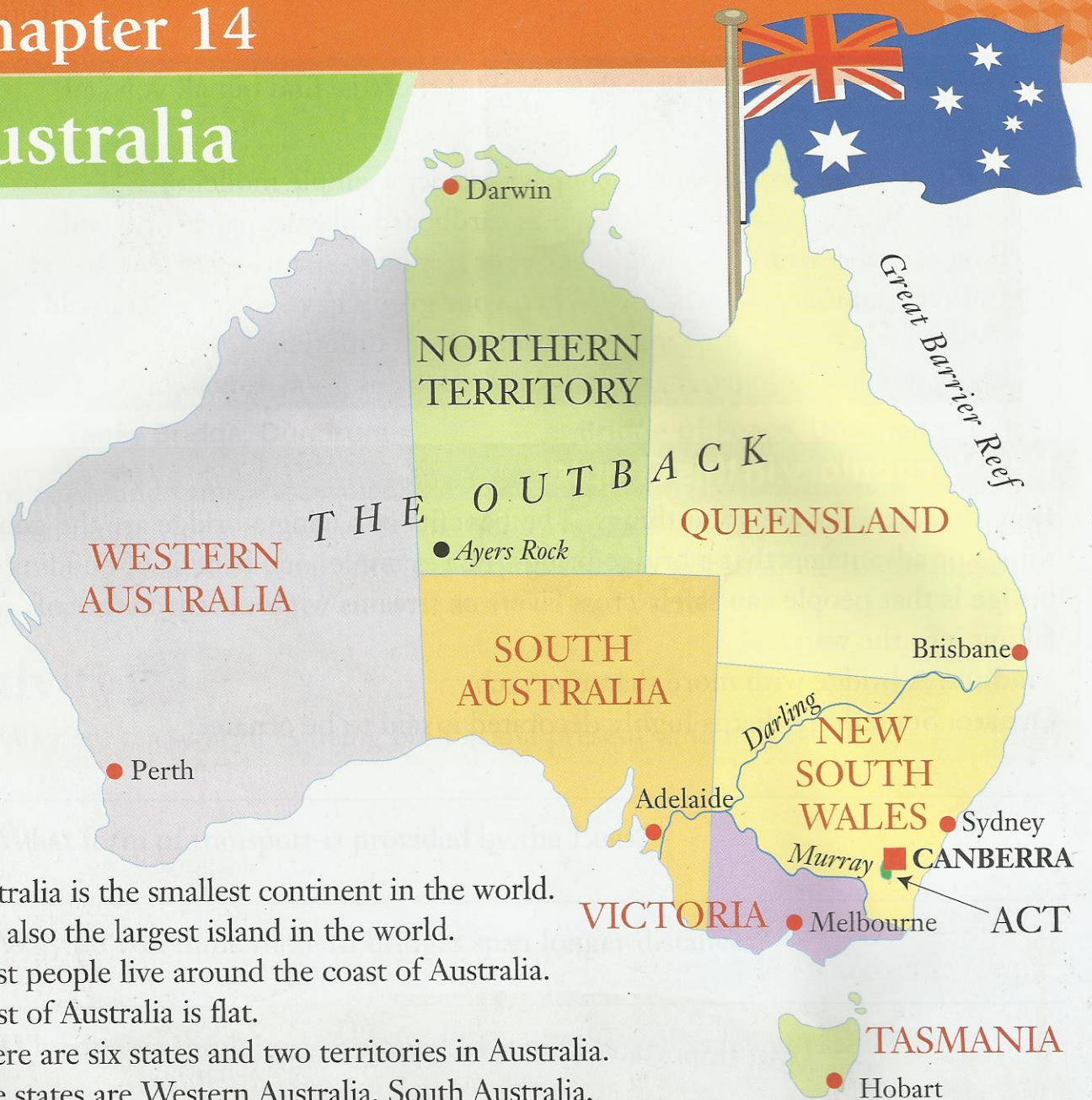


Chapter 14

Australia



Australia is the smallest continent in the world.
It is also the largest island in the world.
Most people live around the coast of Australia.
Most of Australia is flat.

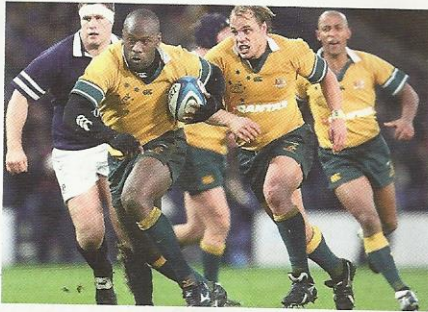
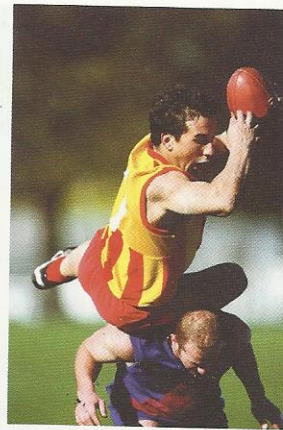
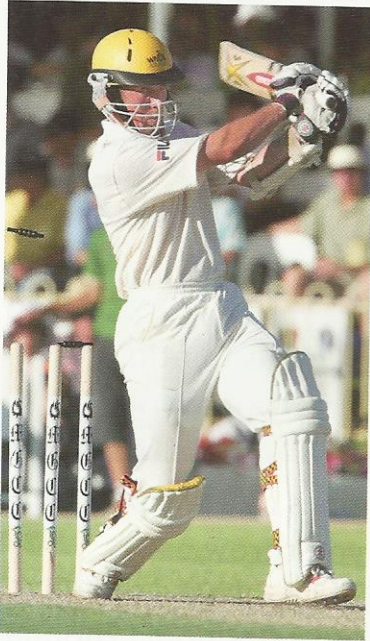
There are six states and two territories in Australia.
The states are Western Australia, South Australia,
Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria and Tasmania.

The two territories are the Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory (ACT).

Facts about Australia

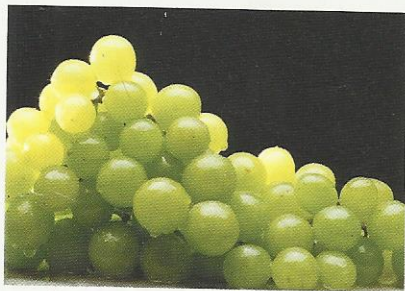
Population	20.3 million
Capital city	Canberra
Language	English
Currency	Australian dollars
Largest city	Sydney
Longest river system	Murray-Darling river system
An island off South Australia	Tasmania
Seasons	The seasons are opposite to ours. Spring starts in September in Australia. Summer time is our winter time.

Strand Unit: People and other lands.

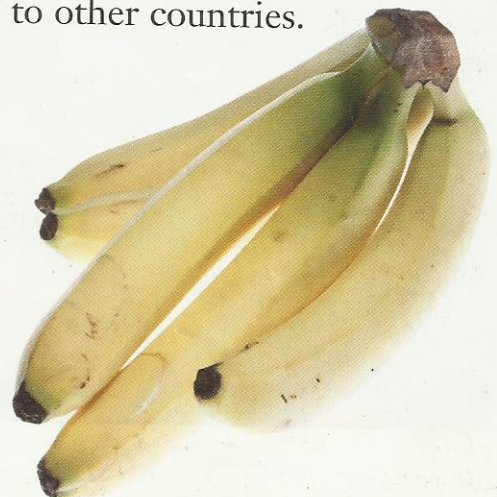
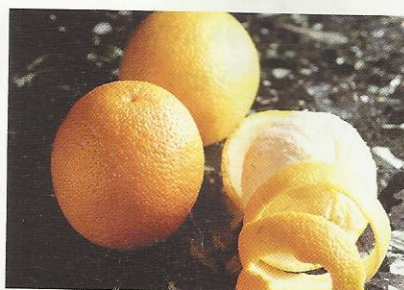
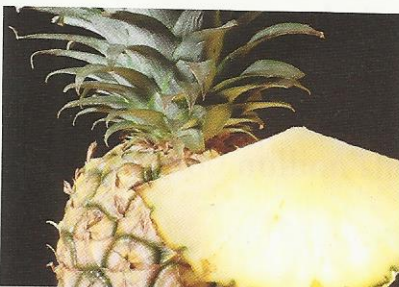


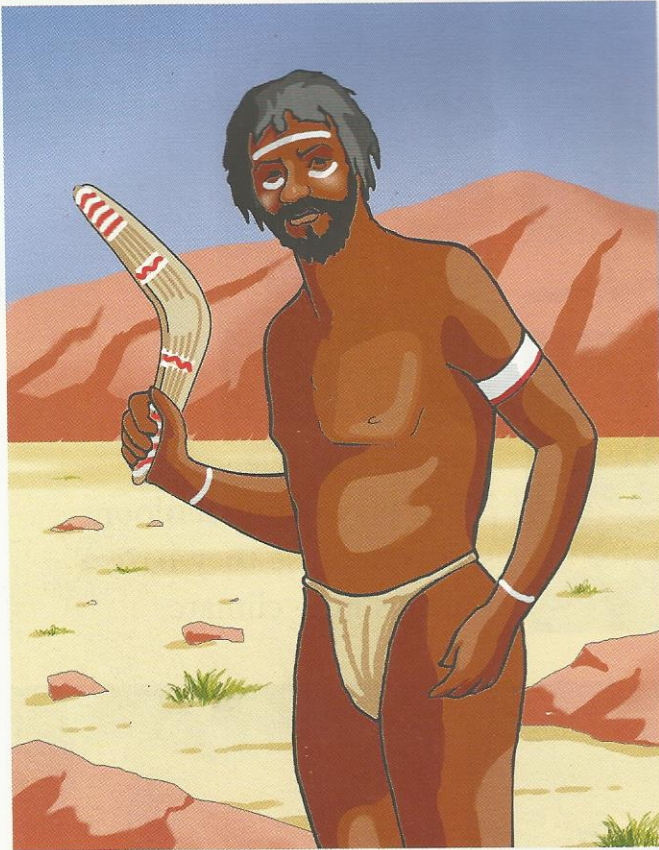
Australians love sport. They play many outdoor sports because they have a warm, sunny climate.

Australia has a great variety of animals. Some of their animals can be dangerous. Dingoes (wild dogs), snakes and crocodiles are known to have killed people. Australia is also home to the kangaroo, the koala and the box jellyfish – one of the most poisonous creatures in the world!



Because of the warm climate, Australia is an ideal place to grow fruit which they export to other countries.





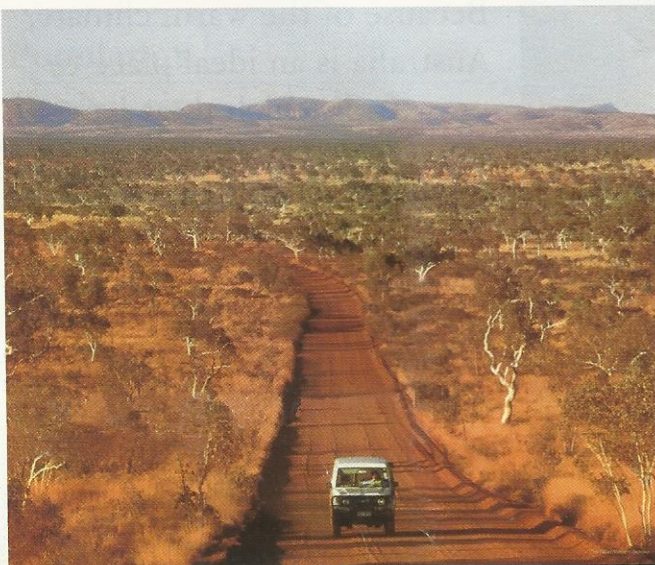
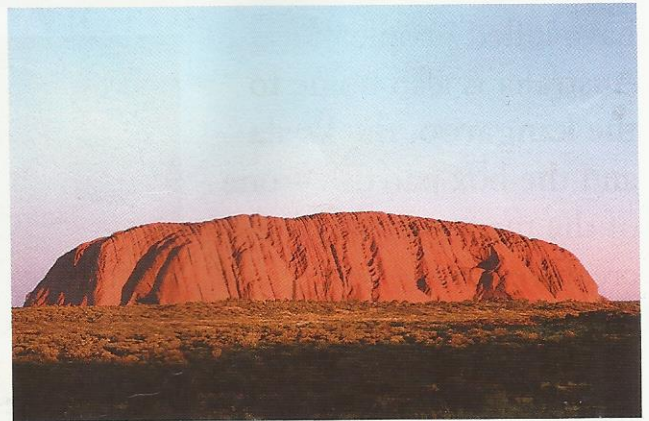
Native Australians are called **Aborigines**. They were the first people to live in Australia and have lived there for thousands of years.

At one stage, there were almost one million Aborigines — now there are less than 200 000.

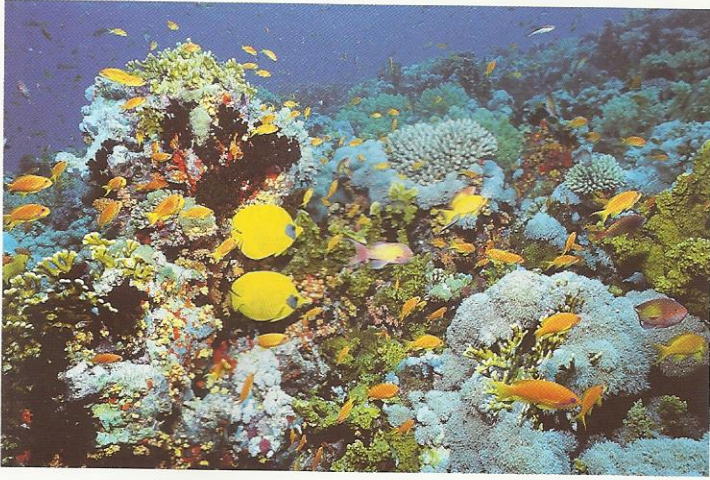
One of their most famous hunting weapons or tools is the **boomerang**. This is a V-shaped flat piece of wood used by the Aborigines as a weapon to hunt with. When you throw a boomerang, it should spin around and come back to you.

The didgeridoo is an old musical instrument that the Aborigines used. You will still see them playing the didgeridoo in cities and in tourist areas.

Ayers Rock is the most famous landmark in central Australia. It rises 348 metres above the surrounding plains and is nearly nine kilometres around its base. It is also known as Uluru, the Aboriginal name for it. As you approach the Rock, it appears to change its colour. It is a hundred million years old.

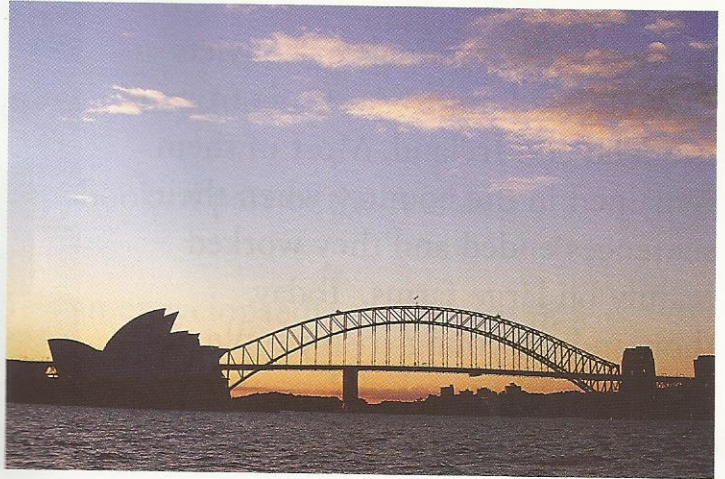


The outback is an area of very dry land in central Australia. Much of the ground is covered with red dust and red rocks. Very few people live in this area.



The Great Barrier Reef is the largest reef in the world. It is bigger than Britain and is the same length as the west coast of America. It has been created over millions of years from small fish and sea animal shells forming together. The area is made up of 3000 reefs and over 1000 islands. It contains roughly 1500 types of fish.

Sydney Harbour Bridge is another famous landmark which many tourists climb. It is so high that you could pass a ten-storey building underneath. It is 503 metres long and its arch weighs 39 000 tonnes.



Sydney Opera House is another famous landmark. It took five years for the engineers to work out how to build just the roof and it took almost fifteen years to complete the building.

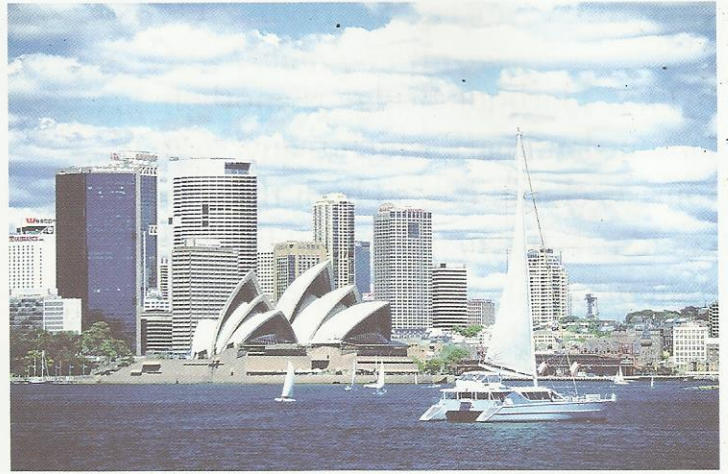
Australia is one of the world's biggest producers of wool. Some of the sheep farms are so big that the farmers use cars or helicopters to travel across thousands of acres of land to count their sheep. There are more than 80 million sheep in the outback.





The Olympic Games took place in Melbourne in 1956 and Ronnie Delaney from Ireland won a gold medal in the 1500 metres race. The 2000 Olympic Games were held in Sydney. Sonia O'Sullivan from Ireland won a silver medal.

In the 1780s, criminals or convicts were shipped out to Australia from England and Ireland. Most of them remained in the country when their sentences ended and they worked mainly on large farms. Today, thousands of young Irish people visit Australia either on holidays or to spend time working there.



The Australian rugby team is often referred to as The Wallabies. The Australian national colours are green and gold.

Activity A

1. What is the capital city of Australia? _____
2. Is the capital city the largest city? _____
3. What is the largest city in Australia? _____
4. Why do you think most people live around the coast of Australia? _____

Activity D

Look at the map of Australia and write the following places in the correct box below. Melbourne, Ayers Rock (Uluru), Darwin, Great Barrier Reef, Sydney Opera House, Brisbane, Perth.

New South Wales	Northern Territories	Queensland	Western Australia	Victoria

Activity E

1. What is the language of Australia? _____
2. What money (currency) is used in Australia? _____
3. Name the longest river system in Australia. _____
4. Who invented the boomerang? _____
5. Draw a boomerang.



6. What is a didgeridoo used for? _____
7. Name two Irish people who won medals in the Olympic Games in Australia.

8. What do you think takes place in the Sydney Opera House? _____