



A Holiday Built by Hikers, and a Warning in the Numbers

Read the passage and answer the questions. (CEFR B1–B2)

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1 Most national holidays are created from the top down, but Mountain Day grew from the bottom up. For decades, climbing clubs, mountain guides, and local governments called for a day to honor mountains. By 2012, thirteen prefectures already had their own local versions of the day. Only after a group of lawmakers from many parties joined the campaign did the idea become law in 2014.



2 Choosing the date turned out to be a lesson in public memory. August 12 made economic sense because it would extend the Obon break, yet it was also the anniversary of the deadliest single-plane crash in history. Celebrating mountains on a day when 520 people died on a mountain felt wrong to many, so the date was moved one day earlier.

3 The holiday also arrives at a time when mountain accidents are rising. In 2025, police counted 3,623 people who needed rescue or went missing in the mountains, the highest number on record, and nearly half were aged 60 or older. For many guides, the real purpose of Mountain Day is not to send more people up, but to help them come back down safely.

Comprehension

1. What is the main idea of the passage?

- (A) Mountain Day was planned by the national government to bring more tourists to the mountains. (B) Mountain Day came from people who love mountains, and its date and purpose reflect both public memory and safety.
- (C) August 12 was chosen because it was the best date for the Obon break. (D) Mountain accidents in Japan have become fewer since Mountain Day started.

2. By 2012, how many prefectures had their own local version of Mountain Day?

- (A) Three (B) Twelve
- (C) Fourteen (D) Thirteen

3. Why did August 12 make economic sense as a date?

- (A) It would make the Obon break longer. (B) It was the start of the summer climbing season.
- (C) Fewer people travel on that day. (D) Shops sell more hiking goods in August.

4. What can be inferred about the campaign for Mountain Day before 2014?

- (A) It was started by one political party. (B) Most mountain guides were against it.
- (C) It had support in many local areas, but local support alone could not make it a national law. (D) It wanted to make August 12 a day to remember the plane crash.

5. In paragraph 1, the phrase "from the bottom up" is closest in meaning to

- (A) starting at the foot of a mountain (B) started by ordinary people and groups, not by leaders
- (C) created very slowly over many centuries (D) decided by the lowest court in the country

6. Why does the writer give the number 3,623 in the last paragraph?

- (A) To show that Mountain Day has made hiking more popular among young people. (B) To compare Japan's mountain accidents with those of other countries.
- (C) To prove that the plane crash in 1985 was the worst mountain accident. (D) To support the idea that the holiday should focus on bringing climbers home safely.



Vocabulary, Paraphrase & Summary

Match the words with the definitions. Then rewrite and summarize.

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|----------------|---|
| 1. campaign | a. to make something longer in time or size |
| 2. honor | b. a day that is exactly a year or a number of years after an important event |
| 3. prefecture | c. the act of saving someone from a dangerous situation |
| 4. lawmaker | d. officially written down, so it can be compared with other years |
| 5. extend | e. a planned set of actions to reach a social or political goal |
| 6. anniversary | f. to show great respect for someone or something |
| 7. rescue | g. one of the 47 large areas that Japan is divided into |
| 8. on record | h. a person who is elected to make laws, such as a member of the Diet |

Paraphrase — say it in your own words

1. “Most national holidays are created from the top down, but Mountain Day grew from the bottom up.”

Hint: Replace "from the top down" with "by the government" and "from the bottom up" with "by ordinary people".

2. “Celebrating mountains on a day when 520 people died on a mountain felt wrong to many, so the date was moved one day earlier.”

Hint: Start with "Many people thought" and use "so they changed the date to".

3. “For many guides, the real purpose of Mountain Day is not to send more people up, but to help them come back down safely.”

Hint: Use "Many guides believe that the main goal of Mountain Day is not ..., but ...".

Summary

Summarize the passage in about 50 words.



Debate & Opinion Essay

Prepare for a debate. Then write your opinion (100–150 words).

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Motion: Mountain Day should be used mainly to teach mountain safety, not to encourage more people to climb.

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- Accidents are rising. In 2025, 3,623 people needed rescue or went missing, the highest number on record, so safety is an urgent problem.
- Nearly half of the people in trouble were 60 or older. A national day for safety lessons could reach these older hikers.
- If the holiday only tells people to climb, more beginners will go to busy summer mountains without the right skills or gear.

Add your own reason:

AGAINST 反対

- The law says the day is for getting close to mountains and thanking them. Enjoying mountains is the main purpose, and safety is only one part.
- Most people who go out on Mountain Day come back safely. Focusing only on danger may make young people afraid of nature.
- Safety can be taught all year in schools and climbing clubs, so one holiday does not have to carry that job.

Add your own reason:

Opinion	<i>I believe / I think that ...</i>
Reason 1	<i>First, ... For example, ...</i>
Reason 2	<i>Second, ... In fact, ...</i>
Counter	<i>Some people say ... However, ...</i>
Conclusion	<i>In conclusion, ...</i>