

# Australia: Location, Area, Political & Physical Features

## DISCUSS

Why are the Eastern Highlands called the Great Dividing Range ?

### Answer:

The Eastern Highlands are also called the Great Dividing Range because the mountains form the main watershed of Australia. A number of Australia's principal rivers originate here. The Snowy River flows down the steep eastern slope while the Darling, Lachlan, and Murrumbidgee Rivers flow down the western slope and join the Murray River.

## THINK AND ANSWER

Why can't Australia's exotic flora and fauna be found anywhere else in the world ?

### Answer:

Australia is a natural wonderland of beautiful beaches, crystal blue waters, amazing ancient rock formations and pristine rain forests. Australia is the sixth largest country in the world and has the lowest population density per square kilometer. Australia has 16 world heritage listed properties with its historic townships, bustling cities, vivid landscapes and exotic flora and fauna all adding to its unique appeal. Most of Australia's exotic flora and fauna cannot be found anywhere else in the world and the lifestyle is one second to none.

## EXERCISES

### A. Fill in the blanks

Australia is located between latitudes  $10^{\circ}\text{S}$  and  $40^{\circ}\text{S}$  and , between longitudes  $114^{\circ}\text{E}$  and  $154^{\circ}\text{E}$ . So, this Island continent lies wholly in the Southern hemisphere. Australia is the sixth largest country in the world but is the smallest continent. The name Australia comes from the Latin word 'Australis' meaning Southern. The official name is the Commonwealth of Australia. Some other popular names are the 'Land of Migrants' and the 'Island Continent'.

### B. Choose the correct answer

1. The Great Dividing Range is so called because:

1. it divides Australia into two halves
2. it is very high

3. **it acts as a watershed between the rivers flowing to the east and those flowing westwards**
2. The Lake Eyre Basin is called an area of inland drainage because :
    1. the area keeps changing
    2. **the rivers flowing in this area have no outlet to the sea**
    3. it is a low-lying lake

### C. Answer the following questions in brief

#### Question 1.

Name the water bodies that surround Australia.

#### Answer:

Australia lies between the Indian Ocean in the west and the\_ South Pacific Ocean in the east.

#### Question 2.

Identify and name the important line of latitude that passes through the middle of Australia.

#### Answer:

The tropic of Capricorn or 23 $\frac{1}{2}$  °S latitude passes through the middle of Australia.

#### Question 3.

Why are the Eastern Highlands also called the Great Dividing Range?

#### Answer:

The Eastern Highlands are called the Great dividing range because the mountains here form the main watershed of Australia. A number of Australia's principal rivers originate here.

#### Question 4.

What is an 'aquifer'?

#### Answer:

A porous layer of rock capable of storing water and allowing its passage is called aquifer.

#### Question 5.

What is meant by 'inland drainage'? Give an example.

#### Answer:

Inland drainage is that drainage in which the rivers do not reach an ocean or sea and drain in a lake or an 'inland' sea, e.g. Lake Eyre.

**Question 6.**

Which breed of sheep is mainly reared in Australia ?

**Answer:**

The merino breed of sheep, which produces the best fleece for wool, is mainly reared in Australia.

**Question 7.**

Identify the four main sheep-rearing states of Australia.

**Answer:**

The main sheep-rearing states are New South Wales, Victoria, Western Australia, and South Australia.

**D. Answer the following questions in one or two paragraphs****Question 1.**

Mention two differences between the rivers that flow down the western and eastern slopes of the Great Dividing Range.

**Answer:**

The Great Dividing range in the east divides the flow of rivers in the region. The rivers that flow down the eastern slopes' are short and perennial and drain into Pacific Ocean. The rivers that flow down the western slopes are longer and flow to central lowlands and have inland drainage.

**Question 2.**

Explain an artesian basin and an artesian well.

**Answer:**

Artesian basin is a layer of porous or pervious rock lies between two layers of impervious rocks and acts as a reservoir. The rain water seeps underground and the rock becomes capable of holding water and allowing it to pass through it called aquifer. A well is bored into the aquifer through which water rises to the surface by natural pressure is called artesian well.

**Question 3.**

Why is most of the underground water not suitable for human consumption agriculture?

**Answer:**

Most of the underground water is not suitable for irrigation and human consumption as the water is salty and is present in the artesian basin of Australia.

**Question 4.**

How are corals formed?

**Answer:**

Corals are a hard substance composed of skeleton of tiny marine creatures called coral polyps. When corals die their hard skeletons remain fixed in place. Since these polyps

live in colonies, when they die their large accumulation of skeletons form coral reefs which are circular or ridge-like.

### Question 5.

Write three interesting points about the Great Barrier Reef.

#### Answer:

**Some Important points about the Great Barrier Reef are:**

1. The Great Barrier Reef is a 2,300 km long underwater ridge-like feature off the north-east coast of Australia at distance varying from 16 to 240 km from the coastline.
2. It is composed of millions and millions of shells of tiny marine creatures called coral polyps.
3. The Great Barrier Reef is Australia's biggest tourist attraction. The warm, shallow, salty sea between the reef and the shore is the home of tropical fish of bright colours, and crustaceans that abound in this underwater paradise.

### E. Map work

**On the outline map of Australia given here, neatly mark and label the following :**

1. the capital cities of the states
2. The narrow stretch of water that separates Tasmania from Australia
3. The longest perennial river of Australia
4. The ocean that lies west of Australia
5. A ridge-like feature made up of coral
6. write SHEEP FARMING in an appropriate place on the map where it is practised.

#### Answer:

<b>(i) State</b>	<b>Capital</b>
Western Australia	Perth
Northern Territory	Darwin
Queensland	Brisbane
New South Wales	Sydney
Victoria	Melbourne
South Australia	Adelaide
Australian Capital Territory	Canberra
Tasmania	Hobart

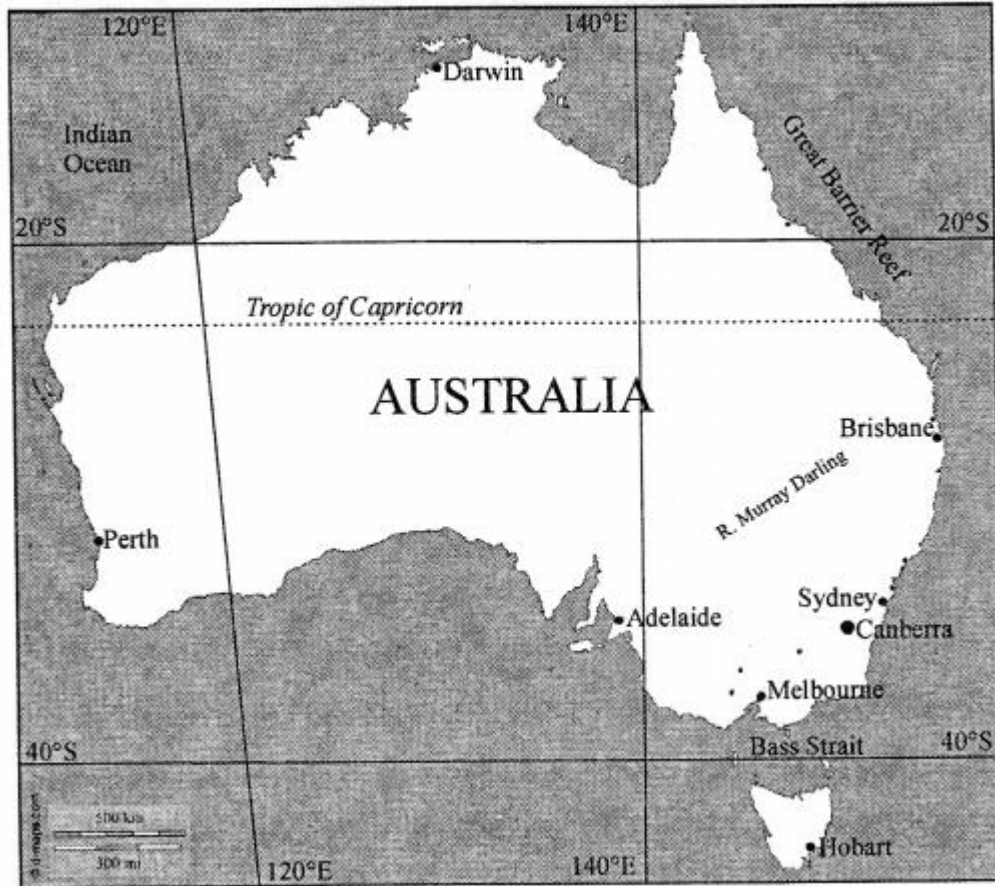
(ii) Bass Strait

(iii) River Murray Darling

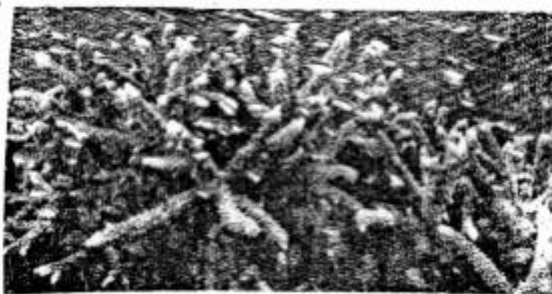
(iv) Indian Ocean

(v) Great Barrier Reef

(vi) Western Australia, Victoria



## F. Picture Study



This is a photograph of Australia's Great Barrier Reef. Why do you think this reef is Australia's biggest tourist attraction.

### Answer:

because its home for bright coloured tropical fishes and crustaceans that abound in this underwater paradise.

## LET'S DO SOMETHING

### Question 1.

On an outline map of Australia, mark the boundaries of South Wales-Victoria border different from the other borders ? Find out why.

#### Answer:

The boundaries of all the states except South-wales and Victoria border are same divided with a straight line.

The reason behind the border not being straight is that the majority of the border between Victoria and New South Wales is formed by the River Murray (Interestingly the river is actually in New South Wales entirely, instead of the border being right through the centre of the river). It doesn't form the border between South Australia and Vic/NSW or any of the other states as it either doesn't run through the states or, like in South Australia, cuts right through the initial territory designated for the free colony. As they didn't want to form another state they just kept SA as it was and had the river running through it.

But essentially, the border is formed by the Murray, which, as a river, naturally isn't a straight line.

### Question 2.

Collect information about the Great Barrier Reef from encyclopaedias or the Internet and write a diary describing all you have learnt about it in your scrapbook.

#### Answer:

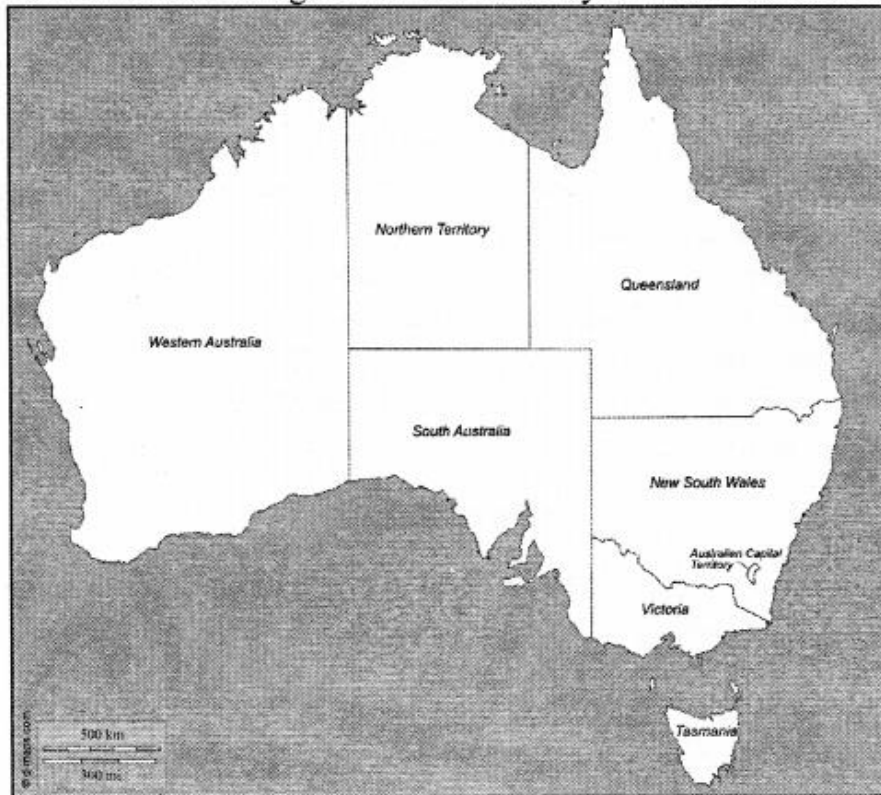
The Great Barrier Reef is one of the seven wonders of the natural world, and pulling away from it, and viewing it from a greater distance, you can understand why. It is larger than the Great Wall of China and the only living thing on earth visible from space.

#### Where Is The Great Barrier Reef ?

The marine park stretches over 3000km (1800 miles) almost parallel to the Queensland coast, from near the southern coastal town of Bundaberg, up past the northern tip of Cape York.

The reef, between 15 kilometres and 150 kilometres off shore and around 65 Km wide in some parts, is a gathering of brilliant, vivid coral providing divers with the most spectacular underwater experience imaginable.

A closer encounter with the Great Barrier Reefs impressive coral gardens reveals many astounding underwater attractions including the world's largest collection of corals (in fact, more than 400 different kinds of coral), coral sponges, molluscs, rays, dolphins, over 1500 species of tropical fish, more than 200 types of birds, around 20 types of reptiles including sea turtles and giant clams over 120 years old.



### **What Is The Great Barrier Reef ?**

The reef is a breeding area for humpback whales, migrating from the Antarctic and is also the habitat of a few endangered species including the Dugong (Sea Cow) and large Green Sea Turtle. In recognition of its significance, UNESCO listed the Great Barrier Reef as a World Heritage Site in 1981.

Because of its natural beauty, both below and above the water's surface, the reef has become one of the worlds most sought after tourist destinations.

In 2006 there were approximately 820 operators and 1500 vessels and aircraft permitted to operate in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park providing ease of access for all to experience the Great Barrier Reef and learn first hand about its natural delights and World Heritage values.

One of Australia's most remarkable natural gifts, the Great Barrier Reef is blessed with the breathtaking beauty of the world's largest coral reef. The reef contains an abundance of marine life and comprises of over 3000 individual reef systems and coral cays and literally hundreds of picturesque tropical islands with some of the worlds most beautiful sun-soaked, golden beaches. Because of its natural beauty, the Great Barrier Reef has become one of the worlds most sought after tourist destinations. A visitor to the Great Barrier Reef can enjoy many experiences including snorkelling, scuba diving, aircraft or helicopter tours, bare boats (self-sail), glass-bottomed boat viewing, semi-submersibles and educational trips, cruise ship tours, whale watching and swimming with dolphins.

### **A Natural Wonder :**

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