



Teacher's Guide to Families of the World

Australia

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Australia Rural Script Final

This is Australia, the country where I live. It's a giant continent surrounded by water. Because it's been an island for thousands of years, all kinds of animals only live here and nowhere else in the world.....Like the duck billed platypus, the kangaroo and the koala.

It's 6:15 in the morning and Mum is waking me up for school.

My name is Phoebe and I'm 8 years old. I live on a farm with my Mum and Dad, my 10 year old brother, Forbes, and lots of sheep and cattle, and Jake, our dog.

Forbes has a few minutes to play before breakfast.

When everybody's ready, we have breakfast together. I'm having Weetabix cereal. I like to put a little honey on my cereal.....OK, maybe I like to put a LOT of honey on my cereal!

It's June, and the weather is really getting cold. Winter here lasts from June to August, so this time of year we get dressed in front of the heater in the living room.

Today is sports day at school, and we're wearing a special uniform that we can bang around in.

Every morning it's my job to feed the chickens and gather the eggs. When Mom cooks, she saves the scraps to feed to our chickens. We also feed them a mixture of grain and corn. It's a good deal....we recycle our table waste and the chickens give us back eggs, lots of eggs. All these eggs are from just one day!

We take snacks to school in our lunch boxes. Today we're going to have pizza delivered to school for lunch.

Jake would like to go everywhere with us. So we have to be sure to tie him up when we leave, or he'll try to follow us to school. Mum will untie him when she comes back from taking us to the school bus.

Dad's family has been farming for over two hundred years. We raise sheep and cattle now, and when we get enough rain, we also grow crops like wheat and barley. Mum says a lot of the interior of Australia is desert. But in some areas like ours we'll get plenty of rain for a few years and then have three or four years with

way too little rain. We've had a drought for more than 5 years now, so it's very, very dry.

Here's our bus! We can always tell if it's ours by the picture of a camel in the window. Australia has lots of camels that were brought here in the early days to travel through the desert. When people started to use cars, they just let the camels go, and now they're wild.

We go to an Anglican school, and this morning we're going to a church service. The Anglican Church is the oldest European religion in Australia. That's because an Anglican minister was the chaplain for an early group of Europeans that came here in 1788. Eleven hundred convicts, soldiers and settlers sailed here from England. They found people already living here. These were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, who had been living here for many thousands of years, and they're still living here today.

When we get back to school our first class today is math.

Then it's time to have a snack. During recess we all find fun things to do. Some kids learn to throw a javelin. We go out to practice so we can compete with kids from other schools in a big sports day competition.

These kids are racing back and forth across the field.

I'm learning how to high jump. First we just learn how to jump and land on a big cushion without hurting ourselves. Then we start trying to jump over the bar without knocking it down. When I miss the bar, the teacher gives me some tips on how to do the scissor kick to help me get over it.

After awhile everyone has knocked down the bar except my friend and me. She misses, and now it's my turn. This time I'm luckier.

Hurray! The pizza delivery truck is here. When we ordered it this morning, everybody got to choose the kind they wanted. I got cheese pizza this time... my favorite!

Back at the farm, a tiny amount of rain fell. Even though we want rain, today isn't a good time to get it. That's because tomorrow Dad wants to have the sheep shorn. That means they'll get a haircut. The trouble is they can't be shorn if their wool is wet. Dad checks one of the sheep and finds its wool is damp. So he decides that

when I come home from school, I can help him put the sheep in the shed to dry out overnight.

Every day Dad checks to see how work is coming on replacing an old house on our farm that burned down a few months ago. Mum and Dad usually hire someone to help with farm work and look after the animals when we go on vacation, and this is where they live. When you have animals, you have to be sure they have food and water, and that means that someone has to be around all the time.

Mum's worked out a system to save water when she does the laundry. A washing machine first washes the clothes, and then it rinses them with clean water. Mum's idea was to catch the rinse water when it comes out of the machine and use it to wash the next batch of clothes. See? The rinse water is still pretty clean. This way she uses only half as much water as the old way.

Our toilets are also designed to save water. The half circle is for a small flush and the full circle is for a big flush.

We also have a big tank to catch and store rain water that runs off the roof of our buildings. We also get water from a well in the ground, and Mum uses that for her garden. She has put sprinklers right where she wants the water to go, so none is wasted.

When we get home, Dad helps me learn to ride my new motorcycle. I've already had some lessons, but when I tried to ride it by myself, I drove it right into a fence. I don't really want to try again, but it's important to learn, because we use motorcycles to move cattle and sheep from one field to another, like some ranchers use horses. Maybe tomorrow I'll give it a go. But today I'll stick to using my bike.

Time to move the sheep into the shed. I use an old bottle with a few stones in it to make a rattle that scares them into moving. If you can get one sheep to go where you want it to, the chances are good the others will follow it. That's why we sometimes say people are acting like sheep when they do what someone else is doing instead of thinking for themselves.

Once we get them into the shed, I play on the wool sorting turntable while Dad puts a bag in the machine we'll use tomorrow to press the wool into big bales.

Then we go out and start rounding up a different bunch of sheep that Dad's going to sell tomorrow. Dad and Forbes are on motorcycles, Mum is in the truck, and I'm on my bicycle.

Once we get the sheep penned for the night, we head home for bed. See you tomorrow!

It's Saturday morning, and the first thing we do after breakfast is bring a bale of hay to the pen where we put the sheep last night. Unloading hay can be hard work, because it's so heavy. But we figure out how to make the job fun anyway. Now the sheep can have breakfast, too!

Dad and Forbes are going to Grandma and Grandpa's farm. But before they go, Dad gasses up the car at our gas pump. We need gas close to home, because we have lots of machines and vehicles that use gas, and it's a long way into town!

Forbes and Dad are going to treat Grandma and Grandpa's cattle with medicine and shots. It takes about an hour for them to get to the farm.

I bet you've noticed that we drive on the left side of the road, and our steering wheel is on the right side of the car. Maybe that's because Australia's first European settlers were from England, and they drive on the left in England. We're still members of the British Commonwealth. In fact, Australia's official name is the Commonwealth of Australia.

Dad's herding the cattle he's going to treat into a special pen. Forbes gets a needle ready for Dad to give the cattle shots, and Dad will squirt the medicine into their mouths. He uses a cage with a special door that closes around the animal's neck so it can't move around too much.

When Dad and Forbes come back from my Grandparents' farm, the men Dad hired to shear the sheep are already busy. Shearing looks a little like undressing the sheep, and when their wool coats are gone, they really look different. The wool is sorted to take out any sticks or stones that might have gotten caught in the wool. Then the wool is squeezed into the bag that Dad got ready yesterday, so it doesn't take up too much room. When it's packed into the bag, it will make a bale that weighs about 200 kilograms. That's over 400 pounds!

While Dad and Forbes are working, Mum takes me to a field hockey game. We call it “minkey”, which is field hockey for children. At our age, boys and girls can play on the same team. I have to tell you that sports in Australia are a big thing.

After my minkey game, I go home and practice my violin. I've been taking lessons for a year and a half.

We live close enough to town that I can take ballet lessons. Australia is huge, and lots of kids live on ranches and farms so far from any school that they use computers, phones and radios to take classes at home.

Mom's making our favorite meal tonight. It's a casserole with broccoli, cheese, butter, chicken and noodles. She puts all the ingredients into a baking dish, pours the cheese sauce on, and then bakes it for an hour. She's also making apple crumble for dessert. Yum! We usually have our evening meal, which we call tea, together.

Then it's bath time.

I read to Dad before I go to bed, and he helps me pronounce any words that I have trouble sounding out. Then we brush our teeth again. And then it's off to bed. Goodnight!

Australia Urban final script

My name is Joshua and I live in Sydney, Australia's largest city. It's 7 o'clock and I'm just getting up for school.

I live in this house with my sister Phoebe, Mum and Dad, a guppy fish, three miniature rabbits, and a budje, which is a kind of parrot....Oh, and two chickens that live in the back yard. I'm 7 years old and Phoebe's 5. She's bringing in the morning newspaper.

It's my job to let our chickens out of their cage every morning. We give them table scraps and grain to eat.

Dad will be leaving for work in a few minutes, and I want to talk to him before he leaves.

Mum has taught us how to do some things in the kitchen. Today I'm making scrambled eggs. First I crack open the eggs as carefully as I can, so pieces of eggshell don't fall into the mixing bowl. Then I beat the eggs with a whisk. I add some milk to the eggs before I put them into the frying pan.

Phoebe rinses the canned beans that we'll put on slices of bread, together with the eggs. While I'm working on the eggs, Phoebe washes dishes and cleans up.

Dad has to leave for work before we have breakfast, so it's just the three of us.

Dad works in downtown Sydney. He walks to the bus stop and then rides the bus for about a half hour. Most Australian cities have good public transportation so people can get around easily, even if they don't have a car. We have a car and Mum will be using it this morning to take us to school.

Dad gets a free breakfast from the company where he works. He's a journalist. That's a person who writes for magazines or newspapers. He writes about buying and selling oil, coal and steel, which companies use to make things like cars and airplanes.

Dad uses his computer to get a lot of the information he needs when he writes his stories. He also gets information from people who know about what he's writing about.

Mum's also a journalist, but when she and Dad decided to have a family, she wanted to be a full time Mum and take care of Phoebe and me. She used to write lots of stories for women's magazines that were sold all over the world.

Now she's working on a book here at home. It's called a novel, which is a make believe story that she writes by using her imagination. Maybe people will like her novel and will buy lots of her books!

It's time to leave for school. Mum is in a car pool. That means she and some other parents take turns driving us to school. Today it's Mum's turn to drive, so we stop on the way to school to pick up other students.

I go to a public school and Phoebe goes to a private kindergarten. We usually get to school a few minutes before class starts, so we play outside until about 9 o'clock.

(Teacher talks to class)

Who's heard the saying that when two vowels go out walking, the first one does the talking? Put your hand up if you've heard that. When two vowels go out walking...OK so when two vowels, an O and an A, they're both vowels...A, E, I, O, U. The first one in this case does the talking.

This morning we're having an English class. Our teacher is going over the rules that will help us remember how to spell and pronounce words.

(Teacher talks to class)

Who can think of words that have O, A, and it sounds like O? It's like O is saying it's name. "Float". Another one please. Josh. (Josh says) Boat. (teacher) Boat, there's the first nice easy one.

Our school has lots of kids whose parents came from other countries. When my family goes shopping downtown, we see people from all over the world. Mum says they come to live in Australia because they think they can find a better life here.

After English class, we have recess for 20 minutes. Our school has 380 students in grades 1-6. I'm in second grade. We have about 12 weeks off during the year, and most of our vacation is in the summertime, from about Christmas to the end of January.

After recess it's back to class for penmanship, where we practice our writing. It helps to trace over the letters so we can see how it feels to make them the right way. These little wedge shapes show the size of the space we need to leave in these letters.

While Phoebe and I are in school, Mum goes shopping for some groceries. Today she stopped at the butcher shop to buy some chicken. Yes, I know we have chickens at home, but they're our pets, and we'd never think of eating them!

After shopping, Mum picks up Phoebe and me and takes us to our lessons. I've been taking piano for almost a year.

While I'm at my lesson, Mum drops off Phoebe at her ballet class. After our classes she takes us to her Mum and Dad's house for tea. Of course you know that makes them my Grandma and Grandpa.

Grandpa has a shop in his basement where he has all kinds of tools to make things. Phoebe uses a hammer and nails, a saw, and a screwdriver, just like Grandpa showed her.

We always like to check out the back yard. It gets cold in this part of Australia, but it doesn't freeze. That means Grandpa and Grandma can grow lemon and orange trees, and some of the fruit is almost ripe. Grandma says that if we lived farther north, the weather would be warm enough to grow bananas, too.

After supper we play some dominoes. Phoebe has a sore finger that she hit when she was hammering a nail.

Grandpa and Grandma's dog, Texas likes to listen to us play. I say "listen", but he's so old that he really can't see or hear much any more. When we finish our game of Dominoes, Grandpa says it's getting to be our bedtime.

On our way home we stop to watch the monorail that makes a big circle around downtown Sydney. Dad says it's called a monorail because it only has one rail instead of two, and "mono" means one.

When we get home, I draw a picture to give to a friend of mine. We both like flying monsters.

While I'm working on my monster, Phoebe's taking a bath. Then it's my turn.

I'm having a great time, but Mum probably wouldn't be too happy with me if she saw how much water I used. People in Sydney try not to waste water so the city won't run out if we don't get enough rain, but I guess I got carried away tonight when I filled the tub.

After I brush my teeth, Dad checks my homework. Our teacher gives us a week to do our assignments, and I'm trying to learn to do some of it each day, instead of leaving it all until the night before I have to hand it in.

Mum's washing our lunch boxes in the kitchen.

I'm starting a new project in the living room. I'm making something out of an old egg carton. It's my own invention. I thought of it when I was making the eggs this morning. What do you think it's going to be? If you guessed “erupting volcanoes”, you were right!

We have some egg custard that Mum made this afternoon while she reads us a story.

Before bedtime, Phoebe and I play with our rabbits, Rayquaza and Cutie. When we finish saying goodnight to our rabbits, it's time for us to say goodnight to you!

Goodnight!

Glossary

ballet – a kind of dance when men wear tights and women wear fluffy skirts and they all sometimes dance on their toes.

basement – the underground portion of a house

British Commonwealth – a group of former colonies of England who meet for games and other activities

colony – a place settled by people all of whom came from another country

dominoes – a game played with blocks of wood on which are printed different numbers of circles

drought – a long period without rain

egg custard – a kind of sweet pastry

javelin – a sport where one throws a long spear

journalist – a person who writes for the newspaper, radio, TV or Internet news

magazine – a bound book which comes out regularly and carries works by different authors

monorail – a kind of train that runs on one rail

parrot – a kind of bird with a hook bill that are often very colorful

platypus – a special animal only found in Australia that has fur, yet lays eggs.

volcano – a mountain that can spew lava and rock out of its top

Discussion and Activities After Viewing

- Ask each child to list some of the similarities and differences between their family and school and those in the video.
- Invite someone from Australia to talk with the class about growing up in Australia and to play an Australian music or tell a Australian story.
- Ask the class what things in the video tell us about that the climate in Australia.
- Discuss why English is the national languages of Australia.
- Discuss the similarities between the US and Australia in having been “discovered” by European countries, having a population of native peoples, having been colonies, become independent, being settled by immigrants, and being highly advanced in technology.

Questions

1. What languages do Australians speak?
2. Where do most Australians live in Australia?
3. Who are Australia's nearest neighbors?
4. Why do you think Australians live, look and speak so much like American?
5. Does Australia trade much with the United States?
6. Why are so many Australian animals so unique?

Answers to Questions

1. What languages do Australians speak?

The languages spoken in Australia include many of the languages of the world. There are many immigrants from all over the world who have come to Australia. The official language is English.

2. Where do most Australians live in Australia?

The southeastern and eastern part of Australia is the wettest and most temperate part of the country. Much of the interior and west of the country is dry, while the northern part is very hot.

3. Who are Australia's nearest neighbors?

East Timor, Papua New Guinea, Indonesia to the north, the Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and the French dependency of New Caledonia to the northeast, and New Zealand to the south are its nearest neighbors.

4. Why do you think Australians live, look and speak so like much like American?

Australia and the United States share much of the same English culture. There is a lot of trade between the two countries and their economies are open to each other. One will find many of the same products on the shelves of supermarkets.

5. Does Australia trade much with the United States?

The United States is the 2nd largest exporter to Australia and the fifth largest importer.

6. Why are so many Australian animals so unique?

Australia separated from the other continents many millions of years ago. Many animals such as the kangaroos developed there in isolation, and other animals such as wolves never arrived.

Some Things We've Learned About Australia

(Please circle the correct answer).

1. T F English is the only national language of Australia
2. T F Weather in most parts of Australia is wet.
3. T F Australia is on the continent of North America.
4. T F Weather in most parts of Australia is wet.
5. T F Very few Australians use technology.
6. T F Sydney is the largest city in Australia.
7. T F Very few Australians use technology.
8. T F Sydney is the largest city in Australia.
9. T F Australia used to be a colony of Great Britain.
10. Draw a series of pictures telling Phoebe or Joshua's story. Try to include as much detail as you can remember from each part of the story.

Introduction

Australia is the largest country in the continent of Australia. It is famous for the koala bears and kangaroos. It is home to the Sydney Opera House and the Great Barrier Reef.

The Land and Climate

Australia is about the size of the United States. Only 7% of it is arable. Two-thirds of land is desert or semi-desert with very high rates of evaporation, low and very variable rainfall. The most temperate part of the country lies in the southeast and east and part of the southwest.

The country can be divided into four parts: an eastern sandy coastal plain, eastern highlands including the Great Dividing Range, central plains, and western plateaus.

The Great Dividing Range is the watershed for the eastern half of Australia. On its eastern side, permanent rivers flow to the Coral Sea and South Pacific Ocean. On the western side flowing across the interior, only the Murray is permanent. Fed by melting snow at its source in the Mount Kosciusko region, and by large tributaries like the Darling and Murrumbidgee rivers, the Murray crosses the dry Murray plains. It meets the sea on the south coast, east of Adelaide. The Murray -Darling- Murrumbidgee drainage system is the most important river system in Australia. It drains more than 1.1 million sq km (415,000 sq mi) in Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria, and South Australia, and waters some of the country's most important arable and grazing lands. Much of the network is also navigable during the wet season. The Murray, itself, forms most of the border between New South Wales and Victoria.

Northern Australia is characterized by hot humid weather with tropical monsoon rains in the summer and a dry winter. The monsoons are very variable in timing, duration and the amount of rainfall it brings. Many mangroves and swamps lie by the coasts. Western Australia has low rainfall in all areas except the extreme south where tall forests of eucalyptus grow. The area around Perth in Western Australia has hot dry summers and cool mild winters.

Plant and Animal Life

Australia has been geographically isolated from the rest of world for over 50 million years. Marsupials evolved in isolation from the more highly developed mammals; they dominate all the ecological niches that placental animals dominate in other regions of the world. Birds unique to Australia also evolved, and distinctive trees and plants developed. There are about 280 species of mammals, 800 of bird, 300 of lizard, 140 of snake and two of crocodile. Of the mammals, almost half are marsupials. The rest are either placental mammals or monotremes and most are unique to Australia.

Of the marsupials, the most famous are the kangaroos of which there are about 50 species of kangaroo, ranging from some that stand as tall as a man to others as small as cats. Of the bird species listed in Australia, 400 - including the large, flightless emu - are found nowhere else.

Australia has also one of the largest sheep populations in the world. It has over 100 million sheep and the wool and meat are one of its major exports.

People

The majority of Australians are of British descent, and until 1973 Australia had a Whites-only immigration policy. . Today up to 30% of immigrants come from Asia. Almost a quarter of the population is foreign born with the majority coming from the UK. Today the population includes people from all over the world: East and Southeast Asians comprise 5.50%, Indians- 1.56%, Black - 0.55%, Hispanics - 0.74%, Arabs - 1.92%, Native - 2.16% and Oceanic - 0.87%

History

Aboriginal settlers arrived on the continent from Southeast Asia about 40-80,000 years before the first Europeans began exploration in the 17th century. The aboriginal people lived in hunter-gatherer bands within well defined territories and spoke different languages. It is estimated that the population in the 17th century was approximately 400,000.

Australia was first explored by Europeans in the early 17th century. No formal territorial claims were made until 1770, when Capt. James Cook took possession in the name of Great Britain. The original colony was established as a penal colony. Over 160,000 convicts were brought to Australia until penal transportation ended in 1868. Many more free immigrants came during this period. The aboriginals were displaced and mines, ranches and farms were established on the more hospitable parts of the country. Six colonies were created in the late 18th and 19th centuries; they federated and became the Commonwealth of Australia in 1901.

In 1914, Australia entered World War I as a part of the British Empire. Of the total male population of Australia of less than 3 million, almost 400,000 of them volunteered to fight in the war. As many as 60 000 died and tens of thousands more were wounded.

Every year on 25 April, Australia commemorates the brave but devastating battle fought by the Australia and New Zealand Army Corps—Anzacs—at Gallipoli, Turkey, in 1915. The day also commemorates all Australian soldiers who have fought in wars since then.

The period between the two world wars was marked by instability. Social and economic divisions widened during the Depression years when many Australian financial institutions failed.

During the Second World War Australian forces contributed to the Allied victory in Europe and in Asia and the Pacific. Almost a million men were under arms and the war dead numbered over 39,000. The generation that fought in the war and survived came out of the war with a new sense of awareness of Australia's capabilities.

After the war the Australian economy experienced a boom period. Pent up demand during the war period as well as the impact of millions of refugees and migrants arriving in Australia propelled growth. Manufacturing employment grew steadily. The economy developed strongly in the 1950s with major nation-building projects such as the Snowy Mountains Scheme, a hydro-electric power scheme located in Australia's Southern Alps. Suburban Australia also prospered. The rate of home ownership rose dramatically from barely 40 per cent in 1947 to more than 70 per cent by 1960.



Flag of Australia



Map of Australia

Activity

Australian Words and Phrases

Ankle biter	Small Child
Arvo	Afternoon, "I'll be there this arvo."
Agro	Aggravated, angry
Away with the pixies	Daydreaming
Aussie (pronounced Ozzie)	Australian
Back of beyond	Way away from civilisation
Barrack	Root for, cheer, "I barrack for the Magpies."
Bathers	Swim trunks
Billabong	Watering hole
Bitumen	Asphalt road
Bloke	Man
Bum	The part of you that sits on a chair, your bottom.
Bush	Land outside the city
Bush telegraph	The town gossip
Car park	Parking lot
Chips	French fries
Chook	Chicken
Chrissie	Christmas
Cockie	Farmer
Cuppa	Cup of tea or coffee
Dag	Amusingly uncoordinated, "he's

	such a dag"
Dinki-di	Something good from Australia
Dilly bag	Small food bag or carry bag
Didgeridoo	Aboriginal wind instrument
Dob (in)	Snitch (most Australians won't)
Engaged (phone)	busy, "the phone is engaged."
Fair dinkum	Someone or something genuine
Fairy Floss	Cotton candy
Footy	Australian Rules Football
G'day	Australian for hello
Good on ya	Good job, good for you
Great Australian wave	Swatting flies away from your face
Happy as Larry	Very happy
Icy pole	Popsicle
jelly	jell-o
Joe Bloggs	Mr average citizen, John Doe
Jumper	Sweater
Kit	A pack with your belongings
Lollies	Candy
Lift	Elevator
Mackers	McDonald's
Mate	Friend
Matilda	Sleeping bag or roll
Milk bar	Convenience store
Mozzie	Mosquito
Mum and dad	Mother and father
Nappy	Diaper
No worries	No problem at all

Nong	Idiot, "you nong!"
Ooroo	Goodbye
Oy!	Hey!
Oz	Australia
Push bike	Bicycle
Rellies	Relatives
Rubber	Pencil eraser
Scones (short O)	Biscuits
My shout	I'll pay this time
Singlet	Undershirt or tank top
Stickybeak	Nosy person
Snag	Sausage
Swag	Canvas bag for your belongings
Ta	Thanks
Tea	Dinner
Tucker	Food
Tuckshop	School cafeteria or snack shop
Ute	Utility vehicle, pickup truck
Whinge	Complain all the time, "what's he whinging about now?"
Yobbo	Redneck
You Right?	May I help you? Do you need anything?

The Climbing Koala



Make the Climbing Koala

What you'll need:

scissors

crayons, colored pencils or markers

4 split pins

DIRECTIONS:

1. Print out the climbing koala above on stiff paper, or print it and glue it to stiff paper.
2. Color in the koala light grey and give it a white tummy
3. Cut out the body, legs and tree trunk
4. Join the legs to the body with two split pins
5. Join the paws to the tree trunk with the other two split pins
6. Make sure the letters line up !

Now make your koala climb!

Australia's National Anthem

Advance Australia Fair

Australians all let us rejoice,
For we are young and free;
We've golden soil and wealth for toil,
Our home is girt by sea;
Our land abounds in Nature's gifts
Of beauty rich and rare;
In history's page, let every stage
Advance Australia fair!
In joyful strains then let us sing,
"Advance Australia fair!"
Beneath our radiant southern Cross,
We'll toil with hearts and hands;
To make this Commonwealth of ours
Renowned of all the lands;
For those who've come across the seas
We've boundless plains to share;
With courage let us all combine
To advance Australia fair.
In joyful strains then let us sing
"Advance Australia fair!"

Additional Resources

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Appendix

Background

Aboriginal settlers arrived on the continent from Southeast Asia about 40,000 years before the first Europeans began exploration in the 17th century. No formal territorial claims were made until 1770, when Capt. James COOK took possession in the name of Great Britain. Six colonies were created in the late 18th and 19th centuries; they federated and became the Commonwealth of Australia in 1901. The new country took advantage of its natural resources to rapidly develop agricultural and manufacturing industries and to make a major contribution to the British effort in World Wars I and II. In recent decades, Australia has transformed itself into an internationally competitive, advanced market economy. It boasted one of the OECD's fastest growing economies during the 1990s, a performance due in large part to economic reforms adopted in the 1980s. Long-term concerns include pollution, particularly depletion of the ozone layer, and management and conservation of coastal areas, especially the Great Barrier Reef.

Geography

Location: Oceania, continent between the Indian Ocean and the South Pacific Ocean

Geographic coordinates: 27 00 S, 133 00 E

Map references: Oceania

Area:

total: 7,686,850 sq km

land: 7,617,930 sq km

water: 68,920 sq km

note: includes Lord Howe Island and Macquarie Island

Area - comparative: slightly smaller than the US contiguous 48 states

Land boundaries: 0 km

Coastline: 25,760 km

Maritime claims:

territorial sea: 12 nm

contiguous zone: 24 nm

exclusive economic zone: 200 nm

continental shelf: 200 nm or to the edge of the continental margin

Climate: generally arid to semiarid; temperate in south and east; tropical in north
Terrain: mostly low plateau with deserts; fertile plain in southeast

Elevation extremes:

lowest point: Lake Eyre -15 m

highest point: Mount Kosciuszko 2,229 m

Natural resources:

bauxite, coal, iron ore, copper, tin, gold, silver, uranium, nickel, tungsten, mineral sands, lead, zinc, diamonds, natural gas, petroleum

Land use:

arable land: 6.15% (includes about 27 million hectares of cultivated grassland)

permanent crops: 0.04%

other: 93.81% (2005)

Irrigated land: 25,450 sq km (2003)

Natural hazards:

cyclones along the coast; severe droughts; forest fires

Environment - current issues:

soil erosion from overgrazing, industrial development, urbanization, and poor farming practices; soil salinity rising due to the use of poor quality water; desertification; clearing for agricultural purposes threatens the natural habitat of many unique animal and plant species; the Great Barrier Reef off the northeast coast, the largest coral reef in the world, is threatened by increased shipping and its popularity as a tourist site; limited natural fresh water resources

Geography - note:

world's smallest continent but sixth-largest country; population concentrated along the eastern and southeastern coasts; the invigorating tropical sea breeze known as the "Fremantle Doctor" affects the city of Perth on the west coast, and is one of the most consistent winds in the world

People

Population:

21,264,082 (July 2009 est.)

Age structure:

0-14 years: 18.6%

15-64 years: 69.7%

65 years and over: 13.5% (2009 est.)

Median age:

total: 37.3 years

male: 36.6 years

female: 38.1 years (2009 est.)

Population growth rate:

1.185% (2009 est.)

Nationality:

noun: Australian(s)

adjective: Australian

Ethnic groups:

Caucasian 92%, Asian 7%, aboriginal and other 1%

Religions:

Catholic 26.4%, Anglican 20.5%, other Christian 20.5%, Buddhist 1.9%, Muslim 1.5%, other 1.2%, unspecified 12.7%, none 15.3% (2001 Census)

Languages:

English 79.1%, Chinese 2.1%, Italian 1.9%, other 11.1%, unspecified 5.8% (2001 Census)

Literacy:

definition: age 15 and over can read and write

total population: 99%

male: 99%

female: 99% (2009 est.)

Government

Country name:

conventional long form: Commonwealth of Australia

conventional short form: Australia

Government type: federal parliamentary democracy

Capital:

name: Canberra

geographic coordinates: 35 17 S, 149 08 E

time difference: UTC+10 (15 hours ahead of Washington, DC during Standard Time)

daylight saving time: +1hr, begins last Sunday in October; ends last Sunday in March (ended first Sunday in April 2006)

note: Australia is divided into three time zones

Administrative divisions:

6 states and 2 territories*; Australian Capital Territory*, New South Wales, Northern Territory*, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania, Victoria, Western Australia
Dependent areas:

Ashmore and Cartier Islands, Christmas Island, Cocos (Keeling) Islands, Coral Sea Islands, Heard Island and McDonald Islands, Norfolk Island, Macquarie Island

Independence: 1 January 1901 (federation of UK colonies)

National holiday: Australia Day, 26 January (1788)

Constitution: 9 July 1900, effective 1 January 1901

Legal system: based on English common law; accepts compulsory ICJ jurisdiction, with reservations

Suffrage: 18 years of age; universal and compulsory

Executive branch:

chief of state: Queen of Australia ELIZABETH II (since 6 February 1952), represented by Governor General Maj. Gen. (Ret.) Michael JEFFERY (since 11 August 2003)

head of government: Prime Minister Kevin RUDD (since 3 December 2007)

cabinet: prime minister nominates, from among members of Parliament, candidates who are subsequently sworn in by the governor general to serve as government ministers

elections: none; the monarch is hereditary; governor general appointed by the monarch on the recommendation of the prime minister; following legislative elections, the leader of the majority party or leader of a majority coalition is sworn in as prime minister by the governor general

Legislative branch:

bicameral Federal Parliament consists of the Senate (76 seats - 12 from each of the six states and 2 from each of the two mainland territories; one-half of state members are elected every three years by popular vote to serve six-year terms while all territory members are elected every three years) and the House of Representatives (150 seats; members elected by popular preferential voting to serve terms of up to three-years; no state can have fewer than 5 representatives)

Judicial branch:

High Court (the chief justice and six other justices are appointed by the governor general)

Diplomatic representation in the US:

chief of mission: Ambassador

chancery: 1601 Massachusetts Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20036

telephone: [1] (202) 797-3000

FAX: [1] (202) 797-3168

consulate(s) general: Atlanta, Chicago, Honolulu, Los Angeles, New York, San Francisco

Diplomatic representation from the US:

chief of mission: Ambassador

embassy: Moonah Place, Yarralumla, Canberra, Australian Capital Territory 2600

mailing address: APO AP 96549

telephone: [61] (02) 6214-5600

FAX: [61] (02) 6214-5970

consulate(s) general: Melbourne, Perth, Sydney

Flag description:

blue with the flag of the UK in the upper hoist-side quadrant and a large seven-pointed star in the lower hoist-side quadrant known as the Commonwealth or Federation Star, representing the federation of the colonies of Australia in 1901; the star depicts one point for each of the six original states and one representing all of Australia's internal and external territories; on the fly half is a representation of the Southern Cross constellation in white with one small five-pointed star and four larger, seven-pointed stars

Economy

Economy - overview:

Australia has an enviable, strong economy with a per capita GDP on par with the four dominant West European economies. Emphasis on reforms, low inflation, a housing market boom, and growing ties with China were key factors over the course of a 17-year economic expansion that ended with the recent global financial crisis. Business and consumer confidence and high export prices for raw materials and agricultural products fueled the economy to the point of overheating in recent years, particularly in mining states. Drought, robust import demand, and a strong currency pushed the trade deficit up, while infrastructure bottlenecks and a tight labor market constrained growth in export volumes and stoked inflation through mid-2008. The economy fared

relatively well during the global financial crisis, narrowly avoiding a technical recession because of monetary and fiscal stimulus, buoyant export demand and investment from China, and the strong health of Australia's banking sector. Australia became the first G20 country to tighten monetary policy after the crisis when the central bank raised its key rate in October 2009. In 2010, the government will focus on raising Australia's economic productivity, managing the symbiotic, but sometimes tense, economic relationship with China, passing emissions trading legislation, and dealing with other climate-related issues such as drought and devastating bushfires.

GDP (purchasing power parity): \$819 billion (2009 est.)

GDP - real growth rate: 0.8% (2009 est.)

GDP - per capita (PPP): \$38,500 (2009 est.)

GDP - composition by sector:

agriculture: 3.8%

industry: 24.9%

services: 71.3% (2009 est.)

Labor force: 11.44 million (2009 est.)

Labor force - by occupation:

agriculture: 3.6%

industry: 21.2%

services: 75.2% (2004 est.)

Unemployment rate: 5.4% (2009 est.)

Agriculture - products:

wheat, barley, sugarcane, fruits, cattle, sheep, poultry

Industries:

mining, industrial and transportation equipment, food processing, chemicals, steel

Exports:

\$161 billion (2009 est.)

Exports - commodities:

coal, gold, meat, wool, alumina, iron ore, wheat, machinery and transport equipment

Exports - partners:

Japan 22.2%, China 14.6%, South Korea 8.2%, India 6.1%, US 5.5%, NZ 4.3%, (2009)

Imports:

\$160.9 billion (2009 est.)

Imports - commodities:

machinery and transport equipment, computers and office machines,
telecommunication equipment and parts; crude oil and petroleum products

Imports - partners:

China 15.4%, US 12.1%, Japan 9.1%, Singapore 7.0%, Germany 5.1% (2009)

Currency (code): Australian dollar (AUD)

Exchange rates:

Australian dollars per US dollar – 1.2894 (2009), 1.2059 (2008), 1.2137 (2007),
1.3285 (2006), 1.3095 (2005), 1.3598 (2004), 1.5419 (2003), 1.8406 (2002), 1.9334
(2001)

Fiscal year: 1 July - 30 June

Transportation

Roadways:

total: 810,641 km

paved: 336,962 km

unpaved: 473,679 km (2004)