

Created by Jennifer Sage
Training Type: Race Simulation
Working HR Zones: Zone 3 to 5c
Total Class Length: 60 minutes

Nineteen hundred meters up there is completely different from 1,900 anyplace else. There's no air, there's no oxygen. There's no vegetation, there's no life. There's no life. Rocks. Any other climb there's vegetation, grass, and trees. Not there on the Ventoux. It's more like the moon than a mountain.
~Lance Armstrong, 2000

Riding on the Moon

By this 15th stage, the 2013 Tour de France is over halfway finished. They are approaching the Alps, where two stunningly hard days in a row await them, but here before them lies perhaps one of the most challenging climbs of the Tour. A lot of action will take place in the Alps, but today's stage in the heart and the heat of Provence, can potentially change the status quo. Whoever wins on Ventoux or whoever claims (or holds on to) the Yellow Jersey, will be a force to be reckoned with in the remaining 6 stages.



Le Mont Ventoux is a mountain feared by many pro cyclists. It rises 1,910 meters from almost sea level (200m). The route snakes up the eastern flank for 22 km. That's 13.5 miles of an unrelenting average grade of 8%. It's the highest point between the Alps and the Mediterranean Sea and can be seen from many, many miles away. On a clear day, one can see the Mediterranean Sea from the top. The summit of Ventoux is bare limestone, without vegetation or trees, which makes it appear to be snow-capped year round. It can be brutally hot, or it can be chilly and very windy at the summit. Some say the origins of the name Ventoux comes from the French word for wind—*vent*.

Mont Ventoux has been nicknamed the “Beast of Provence”, “The Giant of Provence” and “The Bald Mountain”. Why is the mountain bald at the top? It wasn't always that way, but beginning in the 12th century, Mont Ventoux was systematically stripped of trees to supply the hungry naval ports along the Mediterranean coast. Yes, battle ships are what cost Ventoux its vegetation. Some of the mountain was reforested in the 19th century, but it never took hold on the top third of the mountain.

The Tour de France first visited Ventoux in 1951, and this year will be the 16th visit of the cyclists in the Tour de France. Its fame as a scene of great Tour drama has made it a magnet for cyclists around the world.

The most famous, or rather infamous, ascent of Ventoux in the Tour de France was in 1967. British rider Tom Simpson began weaving across the road about 2/3 of the way up before he fell down. He famously asked spectators to put him back on his bike. He rode a little more and then fell over dead of dehydration and heat exhaustion. Later, amphetamines and alcohol was found in his system. A monument to Tom Simpson stands where he died, surrounded by barren limestone rocks. To this day cyclists adorn the monument with water bottles, flowers and other paraphernalia.

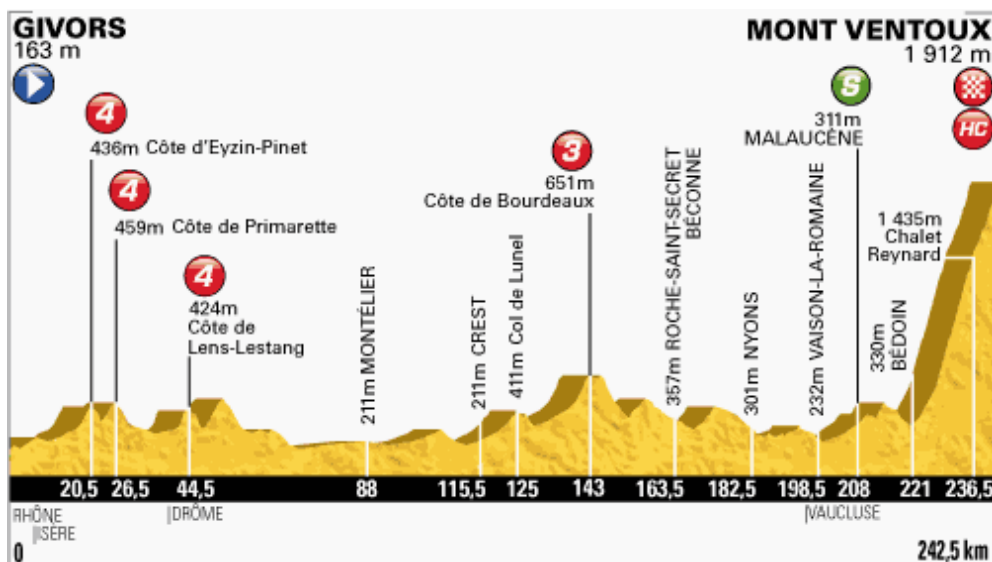


The second most famous ascent is the year 2000. Lance Armstrong and Marco Pantani were battling it out solo over the final few kilometers. Lance had a definite lead as they approached the finish line. At the last moment, he let up and Pantani soared past him. But he wasn't happy about it, there were no triumphant arms in the air as he won the stage and he cast an angry look at his opponent. Lance let Pantani take the stage, but he later regretted it. The next time he was faced with Ventoux, he famously said, "No more gifts."

Today's Stage

There are only about 30 kilometers of flat leading up to the monster climb, so it's not an easy first half. The legs of these riders are going to be tired long before they arrive at Bédoin at the base of the climb. It's a good thing there is a day off the next day! Our profile begins 3/4 of the way into the stage, at the town of Nyons.

Get ready for a hard one. Bob Roll says, "Alpe d'Huez is the cathedral of climbs, where the angels, the climbers, come out. But it's not the hardest. That would be Ventoux."



Warm-up**Dancing With Mephisto, Enigma, 4:25, 88 bpm**

We join the stage about 3/4 of the way, just before the final climb, at kilometer 182 in the town of Nyons. Nyons is known as the olive capital of France, and it's pretty evident why. We've been riding past groves and groves of olive trees, as well as fields of fragrant lavender, and of course, the ubiquitous sunflower fields. As we approach the base of Ventoux the scenery will change to primarily vineyards (has anyone ever drunk a *Côtes de Ventoux*, the appellation from the lower flanks of this famous mountain?)

What has happened thus far on this roller coaster stage? As expected, there was an early break made up of four eager riders. It was expected because to get a podium finish on the summit of the Giant of Provence, one has to be either really, really strong, or really, really cunning. These breakaway riders are relying on both, but they'll especially need their cunning to even come close to the power output of the top riders of the GC. By trying to get as much of an advantage as they can early on, they may possibly have a chance.

...or not. It depends on the desires of the chase group and of the peloton. The break's chance of success is a slim one, but it is a chance nonetheless. If they do, they will be written into the history books of cycling, and that is a pretty attractive goal for many pro cyclists!

Tell your class that they are going to represent the chase group for most of this stage, although you will go back and forth to check in on the peloton and the lead group. The nine riders in the chase group are three Heads of State, including the yellow jersey, plus their two best super domestiques. You and your class represents the two team leaders who are NOT the yellow jersey, and you will be relying on your domestiques to pull you to the top of this mountain. You'll have to work with the yellow jersey, at least for the first half or more of the climb. But the two of you have other ideas in mind...

Gradual Uphill from Nyons**Sunday Girl, Blondie, 3:05, 143 bpm**

The road turns uphill right away. Our chase group does not want to let that breakaway stay out ahead too far, but we also need to reserve some energy. If we burn too many matches by stepping up the pace too early, it could mean that breakaway succeeds and we don't get our chance for a stage win. So make sure your class knows your goal is to balance the need to catch, them with the need to wait until the right moment. If they are chomping at the bit, this is the time to be patient! There is plenty of time to turn up the power once we are on the flanks of Ventoux.

At 1:26 in the song you can say to your students, "I bet you didn't know Blondie spoke French! She's saying, '*depeche toi*' which means 'hurry up'! Do you think it's about time we hurry up? Pretty soon!"

This is a moderate climb, but still, it's uphill. Grab the beat and dial in resistance, but keep in mind that brutal climb to the moonscape that lies ahead. After two minutes, go "downhill" for one minute by releasing some resistance and letting the legs spin. There is still some rolling up and down to do before we get to the base.

Uphill to Malaucène**Toi et Moi, Adenyum, 3:21, 132 bpm**

This climb is a little steeper than the last gradual one, so add a little more resistance. Still, it's not even enough to qualify as a categorized climb. But tell that to your legs! If your students look like they're climbing too hard tell them, "Patience my friends, patience! You'll get your chance."

There is an intermediary sprint in Malaucène. Shall we go check on the lead group for a moment to see if they are going to go for it? None of them are in contention for the green jersey, but there are other benefits of grabbing those points, so two of the riders in the lead group are going to battle each other out for those 10 points. At 2:30 into the song, start getting your students ready. This won't be an "all-out" sprint, but just a quick surge to stay ahead of the other rider. With 30 seconds left, have them stand up and push for 15 seconds standing, then the remaining 15 seconds seated.

Downhill to Bédoin**Major Tom, Plastic Bertrand, 3:09, 170 bpm**

Well since we are riding up to the moon, what better way to prepare to launch than with this song? In French no less! This is the downhill on the way to Bédoin at the base of Ventoux. Let the legs spin at 85 rpm, but don't drop your guard too much. The breakaway is comfortably ahead by about 6 minutes, and the chase group has about 4 minutes on the peloton. We aren't worried about the peloton; the riders with designs for a stage win, including the yellow jersey, plus their strongest and most loyal domestiques, are in this elite group of riders. We are going to be on the hunt for that chase group shortly. Don't recover on this downhill, keep the pace pretty consistent, with slightly faster legs against a moderate resistance.

With about 45 seconds left to the song, tell everyone that you're passing through the village of Bédoin, which is a kind of mecca for cyclists around the world who come here to add Mont Ventoux to their bucket list. Not long after you leave Bédoin, the road turns up sharply just up the road...

Le Mont Ventoux Begins Steeply**Le Ciel est Triste, Emou, 9:13, 110 bpm**

Here it is, the moment we've all been waiting for. The slog up to the summit of Le Mont Ventoux has begun! And it's steep right from the get go. Turn up the resistance and grab the beat (at 55 rpm) and focus on what it feels like on the leg muscles to strain against such a steep climb. We know that the break had to suffer up this first steep section just like we are, but still, it's not time to attack or go on the hunt...not just yet. There's no reason to rush into hell...just yet!

This is a long, moody song. Go with the somber mood, anticipating the real challenge that lies ahead, knowing the pain is only going to get worse when the pace is picked up. Describe what is going on in the minds of the lead group, as they begin to worry about their adversaries on their tail. How much longer can they maintain this lead? Then go back to the peloton to describe the non-climbers at the back, just hanging on, trying to regroup with enough other riders (mostly sprinters) so if they drop back, they won't get disqualified. Their suffering is for a different reason.

Then come back to the chase group. We are determined, but patient. Go ahead and stand up every 90 seconds for 20-30 seconds to stretch the legs. This entire song should be a consistent pace, consistent effort with a lot of the effort felt more in the legs than the heart. Again, remember what lies ahead and know that you'll be standing a lot to attack.

Realization: The Time is Now

Full Moon, Element, 8:06, 140 bpm

This song will pick up the energy from the moment it starts. Let everyone know, the name of this song is Full Moon, so apropos to our climb today! If you listen closely you'll hear him say a couple of times "Full moon turn the tide tonight". That's our goal—to turn the tide of this race. Let the soul of the song sink into your legs as they carry you closer to the lunar surface of this mountain.

The chase group realizes that now is the time to pick up the pace. The moment of truth lies ahead. At 1:26 the energy of the song picks up; this is when we send our super domestiques up to the front and raise our resistance (stay seated for now). Think Jens Voigt, Fabian Cancellara, Richie Porte, some of the strongest domestiques in the pro-peloton.

What happens when a domestique takes the lead? He hurts himself beyond belief! He goes and goes, ignoring all signs his body is giving him that he should slow down, burying himself for his team leader, sacrificing any selfish desire he may have. This section of road is in honor of those super domestiques who sacrifice themselves for their leader. What do we do, the Heads of State? We let them lead us onwards, we get on their wheels, and tuck ourselves into the back of this group. We will have our own chance to attack later on. Work hard here. Hard...but not very hard!

At 3:44 stand up. It's not an attack, but it's an elevated pace. Stay standing until 4:13 and then sit back down and continue to work hard. Stay on your teammate's wheel. Pay attention to what he is doing.

Stand again at 6:02 (right after he says "Full moon turn the tide tonight"). This time stay standing over a minute, until 7:11 (song eases just a bit), but don't ease up, continue to work.

Jens Voigt is at the front setting this grueling pace. You can hear him say out loud, "SHUT UP LEGS!" and you tell your own legs to stop their complaining too!

The Hunter and the Hunted

Solar Storm, Tikal, 8:08, 140 bpm (at 5:50 it builds up to 155 bpm)

This is where the rubber meets the road, so to speak. Either we catch that breakaway or we risk losing this stage. It's now or never guys! Those riders ahead of us must have picked up their own effort, because that last 8 minutes of acceleration didn't bring us much closer—that's not good news. We've shed one group of domestiques, but the second in command are still there. It's their turn to turn themselves inside out. But this time, they stand up to accelerate a little more. You do as well, but try to stay right at your threshold, not allowing yourself to burn a match above it. Hurt...but not too much.

Song starts of mild, use it for a brief recovery, but don't get complacent, you can tell it's going to build up to something pretty daunting! As the song builds, begin to increase your pace, but stay seated.

(Note: the following changes in position are timed to energy breaks of the song)

1:10 stand up and drive.

2:21 sit back down. Slight recovery as you tuck in behind a wheel. The motorcycles tell us that their advantage has decreased to only 2 minutes.

3:15 UP! Stay standing about 45 seconds, then sit back down and stay consistent. Now we've been told their advantage has shrunk to just over a minute. Our tactics are working. They must be suffering intensely as are we, but we have the advantage of being the hunter, and they are our prey. That gives us an additional fire in our legs. Their anticipation of impending doom is no doubt affecting their legs and their energy.

5:07 the song takes a break and lo and behold, we have our prey in our view a few hundred meters ahead! Can they see us yet? We're not sure. We look around and...

5:34 Stand and push! Stay standing 20-30 seconds. You're going to hear the beat start picking up in the song from about 5:50, we raise our cadence to match, bringing it to 78 rpm. (This will really raise your intensity; have students sit down if it becomes too much.)

We draw up behind the four riders of the breakaway. Stand up briefly (10 seconds) and drive even more. The breakaway group is frantically trying to survive, but they are all over the place. A few succumb to the inevitable and drop back I utter agony, it's like they're going backwards as we fly past them. Two of them try to grab our wheels.

As that beat continues to increase, it will become very hard—you may have to back off some resistance if it's too much to hold—so stay seated for most of the rest of the song and maintain the rhythm.

At 7:04, the energy backs off. We just sit down and pedal and look around (use this time to recover a bit). The two from the break who tried to stay with us end up falling back, dejected. As well, our first wave of domestiques have dropped off, their stellar job done for the day. Our group is now down to 5. The yellow jersey, and you and me (point to your students and to yourself) and our two final domestiques. The yellow jersey has no more teammates to protect him, his team has fallen apart in the past week. We decide we're going to try to drop him too. Yes, it may be a pipe dream, but hey, why not? It's happened before, and we think we've seen a chink in his armor. We've detected that he's fallible, especially when he's unprotected.

We are emerging onto the lunar landscape. Leaving the shelter of the trees. The sun is beating down hard, the road is thickly lined with fans.

The Real Battle Begins**Kuvera, E.S. Posthumus, 4:05, 124 bpm**

So, that was a shake up of epic proportions! But we can't continue with so many riders. Our last super-domestiques have a job to do. This song starts off with a consistent rhythm, settle into a comfortable, yet still concerted effort. We are still tucked behind our last two domestiques. Shall we try to drop the yellow jersey? As we glance back at each other, our unspoken vow is apparent to each other, we speak with our eyes. Yes, we've got no choice but to try to drop him.

At 2:06 stand up and go for it! Stay standing until 2:36. He's starting to show signs of wear.

With no teammate, he's trying to ride our wheels but we won't let him.

3:21 stand up and try to shake him again. There's a lot of pain being dished out here! Hold until the end of the song...

Right as the song ends, we pass the memorial to Tom Simpson. Every cyclist who passes this point dips his head in memory. Yes, even riders in the middle of a race.

Attacks to the Summit**Preliator, Globus, 4:28, 144 bpm**

The yellow jersey has cracked! (Say that with great emotion, just like a TV announcer!) He's falling off the back, struggling to get back on our wheels, but he must have hit the red zone and cannot come back. His legs are unwilling, his spirit broken. But you and me? We are triumphant—that's what you get when you suffer—you get results! Now it's time to say goodbye to our own teammates, our super loyal worker bees who have turned themselves into complete mush for us.

You know what that means, don't you? It's down to YOU (point to your class, and hesitate for a moment)...and ME! We are the last two riders on this mountain! This mountain has produced the truth, and we are it. We had a mutual opponent until this point, we worked together...but now, we have to draw our swords against each other. Both of us cannot be victorious. There will be no gifts!

(You're going to invite your students to try to beat you to the top. You will attack every so often, then let up, then incite them to counter-attack for 15–20 seconds.)

:26 the march begins...everyone gears up.

1:48 YOU stand up and go! (They follow) Hold for 20 seconds, then sit. Will they counter attack? Look around and wonder out loud, "hmm, I wonder if my opponent is going to counter-attack me? I wonder if..." If they don't get the hint, say, "HINT HINT!" and smile at them.

Hopefully they'll go quickly, so you can neutralize it (sit back down) by about 2:45 into the song, giving you a little recovery before you go again.

3:07 YOU go again (they follow). Hold for 10-15 seconds, then sit. If they don't counter-attack, wait just a moment because...(if someone does decide to attack, that's ok, just continue to the finish line).

3:33 THERE'S THE FINISH LINE! *Who wants it? It's steep here, I want that win, I dare you to follow.*

You all stand up and drive to the top (40 seconds away).

4:05, you both roll under the finish line....and as the song finishes quietly, you concede defeat to your opponent (your entire class) by telling them “*you drove past me in the final meter, that was almost a photo finish. But we both know it was you who was triumphant in the end. Congratulations! I’ll have to be happy with second place on the podium, and the yellow jersey who worked with us in our chase group for so long, he’ll get to stand on the third place of that podium. All of us are champions!*”

What About the Autobus?

Moonlight Sonata, E.S. Posthumus, 5:30, 110 bpm

Let your students bask in the glory of their win for about a minute, have them drink up...but then say:

But wait! Your win is all well and good, but what about those poor riders bringing up the rear? Remember them, the group of primarily sprinters back there in the Autobus? How about we go back and help them up to the finish line?

This song is melancholy, but so are the riders at the end of the peloton! Dial in more resistance and ride a slow cadence (55 rpm) back to the finish. It doesn’t have to be high intensity, just feel it in the legs, and stay seated until the final 30 seconds to help your heavy legs get past the finish line.

Cool-down

J’ai Demandé a La Lune, Indochine, 4:19

C’est Tout, Metatuk, 3:11

This first song translates as “I asked of the moon”. Yes, we asked, and she delivered, didn’t she? We got our wish today. Well, at least you did, you won one of the most famous climbs in the Tour de France. Oh, and by the way, the yellow jersey managed to stay within a minute of us as we crossed the finish line. Since he started the day with several minutes advantage, while he lost some time, he’s still in yellow. Who knows if that will change in the Alpes, there’s still time to try to take it away from him. The time trial in three days may shake things up some more.

Cool down and stretch.

Stage 15 Playlist, Riding On The Moon

Section	Music	BPM	Time
Warm-up / Start	Dancing with Mephisto , Enigma A Posteriori	88 BPM	4:25
Gradual Uphill From Nyons	Sunday Girl , Blondie Best of Blondie	143	3:05
Uphill to Malaucène	Toi et Moi , Adenyum Toi et Moi	132	3:21
Downhill to Bédoin	Major Tom , Plastic Bertrand L'Essentiel	170	3:09
Le Mont Ventoux Begins Steeply	Le Ciel est Triste , Emou Still...Pretty Good Year	110	9:13
Realization: The Time is Now	Full Moon , Element Full Moon	140	8:06
The Hunter and the Hunted	Solar Storm , Tikal Cosmic Dragon	140	8:08
The Real Battle Begins	Kuvera , E.S. Posthumus Makara	124	4:05
Attacks to the Summit	Preliator , Globus Epicon	144	4:28
What About the Autobus?	Moonlight Sonata , E.S. Posthumus Sudaka	110	5:30
Cool-down / Stretch	J'ai Demandé a la Lune , Indochine L'Essentiel Faudel C'est Tout , Metatuk La Foire aux Primates		4:19 3:11