



# Taroko Gorge

Reading Worksheet — Level F | [tahricteaches.com](http://tahricteaches.com)

Taroko Gorge, located on the eastern coast of Taiwan within Hualien County, is widely regarded as one of the most **spectacular** natural landscapes in Asia. Carved over millions of years by the relentless force of the Liwu River, the gorge features towering marble cliffs, narrow canyons, and turquoise waters that wind through dense subtropical forest. Its name, derived from the indigenous Truku people, means "magnificent and beautiful," a description few visitors would dispute.

The geological history of Taroko is genuinely remarkable. The marble and granite formations were created when ancient coral reefs were subjected to immense **pressure** and heat deep beneath the earth's surface. Continuous tectonic activity then thrust these metamorphic rocks upward, while the river patiently **eroded** the stone, producing the dramatic vertical walls that define the park today. The process continues even now, making the landscape geologically dynamic.

Beyond its scenery, Taroko National Park harbors **remarkable** biodiversity. Endemic species of butterflies, macaques, and rare birds thrive within its varied microclimates, which range from coastal lowlands to alpine peaks exceeding 3,700 meters. Conservationists consider the area an ecological treasure that warrants ongoing protection.

Visitors typically explore the gorge via the Central Cross-Island Highway, a narrow road carved precariously into the cliff face during the 1950s. Popular trails such as Shakadang and Baiyang lead hikers past suspended bridges, hidden waterfalls, and sacred Truku sites. However, the region remains **vulnerable** to typhoons, landslides, and earthquakes, which periodically close sections of the park and remind travelers of nature's unpredictable power.

Despite these hazards, Taroko continues to captivate hundreds of thousands of visitors each year. Local authorities are working to balance tourism with sustainability, implementing visitor quotas and reinforcing infrastructure damaged by recent seismic events. For travelers seeking a destination that combines geological wonder, cultural depth, and ecological richness, Taroko Gorge represents an experience that is both humbling and unforgettable.

## A. Vocabulary

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|------------------------|---|
| 1. spectacular ____    | a. originating or occurring naturally in a particular place; native |
| 2. pressure ____       | b. native and restricted to a certain place or region               |
| 3. eroded ____         | c. in a way that is dangerously unstable or insecure                |
| 4. remarkable ____     | d. continuous physical force exerted on or against an object        |
| 5. vulnerable ____     | e. gradually worn away by water, wind, or other natural forces      |
| 6. indigenous ____     | f. worthy of attention because of being unusual or extraordinary    |
| 7. biodiversity ____   | g. exposed to the possibility of being harmed or damaged            |
| 8. endemic ____        | h. variety of plant and animal life within a particular habitat     |
| 9. sustainability ____ | i. ability to be maintained without depleting natural resources     |
| 10. precariously ____  | j. extremely impressive or dramatic in appearance                   |

## B. True or False

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- \_\_\_ 1. Taroko Gorge is located on the western coast of Taiwan.
- \_\_\_ 2. The Liwu River played a major role in carving the gorge.
- \_\_\_ 3. The name 'Taroko' comes from the indigenous Truku people.
- \_\_\_ 4. The marble in Taroko was originally formed from ancient volcanic ash.
- \_\_\_ 5. Some peaks within Taroko National Park exceed 3,700 meters in elevation.
- \_\_\_ 6. The Central Cross-Island Highway was constructed during the 1980s.
- \_\_\_ 7. The Shakadang and Baiyang trails are popular hiking routes in the park.
- \_\_\_ 8. Taroko is rarely affected by typhoons or earthquakes.
- \_\_\_ 9. Authorities have introduced visitor quotas to promote sustainability.
- \_\_\_ 10. The gorge attracts only a few thousand visitors each year.

## C. Fill in the Blanks

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**Word Bank:** spectacular, eroded, vulnerable, indigenous, biodiversity, endemic, sustainability, precariously

1. The Truku are an \_\_\_\_\_ group whose ancestral lands include the gorge.
2. Over thousands of years, the river \_\_\_\_\_ the marble cliffs into their current shape.
3. The park is home to many \_\_\_\_\_ species found nowhere else on earth.
4. Coastal areas of Taiwan remain \_\_\_\_\_ to powerful typhoons each summer.
5. The highway clings \_\_\_\_\_ to the cliff face high above the river below.



## D. Comprehension Questions

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1. How were the marble formations of Taroko Gorge originally created?
2. Why is Taroko National Park considered ecologically significant?
3. What challenges threaten the stability of Taroko Gorge as a tourist destination?

## E. Discussion Questions

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1. Should governments limit the number of tourists allowed into fragile natural sites like Taroko Gorge, and what are the trade-offs of doing so?
2. How can countries balance preserving indigenous cultural heritage with developing tourism in protected natural areas?



# Answer Key

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**A. Vocabulary:** 1-j, 2-d, 3-e, 4-f, 5-g, 6-a, 7-h, 8-b, 9-i, 10-c

**B. True/False:** 1-F, 2-T, 3-T, 4-F, 5-T, 6-F, 7-T, 8-F, 9-T, 10-F

**C. Fill Blanks:** 1-indigenous, 2-eroded, 3-endemic, 4-vulnerable, 5-precariously

**D. Comprehension:**

1. Ancient coral reefs were transformed into marble by intense heat and pressure deep beneath the earth's surface before being pushed upward by tectonic activity.
2. It harbors remarkable biodiversity, including endemic butterflies, macaques, and rare birds thriving across microclimates from coastal lowlands to alpine peaks.
3. Typhoons, landslides, and earthquakes periodically damage the park and force closures, requiring authorities to reinforce infrastructure and manage visitor numbers.

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