

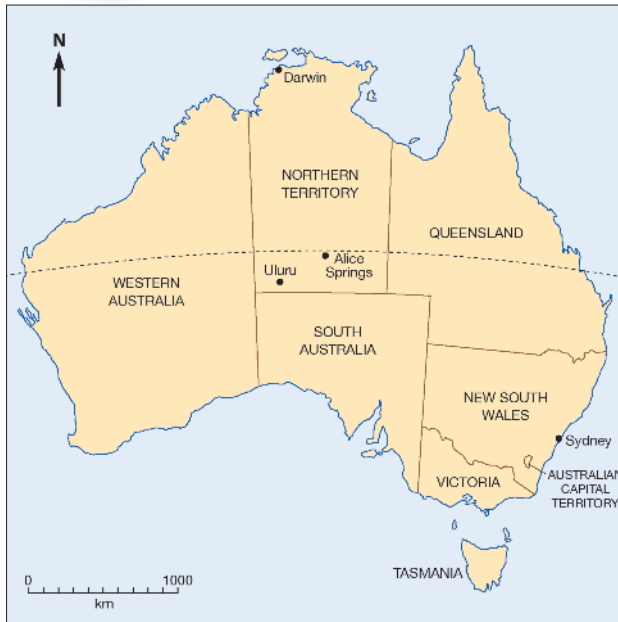
Knowledge box 7

Geography Plus: Australia Here We Come!

These knowledge boxes provide background information for teachers to help develop knowledge for teaching **Australia Here We Come!**



Experiencing Uluru



About Uluru

Uluru is in the Northern Territory of Australia in the Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage site. The park covers 2010 square kilometres and also includes Kata Tjuta (Mount Olga), which is 40 kilometres to the west. Uluru is in the Australian desert and temperatures are very extreme: it can reach 45°C during the summer and -5°C during winter nights. Although it is a dry region, it receives 307mm of rain each year (in comparison, Sheffield in the UK receives on average 825mm a year). When it does rain the dome collects a lot of rainwater, which runs off in steep waterfalls.

The local Anangu are the traditional aboriginal owners of Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park. The Anangu and Parks Australia have developed a Cultural Centre and a wide range of activities to help visitors experience this land through Anangu eyes. They want visitors to open their minds and hearts to learn about the Anangu land, beliefs and culture.



Photo: Wendy North

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Dreamtime stories

Dreamtime stories describe how indigenous Australians see their origins. Listening to these creation stories helps visitors to understand the views of the people who have lived at Uluru for thousands of years and appreciate how Australia's native peoples value their landscapes and try to protect them. Anangu rangers conduct tours in the area to explain what the landscape means to them and tell a dreamtime story.

The dreamtime story told by Wally, an Anangu guide, is about Crested Bellbird Man and Blue-tongue Lizard Man. Wally illustrated this by drawing in the sand as shown in **PowerPoint 6**. Having read this sheet and viewed **Powerpoint 6**, the ideal way to share the story with your pupils is to tell it from memory, drawing the story map in a sand-tray, and pointing to the circles as you go.

Uluru: August 2004 (as retold by Ann Hamblen from her travel journal)

Wally, our Anangu Guide/Ranger, sits cross-legged in the red sand, smoothing the area in front of him with the end of a training spear.

Through his interpreter, Katya, he tells us in Pitjanjara, that he wants us to hear his words in his own tongue. He can explain things better; pass on the knowledge so that we can understand better. Much of the Tjurkupa – the tradition, beliefs, lore and law of the Anangu – is secret and cannot be shared with people outside, but the Anangu share certain stories now, to help others to understand. Through Katya, he asks us to address questions to him, not to her – 'go to the source, not the pot'. (Later he's very happy to answer our questions in English/Australian.) He tells us that he is only the second generation of his people to wear trousers



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and a shirt, and to put shoes 'between my body and the Earth'.

For thousands of years, he tells us, older people would take care of the children in the heat of the day while younger women gathered fruits, berries, roots, witchetty grubs and honey-ants – whatever is good to eat – and the men hunted kangaroo, wallaby and emu for meat. The children and the elders gathered in the shade of the rock and the elders told of Dreamtime – the time before time – creation time. Today children still need to learn these stories, to learn who they are, all about creation and their own land, how to behave, how and what to hunt/gather, cook, eat, all about the importance of tradition, art, story, celebration, ritual, dance... all about how to be members of their community. This is 'school'. Once, adults painted story maps on the rock or drew symbols in the red sand to help tell of their ancestors (part human, part animal, part spirit) in Dreamtime; they still draw in the sand, and also make paintings to tell these stories.

And, drawing a map of the story in symbols in the sand as he tells it, Wally shares the Dreamtime conflict of Crested Bellbird Man and Blue-tongue Lizard Man, which takes place at Uluru, a very special place to his people. In this story, some of the features of the great rock are created, and there is moral teaching about how stealing, deceiving and lying bring their own terrible punishment in the end.

The story of Blue-tongue Lizard Man (Lungkata) and Crested Bellbird Man (Panpanpalala) told by Wally

'Once, long ago, in Dreamtime, Blue-tongue Lizard Man, Lungkata, set out on a journey from the west. He set out on his journey because he could find no trace of his ancestors where he was. His circles are empty circles of travel – no camps. (Wally draws as he says this.) There is no trace left of his journey in the land, until he comes to Uluru, where he decides to make his camp in a cave on the west side before going to look for food. (Wally draws a circle for Uluru and a small circle inside for the cave.)

Now we need to know another character. Crested Bellbird Man, Panpanpalala, is out there (Wally points south) hunting emu – all around is plentiful emu land.

(Wally draws circle-line-circle... these are 'empty circles of travel... no camp yet')

He throws his spear at an emu but it runs on. He catches up with it at the south corner of Uluru and kills it but he is wounded. He decides to over-night there and cuts the emu up ready to cook. *(Now his circle becomes a camp with his circular shelter drawn in it.)*

Tired, sad and depressed, he climbs the rock to look for company but the desert is empty. He walks around the rock but sees only his own footsteps and a cave high up on the side of the rock. *(Wally points to the cave on the south-west side of his Uluru circle.)* He comes back to his emu meat. He makes a wind-break and lights a fire but is too tired to cook and eat. He just lies down and falls into a deep sleep.

Now, Lungkata, Blue-tongue Lizard Man is looking for food. He finds Panpanpalala, Crested Bellbird Man, fast asleep, and starts talking to him, but can't wake him. He tries again. No response. He notices the emu meat and he's very hungry. Blue-tongue Lizard Man starts to leave for his own camp, so depressed because he can't get through to Crested Bellbird Man. But his tummy talks louder than his mind and he steals another man's hunting meat while he sleeps (he leaves one drumstick) and takes it back to his own camp. He lays false tracks so his crime will be harder to trace.

Crested Bellbird Man wakes. He's cold, so he builds up his fire: then he discovers that he's been robbed! He grabs a fire-stick and follows Lizard man's tracks. He follows two false leads then finds Blue-tongue Lizard Man's camp in the tunnel in the rock. He sees his meat at the mouth of the cave and the two have a big shouting row. Blue-tongue Lizard Man denies that he stole the meat and won't give it back to Crested Bellbird Man.

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Angry Crested Bellbird Man drags every tree to the base of the rock and lights a great fire. He smokes Blue-tongue Lizard Man out of the cave and he falls and dies; the pile of meat falls, too, and half-buries the body of Blue-tongue Lizard Man at the foot of the rock. The white skin on the rock is the smoke, and the great boulders are the emu cuts and the dead body of Blue-tongue Lizard Man. The drumstick rock, the only emu meat Lungkata left for Crested Bellbird Man, is round the other side.'

To climb or not to climb

Tourists may want to climb for the view or just to say they have done it, but the rock has spiritual significance to the Anangu people and many areas are sacred: they may embody moments of creation, for instance, or be sites for secret ceremonies. The climb is dangerous, especially in the heat, and when someone dies or is injured climbing, the Anangu grieve. Pollution and erosion are factors too.

Read the leaflet *Please Don't Climb!* produced by the Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park. It explains, from the point of view of the traditional owners, why they would much rather tourists walked around the rock than climbed on it. Download the leaflet from <http://www.environment.gov.au/parks/uluru/publications.html>

Pupils can explore a range of views about climbing Uluru using **Activity sheet 8**. You could widen the discussion to respect for other people's boundaries. Ask your pupils where they may not go and why (a brother or sister's bedroom? The bar in their local pub? The sanctuary of their local church or faith centre?). Do they think it is fair/right that they may not go into the places they mention? This strategy will be particularly helpful if you are preparing your children to engage in full Philosophy for Children (P4C) enquiries as they move up the school. Go to www.sapere.org.uk for background, courses and resources on P4C.

