

Being male and on your phone are biggest dangers on Scottish mountains

Level: Intermediate

1 Warmer

a. Discuss the following scenario: a small group of 20-somethings are planning an all-day hike in the Scottish mountains in spring.

- What should they take with them?
- What should they find out before they start their hike?



2 Key words

a. Write the correct word(s) from the wordpool next to the definitions below. Then find and highlight them in the article to read them in context.

abilities assumption avalanche cliff cornerstone crampons
fatality filthy glen overestimate peak treacherous

1. a large amount of snow and ice that suddenly falls down a mountain

2. very dangerous, especially because the dangers are not obvious _____
3. the top of a mountain _____
4. a valley, especially in Scotland _____
5. pieces of metal with sharp points that you put on your boots for climbing on snow or ice

6. the steep sides of an area of high land _____
7. a death caused by an accident, war, violence, or disease _____
8. think that something is better than it really is _____

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9. the skills you have that allow you to do something _____
10. the basic part of something, on which everything depends _____
11. something that you consider likely to be true even though no one has told you directly or you have no proof _____
12. very dirty _____

b. Use some of the key words above to complete these sentences.

1. The surface water made the road _____ for drivers.
2. This study is the _____ of the whole research programme.
3. It's unfair to make _____ about teenagers being lazy and untidy.
4. As well as one _____, a further 17 people were injured.
5. The children were completely _____ after playing in the mud.
6. You should never _____ your ability or strength when swimming in the sea.

Being male and on your phone are biggest dangers on Scottish mountains, says expert

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Libby Brooks

27 March, 2022

- 1 Being male, relying on your mobile phone and not checking the avalanche forecast: these are the biggest risk factors on Scotland's mountains, says the country's top female climbing expert.
- 2 Heather Morning, Chief Instructor at Glenmore Lodge, Scotland's national outdoor training centre, is telling visitors to "act like it's still winter" this springtime. Police Scotland reported in March that mountain rescues were up 40%, with climbers misreading treacherous conditions on the peaks. Seven people died on the hills in March alone.
- 3 Heather Morning said: "In March, we get longer daylight hours, and down in the glen here it can feel like summer. People don't realize that they might still need an ice axe and crampons up high."
- 4 With snow still falling in the Cairngorm mountains, the warmer days and cold nights combine to make conditions even more dangerous. Melting water turns to hard ice.
- 5 "People step on old hard snow, slip and fall into rocks or off cliffs. Loss of life is complex, but there are definitely some trends. Nearly all fatalities on the Scottish mountains are men. Men over 60 are the demographic that get into difficulties."
- 6 In her previous job as Mountain Safety Adviser at Mountaineering Scotland, Morning discovered that women accounted for only ten of the 114 fatalities.
- 7 She said: "Obviously it doesn't reflect everybody, but from the many years I've spent training people, men often overestimate their ability and give things a go, and don't think that they need formal skills training."
- 8 Women, in Morning's experience, have far less confidence in their own abilities and are more willing to attend, for example, a navigation course, "which is the absolute cornerstone of safety in the mountains". She estimates that about 25% of mountain-rescue incidents are the result of "basic navigation error".
- 9 Many young people think that all they need is an app. "As a younger person, your whole life is orientated around your mobile phone, so it seems very natural to take it onto the mountain. A map and compasses feel outdated," she said.
- 10 A further challenge is trying to educate people who do not consider outdoor resources are important for them. "The classic example is of someone driving up from the south to climb Ben Nevis. Many people you meet on the main track up have never even heard of the avalanche forecast."
- 11 But her decades on the mountains have taught her never to make assumptions about an individual's climbing abilities, and this includes dogs. She remembers her initial surprise when a "tiny little chihuahua" arrived with its owner to attend a navigation course she was running.
- 12 "Oh my god, it was as hard as nails. The dog down from the hill filthy, having had a wonderful time and it's climbed lots of mountains. So never judge a book by its cover," she said.

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3 Understanding the article

a. Are these sentences True or False according to the article? Correct any that are false.

1. Young men in their 20s most often get into difficulties in the Scottish mountains.
2. Springtime weather in Scotland may be very warm on the peaks and snowy in the glens.
3. One of the best ways to stay safe in the Scottish mountains is to check the avalanche forecast.
4. More than ten times as many women as men die on the Scottish mountains.
5. Heather Morning says that men overestimate their abilities while women are less confident in their abilities and so are more willing to learn about mountain safety.
6. Young people in particular often don't realize how important it is to take a map and a compass into the mountains.

4 Key language

a. Find phrases in the last paragraph of the article with the following meanings.

1. very strong and good at fighting
2. used for saying that you should not form an opinion about someone or something just from the way they look

b. What are the phrases used to talk about in the article?

c. Use each of the phrases twice to complete these sentences.

1. The ponies may look small and cute, but in reality they are _____
_____.
2. Wow, chocolate-covered crickets are really delicious. It just shows that you should _____
_____.
3. From the outside, the café looked cheap and filthy, but inside it was beautiful. That's why, these days, I try not to _____.
4. You don't have to pretend to be _____.
It's ok to cry every now and then.

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5 Language awareness

a. Match these common Scottish dialect words with their English equivalents.

- | | |
|-----------|-----------|
| 1. aye | a. lake |
| 2. bairn | b. clever |
| 3. canny | c. know |
| 4. glen | d. idiot |
| 5. ken | e. valley |
| 6. loch | f. potato |
| 7. numpty | g. yes |
| 8. tattie | h. baby |

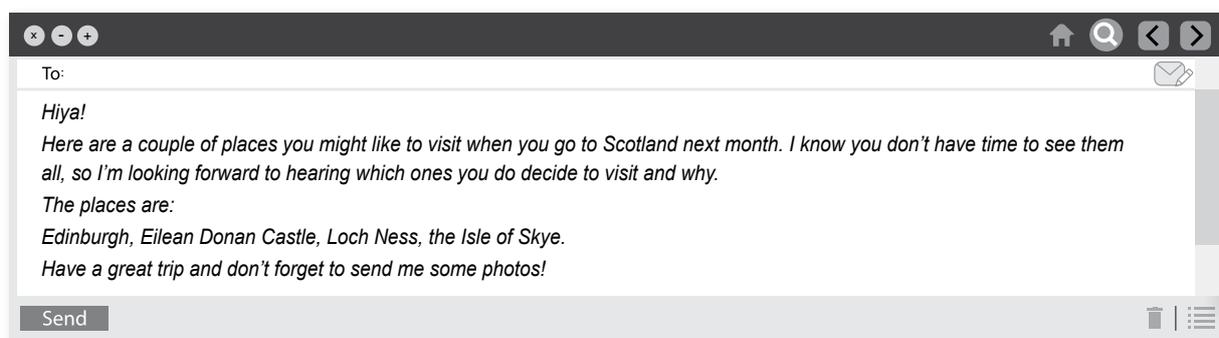
6 Discussion

a. Discuss these questions and scenarios.

- Why do we find mountains so appealing? What makes people want to climb to their peaks?
- Why are people who live in towns and cities often not prepared for their trip to the wilderness, the desert, the jungle, or into the mountains?
- Talk about a time when you realized you should have been more prepared for the outdoors.
- Why do people do endurance sports such as free climbing, ultra-marathons or cross-country skiing?

7 In your own words

a. You are planning a trip to Scotland. You have a friend who lived there for two years. You asked them for suggestions about places you should visit. Read their email.



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- b. Research the places and decide which two you'd like to visit. Write an email back to your friend telling them which place you chose and why. Ask follow-up questions about the place too.

Edinburgh and its castle



Eilean Donan Castle



Loch Ness



Isle of Skye

