

Descriptive writing – ayer's rock



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

As the cramped, stuffy minibus approached our destination, I could see the first rays of morning sun sparkle over the horizon. Against this blinding inferno an ominous shadow appeared. It grew as we drew nearer, the true size of it becoming clearer. Looking away briefly to swat at a fly, as I turned back I was hit by a surge of warmth as the sun rose higher. Transfixed I stared at the task before me; the other occupants of the bus seemed sombre and lifeless compared to the scenery. Glancing at my watch (5. 00am) I slipped my hat over my eyes and attempted to sleep.

A sudden jolt awoke me; a speed bump signalling our arrival at the monolith. The shade confused my dozing mind briefly as I looked left. Waking quickly I saw a vast expanse of orange-brown rock rising to the sky, ugly at a glance but beautiful in detail. Awe-struck, my eyes slowly surveyed the rock; tracking up I saw faint smears of colour moving towards the summit, and eventually clicked that these were people, dwarfed immensely by this foreboding thing. I managed to pull myself from my seat, grab my camera and head for this blister rising from the outback.

My view had been that I was at the base of the rock already, and that my walk would be a short one, but the weathered lump continued to grow as I approached. More and more detail was becoming visible; small bushes surrounding the base from a distance were actually small trees, small cracks in the rock were the size of a block of flats, creating huge weathered tentacles reaching into the desert dust. I eventually reached the base, continually staring upwards and trying to take in the full magnitude of this place. Our groups guide appeared and gave us the go ahead to begin the climb to the summit of this red mountain.

I began the climb optimistic; seeing the sloping pathway from the base made it seem an ascent of no more than 150 metres, and the help of a chain near the floor would make it short work. But as I climbed higher, I saw more pathways stretching off over the wasteland of the zenith. Already somewhat tired, I suddenly had a surge of energy and decided to press on fast. I motored up the remaining chained slope, ignoring the floods of Japanese tourists sliding slowly down. Reaching the barren plain, I saw it was not the flat desert I had imagined but was covered in deep furrows and potholes created by the millennia of exposure to the harsh outback elements. I groaned, but could now see the apex another 200 metres or so higher. The prospect of seeing the already magnificent view from that windswept pinnacle strengthened my resolve, and I set over this other worldly landscape

As I continued to climb, and could see more of the pristine wilderness around me, I realised just how far from the hustle and bustle of the civilized world I was. No sound could be heard apart from the constant warm breeze whipping through the channels in the rock; after my push towards the top I had left the rest of the people heading up behind somewhat, and no other tourists had ventured this far. I had the pleasure of being completely alone to fully appreciate the beauty of my surroundings, and how disconnected from life I felt. I realised that in my mental wanderings, I had also wandered quite far, almost to the roof of this red world. The final chasm in the rock before my goal seemed nothing more than a ditch and the last few steps would be done in minutes.

Rising over the final hill and out of the shadow, into the fierce morning sun was fantastic. Seeing the earth stretch out into infinity below me filled me with life. It was quite odd. Weary from the climb, I sat down to rest, still feeling this wonder that places this untouched still existed in the world. The inspiration to explore and find more of these areas of solitude was suddenly kindled in me, and started some ambitions flowing in my brain. Rested, I decided to use this short period of isolation to examine where I was.

Although at a glance the summit seemed empty, on closer inspection there was life. In the pools of rainwater dotting the surface were ancient creatures, species of crustacean, with strange shrimps and strange prehistoric things I later found out were called triops; similar to the trilobites of the Mesozoic, yet still alive after the isolation on this rock. It was quite incredible; a glimpse into a life cycle that has been carrying in a single puddle for millions of years, completely ignorant of the rest of the world and completely unchanged.

In the time I had been staring into the pool, my mum and sister had arrived and were admiring the view. I approached and told them about what I had seen and my amazement at this place. We explored some more, took some photos to remember what we had seen, and found the remains of a fire from an aboriginal fire, possibly hundreds of years old but preserved on this time stopping rock. Thinking of the ages that had been and gone while this single rock had stood frozen continued to amaze me. It was seen by some of the first human cultures hundreds of thousands of years ago, before dinosaurs would of swum around it during its time submerged in an ancient sea, before

that who knows what might of seen it? If it could speak, what stories would it tell?

Hours had passed since I first set off, and it was time to head back to the confines of the minibus. Coming back down, I didn't mind leaving as I felt as though no matter how much we are told about the world, no matter how much information we are fed through the media, television and how much our governments try to shrink our perception of the world, it is still a truly vast place that should be appreciated for its wonders and the ones it may still hold.

Reaching the base again, and looking back at where I had been, I decided that I wanted to see these wonders in my lifetime.