

## GEOGRAPHY · Y3-Y6

# Mountains

Knowledge Organiser — KS2 Geography

## Key vocabulary

1

**Mountain**

Land that rises sharply to over 600 metres above sea level.

2

**Hill**

Smaller raised land — usually under 600 metres.

3

**Mountain range**

A line or group of connected mountains.

4

**Summit**

The very top of a mountain — also called the peak.

5

**Tectonic plates**

Huge pieces of Earth's crust that float on hot rock below. They move very slowly.

6

**Volcano**

Mountain formed where melted rock (magma) escapes from underground.

7

**Snowline**

Height above which there is snow all year round.

8

**Avalanche**

Sudden, fast slide of snow, ice or rocks down a mountainside.



9

**Sherpa**

Person from Nepal who is expert at climbing in the Himalayas.

10

**Altitude**

Height above sea level.

## mountains form

Three main ways

- 1. **FOLD MOUNTAINS** — when two tectonic plates push together, the land between them folds upwards (like pushing a tablecloth). Most major ranges (Himalayas, Andes, Alps) formed this way.
- 2. **VOLCANIC MOUNTAINS** — formed when magma erupts and cools layer by layer. Mount Fuji, Mount Etna, Mount Vesuvius are volcanic mountains.
- 3. **BLOCK MOUNTAINS** — when sections of Earth's crust break and one block pushes upward while another stays low.
- Most mountains take **MILLIONS** of years to form.
- The Himalayas are still growing — about 5mm taller every year as India pushes into Asia.

## major mountain ranges

And their highest peaks

- **HIMALAYAS** (Asia) — Mt Everest (8,849m), highest mountain on Earth
- **ANDES** (South America) — Aconcagua (6,961m), longest range in the world
- **ROCKIES** (North America) — Mt Elbert (4,401m)
- **ALPS** (Europe) — Mont Blanc (4,809m)
- **URALS** (Russia) — divides Europe and Asia
- **PYRENEES** (Europe) — between France and Spain
- **ATLAS** (North Africa) — Toubkal (4,167m)
- **DRAKENSBERG** (South Africa) — Thabana Ntlenyana (3,482m)



- GREAT DIVIDING RANGE (Australia)
- UK: Ben Nevis (Scotland, 1,345m), Snowdon (Wales, 1,085m), Scafell Pike (England, 978m)

## Mountain climate and life

It gets very different up high

- TEMPERATURE drops as altitude increases — about 1°C colder for every 100m up.
- Mountains have OXYGEN much thinner near the top — climbers need oxygen tanks above 8,000m.
- Many mountains have a SNOWLINE — above this height, snow stays all year round.
- Different ZONES of life: forest at low altitude → smaller plants higher up → bare rock and ice at the top.
- Animals that live in mountains: yaks (Himalayas), llamas and condors (Andes), mountain goats (Alps), snow leopards.
- People who live in mountains often farm on terraces (steps cut into the slope).
- Climbing the highest mountains is dangerous — many people die on Mt Everest each year.
- First climbers to reach the top of Everest: Sir Edmund Hillary (New Zealand) and Tenzing Norgay (Nepal), 1953.

