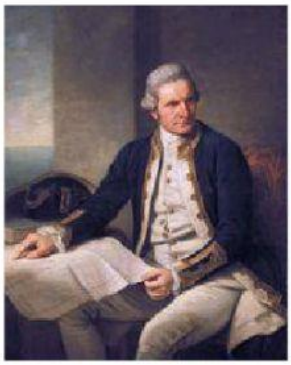
Brief Overview of the History of Australia



Australia was first inhabited perhaps 40,000 years ago by aboriginal peoples. During the Age of Exploration, the land was discovered and mapped by many Europeans including the Spanish, Dutch and English. However, Australia wasn't really explored until 1770 when Captain James Cook explored the east coast and claimed it for Great Britain. He named it New South Wales. Mountains in Australia. The first colony was established at Sydney by Captain Arthur Phillip on January 26, 1788. It was initially considered a penal colony. This was because many of the first settlers were criminals. Britain would sometimes send their criminals to the penal colony rather than jail.



Oftentimes, the crimes that people committed were small or even made up to get rid of unwanted citizens. Slowly, more and more of the settlers were not convicts. Sometimes you will still hear people refer to Australia as being started by a penal colony. Six colonies were formed in Australia: New South Wales, 1788; Tasmania, 1825; Western Australia, 1829; South Australia, 1836; Victoria, 1851; and Queensland, 1859. These same colonies later became the states of the Australian Commonwealth.

Write questions to go with these answers based on the text

1. _____

Aboriginal peoples.

2. _____

The Spanish, Dutch and English.

3. _____

In 1770.

4. _____

New South Wales.

5. _____

At Sydney.

6. _____

Because many of the first settlers were criminals.

7 _____

To get rid of unwanted citizens.

8. _____

New South Wales, Tasmania, Western Australia, South Australia, Victoria, and Queensland.

9. _____

The states of the Australian Commonwealth.