Australia

Background Information
Australia!

- Australia is an island, surrounded by water.
- It is located on the smallest continent in the world.
- It is the sixth largest country in the world.
Commonwealth of Australia

Queen Elizabeth II has been the head of state since 1973

The Queen is represented by a governor-general and by a governor in each state
Government

- Democratic, federal-state system recognizing British monarch as sovereign.
- Independence (federation): January 1, 1901.
- Head of state is the British monarch
Government Cont...

- **Legislative**--(76 Senators, 150-House of Representatives).
- The House of Representatives selects the Prime Minister as head of government, who then appoints his cabinet.
- **Judicial**--independent judiciary.
- Administrative subdivisions: Six states and two territories.
Aussie Prime Minister

- Kevin Rudd
- 26th Prime Minister
- Assumed office Dec 3rd 2007
- Head of the Australian Labor Party
Area and Population

- **Area**: (7,617,930 sq km)  
  (2,941,285 sq miles)
- **About the Size of the 48 U.S States**
- **Population** (2007 est.): 21 million (over 70% in Cities and towns)
- **Capital City**: Canberra (pop. 327,700)
Australia: States and Territories

- A federation of six states and two mainland territories
Major Cities
Capital Cities and Population

- Sydney, New South Wales, 4.3m
- Melbourne, Victoria, 3.6.
- Brisbane, Queensland, 1.6m
- Perth, Western Australia, 1.5m
- Adelaide, South Australia, 1.1m
- Canberra, National Capital, Au. Cap. Territory, 327,700
- Hobart, Tasmania, 189,400
- Darwin, Northern Territory, 96,200
Geography

- Australia is the driest and flattest inhabited continent, and has the oldest and least fertile soils.
- Largest part of Australia is desert or semi-arid
- The western half of the continent is occupied by a desert plateau that rises into barren, rolling hills near the west coast.
Only the SE and SW corners of the continent have a temperate climate.
The northern part, with a tropical climate, has a vegetation consisting of rainforest, woodland, grassland and desert.
Australia Geography and Climate
Geography

- Mountain ranges run from north to south along the east coast.
- Highest point in Mount Kosciusko (7,308 ft; 2,228 m).
- The Great Barrier Reef along the NE coast is about 1,245 mi (2,000 km).
- The island of Tasmania (26,178 sq mi; 67,800 sq km) is off the southeast coast.
CLIMATE

- Pleasant, with two distinct zones.
- North of the Tropic of Capricorn--mostly tropical with wet condition in the summer and dry conditions in the winter.
- Summer heat all deserts (north and south), and temperatures sometimes exceed 120ºF.
In the south, below the Tropic of Capricorn weather conditions are temperate and include the four seasons.

Australia's seasons are the opposite of those in the Northern Hemisphere -- Spring (Sept-Nov), Summer (Dec-Feb), Fall (Mar-May) and Winter (Jun-Aug).
Australia Climate and Weather

Other info and Economy

- Years of Compulsory education is age 15 in all states except Tasmania, where it is 16
- Literacy Level 99%
- Work Force (10.4 m)
  - Service 72.2%
  - Manufacturing 10.3%
  - Mining 4.9%
  - Agriculture 3%
  - Public Administration and defense 3.8%
Currency: AUD to $1USD

**Currency:** Basic units—Australian Dollar 100 cents = 1 AU$. 
Australia's aboriginal inhabitants (a hunting-gathering people), referred to today as Aboriginals and Torres Straits Islanders, arrived more than 40,000 years ago.

Current aboriginal population is approx. 517,200 (about 2.5% of the population).

The government and the public are now trying to be more responsive to aboriginal rights and needs.
Claimed in 1770 by Captain James Cook for Great Britain.

On January 26, 1788 (now celebrated as Australia Day) the first group of settlers arrived establishing a colony on the east coast of Australia, in New South Wales.

Earlier arrivals were mostly convicts.
Selected Aussie Landmarks

Twelve Apostles and Blue Mountains
1,200 miles of coral--the largest living structure in the world.
Home to many unique animals
Ayers Rock--Uluru
Outback
Outback