want to differentiate further. I combine the story reading, with watching of youtube videos and discussion. I usually show my students footage of finding George Mallory’s body, but give them a warning incase they don’t want to see it. For me it’s a poignant moment. I spend a lot of time with students brainstorming all the evidence, discussing its significance so when we use the evidence sheet most students tend to be comfortable with the blank sheet, rather than the differentiated one.

**Should people be allowed to climb Everest (2-4 Lessons including debate and preparation time):** The activity should be pretty self-explanatory and again teachers will be able to judge whether they have the right class for spirited debates. I find putting the work in early on and giving students plenty of structure and preparation time will be very rewarding. For shy students make sure in their teams the are assigned roles to look for stats, formulate questions. Over the years I have had some amazing results with debates from classes I didn’t expect to be so passionate… but also some that bombed!

**My Himalayan Adventure (2-4 Lessons possible):** If you time this for the end of the Christmas term, I find it works perfectly. You can combine watching a great video (if you like Tintin!), with getting students to be creative, work on a project and do some cross-curricular work. I tend to watch the Tintin in 3 or 4 sections, so students know in the lesson they will get a balance of watching the movie and preparing their own adventures.
This sample includes one of the activities. The full pack is available from icgeography.com
The story of George Mallory and Andrew Irvine

On 8th June 1924 George Mallory and Andrew ‘Sandy’ Irvine were seen 100m from the peak of the mighty Mount Everest. Bad weather closed in and they were never seen again until George Mallory’s body was found in 1999 – some 75 years later. The unanswered question remains: Did they reach the summit?

The 1924 trip was Mallory’s 3rd visit to Mount Everest, he had been in 1921 to check if a trip to the summit was possible and then in 1922 he tried to climb to the top for the first time.

In 1922 they made three attempts – the first two they abandoned above 8000m due to bad weather – Mallory knew the conditions well. The third was abandoned after a climbing error started an avalanche that killed 7 people.

In 1924 Mallory was determined to succeed and he had the experience of 1921 and 1922 – he knew the conditions. He said he would not come back unsuccessful and he took a photo of his wife which he planned to leave at the peak.

At 12:50pm on June 8th Noel Odell saw Mallory and Irvine in the distance at the 2nd step – he was concerned as they were as much as 5 hours behind schedule.

After Odell saw them, the clouds came over and neither Mallory or Irvine were ever seen alive again.

Odell found some oxygen equipment days later in their final camp, suggesting a problem had delayed their start that day. In 1933 Andrew Irvine’s ice axe was found, the positioning suggested it had been dropped in a fall.

The biggest discovery was the body of George Mallory discovered in 1999 at a height of 8,159m. The body did not have any extreme injuries – suggesting he had not fallen far. Goggles were found in his pocket (he was not wearing them) but there was no sign of the photo of his wife.

In recent years other climbers have attempted to re-create the conditions and the same route. One climbed to 21,000 feet in the same clothes and felt good.

It was only in 1990 that someone successfully completed the same route, but they rated the climb at a difficulty that might just have been within Mallory’s capabilities. Irvine was not such an experienced climber though.
On 8th June 1924 George Mallory and Andrew 'Sandy' Irvine were seen 100m from the peak of the mighty Mount Everest. Bad weather closed in and they were never seen again until George Mallory’s body was found in 1999 – some 75 years later. The unanswered question remains: Did they reach the summit?

"I'm quite doubtful if I shall be fit enough. But again I wonder if the monsoon will give us a chance. I don’t want to get caught, but our three-day scheme from the Chang La will give the monsoon a good chance. We shall be going up again the day after tomorrow. Six days to the top from this camp!"

--from George Mallory’s last letter to his wife prior to disappearing on Mt. Everest with his partner Andrew "Sandy" Irvine in 1924

The basic equipment used in 1924

Just some of the high-tech equipment used today

Mallory claimed he would not come back unsuccessful.

Irvine was suffering symptoms of altitude and not experienced.

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Your final verdict: Did George Mallory and Andrew Irvine reach the summit?

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