

HER PLACE WOMEN'S MUSEUM

EDUCATION/SECONDARY

BRIGITTE MUIR

Class grouping: whole class and pairs (if desired)

Time: 60–90 minutes

Purpose: The purpose of this activity is to introduce students to the achievements of Australian female mountaineer Brigitte Muir. As the first Australian woman to climb the seven summits of the world, Brigitte's motivation and dedication inspires young women to work to achieve their goals. The aim of this lesson is for students to identify with Brigitte and determine their own 'mountain' that they wish to climb in their lives.

The activities in this resource work well if you are able to have access to YouTube in the classroom. After watching the initial documentary, *The Eighth Summit*, the class will work independently or in pairs and share their own 'mountainous' goals.

Activities:

- 1. Watch documentary *The Eighth Summit* and complete question sheet. Discuss questions from documentary.**
- 2. Determine personal 'mountain' and goals. Discuss goals as a class.**

Preparation and Materials:

- Print copies of documentary questions for students and one copy for teacher (with answers)
- Organise internet access to YouTube

Activity 1

Whole class

Watch the following documentary as a class. Students fill in question sheet throughout viewing.

- *The Eighth Summit:*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aLDdqSkTRm0>

Activity 2

Independently/in pairs and whole class

Students work independently or in pairs. Together, they discuss the following questions. Following this, lead a discussion in the classroom where students share their thoughts and goals with the class.

1. What activities or interests are you passionate about?
2. What is your 'mountain'? i.e. what seemingly 'impossible dream' would you like to achieve in your life?
3. What scares you about this? Can you use your fear to help you? How?
4. Brigitte says she used her anger to help motivate her and stop her from giving up – how does this apply to your dream?
5. Brigitte says independence and education helped her achieve her goals. Does this apply to you? How?
6. Brigitte faced many challenges and it took a long time for her to reach her goal – much longer than she initially thought. What challenges might you face in trying to reach your goal?
7. Name two ways in which Brigitte Muir is inspiring.
8. How do you think it would feel to have 'climbed your mountain'?
9. How do you think you could use your achievement to inspire others and make the world a better place?

The Eighth Summit documentary: questions (Teacher Copy)

1. In 1988, what was Brigitte's dream?
To climb the highest mountain on every continent – the seven summits
2. How many times did Brigitte unsuccessfully attempt Mount Everest?
4 times
3. Where did Brigitte grow up?
Jemeppe, Belgium
4. What advice did Brigitte's mother give her as a child?
To be independent and educated
5. What year did Brigitte start caving?
1976, while she was still in school
6. In 1986, Brigitte and John attempted their first high altitude climb. They climbed Mount Shivling in India. What went wrong?
Their Indian liaison officer died and Brigitte fell in love with another man. Brigitte and John split up for a while after this.
7. Which was the first world summit Brigitte climbed?
Alaska, Mount Denali
8. Where was the second summit?
Tanzania, Africa, Mount Kilimanjaro
9. When and where was the third summit?
Argentina, 1989 Mount Aconcagua
10. What happens when Brigitte attempts the south side of Mount Aconcagua?
Bad weather, treacherous conditions, runs out of food, hallucinating
11. What does Brigitte think about being scared in the mountains?
It's natural, more adrenalin, more aware – which is a good thing in those conditions. Good to be scared, not terrified.
12. Where was the fourth summit?
Mt Kosciuszko, Australia
13. What about the fifth summit?
The former Soviet Union (USSR), Mount Elbrus – the highest peak in Europe
14. How many climbers were recently killed in this region and how?
An avalanche, killing 42 Russian climbers
15. Where is the real challenge in being an expeditioner?

Maintaining your life at home, going away on expeditions and also doing something for/being involved in the community

16. When was Brigitte's first attempt of Everest and why didn't she succeed?
1993 - There was a death on the team and she was frightened.

17. Why does Brigitte say it's important to love yourself?
If you love yourself, you can be your best self and love others. People who don't love themselves are not nice, or helpful to be around!

18. How did Brigitte get the money to climb Everest?
Adventure Class - taking guided mountaineering tours

19. What was difficult about her Mount Vinson climb in Antarctica?
Trapped in a tent for ten days - a break in the weather allowed a dash for the summit.

20. What year was Brigitte's second attempt at Everest?
1995

21. Why wasn't she successful?
Her headlamp went out and she was left behind on the mountain on a ledge.

22. What kept her alive?
Anger. Brigitte finds anger to be a great motivator.

23. When was her third attempt?
1996

24. What went wrong?
Several people who were ahead of them died - if they had known, they could have rescued some of them. After this, Brigitte didn't feel like continuing the climb.

25. The fourth attempt?
1997

26. What does she say is hard about being at that altitude?
The waiting - sometimes for days. Eating is hard. Also, you need to drink a lot of water.

27. Does she make it?
Yes!

28. What does she want to tell all Australians?
This is a beautiful planet and we should look after it. There's only one Australia.

29. How long did it take Brigitte to be the first woman to climb all seven summits of the world?
9 Years

30. What are the two reasons Brigitte wanted to climb Mount Makalu, also located in the Himalayas?

- 1 - Everest wasn't satisfying because of the help from Sherpas.
- 2 - John's best friend died on Makalu so Brigitte wanted to make it a happy mountain again.

31. What went wrong?

Brigitte's good friend Michael was killed.

32. Why did this affect her so profoundly?

This was the first time she had been so close to a friend who died - she met his family and found herself 'on the other side of the fence'. She had lost friends, but this time, she lost someone she loved.

33. What two things did she lose?

She lost Michael and lost high altitude climbing.

34. What did Brigitte do when she returned from this trip?

Went to art school and focused her energy on her painting and writing



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