

Name _____

AUSTRALIA

GEOGRAPHY

Australia lies in the Southern Hemisphere between the Pacific and Indian Oceans. It is the smallest continent and the sixth largest country in the world today. It is about the same size as the continental United States (without Alaska and Hawaii). It is also the lowest, flattest, and apart from Antarctica, the driest continent.

Australia is globally isolated, which explains why it has such unique flora and fauna. Some Australian animals and plants only exist there natively, and nowhere else in the world. These animals include the kangaroo, emu, wombat, koala, hundreds of types of eucalyptus trees, and the only egg-laying mammals on earth- the platypus and echidna.

About one-third of Australia is desert. Lake Eyre, is a salt lake that stays dry the majority of the time in southern Australia. It fills up completely only an average of twice a century! Most of the rivers that feed into the lake dry up before they reach it. Almost all Australian rivers are seasonal, filling up with water only after heavy rainfalls. The only permanently flowing rivers are located in the eastern and southwestern regions of Tasmania and Australia.

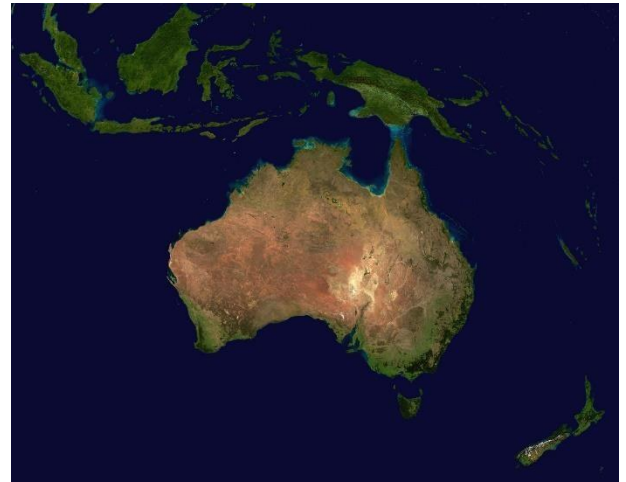
The highest mountain in Australia is Mount Kosciuszko, standing at 7,310 feet tall. Ayers rock, or "Uluru" is the center of the country and is the largest standing rock in the world.

One of Australia's greatest assets is the Great Barrier Reef, a magnificent reef that runs along the northeastern coast for more than 2,000 kilometers. It is considered one of the world's natural wonders and is the most extensive reef system and biggest structure created by living organisms on earth.

Australia is often referred to as the "land down under." It was the last continent to be discovered and explored by Europeans, so it also called "The Last of Lands." The desert part of the Australia is known as the "Outback."

ABORIGINES

Prior to British arrival, the Aborigines populated Australia. They are first thought to have arrived on the Australian mainland by sea from Southeast Asia between 40,000 to 70,000 years ago. The Aborigines were hunter-gatherers. They established enduring spiritual and artistic traditions and used stone technologies. Australia has an abundance of rock art, some of which are the oldest known engravings in the world. They even



pre-date the cave etchings in Europe. The Aborigines were great hunters, using dingoes, native dogs, and hunting tools like the spear, woomera, and boomerang. Aborigines hunted slow moving, large marsupials nearly to extinction.

By the time of European contact, the Aborigines had developed trade and cultural links with Asia. They had different communities that were spread across the continent. Each group of Aborigines had its own territory, traditions, beliefs, and languages. Once the Europeans arrived, Aborigines found themselves increasingly marginalized in their land, mistreated, robbed, and all but ignored. Many of them were also wiped out from diseases brought from Europeans, like Smallpox.

Today Aborigines only make up about 2% of the population of Australia. Aborigines were not given the right to vote in Australia until 1962. They were recognized as citizens five years later. In 1976 The Aboriginal Land Rights Act is passed and gives Aborigines the legal right to make claims to their land in the Northern Territory. In 2008, the Australian Parliament formally apologized for past wrongdoings to the Aborigines.

HISTORY

The first recorded sighting of Australia was in 1606, when the Dutch ship *Duyfken* commanded by Willem Janszoon saw the West coast of Cape York, the northernmost point of the Australian continent. Twenty-nine other Dutch navigators explored the western and southern coasts of Australia in the 17th century. They called the continent New Holland. Other Europeans explored the area some in the following years.

In 1770, Captain James Cook of Britain sailed the entire length of the eastern coast of Australia. He stopped at Botany Bay and after rounding Cape York, claimed the continent for the British and named it New South Wales.

In 1772, a French expedition led by Louis Aleno de St Alouarn became another of the first Europeans to claim sovereignty over the west coast of Australia, but no attempt was made to follow through with any colonization. Sweden's King Gustav III attempted to establish a colony for his country at the Swan River in 1786, but was not successful.



The First Fleet 1788

In 1779, Joseph Banks, a naturalist on Cook's voyage, suggested that Britain could solve their overcrowding problems in British prisons by transporting convicts to New South Wales. In 1787, the First Fleet of British ships left England and arrived in Botany Bay in January of 1788 under the command of Captain Arthur Philip. He became the colony's first governor. The Fleet was made up of 11 ships, 750 male and female convicts, four companies of marines, and supplies for two years.

Eventually free settlers began to be attracted to Australia over the next several decades. The discovery of gold in the 1850s really changed the colony. There was a huge influx of about 95,000 immigrants. Fortune hunters arrived from all over the world. Several large finds of gold boosted the economy, changing the colonial structures forever. Many new roads were built during this time. Many immigrants became sheep farmers or miners. Aborigines were ruthlessly pushed off their tribal lands as new settlers took the land for farming or mining.

Australia became a commonwealth of the British Empire in 1901. They took advantage of Australia's natural resources to rapidly develop its agricultural and manufacturing industries. They made major contributions to the British effort in the First and Second World Wars. After World War II, there was a flood of European immigrants in Australia. Many were non-British and made enormous contributions to the country.

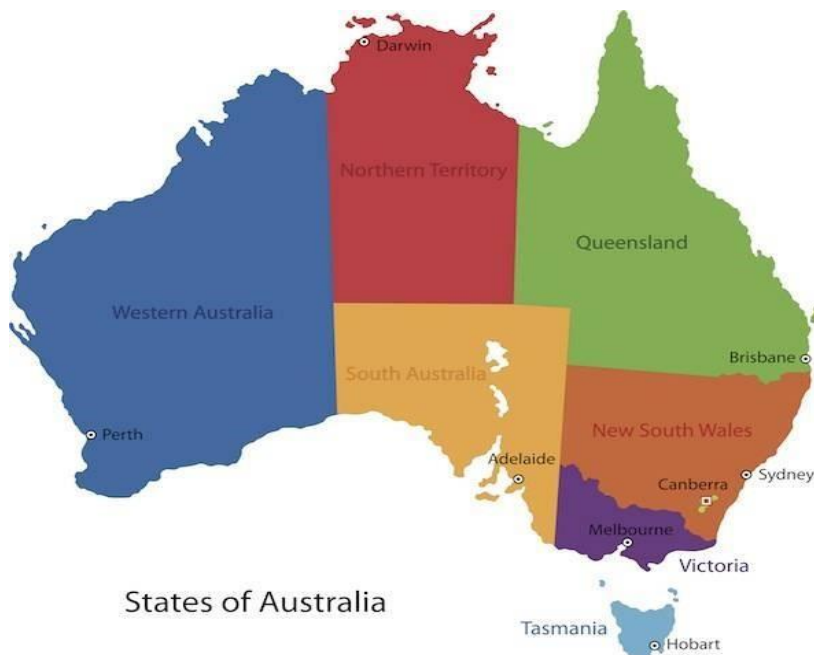
AUSTRALIA TODAY

The capital of Australia today is Canberra. Australia has six states- New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania, Victoria, and Western Australia. They also have two territories- the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory. As a commonwealth of Britain, they have a constitutional monarchy, with Britain's Queen Elizabeth II at the top. They have their own parliamentary government to make decisions.

Australia is one of the most urbanized countries in the world. About 80% of Australia's population live along the

coastline, mainly in the cities of Sydney, Melbourne, and Brisbane. The most spoken language in Australia is English, although Aborigines speak dozens of native languages. Christianity is the most commonly practiced religion in Australia. January 26th is known as Australia Day and celebrates the day the First Fleet landed in Australia.

Australia hosted the Summer Olympics in 2000 in Sydney. They are world leader with a thriving economy today.



NAME THE PLACE: Identify each place described using the word bank and article.

Botany Bay	Swan River	Lake Eyre
Tasmania	Southern	Cape York
Southeast Asia	Sydney	Canberra
Great Britain	New South Wales	Uluru

1.	I was first spotted by a Dutch sailor in 1606.
2.	The Queen from this country is Australia's monarch.
3.	I was recommended to be a spot for a colony by James Cook's voyage and where the First Fleet landed.
4.	Australia lies in this hemisphere, below the equator.
5.	I am Australia's capital city.
6.	The Swedish attempted to start a colony here, but it was unsuccessful.
7.	I am an island state of Australia.
8.	I am Australia's greatest salt lake and I only fill up about twice a century.
9.	I am a major Australian city where the Summer Olympics were held in 2000.
10.	Australia's natives, the Aborigines, most likely came from this area of the world.
11.	I was the first British colony in Australia.

TRUE/FALSE

Statement	True	False
13. Australia is the smallest continent in the world.		
14. The Great Barrier Reef is the world's biggest structure made of living organisms.		
15. Aborigines were farmers who set up their own plantations.		
16. The British were the first to attempt to colonize Australia.		
17. Australia was originally started as a penal colony, as a way to alleviate overcrowding in British prisons.		
18. A gold rush in the early 1800s caused many people to immigrate to Australia.		
19. Australia became a British commonwealth in 1901.		
20. Australia was not involved in the World Wars at all.		
21. Australia has six states and two territories today.		
22. Christianity is the most commonly practice religion in Australia.		
23. Australia has their own President and Vice President.		
24. Most people in Australia live on the coastlines.		

25. Which of the following is NOT true about Australia's geography?

- A. It lies between the Pacific and Atlantic Ocean.**
- B. It is the sixth largest country in the world today.**
- C. It is about one-third desert.**
- D. Australia is globally isolated.**

26. Which of the following is NOT a nickname of Australia?

- A. "Land down under"**
- B. "The Last of Lands"**
- C. "Outback"**
- D. "Down South"**

27. Which of the following is NOT true about the Aborigines of Australia?

- A. They arrived in Australia between 40,000 to 70,000 years ago.**
- B. They were hunter-gatherers, using dingoes and many hunting tools.**
- C. They were treated nicely by the British when they came to Australia.**
- D. They developed trade and cultural links with Asia prior to British arrival.**

28. Which of the following was NOT an advancement made for Aborigines?

- A. Many Aborigines died when the British arrived from diseases and conflicts.**
- B. In 1962 Aborigines were given the right to vote.**
- C. Aborigines were made Australian citizens in 1967.**
- D. The 1976 Aboriginal Land Rights Act gave Aborigines the right to their land.**

29. Which of the following is an accurate statement about the first British colony in Australia?

- A. Captain Arthur Philip became the governor of the colony.**
- B. It was made up mainly of criminals brought over from Great Britain.**
- C. It was unsuccessful and another attempt was made five years later.**
- D. They brought along two years of supplies with them from Great Britain.**

30. Which of the following is an accurate statement about the gold rush in Australia?

- A. There was an influx of about 200,000 people who immigrated to Australia.**
- B. Many new roads were built and the economy was boosted as a result.**
- C. Aborigines became rich from the gold they found on their land.**
- D. Many people left Australia, leaving more land for the Aborigines.**

31. What is the purpose of Australia Day?

- A. To celebrate Australia's independence from Great Britain.**
- B. To celebrate when the First Fleet landed in Australia at Botany Bay.**
- C. To celebrate Aborigines and the history they have in Australia.**
- D. To celebrate the people of Australia and their interesting history.**