

Module: Australia and the Pacific Islands
Topic Content: Australia and the Pacific Islands

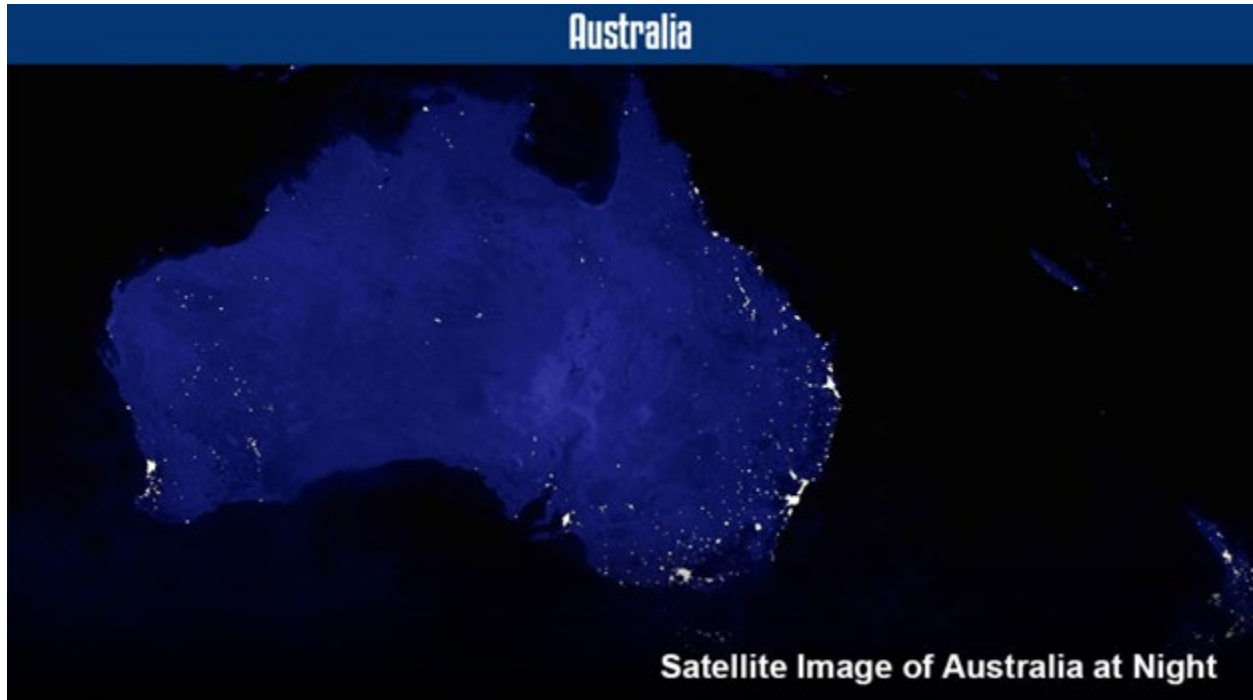
Australia and the Pacific Islands



Click next to begin.

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Australia



Australia is the largest country in Oceania and the sixth largest country in the world. It is located east of the Indian Ocean and west of the Pacific Ocean. The country spans the entire Australian continent and several nearby islands. The largest of these islands is Tasmania, which is located off the southwestern coast.

Australia has a land area that is slightly smaller than the contiguous United States; however, it has a population of around 23 million people. That is comparable to the population of a large urban area. Most Australians live in cities near the coast. The interior of the continent is sparsely populated.

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Major Cities in Australia



Click each point to learn more.

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Sydney

Click each point on the map to learn more

Sydney



- Located at a harbor site on the eastern coast
- Most populous city in Australia and Oceania
- Established by the British in 1788
- State capital of New South Wales
- Multicultural city with a diverse population
- One-third of residents were born outside of Australia

Close

Sydney is located at a natural harbor site on the eastern coast of Australia. It is the most populous city in Australia and the most populous city in Oceania. Sydney was established by the British in 1788. Today, it serves as a major center for culture and trade in the region. It is also the state capital of New South Wales. Sydney is a multicultural city with an incredibly diverse population. More than one-third of the city's residents were born outside of Australia. English is the official language; however, more than 250 languages are spoken by the city's population.

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Canberra

Click each point on the map to learn more

Canberra

National capital of Australia

Part of the Australian Capital Territory (ACT)

ACT is a federal territory that is not a part of any state

Founded in 1913

Contains national monuments and government buildings

The Parliament House is located in Canberra

Close

Canberra is the national capital of Australia. The city is located in the southeastern part of the country. Canberra is part of the Australian Capital Territory, or ACT. The Australian Capital Territory is a federal territory that is not a part of any state. This is similar to Washington, D.C. in the United States. Canberra was founded in 1913 to serve as the capital. The city contains several national monuments and government buildings. For example, The Parliament House is located in Canberra. This building is the meeting place of Australia's legislative body.

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Melbourne

Continue

Melbourne



Located on the southeastern coast of Australia

Second most populous city in Australia

State capital of Victoria

Established in 1835

Important center for trade and finance

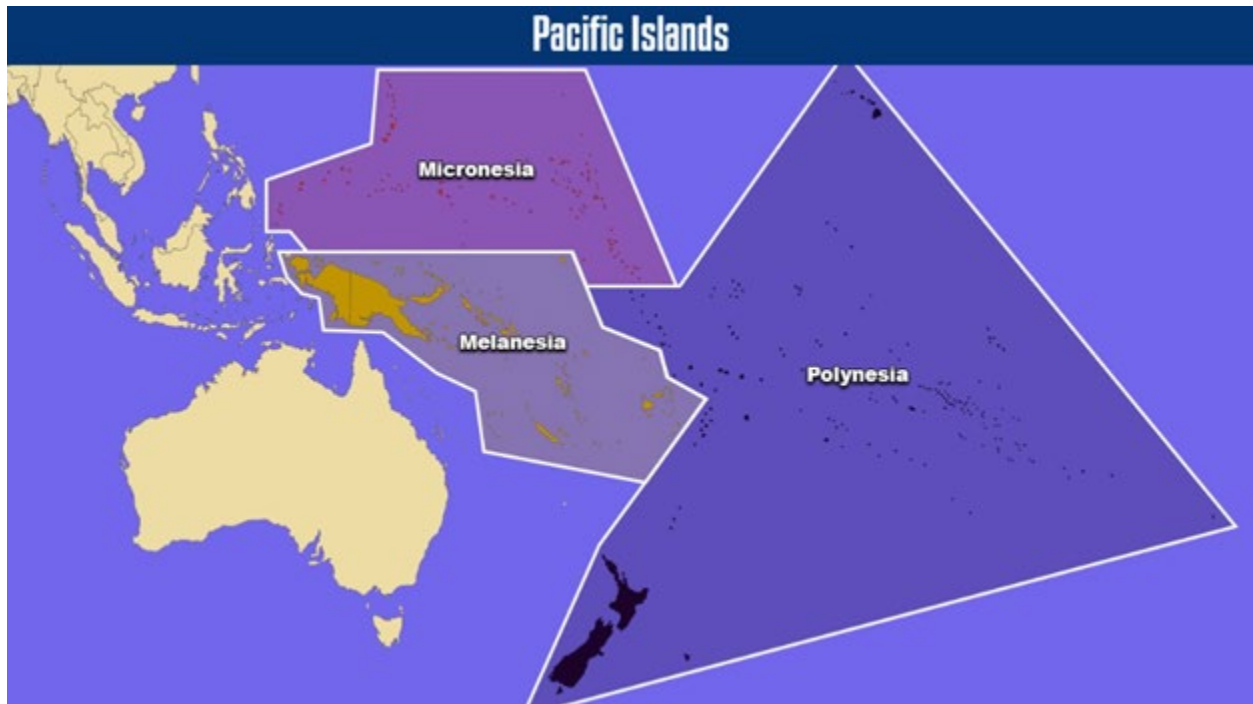
Port of Melbourne is the country's busiest seaport

Close

Melbourne is located on the southeastern coast of Australia. It is the second most populous city in Australia. It is also the state capital of Victoria. Melbourne was established in 1835. During the 1850s, the city experienced a gold rush, which led to rapid growth. The modern city of Melbourne is an important center for trade and finance. The Port of Melbourne is the country's busiest seaport.

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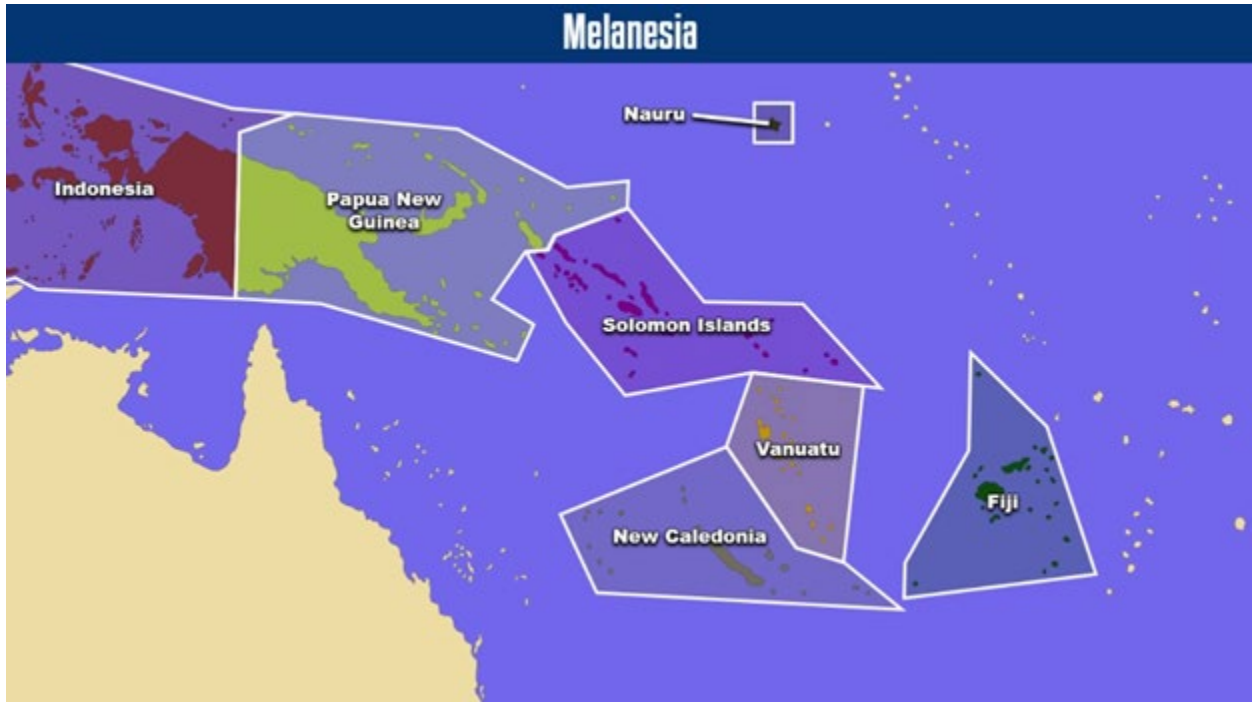
Pacific Islands



There are approximately 25,000 islands located in the Pacific Ocean. Most of the Pacific Islands are sparsely populated. The islands can be grouped into three sub-regions: Melanesia, Micronesia, and Polynesia. The people of Micronesia and Polynesia have similar cultures. The people of Melanesia share more similarities with the Aboriginal people of Australia.

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Melanesia



Melanesia is located northeast of Australia and south of the equator. It includes Papua New Guinea, Nauru, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, New Caledonia, and Fiji. It also includes part of Indonesia, on the western half of New Guinea.

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Papua New Guinea



Papua New Guinea is a part of Melanesia. The country spans the eastern half of the island of New Guinea and several smaller nearby islands. The western half of the island is part of Indonesia. Papua New Guinea gained independence from Australia in 1975. The country is culturally and linguistically diverse. There are more than 800 indigenous languages spoken amongst the population. Many people in Papua New Guinea have a traditional way of life. They live in small tribes in remote areas and practice subsistence agriculture. Less than 20% of the population lives in urban areas.

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Micronesia



Micronesia is located east of the Philippines and north of the equator. It includes the Federated States of Micronesia, Palau, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, Marshall Islands, Wake Island, and part of Kiribati.

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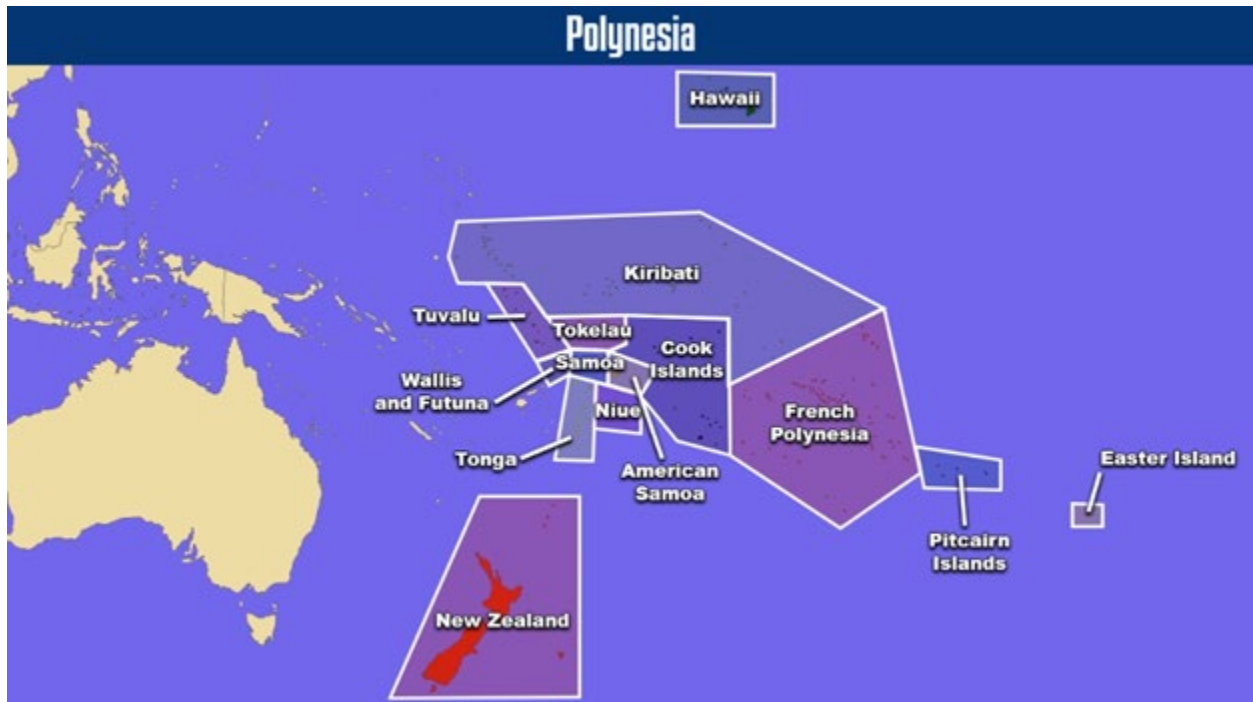
Palau



Palau is a part of Micronesia. This island nation spans roughly 340 small islands in the Pacific Ocean. Palau was administered by the United States after World War II. The country gained full independence in 1993; however, the United States continues to provide defense and social services. Palau has a small population of around 21,000. The country's main industries are subsistence agriculture, fishing, and tourism.

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Polynesia



Polynesia is located east of Melanesia and Micronesia, in the Central Pacific Ocean. It includes New Zealand, Tonga, Wallis and Futuna, Tuvalu, Samoa, American Samoa, Tokelau, Niue, Cook Islands, French Polynesia, Pitcairn Islands, Easter Island, part of Kiribati, and Hawaii.

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New Zealand



New Zealand is located southeast of Australia. It is the largest country in Polynesia; however, some geographers also classify New Zealand as part of Australasia. The country spans two large islands, called the North Island and the South Island. There are also many smaller offshore islands. Auckland is the most populous city in New Zealand. It is located on the northern part of the North Island. Wellington is the national capital of New Zealand. It is located on the southern part of the North Island.

The Maori people were the first to settle in New Zealand. They migrated from eastern Polynesia around 700 years ago. The British colonized New Zealand during the nineteenth century. It became an independent dominion of the British Empire in 1907. Today, Europeans make up around 70% of the population. The Maori make up around 15%. English and Maori are both official languages.

New Zealand is a developed country with a high standard of living. Agricultural industries, like farming and ranching, make up a large part of the economy. Manufacturing, financial services, and tourism are also important industries.