

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### The Indian Subcontinent

The Indian subcontinent is a peninsula that juts southward from the rest of Asia like an enormous arrowhead. The Himalayan Mountains separate the subcontinent from the rest of Asia. While it is a distinct landmass, the Indian subcontinent is not large enough to be considered a continent.

The Indian subcontinent is part of a tectonic plate that has been moving for more than 200 million years. The plate was once attached to Africa, Australia and Antarctica, but it separated and began colliding with Asia 50 million years ago.

When the two landmasses met, the resulting collision created the Himalayas. Scientists expect the Himalayas to continue rising for the next several million years. Many of the Himalayan mountains tower more than five miles above sea level, making the Himalayas the world's tallest

mountain chain. Himalaya means "home of snow" because the tallest peaks of the Himalayas are always capped with snow.

The Himalayas include Mount Everest, the tallest mountain in the world. Everest rises 29,028 feet above sea level on the border between China and Nepal. No plant life grows near the mountain's peak due to powerful winds, extremely cold temperatures, and a lack of oxygen.

Many adventurous people attempt to climb Everest every year. Often their venture ends in sickness or death. Most people are unable to breathe 20,000 feet above sea level because there is not enough oxygen in the atmosphere. A person will suffer brain damage when they are unable to breathe. Clearly the peak of Mount Everest is a place for only the heartiest of people.

### Fill in the Blanks

The Indian subcontinent has been a part of A\_\_\_\_\_ for the last 50 m\_\_\_\_\_. years. The s\_\_b\_\_o\_\_i\_\_ne\_\_t is separated from the rest of A\_\_\_\_\_ by the massive H\_\_m\_\_l\_\_y\_\_n Mountains. Himalaya means "h\_\_\_\_\_ of snow" because the Himalaya's tallest p\_\_a\_\_s are always covered with s\_\_\_\_\_.



More than 500 people have reached the p\_\_\_\_\_ of Mount E\_\_\_\_\_, the tallest of the H\_\_\_\_\_. One Italian, Reinhold Messner, climbed the mountain twice without oxygen. This is a very dangerous feat because a person can suffer b\_\_\_\_\_ damage at that altitude. Everest expeditions have so far claimed over 100 lives, including 40 ethnic Sherpas who live in the H\_\_\_\_\_. Jon Krakauer wrote in his bestselling book, *Into Thin Air*, "Attempting to climb E\_\_\_\_\_ is a completely irrational act . . . As you ascend into [the] thin air, you discover that h\_\_\_\_\_ are not meant to be here." Eight people died on Krakauer's odyssey when a blizzard suddenly enveloped the upper reaches of Everest. The climb may only be undertaken with government permission. Even with o\_\_\_\_\_, strong w\_\_\_\_\_ and frigid t\_\_\_\_\_ make the p\_\_\_\_\_ of Mount Everest a place for only the heartiest of people.

### Answer in complete sentences

\*1. Explain why the top of Mount Everest has an unpleasant climate.

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\*2. In 1924, George Mallory was asked why he wanted to climb Mount Everest. He replied, "Because it is there." Why would someone risk his or her life to climb Mount Everest?

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\*This is a higher order learning question. Any reasonable answer will be graded as correct.