



Intro to Australia

author: Emily Chan

Lesson Summary: Students will learn about the basic history, geography, and cultural heritage of Australia. After viewing several ProjectExplorer Original episodes, students will share their observations and questions about Australia.

GRADE LEVEL:

Upper Elementary

ESTIMATED TIME:

two 50-minute class periods

SUBJECTS:

English Language Arts,
Social Studies, Geo



Background Information for Educators

Australia is believed to have been originally settled by Southeast Asian peoples more than 40,000 years ago. However, when Captain James Cook arrived in 1770, he claimed much of Australia's east coast in the name of the British Empire. Britain's claims upon Australia were extended to include a total of six colonies, and in 1820, all of Australia was incorporated into the British Commonwealth.



Key Vocabulary

colony
Commonwealth
settlement
territory

Guiding Questions

Where is Australia located?

What is the capital of Australia?

What type of government does Australia have?
How does it differ from your home country?

What are some of the country's natural resources?

What are some of the country's unique geographic features?

What languages are spoken in Australia?

What are the defining characteristics of a
"Commonwealth" nation?



Lesson Plan

1. Using a world map, ask students to locate Australia. Ask students to locate Australia's capital city (Canberra). How do they know it is the capital? What usually happens in a capital city?
2. Have students look at some of the geographic features of Australia (coastline; bush; dispersion of settlements predominantly in coastal regions but not inland). Have students locate and identify some of the countries nearby. Ask students to think about how the geography of Australia might influence how the Australian people live, or what their occupations may have traditionally looked like (i.e.: fishing, farming, hunting, etc.).
3. Distribute the Country Profile Worksheet (follows) to students to complete with information they have already discovered about Australia.
4. Read the [G'Day from Down Under! blog](#) and watch the "[The Sydney Harbour Bridge](#)" episode. Ask students to write what observations they made from the video.
5. Briefly explain the history of Australia. Ask students to consider what makes Australia different from other countries with which they are familiar. Have students make comparisons between Australia and their home country.
6. Show students the episode "[Koala-ty Time](#)." Have students add thoughts and observations to their Country Profile Worksheet.
7. Have students reflect on what they have learned about Australia so far. Write down additional questions students may have and encourage them to think about how Australia compares with their home country. Have students think about what they would like to see and do if they were to visit Australia.

Additional Resources

CIA World Fact Book: Australia

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/as.html>

Australia

<http://www.australia.gov.au/about-australia/our-country>

ASSESSMENT	Below Expectations	Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations
Geography Skills	<p>With assistance, student can locate country and capital city on a map.</p> <p>Student may be able to identify some of the basic geographic features (i.e.: coastline) but may require guidance to make inferences about people's daily life due to the geography.</p>	<p>Independently, student can locate country and capital city on a map. With assistance, student can identify the longitude/latitude coordinates of the country.</p> <p>Student can identify some of the specific geographic features (i.e.: coastline, desert, nearby nations) independently. Student can make basic inferences about how people's daily life is shaped by their geography.</p>	<p>Independently, student can locate country and capital city on a map.</p> <p>Student independently identifies the longitude/latitude coordinates of the country, and can identify numerous specific geographic features (i.e.: coastline, desert, nearby nations) independently.</p> <p>Student makes clear observations and inferences linking the geographical landscape with the way local people live their lives. Student may also be able to share other observations about how other nations may influence the local people, culture, and way of life.</p>
Australia Worksheet	<p>With assistance, student is able to complete the Australia Worksheet, completing all required sections.</p> <p>With assistance, student can identify several interesting facts about the country.</p>	<p>Student is able to complete the worksheet independently, using available resources in the classroom & online (i.e.: Atlas, CIA Fact Book, ProjectExplorer.)</p> <p>Student uses observations and resources to identify interesting facts about country. Student makes connections and asks questions that are grade-level appropriate.</p>	<p>Student completes the worksheet independently, using available resources in the classroom & online (i.e.: Atlas, CIA Fact Book, ProjectExplorer), but student may make connections with other countries or with prior knowledge.</p> <p>Student uses observations and resources to identify interesting facts about the country while also making insightful inferences that reflect higher-level connections and thinking.</p> <p>Student makes connections and asks questions that exceed grade-level expectations.</p>

Standards & Benchmarks

From the Common Core Standards for Language Arts in History / Social Studies

- Students will quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text. (*Key Ideas and Details, Grade 5*)
- Students will draw on information from multiple print or digital sources, demonstrating the ability to locate an answer to a question quickly or to solve a problem efficiently. (*Integration of Knowledge and Ideas, Grade 5*)

From the New York State Social Studies Standards, Standard 3: Geography

- Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of the geography of the interdependent world in which we live - local, national, and global - including the distribution of people, places, and environments over the Earth's surface.

worksheet follows on next page



Country Fact File

Country

Capital City

Language (s)

Type of Government

Map Coordinates

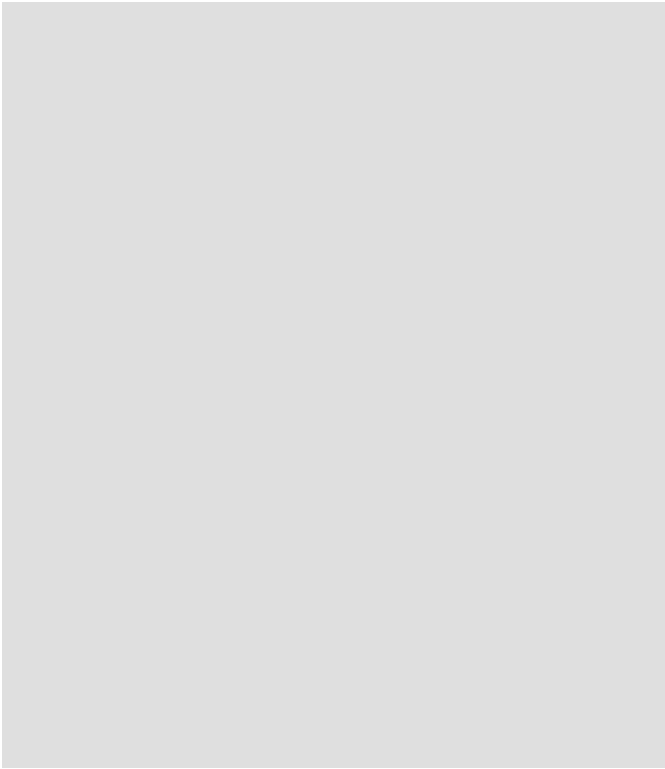
Bordering Countries

Geographic Features

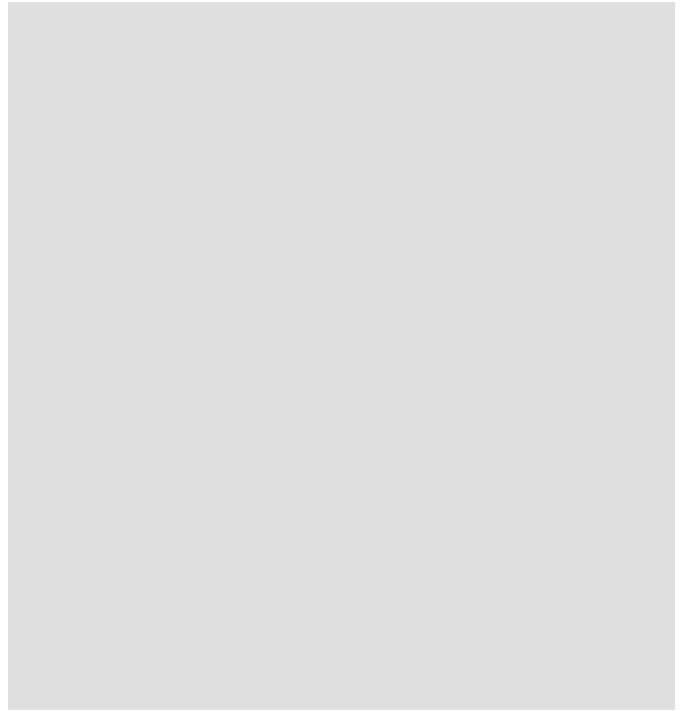
Natural Resources

Draw the country's flag here

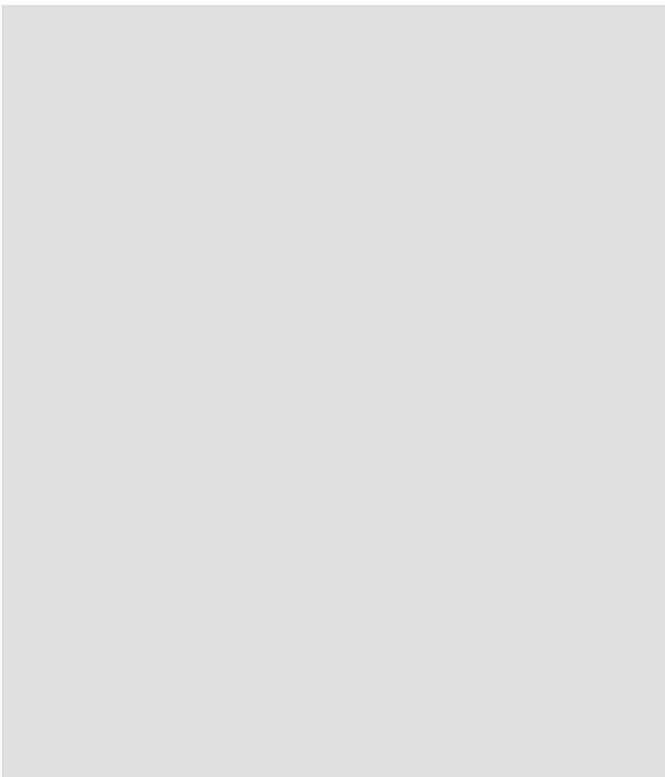
What do I think I know about the country?



What questions do I have that may need further research?



What would I like to know about the country?



If I visited the country I would like to...

