

AL-REEYADA INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

ENGLISH Grade 7 Reading Comprehension

EXERCISE 1

Read the web page about a town in Australia called Coober Pedy, and then answer the questions.

Coober Pedy

The town of Coober Pedy, in South Australia, is a very interesting place. Although there have been people living in the area for a long time, other parts of the world only learned about the region's existence in 1858 when an explorer from Scotland, McDouall Stuart, travelled nearby. It was later still, in 1915, that the town was constructed. This followed an important discovery in the area when highly coloured, precious stones called opals were found in large amounts. By 1999, opal mining had become an important industry for the area, and nowadays, Coober Pedy is often referred to as the opal capital of the world. Another reason why Coober Pedy is so well known is that many people live in houses which, unusually, are located underground. These houses look similar to caves and being underground means they can remain cool in high temperatures. On the surface, these are regularly over 40 °C in the summer. What's more, the temperature below ground stays constant through the year. The town gradually became a popular tourist destination, and over time, mines were opened to the public and hotels were built. Tourists also wanted to see the houses and explore the underground churches. Because these buildings are constructed underground, no sounds from the outside can be heard. Since 1987, there has been a particular increase in tourist numbers. It was at that time that a main road called the Stuart Highway was completed. Visitors without their own transport still have various options to reach the town, including arriving by train, or by a coach which arrives once a day. The train station is outside the town, and people need to plan any trip carefully as the service only runs once a week. Tourists are also strongly advised to avoid visiting at certain times of year due to the extreme heat. Making trips during January and February is particularly challenging, with April to October being seen as a far more sensible choice. There's plenty to see in the town and its surroundings. As well as the spectacular scenery of the vast Australian outback, there's the first 'tree' in the area. It's a sculpture made of iron, and there's nothing else like it. Representing the arrival of the first trucks in the 1950s, it's located on a hill nearby, and is a popular subject for photos. In the town, there are also various art galleries, both above and under the ground. Coober Pedy artists are highly productive, so it is fortunate that it is relatively easy to enlarge an underground house, if needed, by digging out an extra room to make an artist's studio!

MULTIPLE CHOICE. Encircle the letter of your answer.

1. When did the rest of the world first learn about the Coober Pedy region?

- A. 1915
- B. 1858
- C. 1950
- D. 1999

2. Why was the town of Coober Pedy constructed in 1915?

- A. The first road to the area was completed
- B. An explorer discovered the region
- C. Large amounts of opals were found
- D. Tourists began visiting

3. What is one advantage of the underground houses in Coober Pedy?

- A. They stay cool despite high outside temperatures
- B. They provide more space than surface homes
- C. They protect against heavy rainfall
- D. They are cheaper to build than regular houses

4. Why did tourist numbers increase after 1987?

- A. Train services became more frequent
- B. Hotels and art galleries were opened
- C. The Stuart Highway was completed
- D. Underground churches were discovered

5. Which visitor recommendation is mentioned in the text?

- A. Visit during January and February for the best weather
- B. Avoid using the train because it is unsafe
- C. Bring a vehicle because no public transport is available
- D. Avoid visiting during the hottest months of the year

Question 6 When was the town of Coober Pedy built?

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Question 7 What development in the 1980s made it easier for more tourists to get to Coober Pedy?

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Question 8 How often do trains stop near Coober Pedy?

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Question 10 Where in the area can visitors see an unusual piece of public art?

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EXERCISE 2



THE SAND ARTIST

If you take a walk in a popular London tourist area, you'll see street entertainers such as musicians or magicians. You might also see something different – the work of sand artist Lisa Cortez. Lisa uses coloured sand to create detailed patterns on the ground. If people like her work, they can show their appreciation by leaving money in the small box she has nearby. There are of course some people who appear too busy with their mobile phones to show an interest in her art. She feels, however, that she gives people who wouldn't necessarily consider a trip to an art gallery the chance to experience art for themselves, something which she thinks is very positive. Most passers-by do stop and ask where the inspiration for her highly detailed designs comes from.

Working outside comes with certain challenges. Her creations cannot be fixed to the ground, as the sand needs to be swept up at the end of each day. But she can prevent her artwork from being blown away by choosing a place out of the wind. Normally at lunchtimes, she can rely on a flow of office workers or tourists to see her work as they enjoy the chance to be outside. In extremely hot weather, however, they prefer the air-conditioned atmosphere found in the cafés to being outside. You might also imagine that rain would be the most difficult problem to manage, but as Lisa points out, it is quite easy to check when rain is expected so she can alter her plans.

Lisa explains that she spends most of the summer designing and creating her patterns. Because her artwork is different to the usual things people see, she finds that the box she leaves out for donations from people who admire her work fills up quickly on a good day, and sometimes, people come to find her because she's an artist they've heard about. With the money from the box, and the art classes she runs during the winter, she makes enough to rent her small flat in London. Teaching full-time would allow her to afford something bigger, but she'd miss making her art outside. The classes she teaches are for people who want to learn traditional painting methods, although she's thinking about running some classes teaching other people her techniques with sand.

Lisa offers suggestions to anyone thinking about trying sand art in public. For example, while most people walking by say lovely things, there are always those who like to criticise, she says, so learning not to be upset is important. She has also discovered that if you try and create your sand art too close to a path, the sand will be disturbed by the movement of the crowds. Somewhere quieter is better, and will allow you to work on fine decoration, she adds. Lisa's work is based on very precise, beautiful Indian patterns. While making pictures that reflect familiar scenes seems like a good idea, she believes that the colourful sand is perfect for her highly detailed patterns.

Lisa has an exciting month ahead, with an exhibition of her work coming up. It took a while to find the best way of displaying her work; obviously the items she has created specially for the exhibition can't hang on the wall, so she has asked the organisers to cover her work with thin plastic sheets. These give a clear view of the art while at the same time prevent people touching it. The hall where

the exhibition takes place should be big enough for the people Lisa is hoping will come to view her work in comfort.

MULTIPLE CHOICE. Encircle the letter of your answer.

1. What does Lisa say is important about doing her artwork in public?
 - A. She gets people to stop focusing only on their phones.
 - B. She brings art to people who might not go to see it.
 - C. She gets ideas for new pictures from people she talks to.
2. What point does Lisa make about the weather?
 - A. Changes in wind direction prevent her from working.
 - B. It's difficult to protect her artwork from wet conditions.
 - C. Hot temperatures prevent people from seeing her artwork.
3. In paragraph 3, the writer suggests that Lisa
 - A. considers her art to be more important than money.
 - B. is pleased about being a well-known artist.
 - C. uses techniques that have been copied by other people.
4. What advice does Lisa give to people who would like to try sand art in public?
 - A. Include ideas from the local area in your artwork.
 - B. Create your artwork where lots of people walk past.
 - C. Be prepared to deal with negative comments.
5. Why doesn't Lisa fix her sand artwork to the ground?
 - A. It would damage the pavement.
 - B. The sand must be swept up each day.
 - C. She prefers to create new artwork every hour.
6. What does Lisa say about the people who come to see her artwork?
 - A. Many return regularly to watch her work.
 - B. They often request personal sand portraits.
 - C. Some already know about her and come specifically to find her.
7. Why is Lisa planning to use thin plastic sheets at her exhibition?
 - A. To make the artwork more colourful.
 - B. To keep the sand from blowing away.
 - C. To prevent people from touching the artwork while still allowing visibility.
8. What has Lisa discovered about creating sand art near busy paths?
 - A. The crowds disturb the sand, making detailed work difficult.
 - B. It allows better lighting for her designs.
 - C. It makes the sand more colorful.

Find the words in the passage that mean the following:

9. exact and accurate (Adj)..... (Paragraph 4)
10. a public display of art or objects (N)..... (Paragraph 5)