Unit 6

Australia, New Zealand, Oceania, and Antarctica

Southeast Asians settled the Pacific tens of thousands of years ago. The vast distances between island groups allowed distinct cultures to develop.
Australia, New Zealand, Oceania, and Antarctica

SECTION 1 History and Governments
SECTION 2 Economies and Cultures
SECTION 3 Antarctica
Section 1

History and Governments

The nations of this region were first settled by people from nearby and later colonized by European nations.
History of the Region

Early Settlers

- Inhabited region of Pacific, Indian oceans:
  - Australia, New Zealand, Oceania
- Maori are New Zealand’s first settlers
People of the Region

Migrations

• First people came to Australia from Southeast Asia 40,000 years ago
  - descendants are Aborigines
• Settlers arrive in Oceania about 33,000 years ago
• Pacific’s three regional groups: Melanesia, Micronesia, Polynesia
• Southeast Asian migrations expand in that order
  - Polynesians settle New Zealand (Maori)
Island Life

• People settle on islands with fresh water, wildlife, vegetation
• Most fish or farm, trade with other islands
• Cultures develop due to vast distances, distinct languages
Europeans in the Pacific

• Seek spices in 1500s; settlers, missionaries arrive in 1600s, 1700s
• Bring smallpox and other diseases, killing many natives
• Some Europeans enslave islanders
• Britain, France, Germany, Spain, U.S., Japan establish colonies
• Many islands have gained independence since 1962
  - but France still governs New Caledonia;
  U.S. controls Guam

Continued...
Europeans in Australia and New Zealand

- Britain sends colonists, convicts to Australia; six colonies by 1859
- New Zealand settled by whalers, traders from Britain, U.S., France
  - Maori sign 1840 Treaty of Waitangi—Britain controls New Zealand
- Australia becomes self-governing in 1901; New Zealand in 1907

Impact of European Settlement

- Aborigines forced into Australia’s interior, make up 1% of population today
- Maori make up 14% of New Zealand’s population today
Governments

Australia and New Zealand
• Both are part of **Commonwealth of Nations**—former British colonies
  - share heritage, laws, government, monarch as symbolic head of state

Oceania
• Some islands still have ties to Western countries
  - U.S. responsible for defense of Federated States of Micronesia
  - French Polynesians vote in French elections
• Other islands rule themselves, e.g. Tonga’s constitutional monarchy
Section 2

Economies and Cultures

There is great diversity among the economies and cultures of the nations of the Pacific.
Resources and Economies

Oceania’s Economies
• People fish, grow own food, build own homes
• **Copra**—dried coconut meat, coconut oil are important exports
• Tourism helps economies, as in Tahiti

Continued...
Australia’s Economies
• Strong market economy, mostly free trade with other nations
• Service industries provide three-fourths of jobs
• Mining is important: bauxite, lead, zinc
• Farmers produce wheat, sugar cane for export

Trade
• Australia trades with Japan, U.S.
• New Zealand trades mostly with Australia
Cultures and Change

Oceania

- Modernization changes transportation
  - canoes have motors, ships and planes travel between islands
- Strong traditions in arts, families
- **Matrilineal societies** trace ancestry through mother’s side of family
  - still found in places like Papua New Guinea
- **Patrilineal societies**—ancestry traced through father’s side

Continued...
Australia and New Zealand

- Australia’s religions include Islam, Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism
  - today’s immigrants come from Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam
- Over half a million New Zealanders are Maori
  - most of rest are of Scottish, English, Irish, Welsh descent
  - many Asians live in Wellington (capital), Auckland (largest city)
Antarctica is an ice-covered continent where scientific research is the main activity.
The Continent of Antarctica

Many Extremes
• Last continent to be explored
• Earth’s coldest, iciest, windiest, driest continent
• Has no permanent population
• Southernmost region on Earth
• Fifth largest continent—over five million square miles
Land and Climate

Land Regions
- Thick layer of ice, snow (icecap) covers 98% of Antarctica
  - holds 70% of Earth’s fresh water
- Transantarctic Mountains under icecap divide East, West Antarctica
- High plateau covers center of East Antarctica, includes South Pole
- West Antarctica is mostly below sea level; mountainous islands
  - includes Antarctic Peninsula

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Climate

- Cold, dry polar desert; winter lasts from May through August
  - temperatures fall as low as 100 degrees F below zero
- Inland areas are colder, drier; receive no rain, little snow

The Southern Ocean

- Atlantic, Indian, Pacific Oceans meet
- About 60% of coastline is glaciers, ice shelves
  - ice shelf—ice sheet floating on water but connected to land
History of Exploration

From Whalers to Explorers to Scientists

• Norwegian whalers land by 1890s; exploration begins in early 1900s
• British explorers include Robert Falcon Scott, Ernest Shackleton
  - “heroic age”—explorers brave harsh conditions, sacrifice lives
• Richard Byrd flies over South Pole in 1929
• By 1950s, 12 nations have more than 50 research stations in region
Resources

Wildlife and Minerals
• Small variety of plants, animals: lichens, mosses, insects
• Southern Ocean has whales, krill, birds, penguins, seals
• Deposits of coal, iron, other minerals are too costly to mine

The Antarctic Treaty
• Some nations claim parts of continent, but claims are not recognized
• 1959 Antarctic Treaty reserves region for shared scientific research
The Scientific Community

Research
• Up to 20,000 scientists, staff, tourists visit region in summer
• Research wildlife, glaciers, stars

Global Warming
• Theory that temperatures are rising due to burning of fossil fuels
• Scientists study climate; icecap records past temperature changes
• Temperatures in region have risen 4.5 degrees F in last 50 years
• Warming caused Rhode Island-sized ice shelf to collapse in 2002