



Outback Down Under

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Grade: 6

Key Questions:

- Where is Down Under?
- What are the physical characteristics that make Australia unique?
- How has the physical location influenced the people, plants, and animals of Australia?
- How are people affecting the environment? How does the environment affect the people?

Cluster 1: Where is Down Under?

Students will investigate the location of Australia using "The Small Blue Planet" and "PC Globe" (CD-ROM). If these are not available students can use maps, globes, and atlases. Students will compare and contrast location of Australia with the world and their home state and city; determine latitude and longitude, climate zones, time zones, continents, hemispheres, and nearby bodies of water. Students can work in groups to investigate.

Cluster 2

Preassessment:

Students will brainstorm in groups and list everything they know about Australia.

Investigation:

After viewing the National Geographic laser disc program "World Geography: Volume 1, Asia and Australia," students will use a variety of

resources such as CD-ROM programs, laser discs, videos, books, reference materials, and magazines to research features of Australia.

Divide class into cooperative learning groups and assign each group one or two of the following questions to investigate:

- Identify plants that live only in Australia.
- Identify animals that live exclusively in Australia, include habitat and food source.
- List the characteristics of a marsupial.
- Explain how some animals could have evolved almost exclusively in Australia.
- Describe the location and characteristics of the Great Barrier Reef.
- List characteristics of the outback, including location.
- Identify and list five important mineral resources and locate on a map.
- Where is the Continental Divide and what are the characteristics of this region?
- On a map identify and label the lakes, rivers, deserts, and mountains of Australia.
- What and where is Lake Eyre?

Confirmation:

Students can now add to and correct their lists of brainstormed characteristics of Australia.

Application and Assessment:

Students present slide shows using laser discs and CD-ROM applications, create multimedia stacks on a computer, obtain marsupial images from "Multimedia Encyclopedia of Mammals," or "The Animals," and print maps from various application programs.

Extensions:

Students will work in groups and complete the following projects: (Each group will select one project)

- Large poster showing cities and landforms of Australia.

- Create a marsupial mobile.
- Using goop, create a raised relief map of Australia.
- Create a learning center for elementary students to use.

Cluster 3: How has the physical location influenced the people, plants, and animals of Australia?

Students will view the National Geographic laser disc "Restless Earth," depicting the shifting of the continents. Using maps, plot the distance from other nearby land areas including islands and land masses. Compare and contrast the plants and animals of South America to those of Australia. How has the location altered immigration to the continent? What is the status of native Aborigines? Under what circumstances did the first white settlers come to Australia? What part did water play in the location of cities in Australia?

Cluster 4: How are people affecting the environment? How does the environment affect the people?

Students will locate the major population centers of Australia on the map. List reasons the cities are located where they are. What impact has clearing the forest land for farming had on the environment and changed the animal populations? How has civilization affected the Aborigines? How has the large stations of cattle and sheep changed the environment? What is damaging the Great Barrier Reef? Discuss the means of transportation in Australia.

Resources:

Books:

- *My Home in Australia*, by Donna Bailey and Jean Chapman, Steck-Vaughn Company.
- *The Australian Outback*, by Donna Bailey and Jean Chapman, Steck-Vaughn Company.

- **Where on Earth?**, by Paul Rosenthan, Knopf, Inc., 1992. World Geography, Silver Burdett and Ginn, 1992.

Laser Discs:

- National Geographic, World Geography STV, Volume 1, Asia and Australia.
- National Geographic, Restless Earth STV

CD-ROM:

- Small Blue Planet
- Multimedia Encyclopedia of Mammals
- Picture Atlas of the World
- Groliers Multimedia Encyclopedia
- PC Globe
- The Animals

National Geographic:

- "**Northwest Australia: Journey into Dreamtime.**" Arden, Harvey, January 1991, pp. 8-41.

Group Recipe:

- 2 cups table salt and 2/3 cup water
- 1 cup cornstarch and 2/3 cup water
 1. Mix salt and 2/3 cup water in saucepan, stirring until mixture is well heated, 3 or 4 minutes.
 2. Remove from heat and add cornstarch which has been mixed with 2/3 cup water.
 3. Stir quickly.
 4. If it does not thicken, return to low heat and stir until thick. It is hard to stir, but undercooking leaves it sticky.
 5. It should form a soft, pliable mass.

6. It can be kept in a jar or plastic, and does not need refrigeration.

NOTE: 5 lb. salt and 2 cups water to 1 lb. cornstarch and 2 cups water yields 10 tennis ball-sized balls of goop. Excess goop may be wrapped in plastic and kept up to one year.



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