

# Australia, New Zealand, and the Pacific Islands: The People

## Teacher's Guide



**Grade Level:** 6–8

**Curriculum Focus:** Social Studies

**Lesson Duration:** 4 class periods

### Program Description

*Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific Islands: The People* – Australia, New Zealand, and the Pacific Islands are home to about 30 million people – a small percentage of the world’s population distributed over a large area. This program introduces students to the geography, history, and inhabitants of this region. Students will explore the origins of the area’s broad ethnic diversity and discover how complex cultural, historic, and economic components are woven into a diverse tapestry of everyday life throughout this part of the world.

---

### Discussion Questions

- From what island did eastern migration into the Pacific area apparently begin? What skills and technology were necessary before early Polynesian voyagers could cross wide bodies of water?
  - Who were Australia’s earliest known inhabitants? What impact did the aborigines have on their environment? How was this influenced by their cultural and religious belief, called the Dreamtime (the creating time)?
  - Who first mapped the coasts of New Zealand and Australia? What initially attracted Europeans to this area of the Pacific in the late 1700s? How were the indigenous people of New Zealand and Australia affected by the influx of European immigrants?
  - Why is Australia’s outback relatively unpopulated? How did the discovery of gold and other mineral deposits help to develop the area?
- 

### Lesson Plan

#### *Student Objectives*

- Use a map or globe to locate and accurately identify Australia, New Zealand, and the three Pacific Island groups.
- Explore the origins of the ethnic diversity among the populations of Australia, New Zealand, and the Pacific Islands.
- Analyze the pattern of migration and settlement in this region of the world.

- Examine the impact of subsequent waves of migration on the original inhabitants of Australia and New Zealand.
- Investigate and analyze the geographical, historical, and cultural aspects of this region more deeply through research of specified cities, locales, or islands.
- Investigate the folklore, art, or mythology of Australia, New Zealand, or one of the Pacific Island groups.

### *Materials*

- *Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific Islands: The People* video
- Web and print resources about the geography, history, and culture of Australia, New Zealand, and the Pacific Island groups
- Web and print resources about the folklore, art, or mythology of the region

### *Procedures*

1. Prior to viewing the program, ask students to brainstorm a list of words or images that they associate with Australia, New Zealand, or the Pacific Islands and record responses on the board. Follow up with a discussion of the sources of these associations (for example, television, books, travel brochures, or personal travel). Encourage students as they view the program to discover the origins and impact of the ethnic diversity found among the populations of Australia, New Zealand, and the Pacific Islands and to learn how this region of the world developed historically. Write the following “think about” questions on the board.
  - What has contributed to the great variety of people and cultures found in this region of the world?
  - Where did the different ethnic groups come from?
  - What impact have various ethnic groups had on the region?

Alternative: If students are unfamiliar with this region of the world, use visual prompts to generate discussion. For example, show pictures of a kangaroo, a koala, a Pacific Islander in traditional dress (Maori or Tahitian, for instance), or a tropical island beach, and ask students to identify the image and suggest its place of origin. If students are unable to identify items presented or in any way discuss the topic, explain what the images are and how they relate to the program students will be viewing. For students with no knowledge of the region, this program will serve as an introduction. Encourage these students to discover where the region is, who the inhabitants are, and the origins of their ethnic diversity. Write the following “think about” questions on the board.

- Where are Australia, New Zealand, and the Pacific Islands located?
- Who are the inhabitants?
- Where are they from?



2. Map Work and Review: After viewing the program, ask student volunteers to identify Australia, New Zealand, and the three Pacific Island groups on a large map or globe. Guide students through a review of the major ethnic groups among the populations of the region, and have students locate each group's country of origin on a map or globe. Lead a discussion concerning the reasons for and consequences of migration in the region.
3. To examine the geographical, historical, and cultural aspects of this region more deeply, have students work in pairs to research a specific city, locale, or island, and to gather related facts and pictures. Assign or allow students to select a topic from a list, including such places as
  - Melbourne, Brisbane, Perth, Sydney, or Alice Springs, Australia
  - the Australian Outback
  - an Australian gold mining town, such as Kapunda
  - Wellington, Auckland, Dunedin, or Christchurch, New Zealand
  - a New Zealand farm
  - Fiji (general area or a specific island)
  - the Cook Islands (general area, Northern Group, Southern Group, or a specific island)
  - additional Pacific islands or island groups, such as American Samoa, Christmas Island, French Polynesia, Guam, the Marshall Islands, Papua New Guinea, Pitcairn Island, or Tonga

Note: You may wish to add to the list or narrow it to fit the needs of your class.

4. Using the accumulated information and pictures from Activity #3, student pairs will create an informational travel brochure that presents the geography, history, and culture of the assigned or selected city, locale, or island. Have students share completed brochures with the rest of the class. Allow time for questions and discussion of the information presented. Set up an area to display the brochures.
5. To examine the impact of specific ethnic groups on the folklore, art, and mythology of the region, each student will select a topic for research (you may also choose to assign topics) and will prepare a report supplemented with visuals. Completed reports will be shared with the class. A sample list of groups includes
  - Australian aborigines
  - New Zealand Maoris
  - Polynesians (or sub-groups, such as Tongans or Samoans)
  - Melanesians (or sub-groups, such as the Papuans of New Guinea)
  - Micronesians
  - European Immigrants to Australia or New Zealand

## Assessment

Use the following three-point rubric to evaluate students' work during this lesson.

- 3 points: Students quickly and accurately located and identified Australia, New Zealand, and the three Pacific Island groups on a globe or map; conducted all required research on the geographical, historical, and cultural aspects of an assigned region; created a neat, thoughtful brochure demonstrating clear understanding of the topic; researched, prepared, and presented an insightful report on the folklore, art, and mythology of an ethnic group.
- 2 points: Students located and identified Australia, New Zealand, and the three Pacific Island groups on a globe or map; conducted adequate research on the geographical, historical, and cultural aspects of an assigned region; created a brochure demonstrating satisfactory understanding of the topic; researched, prepared, and presented an acceptable report on the folklore, art, and mythology of an ethnic group.
- 1 point: Students were unable to locate or identify Australia, New Zealand, and the three Pacific Island groups on a globe or map; conducted little of the required research on the geographical, historical, and cultural aspects of an assigned region; created a brochure that demonstrated poor understanding of the topic; presented a poorly researched and prepared report on the folklore, art, and mythology of an ethnic group.

## Vocabulary

### aborigine

*Definition:* A member of the indigenous or earliest known population of a region; a native

*Context:* Australia's aborigines are descended from people who came to the continent tens of thousands of years ago.

### Maori

*Definition:* A Polynesian people whose ancestors arrived in New Zealand more than a thousand years ago; indigenous people of New Zealand

*Context:* The Maori population of New Zealand is a small but influential minority.

### Melanesia

*Definition:* One of the three major subdivisions of the islands of the Pacific, roughly comprising the islands of the southwestern Pacific, south of the equator, from New Guinea to Fiji

*Context:* Melanesia includes the Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, and New Caledonia.

### Micronesia

*Definition:* One of the three major subdivisions of the islands of the Pacific, comprising the islands east of the Philippines and north of the equator

*Context:* Micronesia includes the Caroline, Marshall, Mariana, and Gilbert islands.



### **outback (Australian)**

*Definition:* The remote and usually semi-arid interior of Australia

*Context:* Tourism and scattered mining are the main economic activities in Australia's outback.

### **Polynesia**

*Definition:* One of the three major subdivisions of the islands of the Pacific, including scattered islands of the central and southern Pacific Ocean roughly between New Zealand, Hawaii, and Easter Island

*Context:* The larger islands of Polynesia are volcanic, while the smaller ones are generally coral formations.

## **Academic Standards**

### **The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS)**

NCSS has developed national guidelines for teaching social studies. To become a member of NCSS, or to view the standards online, go to <http://www.socialstudies.org>.

This lesson plan addresses the following thematic standards:

- Culture
- Time, Continuity, and Change
- People, Places, and Environments
- Power, Authority, and Governance
- Global Connections

### **Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL)**

McREL's Content Knowledge: A Compendium of Standards and Benchmarks for K-12 Education addresses 14 content areas. To view the standards and benchmarks, visit <http://www.mcrel.org/compendium/browse.asp>.

This lesson plan addresses the following national standards:

- Geography – The World in Spatial Terms: Understands the characteristics and uses of maps, globes, and other geographic tools and technologies; Knows the location of places, geographic features, and patterns of the environment.
- Geography – Places and Regions: Understands the physical and human characteristics of place; Understands the concept of regions.
- Geography – Human Systems: Understands the nature, distribution and migration of human populations on Earth's surface; Understands the nature and complexity of Earth's cultural mosaics; Understands the patterns of human settlement and their causes.

- Geography – Environment and Society: Understands how physical systems affect human systems.
- Geography – Uses of Geography: Understands how geography is used to interpret the past.
- History – Historical Understanding: Understands and knows how to analyze chronological relationships and patterns; Understands the historical perspective.
- History – World History Across the Eras: Understands long-term changes and recurring patterns in world history.