# Features of Australia

Geography Stage 2 – places are similar and different.

4 weeks – 90 minutes a week

## Key inquiry questions

* How and why are places similar and different?
* How can people use places and environments more sustainably?
* How do people’s perceptions about places influence their views about the protection of places?

### Content focus

Students:

* explore the different climates, settlement patterns and demographic characteristics of places
* explore the climate, natural vegetation and native animals of places in Australia
* use this information to imagine what it would be like to live in different places
* consider how people’s perceptions of places are the basis for actions to protect places and environments.

### Outcomes

A student:

* examines features and characteristics of places and environments **GE2‑1**
* describes the ways people, places and environments interact **GE2‑2**
* examines differing perceptions about the management of places and environments **GE2‑3**
* acquires and communicates geographical information using geographical tools for inquiry **GE2‑4**.

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### Overview

The geographical inquiry process will investigate the geographical characteristics of Australia. Students will compare the climate, settlement patterns and lives of the people of three Australian places, including their own ‘home town’. Through investigation of a geographical issue, students will examine the interconnections between people’s perceptions and the protection of a significant cultural site.

This learning is shaped by two inquiries, which vary in length.

Note – teachers may need to adjust and scaffold learning activities as appropriate. Teachers can choose whether the inquiry is undertaken by individuals, pairs or groups, or as a whole class.

### Assessment

Many of the activities require students to demonstrate their learning. These activities can be used to assess student learning at various stages throughout the inquiry process.

## Inquiry 1 – The Australian continent

Student centred cultural study of three Australian places.

Students compile and publish a mini-atlas that showcases geographical characteristics of Australia and provides profiles of three populated Australian places. This could be hand-compiled, digital or multimodal.

Note – the geographical inquiry process will need to be modelled and guided by the teacher.

Students:

* investigate Australia’s major natural and human features for example: (ACHGK014, ACHGK015)
* description of natural features of Australia for example deserts, rivers, mountains
* location of Australia’s states, territories and major cities
* identification of Countries/Places of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples

### Similarities and differences between places

Students:

* investigate the settlement patterns and demographic characteristics of places and the lives of the people who live there, for example: (ACHGK019)
  + examination of the varying settlement patterns and demographics of places
  + comparison of the daily life of people from different places

### Acquiring geographical information

* What is Australia’s location in the world and region?
* Where are Australia’s states, territories and major cities located?
* How are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People’s Countries and Places identified?
* What are some of the unique natural features of Australia? (For example, significant landforms, flora and fauna, World Heritage places.)
* What are the similarities and differences in the geographical characteristics of my town/city and two other Australian places? (Including landscapes, climate, demographics, daily lives.)
* What can Australians do to protect our unique environments and features?

### Acquiring data and information

Identify the geographical tools required to support student learning, for example.

* Locate Australia on a globe and world map. Identify the state and territory boundaries and major cities.
* Locate major heritage and cultural sites on a map of Australia, for example Uluru, Great Barrier Reef, Arnhem Land.
* Reference large-scale maps and Google satellite images that show the landscapes and landforms of Australia, for example deserts, rivers, lakes, mountain ranges.
* Reference maps and information that identify Aboriginal language groups.
* Students investigate three populated places in Australia: their own city/town/place and two other places. It is suggested that places be chosen that show the diversity of Australia, for example an Australian capital city, a regional centre and a sparsely populated place.
  + Use BOM’s [Climate Data Online](http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/data/) to obtain the annual average temperature and rainfall data for each place.
  + Research and record the demographic and population data and settlement patterns for each place.
  + Examine daily life and culture, such as schooling, making a living, recreation, and special events. Use photographs, illustrations, diagrams, story books, and multimedia including apps.
  + Use tourism websites to identify and describe cultural and heritage sites in the places.
  + Interview friends and family who have lived in or visited the places to obtain information on daily life.
  + Fieldwork—visit and record the features of the students’ home town or city.
* Identify examples of environmental sustainability practices in each place.

### Processing geographical information

Students use geographical tools to represent, organise and analyse the data and information, for example:

* Locate Australia on a world map. Label Australia and other major countries or continents.
* On an outline map of Australia plot and label the states and territories, major cities, major landforms and major cultural and heritage sites.
* Consult with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples to explain representations of the identification of Countries and Places.
* Annotate photographs to describe the indigenous plants and animals. Organise and compile images into a narrated slideshow.
* Match images of major landforms and heritage sites to places on a map or satellite image of Australia. Describe these features.
* For each of the three Australian places being investigated:
  + Locate the places on a map of Australia.
  + Annotate photograph collages or narrated slideshows using photographs and video clips of features and heritage sites of the place. Use information from interviews and research to inform the annotations.
  + Construct climate graphs that show rainfall (precipitation) as a column graph and temperature overlaid as a line graph. Interpret the data.
  + Construct a comparison table, a column per place, comparing climate data, population statistics, demographic data, settlement patterns and daily life.
  + Infer the impacts of climate, physical features and the environment on lifestyles. Construct cause and effect charts to illustrate examples.
  + Interpret the comparison table to draw conclusions about similarities and differences in getting around, clothing worn, transport and the personal sense of belonging.

### Communicating geographical information

Communicate – Support students to develop a mini-atlas that is either digital, multimodal or hand-compiled.

The mini-atlas should include:

* Australia’s position on a world map.
* Maps that locate and describe features of Australia, constructed according to cartographic conventions (BOLTS).
* Annotated photographs, videos or slideshows to describe significant landforms, indigenous vegetation and animals, and major cultural sites in Australia.
* A profile page of each of the three Australian places investigated which compiles and explains the processed data and information.
* Explanations of similarities and differences between features, data and daily life, including an explanation about the way the environment affects lifestyle.

Create a class virtual tour, using [Google Tour Builder](https://tourbuilder.withgoogle.com/), of the places investigated by the students. Students provide a summary for each place from their profile pages.

* As a class, undertake the virtual tour, each student acting as ‘tour guide’ for the places they investigated.
* Respond – Describe one sustainability action that enhances quality of life for people and the environment in one of the Australian places investigated.
* Select sustainability practices to implement at school and at home.

## Inquiry 2 – perception and protection of a heritage site

### Case study – Uluru

Students investigate how the protection of the Uluru (or alternative Australian cultural or heritage site) is influenced by peoples’ perceptions of it.

### Perception and protection of places

Students:

* investigate how the protection of places is influenced by people’s perception of places, for example: (ACHGK018)
  + description of how and why people perceive places differently
  + discussion of how people’s perceptions influence the protection of places in Australia, for example sacred sites, national parks, world heritage sites.

### Acquiring geographical information

How can Uluru be protected from the impacts of tourism visitation?

* What is Uluru and where is it located?
* Why is Uluru on the World Heritage List?
* Who visits Uluru and why do they visit?
* What are different people’s perceptions of Uluru?
* How are the impacts of tourism to Uluru managed?
* How do peoples’ perceptions influence the protection of Uluru?

### Acquiring data and information

* Recall cultural sites included in the students’ profiles of Australian places presentations. Identify those listed on the World Heritage List and explain the purpose of the list.
* Recall the location of Uluru and undertake a virtual tour using [Google Earth and Google Street View.](https://earth.google.com/web/search/uluru/@-25.34718542,131.03973189,779.43218886a,5151.91530232d,35y,0h,0t,0r/data=CigiJgokCQw40Cu8qTVAEQg40Cu8qTXAGbk8zShB9ElAIbY8zShB9EnA)
* Reference the World Heritage List to view photographs, read descriptions of the site and the significant factors that led to its World Heritage listing.
* Access information about the site, its past and present significance, different peoples’ perceptions of it and ways it is cared for and protected.

### Processing geographical information

* Represent the information collected in a table or concept map.
* Construct flow charts to explain the interconnections between significance, perceptions, visitation, impacts and strategies that help protect it.

### Communicating geographical information

Communicate – Students create a persuasive text suggesting appropriate tourist behaviours when visiting Uluru. This should clearly explain interconnections between perceptions and protection of the site.

Respond – Students create a text from the point of view of a person who advocates for the site’s protection. This could be an artwork, poem or narrative.

## Support material

### Geographical concepts

Place – the significance of places and what they are like, for example natural and human features and characteristics of different places and their similarities and differences; how people’s perceptions about places influence their responses and actions to protect them.

Environment – the significance of the environment in human life, and the important interrelationships between humans and the environment, for example how climate and environment influence settlement patterns; interconnections between people and environments; differing ways people can use environments sustainably.

Scale – the way that geographical phenomena and problems can be examined at different spatial levels, for example types of settlement across a range of scales; the influence of climate across a range of scales.

Sustainability – the capacity of the environment to continue to support our lives and the lives of other living creatures into the future, for example ways in which people, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, use and protect natural resources; differing views about environmental sustainability; sustainable management of waste.

### Geographical inquiry skills

Acquiring geographical information:

* develop geographical questions to investigate (ACHGS019, ACHGS026)
* collect and record relevant geographical data and information, for example, by observing, by interviewing, conducting surveys, or using maps, visual representations, the media or the internet (ACHGS020, ACHGS027)

Processing geographical information:

* represent data by constructing tables, graphs and maps (ACHGS021, ACHGS028)
* represent information by constructing large-scale maps that conform to cartographic conventions, using spatial technologies as appropriate (ACHGS022, ACHGS029)
* interpret geographical data to identify distributions and patterns and draw conclusions (ACHGS023, ACHGS030)
* present findings in a range of communication forms, for example, written, oral, digital, graphic, tabular and visual, and use geographical terminology (ACHGS024, ACHGS031)
* reflect on their learning to propose individual action in response to a contemporary geographical challenge and identify the expected effects of the proposal (ACHGS025, ACHGS032)

### Geographical tools

The following geographical tools have been integrated into the unit.

* Maps – large-scale maps, world map, globe, sketch maps, maps to identify location, direction, distance, map references, spatial distributions and patterns.
* Fieldwork – observing, measuring, collecting and recording data, conducting surveys or interviews, fieldwork instruments such as measuring devices, maps, photographs.