Year 5 reading comprehension: Opals and Coober Pedy

English · Reading comprehension
Level: Hard

Student: _____ Date: _____

Instructions
- Read the text first. There are 3 questions. Read each one carefully.
- Circle the best answer. Look back at the text to find the words that tell you.
- A grown-up can read the text aloud — that's fine.
- The answers are at the end. Check them together when you have finished.

Questions

Read this, then answer questions 1–3.

Opals and Coober Pedy

Australia produces about 95 per cent of the world’s precious opal, a gemstone that flashes with rainbow colours. Much of it comes from the outback town of Coober Pedy in South Australia. Opal began to form millions of years ago, when water full of dissolved silica seeped into cracks in the rock. When the water dried up, the silica was left behind as tiny spheres that split light into colours. A fourteen-year-old boy named Willie Hutchison found the first opal at Coober Pedy in 1915. Summer temperatures there often climb above 40 degrees Celsius, so many people live underground. These homes, called dugouts, are dug into the hillsides and stay cool in summer and warm in winter. Even some churches and shops are underground. Visitors can tour an old opal mine and see how the stones were dug out by hand.

1. How do we know that opal is very old?

Circle one answer.

- ○ **A** A boy found the first opal in 1915.
- ○ **B** Summer temperatures climb above 40 degrees.
- ○ **C** Visitors can tour an old opal mine.
- ○ **D** It began to form millions of years ago.

2. Which word from the text fits the gap? “Opal began to form when water full of dissolved ___ seeped into cracks in the rock.”

Circle one answer.

○ **A** gemstone ○ **B** silica ○ **C** spheres

○ **D** temperatures

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3. True or false: More than nine-tenths of the world’s precious opal comes from Australia.

Circle one answer.

○ **A** True ○ **B** False

Answer key

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1. D — It began to form millions of years ago.

The text says: “Opal began to form millions of years ago, when water full of dissolved silica seeped into cracks in the rock.” The reason must come from the text.

2. B — silica

The text says: “Opal began to form millions of years ago, when water full of dissolved silica seeped into cracks in the rock.” Read the whole sentence with the word in the gap.

3. A — True

The text says: “Australia produces about 95 per cent of the world’s precious opal, a gemstone that flashes with rainbow colours.” A statement is true only if every part of it is in the text.