Australia

Background Information
Australia!

- Official Name: Commonwealth of Australia
- It is an island, surrounded by water.
- Located on the smallest continent in the world--Oceania.
- The sixth largest nation in the world after Russia, Canada, China, the United States and Brazil.
Australia

- Australia’s official language is English—not by law but by usage
- Australian English is similar to other forms of English, although some colloquial and slang expressions are unique. e.g. Barbie for BBQ, Thongs for flip flops, etc.
- Sydney is 15 hrs ahead of Iowa
Area and Population

- **Area**: (7,617,930 sq km) (2,941,285 sq miles—about the size of mainland US (i.e., the 48 U.S States)
- **Population** (2007 est.): 21 million (over 70% in the 10 largest Cities and towns)
- **Capital City**: Canberra (pop. 327,700)
Government

- Democratic, federal-state system recognizing British monarch as sovereign
- Independence (federation): January 1, 1901
- 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 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.
Aussie Prime Minister

- Julia Gillard
- 27th Prime Minister & 1st female PM
- Sworn in on June 24 2010 & re-sworn in as PM on 14 Sept. following the 2010 Federal Election.
- Leader of the Labor Party
Australia is divided into: Six states
New South Wales, Queensland, South
Australia, Tasmania, Victoria, and Western
Australia

two territories.
Australian Capital Territory and
Northern Territory
A federation of six states and two mainland territories.
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, 189,4000
Darwin, Northern Territory, 96,200
Geography

- Australia is the driest and flattest inhabited continent on earth, yet it has extremes of climate and topography.
- There are rainforests and vast plains in the north, snowfields in the southeast, desert in the centre and fertile croplands in the east, south and southwest.
- About one third of the country lies in the tropics.
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.
The largest part of Australia (3/4) is desert or semi-arid.

The western half of the country is occupied by a desert plateau that rises into barren, rolling hills near the west coast.

Australia has the oldest and least fertile soils.
Australia: Geography and Climate
Mountain ranges run from north to south along the east coast.

Highest point is 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.
Geography
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 120°F.
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).
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%
Australia's aboriginal inhabitants (a hunting-gathering people), arrived more than 40,000 years ago

Current aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander 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.
Australia is a multicultural society
Includes its Indigenous peoples and settlers from countries worldwide.
Since 1945, over six million new settlers from 200 countries have arrived.
People born overseas make up almost one quarter of the total population.
Selected Aussie Landmarks

Twelve Apostles and Blue Mountains
Great Barrier Reef

1,200 miles of coral--the largest living structure in the world.
Home to many unique animals
Sydney Bridge
Ayers Rock--Uluru
Outback
Outback
Aussie Flies and Roo Steaks
Questions or Comments?