

## Over-tourism threatens Mt. Fuji's world heritage status

11th September 2023



Japan's Mt. Fuji's UNESCO World Heritage status is under threat due to over-tourism. The iconic peak was listed as a world heritage site in 2013. However, a spike in the number of tourists scaling the majestic mountain is threatening that listing. Japan is

experiencing a post-covid tourist boom, and many visitors are making a beeline for Fuji-san's climbing trails. Mt. Fuji is so sacred in Japan that many Japanese hope to climb it at least once in their lives. The burgeoning number of climbers is causing environmental damage on the slopes. Litter is strewn across the volcanic ash, and large parking lots have been constructed to accommodate tourists. These are an eyesore on the mountain's once-pristine habitat.

A local official told reporters that: "Fuji faces a real crisis. Tourism has become uncontrollable, and we fear that Mt. Fuji will soon become so unattractive, nobody would want to climb it." He added: "Fuji-san is screaming in pain. We can't just wait for improvement; we need to tackle over-tourism now." The mountain's fifth base station has seen a 50 per cent jump in visitors since 2013, with about four million visitors this summer. Another headache for local authorities is "bullet climbers". These are people who attempt to ascend and descend Fuji in 24 hours. They risk getting altitude sickness and hypothermia. The official climbing season ended on Sunday, giving Fuji a respite from further damage.

Sources: [asahi.com](https://www.asahi.com) / [japantimes.co.jp](https://www.japantimes.co.jp) / [mainichi.jp](https://www.mainichi.jp)

### Writing

Limits should be put on the number of tourists visiting famous sights. Discuss.

### Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

Mt. Fuji / UNESCO / heritage / over-tourism / tourists / boom / climbers / eyesore / crisis / unattractive / screaming / pain / headache / altitude sickness / hypothermia

### True / False

- 1) Mt. Fuji has been a World Heritage site for over two decades. T / F
- 2) The article says many tourists are following bees up Mt. Fuji. T / F
- 3) The article says Mt. Fuji is sacred to many Japanese people. T / F
- 4) Car parks for tourists have been built on Mt. Fuji. T / F
- 5) A local official said tourism on Mt. Fuji is controllable. T / F
- 6) A local official said Mt. Fuji was screaming in pain. T / F
- 7) People who are called "bullet climbers" are getting lots of headaches. T / F
- 8) People cannot climb Mt. Fuji until next year. T / F

### Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- |                      |                    |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| 1. <b>status</b>     | a. disaster        |
| 2. <b>spike</b>      | b. upturn          |
| 3. <b>boom</b>       | c. climb           |
| 4. <b>burgeoning</b> | d. ugly sight      |
| 5. <b>eyesore</b>    | e. standing        |
| 6. <b>crisis</b>     | f. break           |
| 7. <b>tackle</b>     | g. sudden rise     |
| 8. <b>headache</b>   | h. deal with       |
| 9. <b>ascend</b>     | i. growing rapidly |
| 10. <b>respite</b>   | j. problem         |

### Discussion – Student A

- a) What do you know about Mt. Fuji?
- b) Would you like to climb Mt. Fuji?
- c) What world heritage sites does your country have?
- d) What do you think of tourists in your country?
- e) What problems come with over-tourism?
- f) What do you think of hiking up mountains?
- g) What do you think when you see litter everywhere?
- h) Should we limit the number of tourists who visit sights?

## Phrase Match

- |                                       |                             |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. The iconic peak was listed         | a. tourist boom             |
| 2. Japan is experiencing a post-covid | b. sickness                 |
| 3. The burgeoning number of           | c. crisis                   |
| 4. Litter is strewn                   | d. as a world heritage site |
| 5. an eyesore on the mountain's once- | e. from further damage      |
| 6. Fuji faces a real                  | f. across the volcanic ash  |
| 7. we need to tackle                  | g. for local authorities    |
| 8. Another headache                   | h. pristine habitat         |
| 9. They risk getting altitude         | i. over-tourism now         |
| 10. giving Fuji a respite             | j. climbers                 |

## Discussion – Student B

- What do you think about what you read?
- What are your favourite mountains?
- What advice do you have for those climbing Mt. Fuji?
- What kind of tourist are you?
- What can authorities do about the over-tourism problem?
- Do you prefer mountains or beaches?
- What do you know about altitude sickness and hypothermia?
- What questions would you like to ask the local official?

## Spelling

- scaling the jaiseemt mountain
- making a ineeebl for Fuji-san's climbing trails
- Mt. Fuji is so rdaesc in Japan
- The unbgogienr number of climbers
- constructed to aomcdatcome tourists
- the mountain's once-nsptriie habitat
- become so vtataeucnrti
- we need to lkceat over-tourism now
- Another headache for local uitrheoiast
- ascend and snecedd Fuji
- getting altitude sickness and oyaephrmti
- giving Fuji a tperise from further damage

### Answers – Synonym Match

1. e	2. g	3. b	4. i	5. d
6. a	7. h	8. j	9. c	10. f

## Role Play

### Role A – Mt. Fuji

You think Mt. Fuji is the best site. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their sites. Also, tell the others which is the least interesting of these (and why): Great Barrier Reef, Grand Canyon or Taj Mahal.

### Role B – Great Barrier Reef

You think the Great Barrier Reef is the best site. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their sites. Also, tell the others which is the least interesting of these (and why): Mt. Fuji, Grand Canyon or Taj Mahal.

### Role C – Grand Canyon

You think the Grand Canyon is the best site. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their sites. Also, tell the others which is the least interesting of these (and why): Great Barrier Reef, Mt. Fuji or Taj Mahal.

### Role D – Taj Mahal

You think the Taj Mahal is the best site. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their sites. Also, tell the others which is the least interesting of these (and why): Great Barrier Reef, Grand Canyon or Mt. Fuji.

## Speaking – World Heritage

Rank these with your partner. Put the best ones at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- |                       |                |
|-----------------------|----------------|
| • Mt. Fuji            | • Grand Canyon |
| • Machu Picchu        | • Petra        |
| • Great Barrier Reef  | • Angkor Wat   |
| • Great Wall of China | • Taj Mahal    |

### Answers – True False

1	F	2	F	3	T	4	T	5	F	6	T	7	F	8	T
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.