EUROPEAN EXPLORATION and COLONIZATION of AUSTRALIA

CAPTAIN JAMES COOK

Europeans first arrived in Australia during the 1600s. The Dutch were the first to arrive, but they did not establish a colony.

In 1770, an English explorer, Captain James Cook, arrived in Australia. He claimed the territory for Great Britain. His stories about Australia fascinated Europeans. Many of them traveled to Australia to see the new land.

Some Europeans went to Australia to hunt whales, seals, and other sea life. Others came to trade with the Aborigines. Most of these early European visitors stayed only temporarily. They traded with the native populations, but did not try to take their land. They tended to have peaceful relations with the Aborigines.

GUNS, ALCOHOL, and DISEASE

Europeans traded many things in Australia. Sometimes they brought advanced European weapons. Advanced weapons made wars between Aboriginal peoples deadlier than ever before.

Europeans introduced another dangerous product to Australia: alcohol. Alcohol became very popular among the Aborigines. Many abused the new product. Fighting increased. The traditional Aboriginal family structure weakened. Hundreds of years after the first Europeans arrived, alcohol abuse is still high among the Aborigines.

Europeans also brought diseases. The Aborigines lived in isolation in Australia. They had never experienced illnesses like smallpox, measles, or the flu. Their bodies had no natural defenses to protect them from these diseases. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, European diseases killed thousands of Aborigines.

THE PRISON COLONY

In the late 1700s, a new group of Europeans arrived. Unlike previous white traders and explorers, these people came to stay. In 1788, Britain sent one thousand people to settle in Australia. Most of these settlers were prisoners. As cities in Great Britain grew, so did crime. Great Britain decided to use Australia as a prison colony. Prisoners performed hard labor until they finished their sentences. They raised crops, built roads, and built buildings. Eventually, more than one hundred fifty thousand British prisoners lived in Australia. Many of them
remained in Australia after their release. Some built farms. Others settled in the various towns growing up along the Australian coast.

COLONIAL CONFLICT

Australia’s usable land was limited. Colonists in Australia needed space to build prisons, farms, and towns. In most cases, they simply took the land they needed from the Aborigines.

Hostility between white settlers and the Aborigines increased between 1840 and 1860. A number of violent battles occurred. Because of their advanced weapons, the British settlers usually won.

GOLD

For years, Europeans believed that large amounts of gold existed in Australia. Some people sold all of their possessions to travel to the continent in search of wealth. A gold rush began in the late 1850s that brought tens of thousands of foreigners to Australia and surrounding islands. Fighting over land increased between the Europeans and the native peoples.

The growth in population caused by the gold rush made Australia very wealthy. The Aborigines did not share in the prosperity. They lacked power and were victims of racial discrimination in their own land. Aborigines became poorer while white inhabitants grew rich.

AUSTRALIAN INDEPENDENCE

In 1931, Great Britain passed a law giving Australia the right to be an independent nation. Australia became an independent country in 1942 after it voted to accept the new law.
EUROPEAN COLONIZATION and EXPLORATION of AUSTRALIA GUIDED READING

Directions: Read the information about European Colonization and Exploration of Australia and answer the following questions USING COMPLETE SENTENCES.

CAPTAIN JAMES COOK

1. When did Europeans first arrive in Australia?
   Example of a complete sentence: The Europeans first arrived in Australia during the 1600s.
2. Who were the first Europeans to arrive in Australia, even though they did not establish a colony?
3. Which English explorer arrived in Australia in 1770?
4. Who did Captain James Cook claim the territory for in 1770?
5. What fascinated Europeans about Australia and what did many of them do?
6. What are FOUR reasons some Europeans went to Australia?
7. How did the British first treat the Aborigines?

GUNS, ALCOHOL, and DISEASE

8. How did advanced weapons the Europeans brought to Australia impact the Aborigines?
9. How did alcohol the Europeans brought to Australia impact the Aborigines?
10. How is alcohol still a problem today for the Aborigines?
11. Why did diseases affect the Aborigines?
12. What are three diseases the Europeans introduced to the Aborigines of Australia?

THE PRISON COLONY

13. Who were the first Europeans that came to Australia to stay in the late 1700s?
14. How many people were sent to Australia to settle the continent?
15. What problem in Great Britain led to the use of Australia as a prison colony?
16. What four types of hard labor did prisoners do until they finished their sentence?
17. How many total British prisoners lived in Australia?
18. Once the prisoners were released what did many of them do that kept them in Australia?
**COLONIAL CONFLICT**

19. Why did colonists in Australia need space?
20. How did colonists in Australia get the land they needed? Who did the affect?
21. What happened from 1840 and 1860 between the white settlers and the Aborigines?
22. How were the British settlers able to defeat the Aborigines?

**GOLD**

23. What led to further fighting between the Europeans and native peoples (Aborigines)?
24. What did the gold rush do to the population of Australia and what did it do for Australia, in terms of money/wealth?
25. What were some effects on the Aborigines as a result of the Australian gold rush?

**AUSTRALIAN INDEPENDENCE**

26. How many years did it take Australia to become an independent nation after Great Britain passed a law giving Australia the right to be an independent nation?

**SHORT ANSWER**

Read your answers to your questions and answer the following in 3-5 sentences: How were the indigenous Australians (Aborigines) affected by European exploration? Do you think the Aborigines are living better because the British colonized Australia? Give evidence of your answer.