



Year 5 Australia Reading Booklet

Lesson Series:

1. Australia- location and physical geography
2. The history of Australia
3. Settlements
4. Climate
5. Biodiversity
6. Assessment

Name: _____

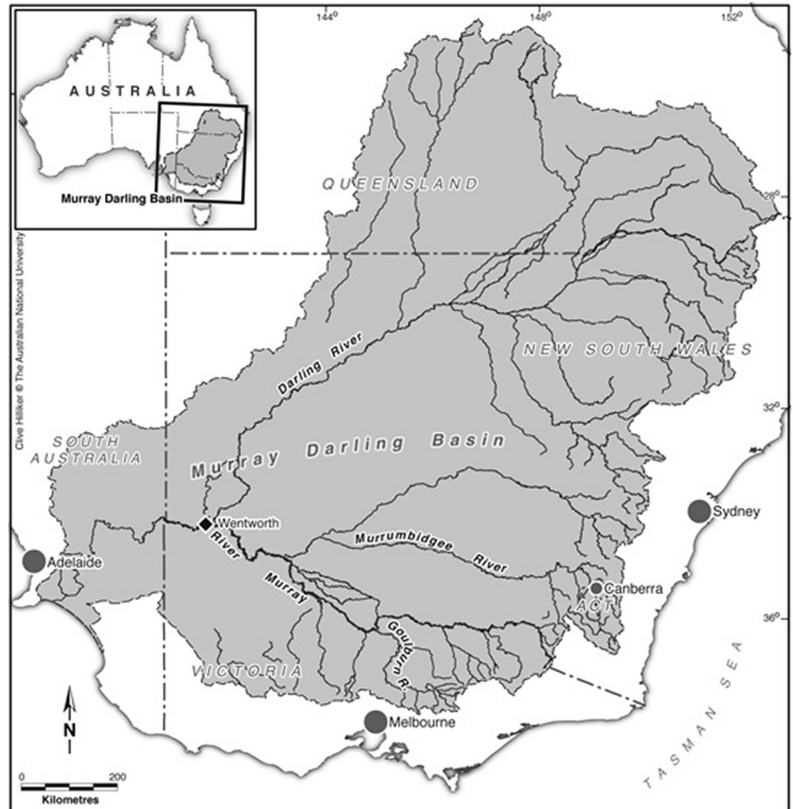
Class: _____

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Lesson 1

Physical Geography

Australia is one of the largest countries on Earth. It is located in the Southern Hemisphere. Australia is incredibly diverse; there are deserts, rainforests, mountains and a huge range of indigenous species of plants and animals. Aboriginal people have lived in Australia for over 60,000 years. mountains. The Australian Outback stretches for thousands of miles across Australia and is very hot and dry. Some people live in the outback, but most of Australia's population is concentrated around its rivers and the coastlines. The Murray River and its tributary the Darling River form a huge river basin in South Eastern Australia. The river basin contains thousands of wetlands, home to many species of plants and animals. Australia's rainfall varies greatly each year, which can result in droughts, made worse when the water levels of the Darling River Basin drop.



Lesson 2

Captain James Cook

During the roman period, there were suspicions of a big mass of land being in the south to balance out the land in the north. It just hadn't been reached yet. In the 16th century, Dutch explorers sailed along the western coastline of Australia, naming the land they saw 'New Holland'. In 1770 British Captain James Cook mapped the East coast, naming it 'New Wales' (It later became New South Wales.). Cook stated to the British that the land belonged to 'no one' - which was not entirely true because of the Aboriginal people who were living there peacefully. However this was good news to the British, who had been looking for new land



to colonise. From 1788, the British sent groups of convicts who had been found guilty of petty crimes (like theft, fighting etc.) to create several colonies. This unfortunately resulted in fights over land with the Aboriginal groups, and the British also brought over diseases which killed a large number of Aboriginal people. The arguments over land continued for many years as the British settlements grew, however in recent years some Aboriginal groups have been able to claim back some of the land that was taken from them and gain more respect for their heritage.

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Lesson 3

Settlements and Industry

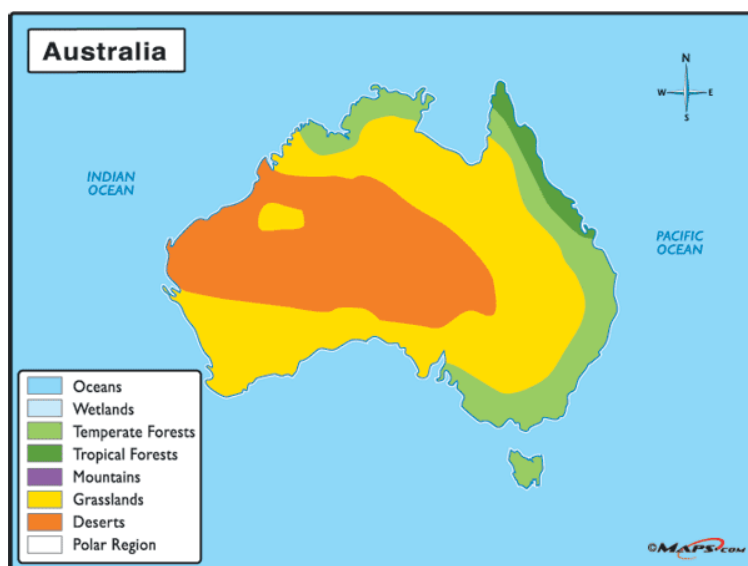
Australia is divided into six states and two territories. The six states are: Western Australia (WA), South Australia (SA), Queensland, New South Wales (NSW), Victoria and Tasmania are states, and the territories are Northern Territory (NT) and Australian Capital Territory (ACT). Each state and territory has its own capital city and state government. Canberra, in the ACT, is the capital of Australia and is where the Federal Government sits. Sydney, the capital city of NSW, is the largest city in Australia and is known for its Harbour Bridge and the Sydney Opera House. Due to the heat and lack of regular rainfall, many Australian cities are found along the coast or by rivers, as the land in the central areas is just too dry.

Lesson 4

Climate and biomes

Due to its size, Australia is home to several biomes including temperate grassland, deciduous forest, semi desert, desert, savannah and tropical forest. The climate across Australia is also varied from the temperate East coast, the hot and dry outback to the tropical north. Southern Australia is cooler than the north, with mild summers and cool winters. Australia has opposite seasons to the UK. It is summertime from December to February, and winter time in June, July and August.

Climate change is a big issue in Australia as average temperatures have risen in recent years and on average, rainfall is low. This has caused droughts, flooding and huge problems for farmers in the agricultural industry.



Lesson 5

Biodiversity

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Australia is home to many animals that cannot be found anywhere else in the world. They evolved in Australia but could not migrate anywhere else because the continent was surrounded by ocean. Kangaroos, koalas and wombats are called 'marsupials', their name comes from an Ancient Greek word for pouch. Marsupials are only found native to Australia and the surrounding islands. Kangaroos, despite being a native animal are also considered pests in some parts of Australia as they destroy farmland and crops.

