

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

Level: Advanced

1 Warmer

a. 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 precautions should they take?
- What should they find out before they set off?



2 Key words

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

assumption	attributes	avalanche	capability	cornerstone
crampons	fatality	generalization	glen	inevitably
irrelevant	peak	reluctance	treacherous	urge

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

2. advise someone very strongly about what action or attitude they should take

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

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7. used for saying that something is certain to happen _____
8. a death caused by an accident, war, violence or disease _____
9. a statement that seems to be true in most situations but is based on too few facts or only on a small number of instances _____
10. qualities or features of someone _____
11. not important to what you are discussing or doing _____
12. the basic part of something, on which everything depends _____
13. a feeling of being unwilling to do something or of wishing that you did not have to do it

14. something that you consider likely to be true even though no one has told you directly or even though you have no proof _____
15. the ability, aptitude, or fitness to do something _____

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

1. That kind of instant success _____ leads to jealousy among the online community.
2. This study is the _____ of the whole research programme.
3. I believe she could win the 400-metre race this year – she certainly has the _____.
4. The surface water made the road _____ for even the most experienced of drivers.
5. It's unfair to make _____ about teenagers being lazy and untidy.
6. As well as one _____, a further 17 people were injured.
7. The UN is _____ them very strongly to honour the peace treaty.

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Data covering seven-year period up to the start of 2019 shows that women accounted for only ten of 114 fatalities

Libby Brooks

27 March, 2022

- 1 Being male, unable to look beyond your mobile phone and unfamiliar with the avalanche forecast: these are critical risk factors on Scotland's mountains, according to the country's foremost female climbing expert.
- 2 Heather Morning, who took up her post as Chief Instructor at Glenmore Lodge, Scotland's national outdoor training centre, in March, 2022, is urging visitors to "think winter" this springtime, as Police Scotland revealed on Friday that mountain rescues are up 40% in recent weeks, with climbers misreading treacherous conditions on the peaks. Seven people have died on the hills in March alone.
- 3 Morning, who is based in Aviemore, 50 miles north-east of Fort William, said: "Into March, we get longer daylight hours, and down in the glen here it very much feels like summer. People aren't switched on to the fact they might still need an ice axe and crampons up high."
- 4 With snow still falling in the Cairngorms, the warmer days and frosty nights combine to make conditions even more dangerous, with melt water turning to hard ice.
- 5 "Inevitably, we see fatalities of people stepping on old hard snow, taking flight and rattling off into rocks or off cliffs. Loss of life is complex, but there are definitely some trends. Virtually all fatalities on the Scottish mountains are men. Men over 60 are the demographic that get into difficulties."
- 6 In her previous role as Mountain Safety Adviser at Mountaineering Scotland, Morning analysed data covering a seven-year period up to the start of 2019 and discovered that women accounted for only ten of the 114 fatalities.
- 7 She said: "You make generalizations about male and female attributes with regard to risk taking and obviously it doesn't reflect everybody, but from the many years I've spent training people, guys tend to overestimate their ability and give things a go, and don't think that they need formal skills training, whereas women tend to swing way the other way."
- 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 some people think is irrelevant, when it is the absolute cornerstone of safety in the mountains." She estimates that about 25% of mountain-rescue incidents are the result of the "basic navigation error of putting people in the wrong place."
- 9 This male reluctance to learn about navigation overlaps with an assumption among many young people that all they require is an app. "As a younger person, your whole life is orientated around your mobile phone, so it seems very natural to take it into the mountain environment, while a map and compasses feel outdated," she said.
- 10 It is a further challenge to educate people who do not consider outdoor resources are relevant for them. "If we take the classic example of someone driving up from down south to climb Ben Nevis – I suspect that most people you meet on the main track up will never even have heard of the avalanche forecast."
- 11 Morning, who originally trained as a typist before being introduced to the Mountain Leader scheme while volunteering with a local youth club, believes that while women increasingly embrace outdoor adventure as much as men, this equality does not translate into those applying leadership qualifications.
- 12 She advised Bonnie Boots, the Glasgow-based group that run women-only hill-walking sessions for women from ethnic backgrounds, and has further plans for a training programme to encourage more BAME (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic) women on to the leadership path.

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- 13 Her decades on the mountains have taught her never to make assumptions about an individual's climbing capabilities, and this extends to dogs. She recalls her initial surprise when a "tiny little chihuahua" arrived with its owner to attend a navigation course she was running in the Ochills. "Oh my god, it was as hard as nails. The thing came off the hill filthy, having had a ball and it's climbed loads 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 are the most likely people to get into difficulties in the Scottish mountains.
2. Springtime weather in Scotland may be very different depending on how high up you are, with warm sunshine on the peaks and snow in the glens.
3. One of the best ways to stay safe in the Scottish mountains is to check the avalanche forecast.
4. In a seven-year period, ten times as many men as women died on the Scottish mountains.
5. Heather Morning says that in general men overestimate their abilities while women are less confident in their abilities, which leads them to take more precautions than men.
6. Older women in particular often don't realize the importance of taking a map and a compass into the mountains.
7. Before becoming a climbing instructor, Heather Morning worked with BAME youths, teaching them navigation skills.
8. She is very disapproving of people who take dogs into the mountains.

4 Key language

a. Find phrases towards the end of the article with the following meanings.

1. very strong and good at fighting
2. enjoyed itself greatly
3. used for saying that you should not form an opinion about someone or something only from their appearance

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

c. Use each of the phrases in sentences or short anecdotes of your own.

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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. Expand your answers with anecdotes and details.

- Why do we find mountains so appealing? What makes people want to climb to their peaks?
- Why do people who live in urban areas often underestimate the difficult conditions they might encounter when going to the outback, the desert, the jungle, or into the mountains?
- Talk about a time when you realized you should have been more prepared for the outdoors.
- What particular dangers are connected with certain outdoor endurance sports such as free climbing, ultra-marathons, or cross-country skiing?

7 In your own words

a. Many extreme sports can bring about disastrous results. Choose one of the disasters (1–4) and find out the following information:

- where it happened
 - what happened
 - why it happened
 - what could have been done differently to prevent the disaster
1. 2021 Gansu ultramarathon disaster
 2. 1996 Everest disaster
 3. 2008 K2 disaster
 4. 2018 Tham Luang cave flooding