Features of Australia 

Focus area – places are similar and different

The Australian continent

Climate of places

Similarities and differences between places

Perception and protection of places

Key inquiry questions

* How and why are places similar and different?
* How can people use places and environments more sustainably?
* How do people’s perceptions about places influence their views about the protection of places?

Content focus

Students:

* explore the different climates, settlement patterns and demographic characteristics of places
* explore the climate, natural vegetation and native animals of places in Australia
* use this information to imagine what it would be like to live in different places
* consider how people’s perceptions of places are the basis for actions to protect places and environments

Outcomes

A student:

* examines features and characteristics of places and environments **GE2‑1**
* describes the ways people, places and environments interact **GE2‑2**
* examines differing perceptions about the management of places and environments **GE2‑3**
* acquires and communicates geographical information using geographical tools for inquiry **GE2‑4**

Outcomes and other syllabus material referenced in this document are from:

* [Geography K-10 Syllabus](http://syllabus.nesa.nsw.edu.au/hsie/geography-k10/) © NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) for and on behalf of the Crown in right of the State of New South Wales, 2015

Overview

The geographical inquiry process will investigate the geographical characteristics of Australia. Students will compare the climate, settlement patterns and lives of the people of three Australian places, including their own ‘home town’. Through investigation of a geographical issue, students will examine the interconnections between people’s perceptions and the protection of a significant cultural site.

This learning is shaped by two inquiries, which vary in length.

Note – teachers may need to adjust and scaffold learning activities as appropriate. Teachers can choose whether the inquiry is undertaken by individuals, pairs or groups, or as a whole class.

Assessment

Many of the activities require students to demonstrate their learning. These activities can be used to assess student learning at various stages throughout the inquiry process.

Inquiry 1

Student-centred cultural study of three Australian places

Students compile and publish a mini-atlas that showcases geographical characteristics of Australia and provides profiles of three populated Australian places. This could be hand-compiled, digital or multimodal.

Note – the geographical inquiry process will need to be modelled and guided by the teacher.

The Australian continent

Students:

* investigate Australia’s major natural and human features for example:  (ACHGK014, ACHGK015)
* description of natural features of Australia eg deserts, rivers, mountains
* location of Australia’s states, territories and major cities
* identification of Countries/Places of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples 

Similarities and differences between places

Students:

* investigate the settlement patterns and demographic characteristics of places and the lives of the people who live there, for example:  (ACHGK019)
	+ examination of the varying settlement patterns and demographics of places 
	+ comparison of the daily life of people from different places   

Acquiring geographical information

Question:

* What is Australia’s location in the world and region?
* Where are Australia’s states, territories and major cities located?
* How are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People’s Countries and Places identified?
* What are some of the unique natural features of Australia? (Eg significant landforms, flora and fauna, World Heritage places.)
* What are the similarities and differences in the geographical characteristics of my town/city and two other Australian places? (Including landscapes, climate, demographics, daily lives.)
* What can Australians do to protect our unique environments and features?

Acquire data and information

Identify the geographical tools required to support student learning, for example:

* Locate Australia on a globe and world map. Identify the state and territory boundaries and major cities.
* Locate major heritage and cultural sites on a map of Australia, eg Uluru, Great Barrier Reef, Arnhem Land.
* Reference large-scale maps and Google satellite images that show the landscapes and landforms of Australia, eg deserts, rivers, lakes, mountain ranges.
* Reference maps and information that identify Aboriginal language groups.
* Students investigate three populated places in Australia: their own city/town/place and two other places. It is suggested that places be chosen that show the diversity of Australia, eg an Australian capital city, a regional centre and a sparsely populated place.
	+ Use BOM’s [Climate Data Online](http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/data/) to obtain the annual average temperatureand rainfall data for each place.
	+ Research and record the demographic and population data and settlement patterns for each place.
	+ Examine daily life and culture, such as schooling, making a living, recreation, and special events. Use photographs, illustrations, diagrams, storybooks**,** andmultimedia including apps.
	+ Use tourism websites to identify and describe cultural and heritage sites in the places.
	+ Interview friends and family who have lived in or visited the places to obtain information on daily life.
	+ Fieldwork—visit and record the features of the students’ home town or city.
	+ Identify examples of environmental sustainability practices in each place.

Processing geographical information

Students use geographical tools to represent, organise and analyse the data and information, for example:

* Locate Australia on a world map. Label Australia and other major countries or continents.
* On an outline map of Australia plot and label the states and territories, major cities, major landforms and major cultural and heritage sites.
* Consult with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples to explain representations of the identification of Countries and Places.
* Annotate photographs to describe the indigenous plants and animals. Organise and compile images into a narrated slideshow.
* Match images of major landforms and heritage sites to places on a map or satellite image of Australia. Describe these features.
* For each of the three Australian places being investigated:
	+ Locate the places on a map of Australia.
	+ Annotate photograph collages or narrated slideshows using photographs and video clips of features and heritage sites of the place. Use information from interviews and research to inform the annotations.
	+ Construct climate graphs that show rainfall (precipitation) as a column graph and temperature overlaid as a line graph. Interpret the data.
	+ Construct a comparison table, a column per place, comparing climate data, population statistics, demographic data, settlement patterns and daily life.
	+ Infer the impacts of climate, physical features and the environment on lifestyles. Construct cause and effect charts to illustrate examples.
	+ Interpret the comparison table to draw conclusions about similarities and differences in getting around, clothing worn, transport and the personal sense of belonging.

Communicating geographical information

Communicate –

Support students to develop a mini-atlas that is either digital, multimodal or hand-compiled.

The mini-atlas should include:

* Australia’s position on a world map.
* Maps that locate and describe features of Australia, constructed according to cartographic conventions (BOLTS).
* Annotated photographs, videos or slideshows to describe significant landforms, indigenous vegetation and animals, and major cultural sites in Australia.
* A profile page of each of the three Australian places investigated which compiles and explains the processed data and information.
* Explanations of similarities and differences between features, data and daily life, including an explanation about the way the environment affects lifestyle.

Create a class virtual tour, using Google Tour Builder, of the places investigated by the students. Students provide a summary for each place from their profile pages.

As a class, undertake the virtual tour, each student acting as ‘tour guide’ for the places they investigated.

Respond

Describe one sustainability action that enhances quality of life for people and the environment in one of the Australian places investigated.

Select sustainability practices to implement at school and at home.

Inquiry 2

Perception and protection of a heritage site

Case study – Uluru

Students investigate how the protection of the Uluru (or alternative Australian cultural or heritage) is influenced by peoples’ perceptions of it.

Perception and protection of places

Students:

* investigate how the protection of places is influenced by people’s perception of places, for example:  (ACHGK018) 
	+ description of how and why people perceive places differently  
	+ discussion of how people’s perceptions influence the protection of places in Australia eg sacred sites, national parks, world heritage sites   

Acquiring geographical information

Question—how can Uluru be protected from the impacts of tourism visitation?

* What is Uluru and where is it located?
* Why is Uluru on the World Heritage List?
* Who visits Uluru and why do they visit?
* What are different people’s perceptions of Uluru?
* How are the impacts of tourism to Uluru managed?
* How do peoples’ perceptions influence the protection of Uluru?

Acquire data and information

* Recall cultural sites included in the students’ profiles of Australian places presentations. Identify those listed on the World Heritage List and explain the purpose of the list.
* Recall the location of Uluru and undertake a virtual tour using Google Street View imagery.
* Reference the World Heritage List to view photographs, read descriptions of the site and the significant factors that led to its World Heritage listing.
* Access information about the site, its past and present significance, different peoples’ perceptions of it and ways it is cared for and protected.

Processing geographical information

* Represent the information collected in a tableor concept map.
* Construct flow charts to explain the interconnections between significance, perceptions, visitation, impacts and strategies that help protect it.

Communicating geographical information

Communicate

Students create a persuasive text suggesting appropriate tourist behaviours when visiting Uluru. This should clearly explain interconnections between perceptions and protection of the site.

Respond

Students create a text from the point of view of a person who advocates for the site’s protection. This could be an artwork**,** poemornarrative.

| Geographical concepts | Geographical inquiry skills | Geographical tools |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Place –** the significance of places and what they are like eg natural and human features and characteristics of different places and their similarities and differences; how people’s perceptions about places influence their responses and actions to protect them.**Space –** the significance of location and spatial distribution, and ways people organise and manage spaces that we live in eg settlement patterns within Australia, neighbouring countries and other countries.**Environment –** the significance of the environment in human life, and the important interrelationships between humans and the environment eg how climate and environment influence settlement patterns; interconnections between people and environments; differing ways people can use environments sustainably.**Interconnection –** no object of geographical study can be viewed in isolation eg interconnections between people, places and environments; influence of people’s values on the management and protection of places and environments and the custodial responsibilities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.**Scale –** the way that geographical phenomena and problems can be examined at different spatial levels eg types of settlement across a range of scales; the influence of climate across a range of scales.**Sustainability –** the capacity of the environment to continue to support our lives and the lives of other living creatures into the future eg ways in which people, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, use and protect natural resources; differing views about environmental sustainability; sustainable management of waste. | Acquiring geographical information* develop geographical questions to investigate  (ACHGS019, ACHGS026)
* collect and record relevant geographical data and information, for example, by observing, by interviewing, conducting surveys, or using maps, visual representations, the media or the internet  (ACHGS020, ACHGS027)

Processing geographical information* represent data by constructing tables, graphs and maps  (ACHGS021, ACHGS028)
* represent information by constructing large-scale maps that conform to cartographic conventions, using spatial technologies as appropriate  (ACHGS022, ACHGS029)
* interpret geographical data to identify distributions and patterns and draw conclusions  (ACHGS023, ACHGS030)

Communicating geographical information* present findings in a range of communication forms, for example, written, oral, digital, graphic, tabular and visual, and use geographical terminology  (ACHGS024, ACHGS031)
* reflect on their learning to propose individual action in response to a contemporary geographical challenge and identify the expected effects of the proposal  (ACHGS025, ACHGS032)
 | Maps –Maps* large-scale maps, world map, globe, sketch maps
* maps to identify location, direction, distance, map references, spatial distributions and patterns

Fieldwork **–** Fieldwork* observing, measuring, collecting and recording data, conducting surveys or interviews
* fieldwork instruments such as measuring devices, maps, photographs

Graphs and statistics **–** Graphs and statistics* tally charts, pictographs, data tables, column graphs, simple statistics

Spatial technologies **–** Spatial technologies* virtual maps, satellite images, global positioning systems (GPS)

Visual representations –Visual representations* photographs, illustrations, diagrams, story books, multimedia, web tools
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