

# AUSTRALIA

## Location

Australia is the smallest continent and the sixth largest country in the world. It is located in the Southern Hemisphere, south of Asia, between the Indian and the Southern Pacific Ocean.



## Geography, climate, natural beauties

Australia's climate is quite different from the rest of the world. It is the driest inhabited continent on earth, and the centre of the country has one of the lowest rainfall rates in the world. About three-quarters of the country can be described as arid or semi-arid.

Queensland has amazing beaches and the Great Barrier Reef – a coral reef where you can go snorkelling or diving. In the interior of the country is the red Australian desert where visitors come to see Uluru (Ayers Rock). The west coast has a wine region and miles of unspoilt beaches. Tasmania, an island 240 km south of the mainland, is known for its unspoilt nature.

## Population, original inhabitants

Australia has only 22.5 million people and is one of the least densely populated countries. About 70 per cent of the population live in the country's large cities along the coast. The capital city is Canberra and other big cities are Melbourne, Perth, or Sydney, famous for its Opera House. English is the common language, however more than 200 languages are spoken throughout the country.

The first people to live there were Aborigines, who came over 40,000 years ago. They are known for their art, spiritual beliefs and music – played on a didgeridoo, a wind instrument. Today they make up a small proportion of the total population, and Australia is a country of migrants.

## Political system

Australia is a constitutional monarchy, a member of the British Commonwealth of Nations. The British monarch is the official head of state, represented by the Governor General. It is a federal democratic republic made up of six states and two major territories, each of which has its own parliament. The federal parliament is found in Australia's capital, Canberra.

## The flag

The Australian flag is dark blue, with the flag of the United Kingdom in the upper left hand corner. The lower left hand corner contains a seven pointed star known as the Commonwealth Star. Each of the star's points represents one of the six sovereign states, and the seventh point represents all of the territories. The rest of the flag is a picture of the Southern Cross constellation, which can only be seen in the southern hemisphere. It has one small star and four larger ones.

## Typical animals

Australia is known for its unique wildlife. Some of the most famous animals include the kangaroo, koala and wombat. These animals are marsupials – their young develop in a pouch. The continent also has many reptiles such as crocodiles and snakes.

**Name Australian states and territories. Draw important cities and interesting places in the map:**



**Find out more:**

First Europeans to discover Australia:

What happened in 1788?

The highest mountain:

The longest river:

Other unique animals/birds/plants:

Typical sports:

Famous Australians: