

Oceania

The Pacific Ocean is the largest ocean in the world. In the southern Pacific, there are many thousands of islands. Some of these islands are too small even to appear on a map. The island of Australia, however, is large enough to be a continent.

In this chapter you will read more about Australia and another island nation in the South Pacific called New Zealand. We call this part of the world Oceania.

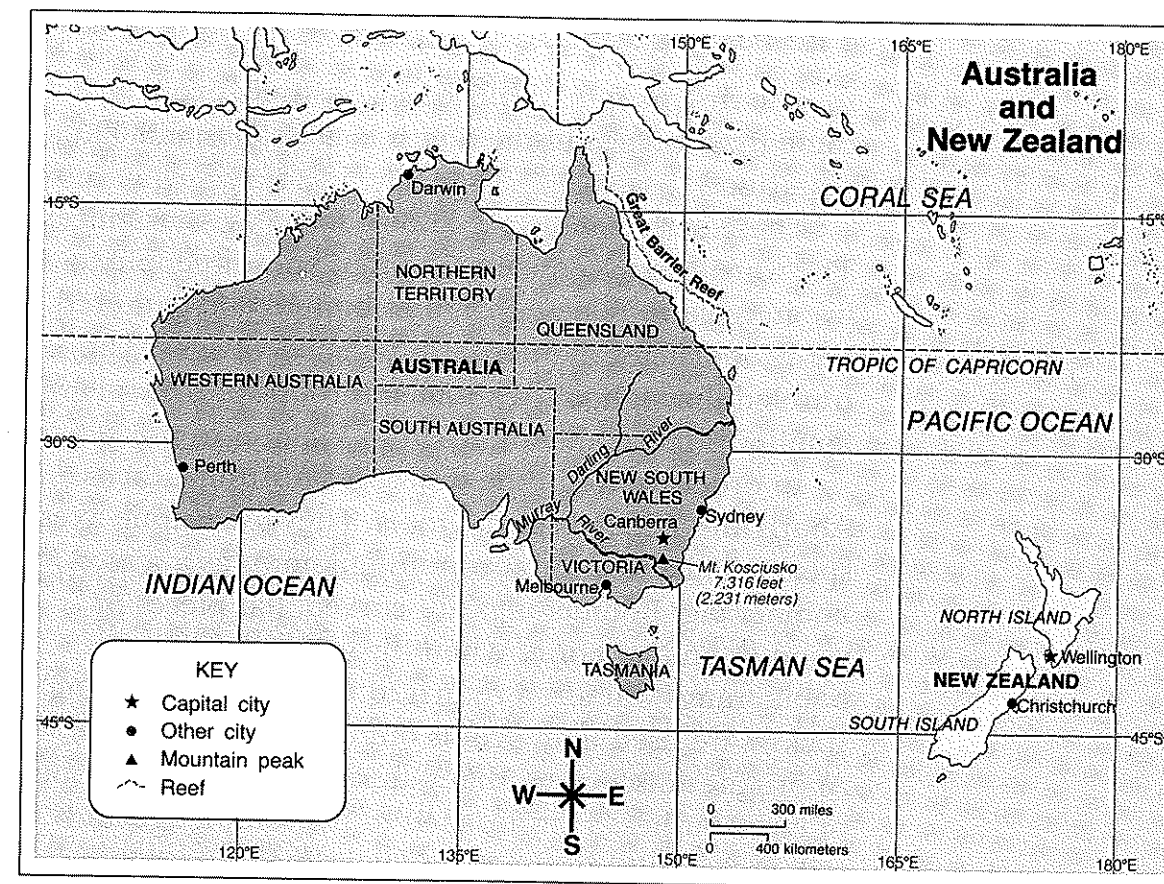
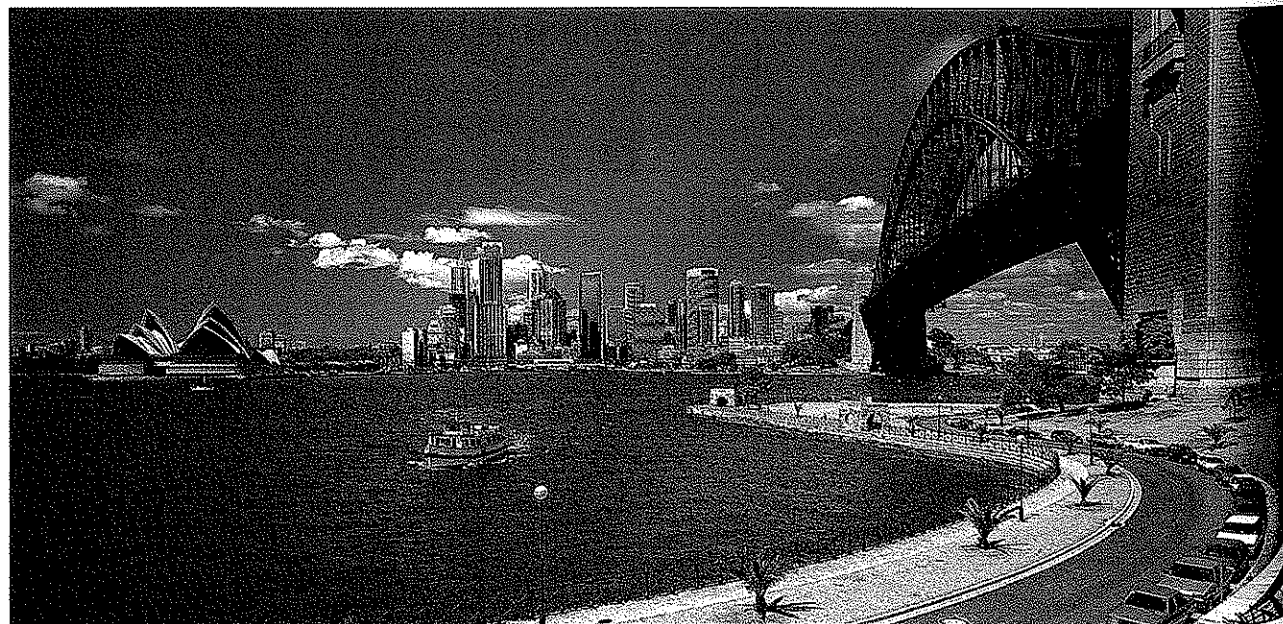
The picture on this page shows the harbor of Sydney, a major city in Australia. Does Sydney look like an old city or a modern new city?

The Pacific Islands

The thousands of islands in Oceania are divided into three groups. They are called Polynesia, Micronesia, and Melanesia. Our state of Hawaii is made up of several islands in Polynesia.

The islands in the South Pacific were formed by volcanoes thousands of years ago. Most of the islands are actually the tops of huge mountains under the sea!

The harbor in the city of Sydney, Australia, is surrounded by many modern buildings.



New Zealand

The country of New Zealand is made up of several dozen small islands and two main islands. The main islands are called North Island and South Island. The climate in New Zealand is mild because the country is surrounded by the ocean.

The "Land Down Under"

The name *Australia* means "southern land." The entire continent lies south of the Equator. Although Australia is surrounded by water, it is a very dry continent. About one third of the land is desert. Australia's hot, dry plains are known as the **outback**.



Look at the map on this page. What are the capital cities of Australia and New Zealand?

Look at the time zone map on page 11. When it's 10 P.M. in Sydney, what time is it in London?

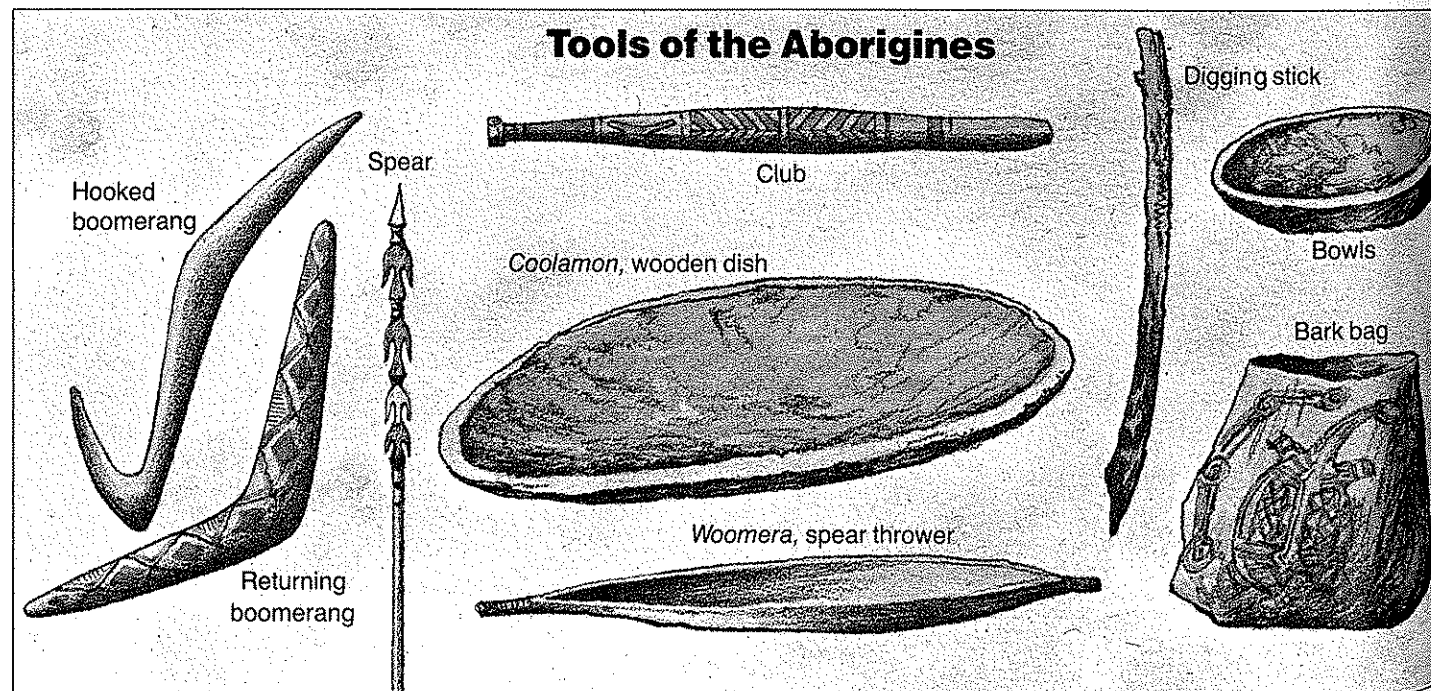
The Aborigines of Australia

The first people who lived in Australia probably came from islands in the South Pacific about 40,000 years ago.

These early people are known today as **Aborigines**. The word *aborigine* means "the first known people to live in a place." The Aborigines hunted and gathered their food. They did not farm or build villages. They traveled throughout Australia in groups of a few families.

In order to live in the deserts of Australia, the Aborigines needed special tools. They used stone axes, spears, and a weapon for hunting known as a **boomerang**. Boomerangs are curved, flat pieces of wood or animal bone. When thrown in the air, boomerangs will often return to the thrower. Digging sticks were used to dig roots out of the ground. The Aborigines discovered that water collected in the roots of large bushes. They learned to use knowledge and skill to stay alive in the Australian desert.

Look at the picture on this page. What is the wooden dish of the Aborigines called?



The Maori of New Zealand

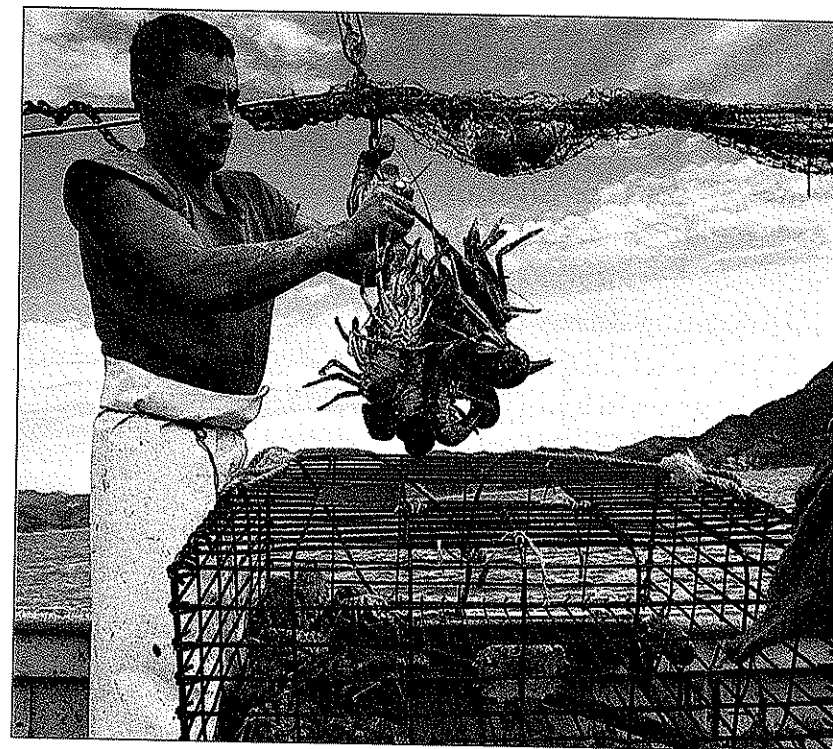
The first people to live in New Zealand were known as the **Maori**. They probably came to New Zealand from Polynesia. They sailed great distances over the sea in large canoes. Like the Aborigines of Australia, the Maori continue to live in New Zealand today.

Like the Aborigines, the Maori were hunters. However, the Maori also grew some crops. They grew sweet potatoes and beans on their farms. And instead of moving from place to place, the Maori built houses of reeds.

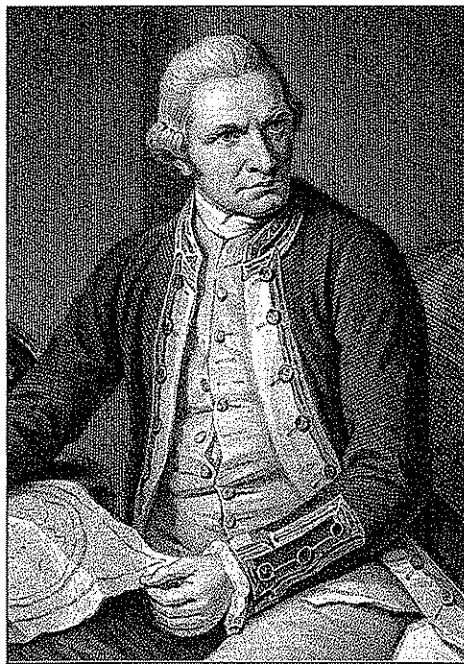
Europeans Discover Oceania

The first Europeans to come to Oceania were Dutch explorers and traders. In 1606 a Dutch explorer named Willem Jansz landed in northern Australia. He was followed in 1642 by another Dutch explorer, Abel Tasman. Tasman landed on an island near Australia. This island was later named Tasmania, after Abel Tasman.

Look at the picture on this page. Besides hunting and farming, how else did the Maori find food in New Zealand?



The Maori fish today in the warm waters of the Pacific Ocean, just as the Maori did long ago.



Captain James Cook

Tasman also reached New Zealand and named it after a part of the Netherlands called Zeeland. But Tasman did not stay long in Oceania. He thought that Australia and New Zealand were not important because the people there did not have what he considered valuable goods to trade.



Look at the map on page 155. Circle two areas named after Abel Tasman.

In 1769, about 100 years after Tasman's journey, a British explorer named Captain James Cook landed in New Zealand. On the same voyage, he also explored Australia. Cook realized that both places had good land for farming. He thought they would be good places for settlers.

Australia and New Zealand Become Nations

The first British settlers to come to Australia were **convicts**. Convicts are people who are found guilty of breaking the law. Great Britain sent the first convicts to Australia in 1788. They had to work there as punishment for their crimes. Over the next two centuries, however, many settlers who were not convicts also came to Australia.

In 1851 gold was discovered in Australia. Then more people moved to the country. By 1860 colonies had been created in eastern Australia and on the west coast. Australia continued to be ruled by Great Britain until 1901. Then Australians united to become the Commonwealth of Australia.

The first Europeans to go to New Zealand were traders and hunters. They went during the 1700s to trade with the Maori and to hunt seals and whales near the islands. During the early 1800s, British traders and hunters began settling in New Zealand.

UNIT PROJECT



As you know, the Pacific Ocean is an important feature of Oceania. How has the fact that the countries of Oceania are islands affected people's lives? Find out how the geography of other places on your tour has affected their economy, culture, and history.

New Zealand did not become a British colony until 1840. In that year a British officer named William Hobson signed a peace treaty with the Maori. This treaty gave Great Britain control over New Zealand.

Even though the Maori had signed the treaty, they were unhappy. They did not want to be forced to sell their land to the British. And more British kept coming to New Zealand. Finally, in 1845, the Maori began to fight the British for control of New Zealand. The fighting continued off and on until 1872, when the Maori surrendered.

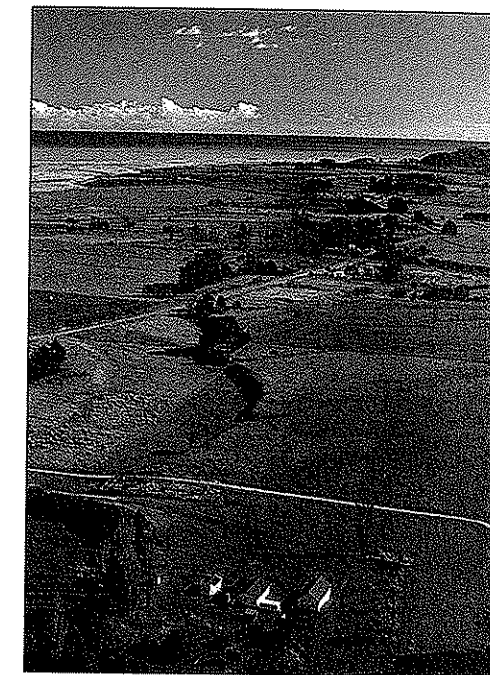
By 1900 the colonists of New Zealand felt that Great Britain should let them govern New Zealand themselves. Great Britain agreed. In 1907 New Zealand became a nation with its own elected government.

Life in Oceania Today

Today, Australia is one of the richest countries in the world. This is because Australia has many natural resources. These resources have helped Australia become a modern industrial nation. Australian cities are much like American cities.

Fishing and farming are still important in New Zealand and the other, smaller Pacific islands. In large cities in New Zealand and some other Pacific islands, people work in offices or stores. But people on some of the smallest Pacific islands still live much the way people have lived there for centuries. They fish and plant crops for food. Sometimes they buy other goods from ships that cross the Pacific. They also sell food products, such as coconuts and potatoes, all over the world.

Modern-day Aborigines in Australia and Maori in New Zealand play an increasing role in their societies. They are adapting to the modern world. Some work in cities and have jobs in technology. Others still live and work in rural areas.



There are many large, modern farms in New Zealand.

When did New Zealand become a nation?

The Great Barrier Reef

A coral reef is a long series of rocks that are formed in the sea by millions of tiny animals. These animals, called **polyps**, are less than one inch long. When polyps die, they leave tiny skeletons behind that, over time, build up into coral reefs.

Coral reefs can take many different shapes under the sea. Some kinds of coral look like large fans. Others look like vegetables such as lettuce. The Great Barrier Reef of Australia is the longest coral reef in the world. It is about 1,250 miles long.

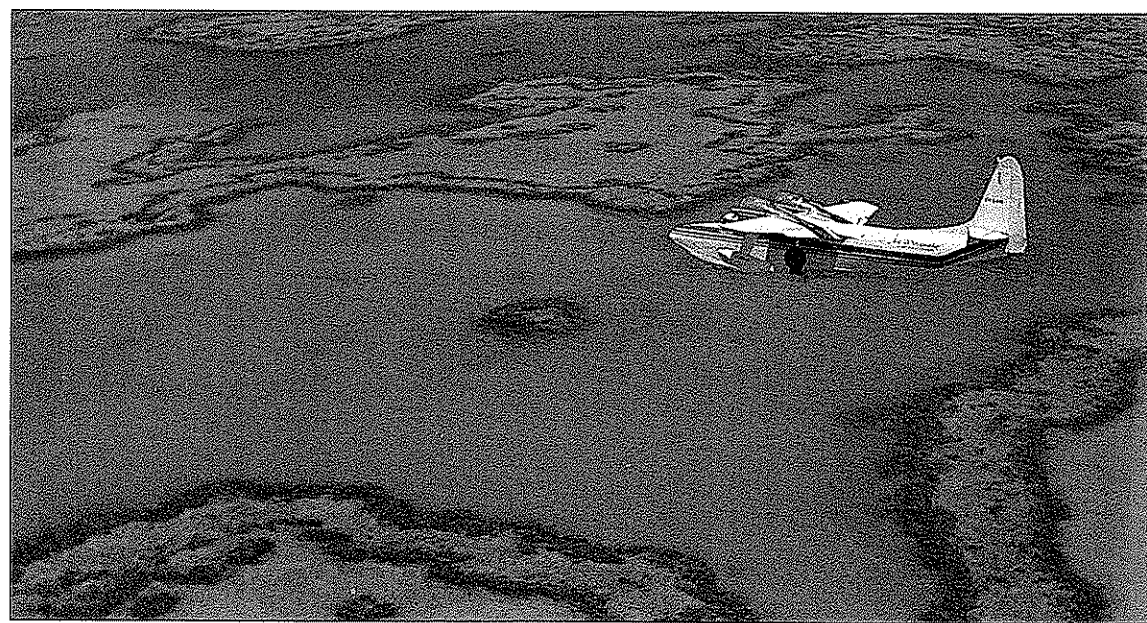
About 400 different kinds of polyps live in the Great Barrier Reef. They come in many different colors: bright red, yellow, green, blue, and purple. These colors, and the colors of the many different kinds of fish that live in the coral, give the Great Barrier Reef the appearance of a beautiful undersea garden.

The Australian government has made most of the Great Barrier Reef a national park. The government hopes to protect the reef from damage, so that people can always enjoy it.



Look at the map on page 155. In what sea is the Great Barrier Reef located?

Many scientists believe the Great Barrier Reef in Australia began to form over 30 million years ago.



CHAPTER CHECKUP

Complete each sentence. Circle the letter in front of the correct answer.

- Oceania includes Australia, New Zealand, and
 - the outback.
 - the Southern Alps.
 - more than 10,000 islands in the South Pacific.
 - more than 10,000 islands in the Atlantic Ocean.
- The Aborigines
 - farmed and built villages.
 - built large cities.
 - came to Australia after the British arrived there.
 - hunted and gathered their food.
- The Maori grew crops and built houses out of reeds in
 - Australia.
 - New Zealand.
 - Polynesia.
 - Melanesia.
- The first British settlers to come to Australia were
 - convicts.
 - farmers.
 - government workers.
 - hunters.
- More people began settling in Australia after 1851 because
 - it was a good place to farm.
 - they wanted to trade with New Zealand.
 - they had broken the law.
 - gold was discovered there.
- The Maori began to fight the British for control of New Zealand because
 - they did not want to be forced to sell their land to the British.
 - they did not want to live in cities.
 - they wanted to live on only one of New Zealand's islands.
 - they wanted to work in offices and stores.



Compare and contrast how life was different for the Maori of New Zealand and the Aborigines of Australia.
