



# Tenzing Norgay

## HIDDEN HERO OF HISTORY

**Listen to the story:** <https://jonincharacter.com/tenzing-norgay/>

**Tenzing Norgay** was one of the first two people to reach the summit of Mount Everest, all 29,029 feet, in 1953.

He was born in Tibet, and, at a young age, went to work for a **Sherpa** community that lived near Everest.

Mr. Norgay joined his first expedition when he was twenty years old as a high-altitude **porter**, which meant he carried and was responsible for many of the groups' vital supplies. He took part in both British and Swiss attempts to summit the mountain, eventually considered a full-fledged member of the expedition team.

Even before cresting the top of Mount Everest, Mr. Norgay broke climbing records in some of his early expeditions and helped find the paths up the mountain that would eventually make way for others to accomplish the feat.

In 1953, Mr. Norgay was climbing with a team that included Sir Edmund Hillary, a New Zealand climber. Sir Hillary fell into a crevasse, but before he hit the bottom, Mr. Norgay quickly secured his rope using his ice pick and saved Sir Hillary's life. From that point on, Edmund Hillary decided that Tenzing Norgay would always be his chosen climbing partner.

In March of 1953, both Tenzing Norgay and Edmund Hillary were part of an expedition that was constantly being interrupted by terrible and dangerous weather, forcing teams of climbers to head back to the base camp. The storm was terrible, and could mean that the two would have to turn around, and head back to the base camp. Mr. Norgay's dreams were on the line. He had gotten close so many times and felt this would be his best shot. He couldn't sleep and kept telling himself that "It must be this time." But the storm had to clear first.

Then, on May 29th, 1953, Mr. Norgay and Sir Hillary woke up at their camp determined to finish the journey and found that the storm had cleared. They made their final ascent of Mount Everest, reaching the highest point on the earth and becoming the first recorded pair to do it.

They spent 15 minutes at the top of Everest and took one photograph: Tenzing Norgay standing with his ice pick.



## Glossary

**Porter** – A person who carries supplies.

**Sherpas** – People native to the mountain regions of Nepal and the Himalayas. They have an incredibly rich culture full of their own unique traditions, and many have a deep knowledge of their mountainous surroundings.

## Give it Some Thought

Tenzing Norgay had been paving the way for many to climb Mount Everest. How do you think he felt when he was the first to reach the summit and also help Sir Edmund Hillary achieve his goal to reach the summit too?

What were some of the dangers that the climbing team encountered on their quest? What do you think motivated Mr. Norgay to continue to lead the team in spite of those dangers?

What qualities did Tenzing Norgay have that made Sir Hillary trust him with his life?

Mr. Norgay and Sir Hillary and the rest of the climbing party had to work as a team to achieve their goal. Why is teamwork so important, especially when facing both physical and mental challenges?

After all of the hard work to prepare and trek to the top of Mount Everest, Tenzing Norgay and Sir Edmund Hillary only stayed on the Summit for 15 minutes. Why do you think they stayed for such a short time?

## Use Your Imagination

Pretend that you are Tenzing Norgay leading Sir Edmund Hillary the last few steps to the summit of the mighty Mount Everest. You've reached the top! Describe the moment: What do you say and do? What do you see? How do you feel?

Now imagine that you are home safe and you've had some time to reflect on your great achievement. Write down what you are thinking and how you are feeling. Do you have any new goals? Do you have thoughts about how you want to be remembered?