

# Reading Comprehension — The Heart of Australia: Uluru

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## The Heart of Australia: Uluru

Rising from the flat red desert at the centre of Australia is one of the most extraordinary sights in the world: Uluru. This vast dome of rock glows a deep, fiery red, especially at sunrise and sunset, when it seems almost to catch fire in the changing light.

Uluru is enormous. It stands about 348 metres high — taller than the Eiffel Tower — and is over three kilometres long. Yet what we see is only the top: most of the rock lies hidden beneath the desert, like an iceberg in the sand. It is made of sandstone, and its red colour comes from iron in the rock, which has slowly rusted over millions of years.

But Uluru is far more than a remarkable rock. It is a deeply sacred place for the Anangu people, its Traditional Owners, who have lived in this region for tens of thousands of years. Uluru is woven into their Dreaming stories, their law and their identity. Every crack and cave holds meaning.

For many years, tourists were allowed to climb Uluru. But the Anangu had always asked visitors not to, because the climb crossed a sacred path. In 2019, out of respect for their wishes, climbing was stopped for good. Today, visitors walk around the base instead, learning its stories.

Uluru reminds us that some places are not just beautiful, but sacred — and that respecting other people's culture matters.

## Questions

1. Where is Uluru? (1 mark)
2. Roughly how tall is Uluru? (1 mark)
3. What gives Uluru its red colour? (1 mark)
4. Find and copy a word in paragraph 3 meaning "holy or deeply respected." (1 mark)
5. Why does the writer compare Uluru to an iceberg? (2 marks)
6. Why did climbing Uluru stop in 2019? (2 marks)
7. Why do you think the writer says Uluru is "far more than a remarkable rock"? (2 marks)
8. Summarise what makes Uluru special, both as a landform and to the Anangu people. (3 marks)

## Answer Key / Mark Scheme

1. In the flat red desert at the centre of Australia.
2. About 348 metres (taller than the Eiffel Tower).
3. Iron in the rock that has rusted over millions of years.
4. "sacred."

5. Because most of the rock is hidden beneath the desert, like most of an iceberg is underwater.
6. Out of respect for the Anangu, who had always asked visitors not to climb a sacred path.
7. Because it is also sacred to the Anangu — its meaning is cultural and spiritual, not just physical.
8. Landform: a huge sandstone dome, mostly underground, glowing red from iron. To the Anangu: a sacred place central to their Dreaming, law and identity.