

The Pacific World

Section 1



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.

Key Terms and Places

Great Barrier Reef largest coral reef in the world, off Australia's northeastern coast

coral reef a collection of rocky material found in shallow, tropical waters

Aborigines first humans to live in Australia

Maori New Zealand's first settlers

Outback Australia's interior

Section Summary

PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY

Australia has wide, flat stretches of dry land. Low mountains, valleys, and a major river system make up the eastern part of the country. The **Great Barrier Reef**, the world's largest **coral reef**, is located off of Australia's northeastern coast.

New Zealand is made up of North Island and South Island. A large mountain range called the Southern Alps is a key feature of South Island. New Zealand also has green hills, volcanoes, hot springs, dense forests, deep lakes, and fertile plains.

Most of Australia has warm, dry desert and steppe climates. The coastal areas are milder and wetter. New Zealand has a marine climate with plenty of rainfall and mild temperatures. Native animals include Australia's kangaroo and koala and New Zealand's kiwi, a flightless bird. Australia has many valuable mineral resources, and farms raise wheat, cotton, and sheep despite the poor soil. New Zealand has few mineral resources, but plenty of rich soil.

Underline the two islands that make up New Zealand.

Circle the region's native animals.

Section 1, *continued*

HISTORY

Aborigines, the first humans in Australia, came from Southeast Asia more than 40,000 years ago. Early Aborigines were nomads who gathered plants, hunted animals, and fished. The **Maori**, New Zealand's first settlers, came from other Pacific islands about 1,200 years ago. They hunted, fished, and farmed. Captain James Cook visited New Zealand in 1769. British settlers began arriving in Australia and New Zealand in the late 1700s and early 1800s. Australia and New Zealand gained independence in the early 1900s. Both countries are in the British Commonwealth and close allies of the United Kingdom.

Who were the first humans to settle in Australia and New Zealand?

AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND TODAY

Most people in both countries are of British ancestry. Sydney and Melbourne are Australia's two largest cities. Auckland is New Zealand's largest city. Both countries produce wool, meat, and dairy products. Mining is important throughout the **Outback**. Other industries include steel, heavy machines, and computers. Manufacturing, banking, and tourism are important in New Zealand.

Circle the name of New Zealand's largest city.

Today, Australia and New Zealand face the challenge of improving the political and economic status of their native populations.

CHALLENGE ACTIVITY

Critical Thinking: Making Judgments Why do you think the Aboriginal and Maori populations of Australia and New Zealand declined after British settlers arrived? Explain your answer in a short paragraph.