

The Grand Canyon

The Grand Canyon is an enormous gorge in the state of Arizona. It is 277 miles (450 kilometres) in length, up to 18 miles (29 kilometres) wide and more than a mile (1.6 kilometres) deep in places.



MOTHER EARTH

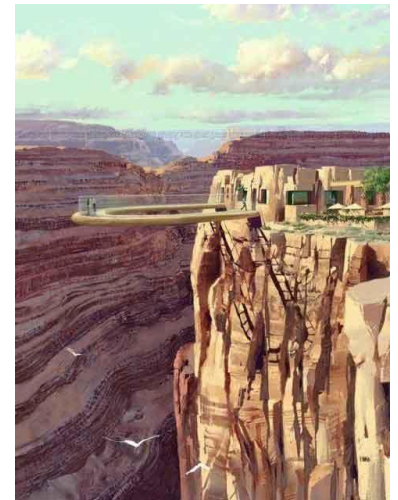
Geologists believe that the Grand Canyon formed 80 million years ago, but some of its rock layers could be two billion years old: the Earth itself is four billion years old. It contains the fossils of many prehistoric animals. For thousands of years Native Americans lived in the canyon's caves, and considered it a holy place. Then, in 1540, García López de Cárdenas from Spain became the first European to see the canyon and tell his people about it.

MOTHER NATURE

Today the Grand Canyon is a major tourist attraction. People travel from all over the world to see it. Most of them enter the canyon at the South Rim, to explore it by foot, bus and helicopter. You can hike along the edge of the canyon and look down at the valley, thousands of feet (or metres) below. Then travel down into the valley by foot, in a helicopter or on the back of a mule.

THE GREAT OUTDOORS

Ride along the Colorado River on a raft. Walk out over the canyon on the Skywalk, a glass walkway that will make you feel like you're walking on air. Visit the village where the Native American Havasupai Indians still live, to learn about their culture. Then ride across the canyon in a horse-drawn carriage to watch the sunset. You can even sleep at one of the canyon's camping sites.



BE CAREFUL!

The Grand Canyon is beautiful but it is also dangerous. It can be really hot or cold there, from around -20°C in the winter to 40°C in the summer. In the past 150 years about 600 people have died in the Grand Canyon. Almost half of them died in airplane or helicopter crashes. Many others drowned in the Colorado River, or died from a fall, heat stroke or dehydration.

MARATHON

Of course, all of these dangers make the Grand Canyon a great place for people to prove how fit and strong they are. Every year, many people hike from one side of the canyon to the other. And hundreds compete in the Grand Canyon Ultra Marathon. They travel 78 miles (125 kilometres) across the canyon in 24 hours. That's a grand achievement at the Grand Canyon.



Read the article and answer the questions.

1. What is the Grand Canyon?
2. Why was it special to Native Americans?
3. What's the name of the river that formed it?
4. How can you explore the Grand Canyon, apart from walking?
5. What else can you do there?
6. Where can you stay overnight?
7. What are the dangers of exploring the Grand Canyon?
8. What caused most of the deaths that have happened there in the past 150 years?

Choose the best word for each space.

The Grand Canyon is located in the state of Arizona. ¹ _____ (*Cause/Because/Since*) of its size and natural beauty, it is considered ² _____ (*by/from/with*) many people to be one of the seven wonders of the world. It measures 446 km long, 29 km ³ _____ (*width/wide/wider*) and 1.6 km deep. The Colorado River, which flows ⁴ _____ (*through/across/over*) the canyon, caused the process of erosion which formed it. The area ⁵ _____ (*began/become/became*) a national park in 1919. The Grand Canyon Park is ⁶ _____ (*such/very/so*) large that the island of Manhattan ⁷ _____ (*should/can/could*) fit in it nearly 58 times. Every year, the Park receives ⁸ _____ (*near/nearly/more*) 5 million visitors from all over the world.

KEY

Read and answer

1. It's a gorge. 2. They considered it a holy place. 3. The Colorado River. 4. You can explore it by bus, by helicopter, on the back of a mule, on a raft, or in a horse-drawn carriage. 5. You can visit a Native American village and learn about their culture. 6. At one of the canyon's camping sites. 7. There are the dangers of extreme temperatures (e.g. heat stroke, dehydration), airplane and helicopter crashes, drowning in the river, or falling. 8. Airplane or helicopter crashes.

Choose the best word

1. Because 2. by 3. wide 4. through 5. became 6. so 7. could 8. nearly