



Contents

How to use this book	iv
The land	1
Oceans and seas.....	6
Deserts.....	11
Mountains	16
Antarctica	21
Australian Capital Territory.....	26
New South Wales	31
Queensland	36
Northern Territory	41
Western Australia	46
South Australia	51
Tasmania.....	56
Victoria.....	61





How to use this book

Appropriate for use in the middle and upper primary years, this book may be used in a wide variety of ways, including:

- For a two- to three-week Society and Environment work unit
- As the framework of an integrated unit of work
- As a single lesson focusing on a specific topic, such as the Australian Capital Territory
- As interesting short texts for use in literacy groups
- For comprehension activities
- For student assignments

Each unit utilises the same framework – an informative one-page text, a comprehension activity with questions incorporating each level of comprehension, a unit overview, suggested activities and a resource page.

Teachers are encouraged to take advantage of the flexible nature of this series. *Australia's places* focuses on geography, and two other titles focus on history and culture.

Australia's past

- The first inhabitants
- Dutch explorers
- Captain James Cook
- The First Fleet
- The convicts
- Development of the sheep industry
- The squatters
- Exploration across the Blue Mountains
- Charles Sturt
- The gold rushes
- The Eureka Stockade
- John McDouall Stuart
- Burke and Wills
- Federation
- Sir Douglas Mawson
- World War I
- World War II
- The Vietnam War

Australia's profiles & people

- Caroline Chisholm
- Ned Kelly
- William Farrer
- Charles Kingsford Smith
- John Flynn
- Immigration
- The coming of television
- Population
- Climate
- Our currency
- The Australian flag
- The Aboriginal flag
- Australia Day
- Anzac Day
- National Aboriginal Day
- Our federal government
- State and local government





The land

Australia is the lowest and the flattest of all the continents. It lies between the Pacific Ocean in the east, the Indian Ocean in the west and the Southern Ocean in the south. The Tropic of Capricorn passes over the northern part of the continent.

The land area of Australia is 7 682 300 square kilometres – nearly six per cent of the world's land surface (excluding Antarctica). The area of the mainland is some 7 614 500 square kilometres and is roughly equal to the United States, excluding Alaska. Amazingly, Australia is nearly thirty times the area of the United Kingdom! Australia is the sixth largest country in the world. Although Australia is the largest island, it is the smallest and least populated continent. Its coastline, including Tasmania, stretches over 36 735 kilometres.

Australia is the driest of all the continents, with the lowest average annual rainfall. More than thirty per cent of the land is desert, which is bordered by a very large area of semidesert.

The highest point on the continent is Mt Kosciuszko, which stands at 2228 metres in New South Wales. The lowest point is Lake Eyre, in South Australia, which lies 15 metres below sea level.

It is believed that Australia was once a vast flat plain and formed part of the super-continent known as Gondwanaland. This enormous land mass is believed to have existed around 150 million years ago, before it began to break up and form smaller continents. This is known as the theory of continental drift.

Australia's land is generally flat, and weathering has been slow without the upheaval of major earthquakes. The last volcanic eruption occurred at Mt Gambier, in South Australia, more than 1400 years ago. Today, Australia is the only continent that does not have volcanic activity.

On the eastern side of the continent is a range of mountains known as the Great Dividing Range. It stretches along the eastern rim of the continent and into Tasmania. This Eastern Highland belt ranges from 150 to 500 kilometres in width.





Answer the following comprehension questions in full sentences.

1. Using a map, find out which Australian states the Great Dividing Range passes through.
2. On which side of Australia does the Great Dividing Range lie, the eastern or western?
3. To what large land mass is it thought Australia once belonged?
4. How long ago did the super-continent Gondwanaland exist?
5. What theory explains how the smaller continents, such as Australia, were formed?
6. What country is identified as being roughly the same size as Australia?
7. Considering these two countries are of similar sizes, what are some of the most striking differences between them? Identify three major differences.
8. Find out the population of the United Kingdom. Considering Australia is approximately thirty times the size of the UK, how do the two population sizes compare?
9. Provide a theory as to why Australia has such a small population for its expansive area.
10. Use the information in this text to identify 10 interesting facts about Australia's land.
11. What information in this text was of the greatest surprise to you? Explain why.
12. From your own knowledge, which Australian state is the largest and which is the smallest?
13. Which Australian state do you think has the highest population? Give reasons to support your answer.
14. Which Australian state do you think has the lowest population? Give reasons to support your answer.
15. Land-wise, which Australian state offers the harshest living conditions? Explain why.
16. Compared to other continents, why has Australia's land seen very little change throughout its history?
17. What types of natural phenomena create changes in a country's landscape?
18. Is Australia subjected to such phenomena?



PROFILE OVERVIEW

Key learning areas

- Is aware of and can identify different features of Australia's physical environment
- Can describe the natural features of the land

Useful terms

continent
mountains
plains
desert
latitude
plateau
environment

flat
mountainous
volcanoes
rainforest
longitude
valleys

hilly
grassland
physical features
island
equator
sea level

Interesting facts

- Australia is the driest and flattest of all the continents.
- Australia is the world's largest island.
- Australia is the world's smallest continent.
- Australia is the only country in the world to occupy its own continent.
- Uluru (Ayers Rock), in Australia's Northern Territory, is the largest monolith in the world.
- Western Australia is bigger than Alaska and Texas combined.
- Lake Eyre is the lowest point in Australia. It is 15 metres below sea level.

