Australia’s Geography

Great Barrier Reef

A coral reef off the coast of Queensland. It is the largest coral reef in the world. The reef lies a short distance off the northeast coast of Queensland. Queensland is one of Australia’s states. The reef extends along Queensland’s coast for more than 1,200 miles. The reef is located in the Coral Sea. The reef contains a huge variety of marine life. It also has the world’s largest collection of coral. There are 400 types of coral, more than 1500 types of fish, and 4,000 types of mollusks. There are several very rare species found in the reef. It is located near major industrial areas and large cities. Pollution from these industrial cities and areas threaten the sea life that lives at the reef.

Coral Sea

The Coral Sea is part of the Pacific Ocean. It is off the north-east coast of Australia. It is bounded in the west by the east coast of Queensland, thereby including the Great Barrier Reef, in the east by the New Hebrides islands and by New Caledonia, and in the north approximately by the southern extremity of the Solomon Islands. South of it is the Tasman
Sea. When the earth’s crust moved millions of years ago, the movement created the Coral Sea and the Great Dividing Range. The Great Dividing Range is the largest mountain range in Australia. Coral Sea Islands are scattered over thousands of square miles of ocean. Australia claimed the islands as territory for Australia in 1969. On these islands are found weather specialists, weather stations, and light beacons.

**Uluru (Ayers Rock)**

Uluru is a huge reddish rock towering out of the flatlands of Central Australia. This is actually a monolith (what is visible of a rock sticking out of the ground). Uluru is the visible tip of a massive underground sandstone rock cemented together by sand and mud. Rusting iron content makes the rock a reddish color. Uluru is 12 stories high and 6 miles wide at its base. Although the native people (aborigines) call the rock “Uluru”, a European surveyor named the rock after a British government official named Sir Henry Ayers in 1873. Uluru is now located in Uluru-Kata-Tjuta National Park in the Northern Territory.
Great Victoria Desert

The Great Victoria Desert was named in 1875 after Queen Victoria of Great Britain is located in South Australia. This desert is more than 160,000 square miles and stretches from South Australia to Western Australia. It is now a protected wilderness area. Very few people live in the Great Victoria Desert due to heat and dryness. The desert only receives 8-10” of rain a year and it never snows there. There are also some grasslands, sandhills, and salt lakes.
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Guided Reading Questions

1) Describe the geography of Australia. (Be SPECIFIC).
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2) What is a monolith? ______________________________
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3) What body of water is the Great Barrier Reef located in?
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4) Why do so few people live in the Great Victoria desert?
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5) What climate conditions are found in Central Australia?
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