

## Social Studies

### ***Geography – Coober Pedy and Adelaide, South Australia, Australia:***

Australia is not only a country, but it is also a continent and an island (review meanings of continent and island). It is known as "the land down under." Help your student locate Australia and ask him why it's known as the land down under.

South Australia is a state of Australia (like \_\_\_\_\_ [insert your state] is a state in America). The two cities mentioned in the story (Coober Pedy and Adelaide) are real cities in South Australia.

*Coober Pedy:* Almost one hundred years ago, a teenager found some surface opals and mining began. Coober Pedy is in the heart of the Australian Outback. It is a small town...about 3,500 people. Temperatures during the day might reach over 110 degrees, but at night the temperature might be below freezing. Because of the temperature extremes, many of the houses (and even churches!) are underground, where temperatures stay around a comfortable 77 degrees.

*Adelaide:* Adelaide is the capitol of South Australia and is a very large city with over 1 million people. It is bordered on the east and south sides by the Murray River, Australia's largest river.

If your student is interested in learning more about Australia, try our [Australia Lapbook!](#)

***Houses – Underground:*** When think of a house, we typically think of house that has a pointed roof and windows, floors of tile or linoleum. Not too many people live in underground homes with walls and floors made from rock. Why would people want to live underground? (Easier and costs less to keep the home warm in winter and cooler in summer, no need to worry about tornadoes damaging the home, etc.)

Have your child think of as many different kinds of houses as he can.

Go-along: *A House is a House for Me* by Mary Ann Hoberman

***Housekeeping:*** Discuss with your child the various duties that make up housekeeping. In our story, Aunt Grace thinks it is "bad housekeeping" because

there was an opal stuck in the wall and she didn't know about it. She thought it made her look like she never cleaned back there.

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## Language Arts

### **Comprehension Questions:**

Do opals really have fire in them? *(No, there are just lots of colors in them and when the light hits the opal, it's as if there is fire trapped inside it.)*

How did the opals "leave town on ladies' fingers or stuck in city men's ties?" *(The opals were set/mounted in jewelry....rings and tie tacks.)*

Why was living at Grandma's like living in an opal? *(The colors that were all around her at Grandmas were ones Jean didn't see back in Coober Pedy.)*

How did the opals "turn into" schoolbooks, clothes, and a bed? *(Grandma exchanged the opal for money and Grandma bought the items.)*

Why did Jean lift the bugs up high? *(To see everything.)*

**Contractions:** Discuss what an apostrophe is and explain that one of its uses is to show missing letters. When an apostrophe is used to show missing letters in a word, then the word is a contraction. Not all words with an apostrophe is a contraction, but many are. Show him some examples from the story and explain to him the two words that make up a contraction.

I'll.....I will

you're.....you are

didn't.....did not

I'd.....I would

they're....they are

isn't.....is not

I'm..... I am

can't.....can not

aren't.....are not

I've.....I have

don't.....do not

doesn't....does not

It's.....it is

there're...there are

she's.....she is

won't.....will not (explain this one is special)

You might want to pick out several to review daily, then at the end of the week, quiz the student on which two words make each contraction.

### **Choices a Writer can make-- Dramatic Effect**

In this story the ellipses are used for dramatic effect, but I wouldn't introduce this concept to a young child who has no prior experience with ellipses. If you have a more mature student, then proceed.

Authors use different techniques in writing just as artists use different techniques in creating an artwork. If an author wants to get the reader's attention, what can he do? He won't be there to read his work aloud; he won't be able to make inflexions in his voice or pause when he wants readers to think--he has to use other strategies. Here are a few of the strategies a writer can implement in his writing when he wants something to stand out to the reader or when he wants to reader to stop and ponder.

1. Exclamation points See! This gets your attention! Where in the text can you student find examples of exclamation points? Teach your student how to read a

sentence that ends in an exclamation point; ham it up and have fun exclaiming!

*"Bother!" she says.*

*"Look!" I tell Aunt Grace..*

*"Well," he says, "that's some opal!"*

*It goes a long ways back in the wall, but finally it comes out -- a big one!*

*"Don't be ridiculous!" Uncle Peter declares.*

*"Jean found it. It's hers!"*

2. Very short sentences.

This is noticed at the end of the story.

*Dad promises to write letters*

*and send funny drawings,*

*and I promise him*

*I'll come back to Coober Pedy to visit.*

***Often.***

***I will miss him.***

You can discuss that sometimes writers use fragments as "very short sentences" -- I always told my students-- "you aren't allowed to break the rules until you know the rules." So, you may or may not allow that in his writing.

3. Ellipses -- Ellipses aren't traditionally used in this way, but the author of the story uses them for a pause; she wants you to stop and think. Look back through the story and read some of these passages with your child. Here is an example:

*Come, I'll show you where we live . . .*

*. . .underground.*

Re-write the passages (your child could do this for copywork) and take the ellipses out; then read right through.

*Come, I'll show you where we live underground.*

How is this different than the other sentence? The original way the author wrote

it puts more emphasis on the fact that they live underground. She stops at the word *live*...and you think...and then you see the word underground...and you really think.

Here are some more examples--

*In Coober Pedy, we all live in holes and look for opals—my dad in the proper mine. . .*

*. . . and me in the rock piles, where kids hunt for shiny opal bits the miners missed.*

*Her face is damp from the hot stove, and when she stoops over, her glasses slide . . . off.*

*I hear her and Dad up late talking . . .*

*. . . and the next day I find out that the opal has turned into schoolbooks and clothes and a spare bed*

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## Art

**Pastels:** Illustrator Allen Garns used pastels to draw each picture. If your student likes experiment with different mediums, have him draw a picture using pastels.

A younger student may like to cut an opal shape out of white construction paper, and use bright colors to add the "fire" of the stone.

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## Math

**Play Jewelry Store:** Using marbles, crystals, rings, necklaces, tie tacks, etc., set up a store. Price items according to child's ability. If your child needs work on

counting out money, then let him be the buyer. If he needs work on counting back change, then let him be the seller.

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## Science

**Opals:** An opal is a precious gemstone, and one of the most beautiful at that. The rainbow spectrum of colors it displays is called the "play of color." Almost all opals are found in Australia (95% of the world's opals). Australian opals are found in an area called The Great Artesian Basin, which lies under about 1/4 of Australia.

There are two types of opals: precious and common. The precious opals display the play-of-color, common ones don't. An opal is formed from a solution of silicon dioxide and water. As water runs down through the earth, it picks up silica from sandstone, and carries this silica-rich solution into cracks and voids, caused by natural faults or decomposing fossils. As the water evaporates, it leaves behind a silica deposit. This cycle repeats over very long periods of time, and eventually opal is formed.

### ***Eyes and the need for glasses:***

Sometimes the parts of an eye don't work together like they should causing people to have a hard time seeing things. Glasses can fix this problem.

#### How Your Eyes Work

Your eye is made up of the following parts:

cornea (kor-nee-uh)- clear tissue that helps your eye focus

iris- the colored part (what color is your iris?)

pupil- allows light into the eye

retina- the very back of the eye

Your eyes bend light rays so that the image can be focused sharply on your retina (and interpreted by your brain). Most people have vision problems because their eyes aren't refracting (bending the light rays) in the right way. Glasses (and contacts) can fix refraction problems by bending the light in the right way -- in a way that lets a person see more clearly.

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## Bible / Character Development

Isaiah 28:16 *Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste.* Jesus Christ is often called a Stone, or Rock, as the foundation whom which we build our spiritual life, and of the church; a "living stone" because he imparts life to all who build upon him, and himself lives eternally.

Psalm 91:11-12 *For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.*

Other references to stones in the Bible: Jacob's stone pillow, the stone with which David felled Goliath, and the stone that covered the tomb of Jesus

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## Just for Fun

Visit a jewelry store or a cave

Bake hot cross buns

Learn about Australian Animals. Be sure to check out our [Marsupials Lapbook](#).

Read ***This Place is Lonely*** by Vicki Cobb (Series: Imagine Living Here) This book really gives the student an idea of what it's like to live in the Outback. (Note: you may wish to skip the page that tells about the 150 million year old super continent, Gondwana.)

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