

# Australia

**Capital:** Canberra

**Official Language:** English

G'day, mate! And welcome to Australia—the “Land down under.” Located in the Southern Hemisphere between the Pacific and Indian Oceans, Australia even celebrates Christmas in the summertime (its seasons are opposite of those in the Northern Hemisphere), so Santa visits children from Australia on the beach! From the Great Barrier Reef to the Outback, from bandicoots to wallabies, Australia is a place like no other in the world.

Although Australians speak English, they also have their own special language. Here are a few examples of Aussie slang:

English	Australian English
Children	<i>Ankle biters</i>
Cheer for your team	<i>Barrack for</i>
Lots of money	<i>Big bickies</i>
Container for boiling water	<i>Billy</i>
Man	<i>Bloke</i>
Quarrel/fight	<i>Blue</i>
Swimsuit	<i>Cossie</i>
Genuine/true	<i>Fair dinkum</i>
Rumor/false news	<i>Furphy</i>
Sheep	<i>Jumbuck</i>
Prankster	<i>Larrikin</i>
Candies	<i>Lollies</i>
Buddy	<i>Mate</i>
Journey through the country	<i>On the wallaby</i>
Terrific	<i>Ripper</i>
Throw a tantrum	<i>Spit the dummy</i>
Nosy person	<i>Sticky beak</i>
Hard work	<i>Yakka</i>

For more information about Australia:

Embassy of Australia  
1601 Massachusetts Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20036

Phone: (202) 797-3000  
Fax: (202) 797-3168  
<http://www.austemb.org/>

## Australian Safari

One of the most interesting things about Australia is the abundance of unusual wildlife. Australia is home to the bandicoot, bilby, cockatoo, death adder, dingo, echidna, emu, frilled lizard, kangaroo, koala, kookaburra, platypus, Tasmanian devil, wallaby, wombat, and more! Divide the class into teams and have each team choose an animal from Australia. Allow the teams to use the library and the Internet to research their animals. Have each team draw a picture of their chosen animal and write a couple of sentences about it. Create an "Outback Corner" where the Australian animals can be posted. Help the children make binoculars by stapling two empty toilet tissue rolls together. Attach an 18" (46 cm) string to hang them around the neck and have the children decorate their binoculars as desired. Use the binoculars as you explore each animal on an "Outback Safari."

Extend the activity by creating an Australian Safari Mobile. Make a copy of the Australian Safari Mobile patterns (**pages 26–28**) for each child. Have the children color the shapes and cut them out along the solid black lines. Cut a 24" (61 cm) length of yarn for each child. Have the child tape the "Australian Safari" topper about 4" (10 cm) from the top of the string, then tape each animal picture to the string, leaving 2" (5 cm) between pictures. The box with information about each animal should be glued to the back side of the matching animal picture. Trim off the bottom of the string if necessary and hang the mobiles from the ceiling.

## Beach Heaven

Since Australia is surrounded by water, it has many beaches for swimming, sailing, playing in the sand, and enjoying the sunny weather. There are many festivals and celebrations that take place on the beach, and you can always find people in their cossies (swimsuits), cooking on the barbie (barbecue). One celebration is called the Seashore Carnival. Among other games, relays that demonstrate lifesaving skills are played between teams of lifeguards. Each team dresses up in matching uniforms. Two team members swim out into the ocean and pretend that they need help. A third member swims out to the people in the water and "rescues" them while other team members pull those in the water safely to shore with a life ring. The team that can do this most quickly is declared the winner.

Create your own lifesaving relay by tossing a small beach ball a short distance away. Mark a line with masking tape and tie a rope around a doughnut-shaped ring. Have the children stand on the line and try to toss the ring over the beach ball. Once the beach ball has been successfully caught, pull the ball back to the starting line by gently reeling in the swim ring. Extend the activity to try "saving" other objects or balls of different size and composition.

While you are visiting the beach, you can try a little surfing, swimming, or dancing, build sand castles, look for treasures buried in the sand, and enjoy a picnic.

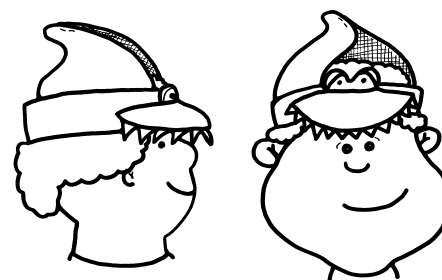
## Shark Attack!

With all that water, Australia is home to many sharks, too. Most beaches post signs warning of the dangers of sharks. These signs let beachcombers know where it is safe and not safe to swim.

Play a game of Shark Attack! with your class. Have all of the children line up on one side of the play area. Choose one or two children to be "sharks" and have them stand on the opposite side of the play area. Have these children wear shark hats (see instructions on page 23) to distinguish

themselves from the swimmers. Once the sharks turn their backs, the swimmers can all enter the "water" (play area) and begin swimming toward the sharks. The sharks then turn around, yell "Shark attack!" and chase the swimmers back across the starting line. Swimmers who are "bitten" (tagged) must swim to shore for first aid. Place a bandage (or tie a strip of cloth for a bandage) on the spot where the shark attack occurred. Once everyone has been caught, choose new sharks and begin again.

Use the Shark Hat pattern (**page 29**) to make shark hats for the children. Copy the pattern for each child onto heavy card stock. Draw a dorsal fin pattern (see illustration below) and make two copies for each child. Have each child cut a 2" x 14" (5 cm x 36 cm) strip of construction paper and color the shark fin and jaws as desired. Show the children how to bend the teeth down toward the underside of the jaws along the solid line that separates the teeth from the jaws. Then bend the eyes toward the jaws along the dotted line. Measure the construction paper strip to fit each child's head and staple the ends together to make a headband. Have each child glue the fins to either side of the headband and then glue or staple them together at the tip of the fin. The eyes should be glued to the front of the headband so that the jaw extends over the front of the forehead. Encourage the children to wear their shark hats while playing beach games or eating lunch.



### Opera House

While you are close to shore, enjoy the Opera House in Sydney. It was built to look like sailboats on the water. Bring in a picture of the Sydney Opera House and have the children offer suggestions for what they think it looks like.

Explain that operas—plays in which the words are sung rather than spoken—are performed in this famous building. Have the children put on an opera of a familiar story, such as "The Three Bears." Find costumes and props as necessary, and have the children act out the play by singing the lines rather than reciting them.

### Great Barrier Reef

Just off the northeast coastline of Australia lies the Great Barrier Reef, home to an unparalleled array of fish, coral, and other sea life. Create your own reef in the classroom by placing a large sheet of blue craft paper on the floor. Have the children use watercolor paints to depict the sea life that lives in and around a coral reef.

### Outback

The Outback is located in south central Australia. It is hot and dry and home to many of the creatures you learned about in the Australian Safari activity. Because it is so hot and dry, most of the animals prefer to be underground during the day and only come out after the sun is down. Even some of the people who live in the heart of the Outback live in underground homes. Many of the children who live in this region live too far away from school to attend. They get their lessons in the mail and then talk to their teachers via two-way radios.

- Have the children make up a dance to go with a story and have them dance, clap, and play their didgeridoos around the campfire.
- Extend the didgeridoo activity by creating a set of didgeridoos that are different lengths and widths. Ask the children to listen carefully and decide which instruments make the lowest and highest sounds. Experiment with one didgeridoo, cutting off the end 2" (5 cm) at a time to demonstrate how the pitch gets higher when the tube is shorter.

### Aboriginal Painting

Aboriginal paintings depict bold, natural colors as well as geometric figures and shapes. Although primitive in look, Aboriginal art is quite popular and is sold all over the world. Using paint and craft paper, have the children create their own Aboriginal artwork. (You may want to check out a book depicting the art form from the library or look to online sources for samples of the Aboriginal style of painting.) Frame each masterpiece and use to decorate the classroom.

### Sheep Station

Wool and mutton exports are a big part of the Australian economy, and there are many, many sheep stations (ranches) around the country. Just as the name is a little bit different, the cowboys in Australia also herd the sheep a little differently. To get around the large sheep stations, Australian sheep ranchers use motorbikes instead of horses.

Knowing how many head of sheep are in your herd is an important part of the job for a sheep rancher. Prepare a sheet of math sentences appropriate to the grade level of your class. Then give each child a herd of sheep in the form of a bag and a handful of cotton balls. The child's job is to move the sheep from the fields into the pen by following the instructions on the math page. For example, if problem #1 says  $2 + 4$ , the child should count out two cotton ball sheep and then four more. After adding them together, the child may write down the sum and move the sheep into the bag. The child continues counting sheep until they are all safely in the "pen."

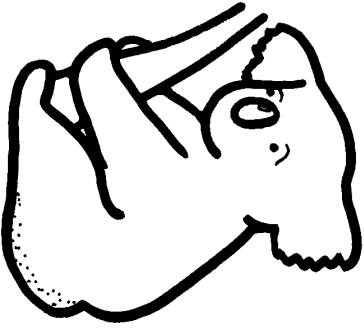
### Pavlova

Pavlova is a favorite Australian treat. Make the pavlova together as a class and then enjoy them for an afternoon snack.

2 egg whites  
 1/2 tsp. (2.5 mL) cream of tartar  
 2/3 c. (160 mL) sugar  
 1/2 tsp. (2.5 mL) vanilla

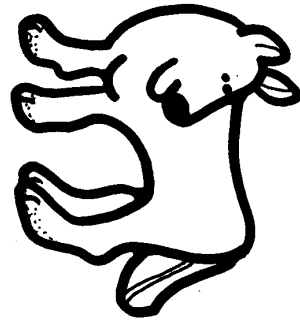
Let the egg whites stand at room temperature for 30 minutes. Add cream of tartar and beat until soft peaks form. Add sugar and vanilla gradually, beating on high speed until stiff peaks form and sugar is nearly dissolved. Spread the meringue into a circle on a parchment-lined or lightly greased baking sheet. Press down on the center to form a bowl in the meringue. Bake at 300°F for 35 minutes. Turn off the oven and let the shell dry with the door closed for one hour. Remove the shell from the baking sheet and fill it with fresh fruit and whipped cream.

## Australian Safari Mobile (2)



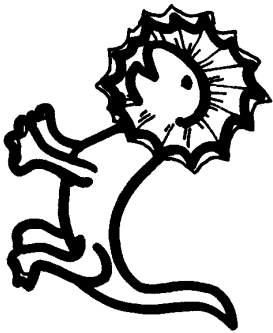
### Koala

A koala is a nocturnal animal that prefers solitude and eats eucalyptus leaves.



### Dingo

A dingo is a wild dog. It usually eats rodents. Dingoes do not bark, but howl instead.



### Frilled Lizard

When it is startled or threatened, the frilled lizard opens up the frill in its neck to make itself look bigger. It will also show its teeth and hiss when alarmed.



### Bandicoot

A bandicoot is a nocturnal marsupial. It has a long nose and hops on its hind legs. Bandicoots fight with their hind legs and only bite if they have to.

# Shark Hat

