

Climbing Kilimanjaro

Mount Kilimanjaro, located in Tanzania a short distance from the equator, is the world's tallest volcano and the tallest mountain in Africa. Climbing the 19,340-foot mountain takes you through distinct ecological regions, such as:

- rain and cloud forest (6,000 feet–9,000 feet)
- heath and moorland (9,000 feet–13,000 feet)
- alpine desert (13,000 feet–16,500 feet)
- glacier (16,500 feet and up)

Each region has its own climate, physical features, plants, and wildlife. Mount Kilimanjaro is the only mountain in the world to offer such a diverse environment along its slopes. You and the other members of your group are charged with writing a travelogue about this unique mountain.

Procedure

- 1 Watch NOVA's "Volcano Above the Clouds" in class and take notes on the various ecosystems found along Kilimanjaro and the equipment needed to scale the mountain.
- 2 Use additional resources for researching and describing each stage of the climb. Include any illustrations, maps, or diagrams you think might be useful. You may want to use the questions below as a guide.
- 3 Write a travelogue that describes the different regions encountered during the climb, as well as the equipment needed and health issues faced during each stage of the climb.

Some Travelogue Questions

- What are some of the physical characteristics of the region?
- What kind of weather might you encounter in this region?
- What kinds of animals and plants can be found in the area?
- Do those plants and animals have any special adaptations to the conditions in the region? If so, what are those adaptations?
- Is there any special equipment you might need for this stage of the climb? If so, what equipment do you need?
- Are there any health or safety precautions you should be aware of for this stage of the climb? If so, what are they?
- Why might scientists wish to study this region in more detail?

