

**Background** At approximately 29,000 feet above sea level, Mount Everest is the highest mountain in the world. More than five thousand people have reached the summit of Mount Everest since the first successful climb in 1953 by Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay. However, the climb is extremely dangerous; more than 200 people have died attempting to reach the top.

# Finding Your Everest

Essay by Robert Medina



CLOSE READ  
Notes

1. **READ** ▶ As you read lines 1–33, begin to collect and cite text evidence.
  - Circle the most important information you learn about Jordan Romero in lines 1–13.
  - Explain in the margin what is meant by “the seven summits.”
  - Underline details in lines 22–33 that explain what Jordan achieved.

**C**an parents go too far in supporting their children’s dreams? This is a question people sometimes ask when they hear the story of the teenage mountain climber, Jordan Romero. Between the ages of 10 and 15, Jordan climbed the highest mountain on every continent—and his father and stepmother climbed them with him. They call themselves Team Jordan.

Paul Romero, Jordan’s father, was taken by surprise when his 9-year-old son firmly announced his intention to climb “the seven summits.” Jordan had seen a mural at school, showing the seven peaks that make up this **pantheon** of mountains. When he told his father what he wanted to do, Paul Romero’s jaw dropped. Paul Romero is an experienced mountaineer, so he knew what was involved. He also knew his son.

pantheon:

10

“We’ve always taught him to just think big and we’ll try to make it happen,” Paul Romero said. But, as Romero later noted, there was a fine line between encouraging his son and pushing him too far. The father began by training his son so that he could “begin to even understand what mountaineering was—that there’s this long, hard, dirty, un-fun hours and days and weeks of carrying packs and long, extensive, brutal travel, and all this type of stuff just before you can even think of climbing a mountain.”

persevered:

Jordan **persevered**, though, and in July 2006, when he was 10 years old, Jordan and his family climbed 19,300-foot-high Mount Kilimanjaro, the highest peak on the African continent. This was the first rung in the amazing ladder that Jordan Romero had set out to climb. Over the next five and a half years, Team Jordan climbed Mount Elbrus in Russia (2007), Mount Aconcagua in South America (2007), Mount McKinley in North America (2008), Mount Carstensz Pyramid in Indonesia (2009), Mount Everest in Asia (2010), and Vinson Massif in Antarctica (2011). In many of these climbs, Jordan set a world record as the youngest ever to climb the peak. When he completed the seven summits at 15, he was the youngest person ever to accomplish that feat.

controversy:

It was the Mount Everest ascent—when Jordan was only 13 years old—that has created the greatest **controversy**. Jordan’s feat as the youngest person to reach “the top of the world” was publicized

2. **◀ REREAD** Reread lines 14–21. In the margin, restate in your own words what Paul Romero says about mountaineering.
3. **▶ READ** As you read lines 34–52, continue to cite textual evidence.
  - Underline the medical claim (a position or opinion) about the dangers of mountain climbing to a 13-year-old.
  - Circle the medical claim that offers a counterargument, or response, to the dangers of mountain climbing to a 13-year-old.
  - Underline the opinion given by another mountain climber.

around the world. “How Young Is Too Young?” asked one newspaper headline. Many mountain climbers and medical experts questioned whether a 13-year-old boy could climb so high (Mount Everest is almost 30,000 feet high) without physically harming his body. Dr. Michael Bradley, a psychologist and expert on teen behavior, noted, “Most 13-year-olds don’t have the wiring to make **cognitive** life-and-death decisions and are not truly able to understand what they’re signing on for.” Another physician, Dr. Peter Hackett, reported that there are conflicting opinions about the effects on a young brain. Some theories say that a young brain is more resilient; others say that it may be more vulnerable.

cognitive:

Many climbers take exception to the publicity surrounding Team Jordan. Everest climber Todd Burleson summed it up by saying, “He’s got his whole life to climb Everest. Being the youngest boy to climb is a fashionable, celebrity-oriented sort of thing. But it’s not about the mountains. It’s like trying to get your PhD at ten.”

Paul Romero claims that he is fully aware of the risks. There is a fine line between encouraging Jordan and pushing him too far, he says. He talked about the point where Jordan might have “reached his maximum mentally, physically, and where the risk has become too high.” He said, “Jordan has just not even come close to that point yet.”

And what about Jordan, now that he has accomplished his goal of climbing the seven summits before his 16th birthday? Unsurprisingly,

4. ◀ **REREAD AND DISCUSS** Reread lines 49–52. With a small group, discuss whether the evidence Todd Burleson cites is sufficient to support his opinion that Jordan and his family are just publicity seekers.
5. **READ** ▶ As you read lines 53–68, continue to cite textual evidence.
  - In the margin, restate the claim that Paul Romero makes in lines 53–57.
  - Circle the main idea in lines 58–65.
  - Underline the details that support the main idea.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Period: \_\_\_\_\_

### Cite Text Evidence

For practice in tracing an argument and counterargument, cite evidence that Medina gives to support each reason in the boxes below.

<b>CLAIM:</b> <i>The risks of climbing Everest are not too great for 13-year-old Jordan.</i>
<b>SUPPORT:</b>
<b>Reason 1:</b>
<b>Reason 2:</b>
<b>Reason 3:</b>
<b>Reason 4:</b>

<b>CLAIM:</b> <i>The risks are too great for 13-year-old Jordan.</i>
<b>SUPPORT:</b>
<b>Reason 1:</b>
<b>Reason 2:</b>
<b>Reason 3:</b>
<b>Reason 4:</b>