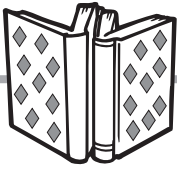


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Invasive Species

Australia has many animals. Some do not live anywhere else. Animals like koalas, kangaroos and wombats are famous all over the world. People see them and know they are Australian.

But Australia is also home to many other types of animals. These animals are not native. They were introduced. This means people brought them here. Sometimes these animals are harmless. Some were brought here for people to use, like cows and horses. Others were brought here for another reason but have since become a problem.

These species might be a pest because they eat food that native animals need to survive. They might compete for the same places. They might even kill native animals.

Rabbits first came to Australia with the First Fleet in 1788. In 1859 Thomas Austin released 24 rabbits at his property in Winchelsea, Victoria. Austin was English and a keen hunter. He remembered hunting rabbits when he was a boy. At the time, he said, “The introduction of a few rabbits could do little harm and might provide a touch of home, in addition to a spot of hunting.”

Austin was wrong. The rabbits he had sent over from England soon bred. The weather and **bountiful** food sources suited them. Today rabbits are probably the biggest pest in Australia. They have done more to ruin crops and harm native animals than anything else.

In the 1930s the cane beetle was causing problems for companies growing sugar cane. They decided to bring in a toad to try and control their spread. The cane toad is native to Hawaii and parts of South America. It has a huge appetite. It was hoped that the cane toads would eat the beetle and save the sugar cane.

This plan did not work. Firstly, the cane toad did not do much to stop the cane beetle. Secondly, the cane toad became a much bigger pest than the beetle had ever been. Today, it is estimated that there are about 200 million cane toads in Australia. This population is going up rather than down.

The cane toad will eat most things, alive or dead. It also has poison in its skin that means that any animal that tries to eat it will be injured or die. Even its tadpoles are poisonous. This means that the cane toad can eat anything but very few animals can eat it. With no real predators, the cane toad has spread across much of Australia. It was first introduced in Queensland in 1935. Today it is so widespread in Queensland that it has become a symbol of the state. It has also started spreading into New South Wales and the Northern Territory.

Neither of these are big pests in their home countries. The conditions and lack of predators for them have allowed them to thrive. But this usually comes at the expense of native animals.





Invasive Species

Directions: Darken the best answer choice.

1. Which of these *isn't* a reason why introduced species are a problem?
 - (A) they compete with native animals for the same places
 - (B) they kill native animals
 - (C) they can be used to help humans
 - (D) they eat food that native animals need to survive

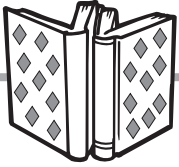
2. The word **bountiful** means
 - (A) small.
 - (B) expected.
 - (C) large.
 - (D) strange.

3. Rabbits *first* came to Australia
 - (A) with other native species.
 - (B) to help stop the spread of the cane beetle.
 - (C) with Thomas Austin.
 - (D) with the First Fleet in 1788.

4. The cane toad is so successful because it
 - (A) is poisonous to other animals.
 - (B) is native to Queensland.
 - (C) was highly effective in getting rid of cane beetles.
 - (D) is still liked by sugar companies.

5. The cane toad was introduced to Australia to
 - (A) become a symbol for Queensland.
 - (B) try and cut down the spread of the cane beetle.
 - (C) poison native animals.
 - (D) give Thomas Austin something to hunt.

6. Today, the cane toad
 - (A) is only spreading further into New South Wales and the Northern Territory.
 - (B) will eventually die out.
 - (C) is not much of a problem.
 - (D) is a famous symbol of Australia known all round the world as a native species.



Different Viewpoints in History

Sometimes two groups will not see things the same way. It causes big problems between them. Aboriginal Australians were living here thousands of years before Europeans. They did not believe that a person could own land. They thought that people should live on land but never claim it as their own. The Europeans thought that owning land was very important. In Europe, those who owned land were rich. They were in charge. The white settlers felt as excited about owning land as you would feel if someone gave you a million dollars.

Europeans thought Aboriginal Australians were **nomads**. They did not think they lived in one place. They thought they just moved around. In fact land was more important to Aboriginal Australians than to Europeans. Their traditional lands gave them their identity. Their ancestors had lived there for thousands of years. Land was not about ownership for them. It made them who they were. When Europeans forced them off their lands they destroyed entire cultures. This was a difference in understanding. It has caused problems and conflicts. It has done this for over 200 years.

It was once accepted that Aboriginal Australians could be taken from their own parents. It is hard to believe now. Not too long ago this was the policy all around Australia. Whole families were split up. Most never saw each other again. Aboriginal children were rounded up and taken to homes. Their parents were not told where they were. The children would not be told why. Brothers and sisters would be separated.

At the time white Australians thought they could bring up Aboriginal children better than their parents. They thought Aboriginals were savage. By bringing up the children as whites they thought they could improve them. Today we recognise this view as racist. This is where people are treated badly because of the colour of their skin or where they come from. But at the time people thought this was a sensible idea.

Because of this policy of child removal Aboriginal Australians suffered a lot. Whole families were destroyed. We call the people affected by this the "Stolen Generation" today. But it was really much more than one generation. In some places Aboriginal children were still being taken from their parents into the 1970s.

On 13 February 2008 the government said sorry to the Stolen Generations. Prime Minister Kevin Rudd led the apology. Aboriginal people had been waiting for it for a long time.

The apology was a good start. But time will tell if it means anything. The history of Aboriginal Australia and European Australia is full of misunderstandings. These misunderstandings often led to tragedy. Our future, though, can be better. We need to work together to make sure that nothing like these tragedies ever happens again. Governments must think things through. We must look at all people as people. Only then can we stop the misunderstandings. We can finally make a better Australia for everyone.



Different Viewpoints in History

Directions: Darken the best answer choice.

1. The Stolen Generations were
 - (A) the first Aboriginal people in Australia.
 - (B) when European settlers arrived in Australia.
 - (C) when Aboriginal children were taken from their parents.
 - (D) when Aboriginal people were thrown off their own lands.

2. A **nomad** is a person who
 - (A) is not European.
 - (B) has no home and travels around.
 - (C) is Aboriginal.
 - (D) believes that land should be bought fairly.

3. Which of these events happened first?
 - (A) Aboriginal Australians lived in Australia.
 - (B) The government apologised to the Stolen Generations.
 - (C) Aboriginal children were taken from their parents.
 - (D) European settlers took over Aboriginal lands.

4. Which statement is true?
 - (A) Aboriginal Australians are recent arrivals to this country.
 - (B) Aboriginal Australians wanted their children taken away.
 - (C) Aboriginal Australians and Europeans had different ideas of land ownership.
 - (D) Aboriginal Australians took over European lands.

5. Which is an example of a view held at an earlier time that has changed?
 - (A) settlers wanting to own land
 - (B) Aboriginal Australians getting their identity from their land
 - (C) Prime Minister Kevin Rudd wanting to apologise to the Stolen Generations
 - (D) Europeans taking Aboriginal children away from their parents

6. The ending of this passage is an example of
 - (A) fact.
 - (B) opinion.
 - (C) a biography.
 - (D) a blog entry.