

Australia

Island, Country & Continent

As one of the largest countries in the world, Australia is known for its long coastline, pristine beaches, ancient castles, Sydney Opera House and The Great Barrier Reef. But it is probably most famous for its indigenous people, the Aboriginals and animals like the kangaroo and koala bear.

To help you get to know Australia better, we have provided a number of facts about this country, continent and island. Yes, Australia is all three of those. In fact, Australia is both a single country and a continent, the only one of its kind.



With communication and technology closing the gap on distance, Australia is gradually being discovered by more and more people, as one of the most interesting destinations in the world.

Exercise 1:

Applying what you know

Since Australia's history can be less familiar to due to its location, it gives students an opportunity to practice applying learning from previous Social Studies lessons to understand how a country's location, surroundings and history influence the way a country and culture develop. Using only the facts listed on the next page, please formulate 10 deductions about how, or why you think Australia developed, as a result of certain criteria. There are no right or wrong answers here, but you must formulate a compelling argument why you believe this could be true. This exercise is meant to have you start thinking why cultures and societies develop the way they do and can be based on a simple fact like weather conditions for instance.

Using the below facts and information about Australia, please formulate 10 deductions that could logically apply based on their potential effect. At least 3 of your deductions must relate specifically to Australia's native population, the Aboriginals.

Did you know?

- Australia is the only nation that governs a whole continent. It is the sixth-largest country in the world.
- Australia is both the largest island and the smallest, flattest continent on earth.
- The name indicates the location: 'Terra Australis' means 'Southern Land'. Australia lies between 10 and 39 degrees South latitude, between the Indian and the Pacific oceans.
- Australia is the driest continent after Antarctica, which makes it the driest inhabited continent on earth.
- 40% of Australia is tropical, but in the Australian Alps it snows at times.
- Most of Australia's interior has a desert climate and is referred to as the Australian Outback.
- Australia is the world's most urbanized country. 70% of the population lives in the 10 largest cities.

Basic Facts

Country Name: Commonwealth of Australia

States (6) and Territories (2): Australian Capital Territory, New South Wales, Northern Territory, Queensland, S. Australia, Tasmania, Victoria, W. Australia.

Capital: Canberra

Land Area: 7,617,930 sq km. Only 6.55% of this area is considered arable

Length of Coastline: 25,760 km

Lowest Point: Lake Eyre, 15 m

Highest Point : Mount Kosciuszko 2,229 m

Climate: arid to semiarid: semiarid in the west and center, the south and east are temperate, the north tropical

Population: 20,090,437 (estimated July 2005)

Age Average: 36.56 years

Ethnic Distribution: Caucasian 91%, Asian 7%, aboriginal and other 2%

Population Growth Rate: 0.87%

Currency: Australian dollar (AUD or AU\$)



Native Australian's; the Aboriginals

Australia's Original Inhabitants

- Australia's aboriginal inhabitants, a hunting-gathering people generally referred to as Aboriginals and Torres Straits Islanders, arrived about 40,000 years ago to Australia.
- Although their technical culture remained static—depending on wood, bone, and stone tools and weapons—their spiritual and social life was highly complex. Most spoke several languages, and confederacies sometimes linked widely scattered tribal groups.
- Aboriginal population density ranged from 1 person per square mile along the coasts to 1 person per 35 square miles in the arid interior.
- The aboriginal population numbers more than 410,000, representing about 2.2% of the population.



Most of the population inhabits costal urban centers