

What You Will Learn...

Main Ideas

1. The physical geography of Australia and New Zealand is diverse and unusual.
2. Native peoples and British settlers shaped the history of Australia and New Zealand.
3. Australia and New Zealand today are wealthy and culturally diverse countries.

The Big Idea

Australia and New Zealand share a similar history and culture but have unique natural environments.

Key Terms and Places

Great Barrier Reef, p. 645
coral reef, p. 645
Aborigines, p. 647
Maori, p. 647
Outback, p. 649

TAKING NOTES

As you read, take notes on Australia and New Zealand's physical geography, history, and situation today. Organize your notes in a chart like this one.

	Australia	New Zealand
Physical Geography		
History		
The Region Today		

Australia and New Zealand

If YOU lived there...

You have just taken a summer job working at a sheep station, or ranch, in Australia's Outback. You knew the Outback would be hot, but you did not realize how hot it could get! During the day, temperatures climb to over 100°F (40°C), and it hardly ever rains. In addition, you have learned that there are no towns nearby. Your only communication with home is by radio.

How will you adapt to living in the Outback?

BUILDING BACKGROUND Australia and New Zealand are very different. Much of Australia, such as the Outback, is hot, dry, and flat. In contrast, New Zealand has much milder climates, fertile valleys, and a variety of landforms.

Physical Geography

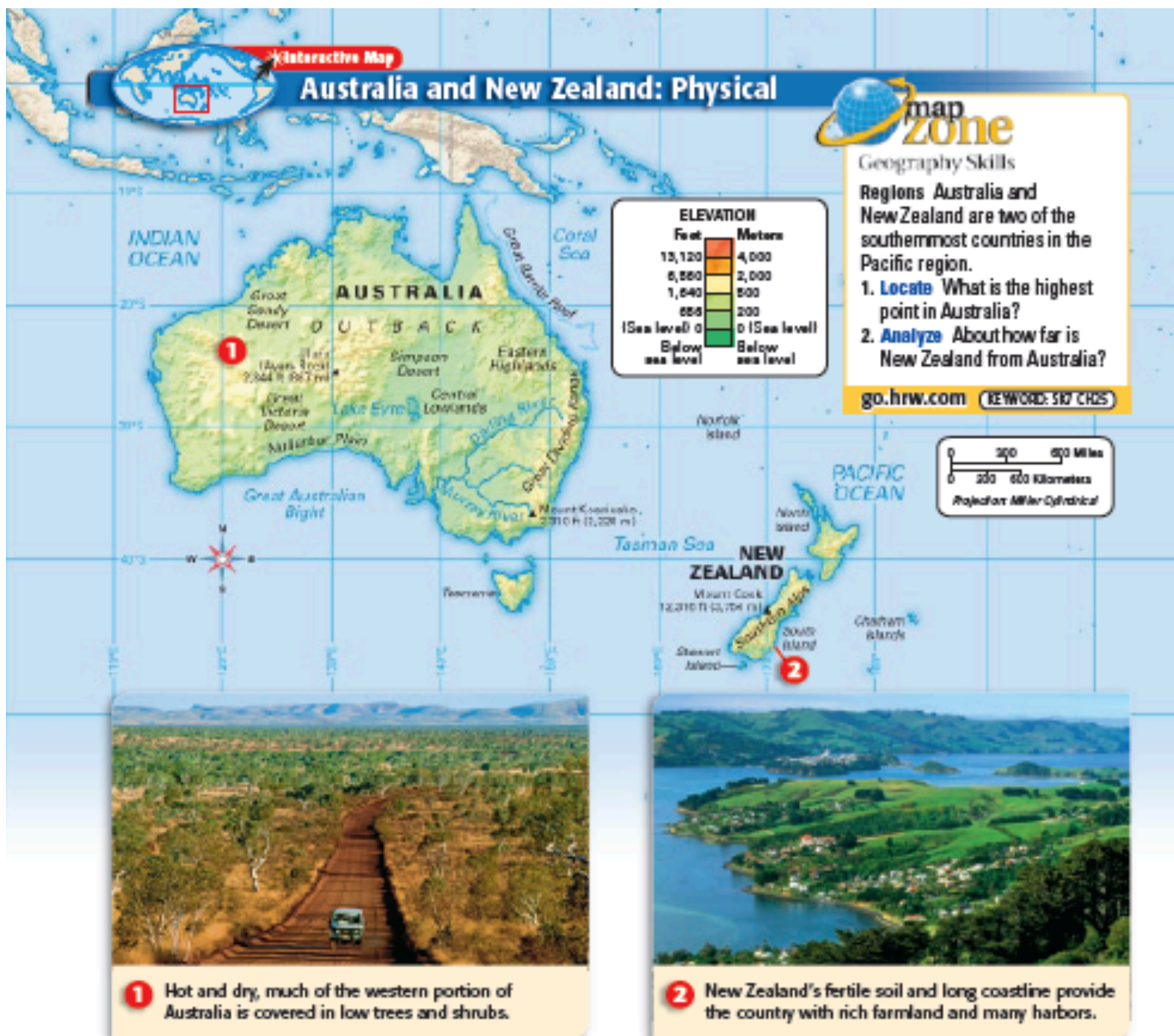
Australia and New Zealand are quite unlike most places on Earth. The physical features, variety of climates, unusual wildlife, and plentiful resources make the region truly unique.

Physical Features

The physical features of the region differ widely. Australia is home to wide, flat stretches of dry land. On the other hand, New Zealand features beautiful green hills and tall mountains.

Australia Similar to an island, Australia is surrounded by water. However, due to its immense size—almost 3 million square miles (7.7 million square km)—geographers consider Australia a continent.

A huge plateau covers the western half of Australia. Mostly flat and dry, this plateau is home to Uluru, a rock formation also known as Ayers Rock. Uluru is one of Australia's best-known landforms. Low mountains, valleys, and a major river system cover much of Eastern Australia. Fertile plains lie along the



coasts. Off Australia's northeastern coast is the **Great Barrier Reef**, the world's largest coral reef. A **coral reef** is a collection of rocky material found in shallow, tropical waters. The Great Barrier Reef is home to an incredible variety of marine animals.

New Zealand New Zealand, located some 1,000 miles southeast of Australia, includes two main islands, North Island and South Island. North Island is covered by hills

and coastal plains. It is also home to volcanoes, geysers, and hot springs. One of the key features on South Island is a large mountain range called the Southern Alps. Thick forests, deep lakes, and even glaciers are found in the Southern Alps. The rest of the island is covered by fertile hills and rich plains. Fjords, or narrow inlets of the sea, create many natural harbors along the coasts of both islands.

Climates

The climates of Australia and New Zealand differ greatly. Because much of Australia has desert and steppe climates, temperatures are warm and rainfall is limited. However, along the coasts the climate is more temperate. Unlike Australia, New Zealand is mild and wet. A marine climate brings plentiful rainfall and mild temperatures to much of the country.

Wildlife and Resources

Both Australia and New Zealand are home to many unique animals. Some of the region's most famous native animals are

Australia's kangaroo and koala and New Zealand's kiwi, a flightless bird.

Australia is rich in resources. It is the world's top producer of bauxite and lead as well as diamonds and opals. Australia is also home to energy resources like coal, natural gas, and oil. Despite poor soil, farms and ranches raise wheat, cotton, and sheep.

Unlike Australia, New Zealand has a great deal of fertile land but few mineral resources. New Zealand's main resources are wool, timber, and gold.

READING CHECK Contrasting How does the physical geography of the two countries differ?

Close-up

Maori Culture

The Maori, the descendants of New Zealand's earliest settlers, lived in small settlements throughout the islands. Their rich culture and traditions are still alive in New Zealand today.

Beautifully decorated storehouses served as a sign of a village's wealth and power. They often held weapons, tools, and foods.

The moko, or tattoos, of Maori warriors were symbols of a warrior's bravery. They also helped intimidate the enemy during battle.

The Maori used elaborately carved war canoes to launch attacks on their enemies.

History

Despite their many geographic differences, Australia and New Zealand share a similar history. Both countries were originally inhabited by settlers from other parts of the Pacific. Later, both Australia and New Zealand were colonized by the British.

Early Settlers

The first settlers in Australia likely migrated there from Southeast Asia at least 40,000 years ago. These settlers, the **Aborigines** (a-buh-RJ-nees), were the first humans to live in Australia. Early Aborigines were nomads who gathered various plants and

hunted animals with boomerangs and spears. Nature played an important role in the religion of the early Aborigines, who believed that it was their duty to preserve the land.

New Zealand's first settlers came from other Pacific islands more recently, about 1,200 years ago. The descendants of these early settlers, the **Maori** (MOW-ee), settled throughout New Zealand. Like Australia's Aborigines, the Maori were fishers and hunters. Unlike the Aborigines, however, the Maori also used farming to survive.

The Arrival of Europeans

European explorers first sighted Australia and New Zealand in the 1600s. It wasn't until later, however, that Europeans began to explore the region. In 1769 British explorer James Cook explored the main islands of New Zealand. The following year, Cook landed on the east coast of Australia and claimed the land for Britain.

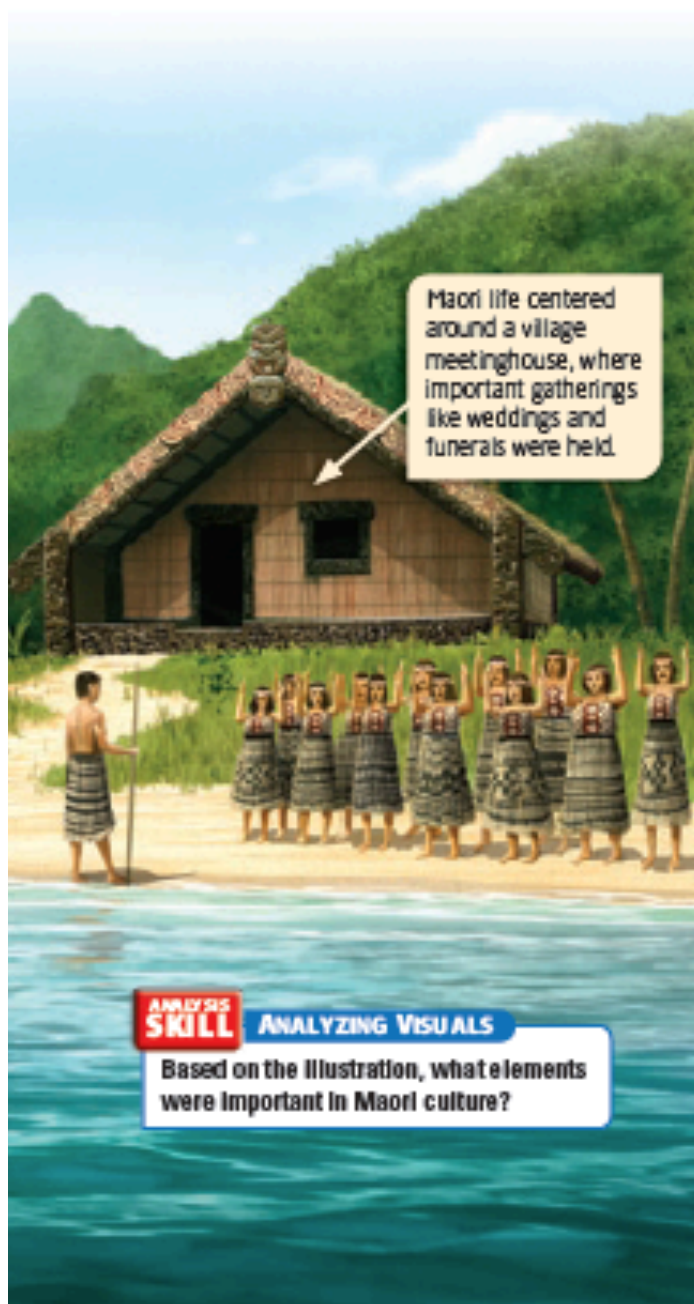
Within 20 years of Cook's claim, the British began settling in Australia. Many of the first to arrive were British prisoners, but other settlers came, too. As the settlers built farms and ranches, they took over the Aborigines' lands. Many Aborigines died of diseases introduced by the Europeans.

In New Zealand, large numbers of British settlers started to arrive in the early 1800s. After the British signed a treaty with the Maori in 1840, New Zealand became a part of the British Empire. However, tensions between the Maori and British settlers led to a series of wars over land.

Australia and New Zealand both gained their independence in the early 1900s. Today the two countries are members of the British Commonwealth of Nations and are close allies of the United Kingdom.

FOCUS ON READING

What conclusions can you draw about why European settlers were attracted to Australia?



ANALYSIS SKILL

ANALYZING VISUALS

Based on the illustration, what elements were important in Maori culture?

READING CHECK

Finding Main Ideas How did early settlers influence the region?

FOCUS ON CULTURE

Australian Sports

Outdoor sports are tremendously popular in sunny Australia. Some of Australia's most popular activities include water sports, such as swimming, surfing, and water polo. In recent years, many Australians have dominated the swimming competition at the summer Olympic Games.

Australia's national sport is cricket, a game played with a bat and ball. Cricket was first introduced to Australia by British settlers. Other popular sports with British roots are rugby and Australian Rules football. These two sports allow players to kick, carry, or pass the ball with their hands or feet. Every year hundreds of thousands of Australians attend professional rugby matches like the one in the photo below.

Drawing Conclusions Why do you think outdoor sports are so popular in Australia?



Australia and New Zealand Today

Despite their isolation from other nations, Australia and New Zealand today are rich and well-developed. Their governments, economies, and people make them among the world's most successful countries.

Government

As former British colonies, the British style of government has influenced both Australia and New Zealand. As a result, both countries have similar governments.

For example, the British monarch is the head of state in both Australia and New Zealand. Both countries are parliamentary democracies, a type of government in which citizens elect members to represent them in a parliament. Each country has a prime minister. The prime minister, along with Parliament, runs the government.

The governments of Australia and New Zealand have many features in common with the U.S. government. For example, Australia has a federal system like that of the United States. In this system, a central government shares power with the states. Australia's Parliament, similar to the U.S. Congress, consists of two houses—a House of Representatives and a Senate. A Bill of Rights also protects the individual rights of New Zealand's citizens.

Economy

Australia and New Zealand are both rich, economically developed countries. Agriculture is a major part of their economies. The two countries are among the world's top producers of wool. In fact, Australia regularly supplies about one-quarter of the wool used in clothing. Both countries also export meat and dairy products.

Australia and New Zealand also have other important industries. Mining is one of Australia's main industries. Companies mine bauxite, gold, and uranium throughout the **Outback**, Australia's interior. Other industries include steel, heavy machines, and computers. New Zealand has also become more industrialized in recent years. Factories turn out processed food, clothing, and paper products. Banking, insurance, and tourism are also important industries.

People

Today Australia and New Zealand have diverse populations. Most Australians and New Zealanders are of British ancestry. In

recent years, however, peoples from around the world have migrated to the region. For example, since the 1970s Asians and Pacific Islanders have settled in Australia and New Zealand in growing numbers.

Native Maori and Aborigines make up only a small percentage of New Zealand's and Australia's populations. One challenge facing both countries today is improving the economic and political status of the those populations. Many of the region's Maori and Aborigines trail the rest of the population in terms of education, land ownership, and employment.

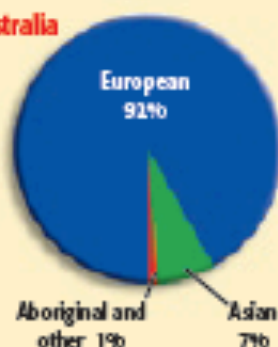
Most Australians and New Zealanders live in urban areas. About 85 percent of Australia's population lives in large cities along the coasts. Sydney and Melbourne, Australia's two largest cities, are home to almost 8 million people. Rural areas like the Outback, on the other hand, have less than 15 percent of the population. In New Zealand, a majority of the population lives on the North Island. There, large cities like Auckland are common.

READING CHECK Summarizing What are the economic strengths of these countries?

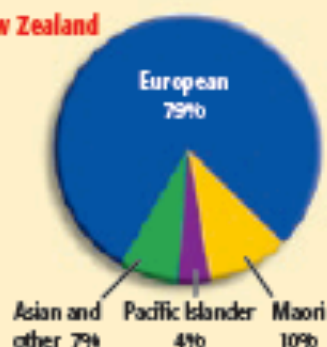


Ethnic Groups in Australia and New Zealand

Australia



New Zealand



Comparing and Contrasting In what ways are the ethnic populations of Australia and New Zealand similar and different?

go.hrw.com KEYWORD: SK7 CH25

SUMMARY AND PREVIEW Despite their geographical differences, Australia and New Zealand have much in common. The two countries share a similar history, culture, and economy. In the next section you will learn about another region in the Pacific world—the Pacific Islands.

Section 1 Assessment

Reviewing Ideas, Terms, and Places

- Identify** What is the Great Barrier Reef? Where is it located?
 - Elaborate** Given its harsh climate, why do you think so many people have settled in Australia?
- Describe** Who are the Maori? From where did they originate?
 - Draw Conclusions** How might the Aborigines' relationship with nature have differed from that of other peoples?
- Recall** Where do most Australians and New Zealanders live?
 - Compare and Contrast** How are the governments of Australia and New Zealand similar to and different from that of the United States?

Critical Thinking

- Comparing and Contrasting** Use your notes and a diagram like the one here to compare and contrast the geography, history, and culture of Australia and New Zealand.



FOCUS ON WRITING

- Describing Australia and New Zealand** What natural resources do these two countries produce? Make a list of the ones people might want to invest in. What illustrations could you include?