

## Australia

## Guide to Reading

## Main Idea

Both a continent and a country, Australia has many natural resources but few people.

## Terms to Know

- coral reef
- outback
- station
- marsupial
- immigrant
- boomerang
- bush

## Places to Locate

- Australia
- Tasmania
- Great Barrier Reef
- Murray River
- Darling River
- Sydney
- Melbourne
- Canberra

## Reading Strategy

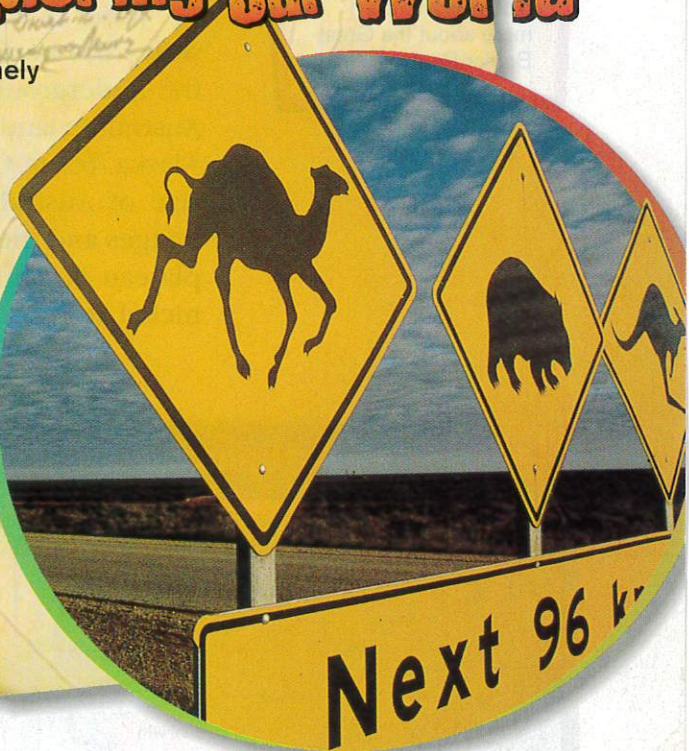
Make a chart like this one. Then fill in two facts about Australia for each category.

Land	History
Climate	Government
Economy	People



## Exploring our World

Signs along Australia's lonely outback warn drivers that they may meet camels, wombats, or kangaroos. This road stretches for 800 miles (1,287 km) between Western and South Australia. With only 11 rest stops along the way, perhaps meeting a kangaroo would be a good thing. It might make the drive seem less lonely.



**I**s **Australia** a country or a continent? It is both. Australia is the sixth-largest country in the world. Surrounded by water, Australia is too large to be called an island. So geographers call it a continent.

## Australia's Land and Climate

Australia is sometimes referred to as the Land Down Under because it is located in the Southern Hemisphere. The Indian Ocean washes its western and southern shores. The Coral Sea, Pacific Ocean, and Tasman Sea border the eastern coast. The island of **Tasmania**, to the south, is part of Australia.

The **Great Barrier Reef** lies off Australia's northeastern coast. Coral formations have piled up for millions of years to create a colorful chain that stretches 1,250 miles (2,012 km). As you recall, a **coral reef** is a structure formed by the skeletons of small sea animals.

Plateaus and lowland plains spread across most of Australia. The longest and highest mountain range, the Great Dividing Range, runs along the eastern coast. Mt. Kosciuszko (KAH•zee•UHS•koh), the tallest mountain in Australia, measures 7,310 feet (2,228 km).

**Web Activity** Visit the **Geography: The World and Its People** Web site at [gwip.glencoe.com](http://gwip.glencoe.com) and click on **Chapter 27—Student Web Activities** to learn more about the Great Barrier Reef.

Narrow plains run along the south and southeast. These fertile flatlands hold Australia's best farmland and most of the country's people. Two major rivers, the **Murray** and the **Darling**, drain this region.

Australia's vast interior is pastureland. The people of Australia use the name **outback** for the inland regions of their country. Dry grasslands and mineral deposits are found here. Mining camps and cattle and sheep ranches called **stations** dot this region. Some stations are huge. One cattle station is almost twice as large as Delaware.

Water is scarce in Australia. In the Great Artesian Basin, however, water lies in deep, underground pools. Ranchers drill wells and bring the underground water to the surface for their cattle. Far to the west, Australia's land is even drier. Imagine a carpet of sand twice as large as Alaska, Texas, California, and New Mexico combined. That is about the size of Australia's western plateau, which includes the Macdonnell Ranges and the Hamersley Range. Most people who cross this vast, dry plateau do so by plane. The region is rich in resources such as gold, nickel, iron ore, diamonds, and uranium.



## Australia and New Zealand: Political



### Applying Map Skills

1. What is the capital of Australia?
2. What sea separates Australia and New Zealand?

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Desert and steppe climates are found in most of the country. Only the Great Dividing Range and Tasmania have winter temperatures that fall below freezing. Because of the country's location in the Southern Hemisphere, summer starts in December and winter starts in June.

**Unusual Animals** About 200 million years ago, the tectonic plate upon which Australia sits separated from the other continents. As a result, Australia's native plants and animals are not found elsewhere in the world. Two famous Australian animals are kangaroos and koalas. Both are **marsupials**, or mammals that carry their young in a pouch. Turn to page 753 to read about these and other amazing animals.

**Reading Check** Where do most of Australia's people live?

## Australia's Economy

Australia has a strong, prosperous economy. Australia is a treasure chest overflowing with mineral resources. These riches include iron ore, zinc, bauxite, gold, silver, opals, diamonds, and pearls. Australia also has



## Australia and New Zealand: Physical



### Applying Map Skills

1. What mountain range lies near Australia's eastern coast?
2. At what elevation is most of Lake Eyre?

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energy resources, including coal, oil, and natural gas. Less than 1 percent of Australia's people work in the mining industry. Still, mineral and energy resources make up more than one-third of Australia's exports.

Australia's dry climate limits farming. With irrigation, however, farmers grow grains, sugarcane, cotton, fruits, and vegetables. Grains and sugar are exported, but most other crops are grown to feed Australia's people. The main agricultural activity is raising livestock, especially cattle and sheep. Australia is the world's top producer and exporter of wool. Ranchers also ship beef and cattle hides.

Australia's factories employ about 10 percent of the country's workers. Manufacturing, which is growing in importance, includes processed foods, transportation equipment, metals, cloth, and chemicals. High-tech industries, service industries, and tourism also play a large role in the economy. Modern ocean shipping enables Australia to export goods to very distant markets. More than half goes to Asia. The United States is also an important destination for exports.

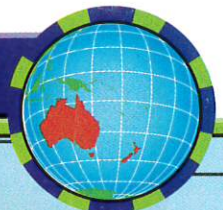
**✓ Reading Check** What is Australia's main agricultural activity?

## Australia's History and People

Despite its huge area, Australia has few people—only 19 million. Most live in scattered areas along the coast, especially in the east and southeast. Australia has long needed more skilled workers to develop its resources and build its economy. The government has encouraged people from other countries to move here. More than 5 million

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

### Australia and New Zealand: Climate

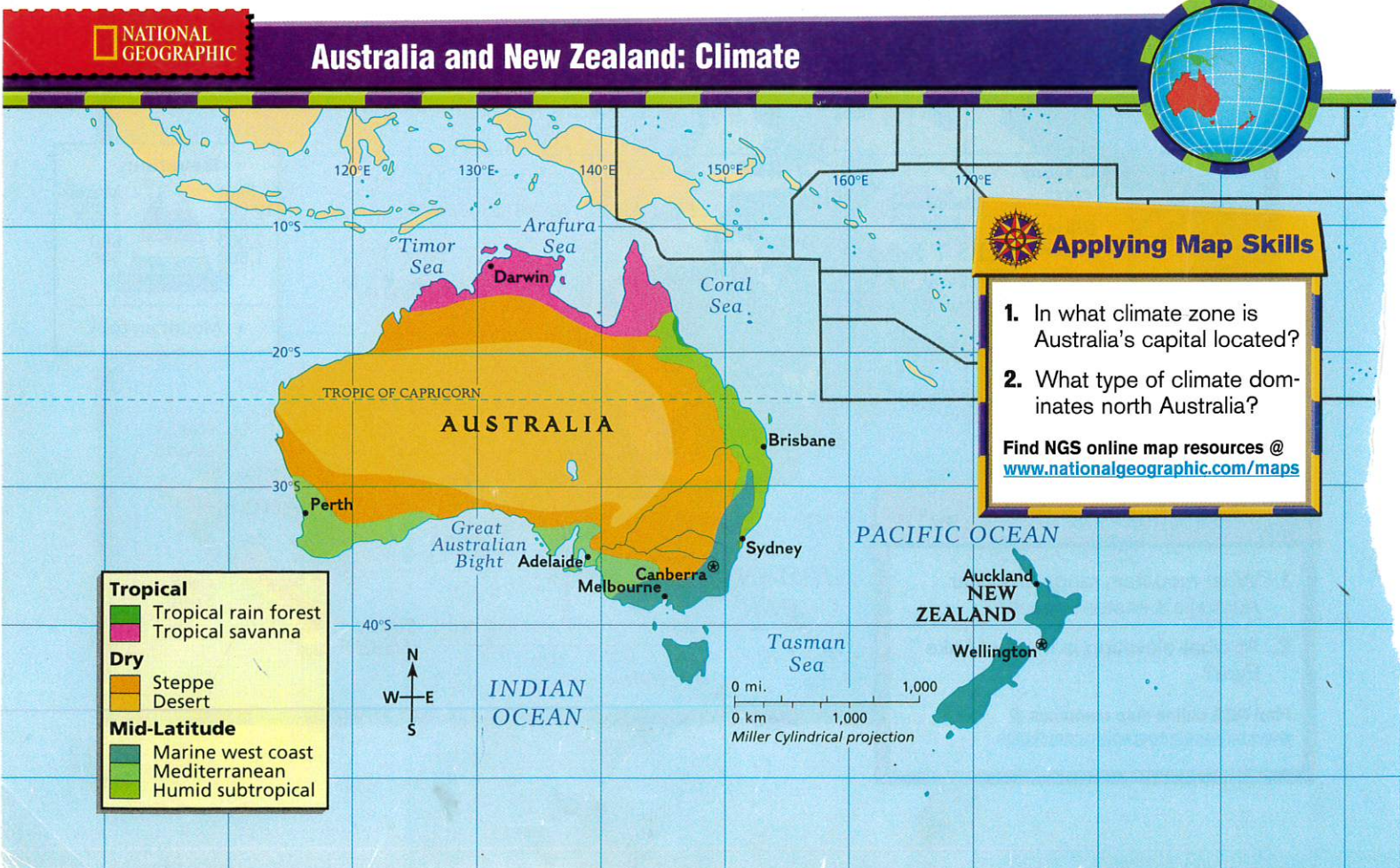
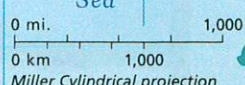
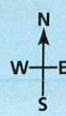


**Applying Map Skills**

1. In what climate zone is Australia's capital located?
2. What type of climate dominates north Australia?

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<b>Tropical</b>	
	Tropical rain forest
	Tropical savanna
<b>Dry</b>	
	Steppe
	Desert
<b>Mid-Latitude</b>	
	Marine west coast
	Mediterranean
	Humid subtropical



## CULTURAL CLOSE-UP

### Music

The *didgeridoo* is the most famous musical instrument from Australia. In its original form, it was made when a eucalyptus branch fell to the ground and was hollowed out by termites. Someone playing a *didgeridoo* creates a variety of sounds by making a combination of lip, tongue, and mouth movements. Once you hear the eerie sounds, it is easy to understand why the Aborigines considered this instrument sacred and made it part of their ceremonies.

**Looking Closer** What other instruments are similar to the *didgeridoo*?



GO TO



**World Music: A Cultural Legacy**

Hear music of this region on Disc 2, Track 28.

**immigrants**, or people who move from one country to live in another, have arrived in recent decades.

A small part of Australia's population are Aborigines (A•buh•RIHJ•neeZ). They are the descendants of the first immigrants who came from Asia about 30,000 to 40,000 years ago. For centuries the Aborigines moved throughout Australia gathering plants, hunting, and searching for water. They developed a unique culture. You may have heard of one of their weapons—the **boomerang**. This wooden tool is shaped like a bent bird's wing. The hunter throws it to stun his prey. If the boomerang misses, it curves and sails back to the hunter.

In 1770 Captain James Cook reached Australia and claimed it for Great Britain. At first the British government used Australia as a place to send prisoners. Then other British people set up colonies, especially after gold was discovered in the outback in 1851. Land was taken from the Aborigines, and many of them died of European diseases.

Today about 300,000 Aborigines live in Australia. Growing numbers of them are moving to cities to find jobs. After years of harsh treatment and isolation in the outback, the Aborigines now are demanding more opportunities. In 1967 the Australian government finally recognized the Aborigines as citizens.

**The Government** In 1901 the Australian British colonies united to form the independent Commonwealth of Australia. Today Australia has a British-style parliamentary democracy. A prime minister is the head of government. The political party with the most seats in the Australian parliament, or legislature, chooses the prime minister.

Like the United States, Australia has a federal system of government. This means that political power is divided between a national government

# Teen Scene

## Dreamtime

Danny Ahmatt and John Meninga are Aborigines who live in Australia's Northern Territory. They live modern lives, but they also have traditional Aborigine beliefs. "We believe in *Dreamtime*," says Danny. "This means that our ancestors do not die but instead become part of nature. This is why we learn to respect our environment."



and state governments. The country has six states and two territories, the Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory.

Although independent, Australia for decades accepted the British king or queen as its ceremonial leader. Australians were largely of British ancestry and wanted to keep their British heritage. Since the 1960s, Australia has gradually developed its own national character. Many present-day Australians are not British but have Italian, Greek, Slavic, or Chinese backgrounds. As Australia's ties to the United Kingdom weaken, more and more Australians would like to see their country become a republic. This would mean replacing the British monarch with an Australian-born president.

**City and Rural Life** About 85 percent of Australia's people live in cities. **Sydney** and **Melbourne** are the largest cities. Sydney gained the world's attention as the host city for the 2000 Summer Olympic Games. **Canberra**—the national capital—has its own territory, much like Washington, D.C., in the United States. A government plan located Canberra inland to draw people into the outback.

About 15 percent of Australians live in rural areas known as the **bush**. Many rural people also live and work on the stations that dot the outback. Some farmers often have to drive several hours on unpaved roads to reach a distant rural town.

English is the major language, but "Aussies," as Australians call themselves, have unique words. For example, Australians say "G'Day," as a form of hello and cook beef on a "barbie," or barbeque grill.

 **Reading Check** What kind of government does Australia have?

## Section

# 1

## Assessment

### Defining Terms

1. **Define** coral reef, outback, station, marsupial, immigrant, boomerang, bush.

### Recalling Facts

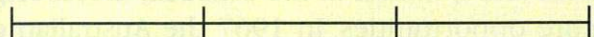
2. **Location** Why does Australia have animals not found on other continents?
3. **Economics** What are four mineral resources found in Australia?
4. **History** Who are the Aborigines?

### Critical Thinking

5. **Understanding Cause and Effect** How does climate affect agriculture in Australia?
6. **Drawing Conclusions** How does life in Australia show that the country was once a colony of the United Kingdom?

### Graphic Organizer

7. **Organizing Information** Make a time line like this one with at least four dates in Australia's history. Write the dates on one side of the line and the corresponding event on the opposite side.



## Applying Geography Skills

8. **Analyzing Maps** Look at the economic activity map on page 755. What are the main manufacturing centers of Australia?