



It was a dark and cold Thursday night on Mount Elbrus, the highest peak of the Caucasus Mountains, when a sudden snowstorm struck 19 climbers trying to reach the Russian **summit**.

Strong winds, low visibility and temperatures that plummeted to minus 20 degrees Celsius began to hurt the group, and they called for help just after 5 pm local time. One woman, who turned back after feeling unwell, died in the arms of one of the guides. Four more people died after reaching the summit, with two freezing to death in the endless storm. Another climber broke his leg while guides suffered **frostbite** and other injuries.

The route to the top of the 5,642-meter **dormant** volcano is known to be particularly dangerous, and between 15 to 30 people die each year attempting to reach its summit.

Difficult words: **summit** (the very top of a mountain or something very tall), **dormant** (inactive), **frostbite** (when cold air or water freezes parts of your body).

**Discussion Questions****Topic Talk**

1. Define the following words: *summit*, *dormant* and *frostbite*
2. Where were the 19 climbers when a sudden snowstorm struck?
3. Were the climbers rescued while trying to reach the summit?
4. How many people died?
5. How safe is the route to the top of the dormant volcano?
6. On average, how many people die each year attempting to reach Mount Elbrus summit?

Express Your Thoughts

1. Would you climb a mountain even if you knew people had died trying to reach its summit?
2. Are there dormant volcanoes in your country? Do people climb there?
3. Which is the highest peak in your country?
Is it famous among climbers?