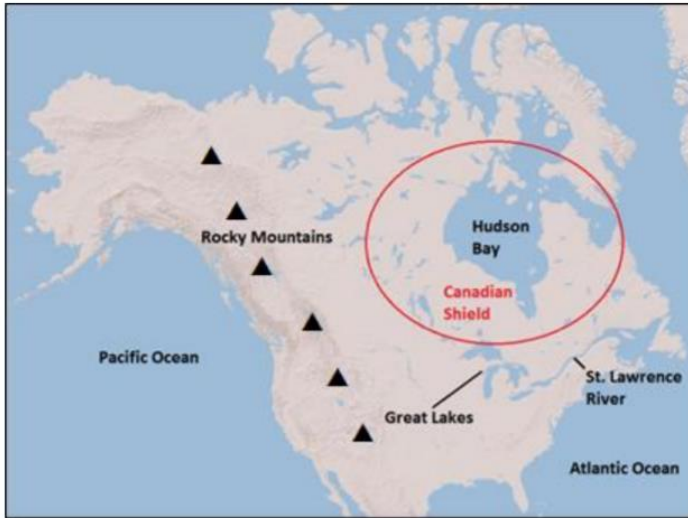


Geography of Canada Australia Teacher Notes

CANADA PHYSICAL AND POLITICAL FEATURES

VOCABULARY PREVIEW:

- province – a political division, similar to a state



The **Pacific Ocean** is located off Canada’s western coast, and the Atlantic is located off its eastern coast.

The landscape of western Canada is dominated by the **Rocky Mountains**. This mountain system extends for over 3,000 miles from the southwestern United States as far north as Alaska.

Canada’s largest internal body of water is **Hudson Bay**, located in the northeast of the country. The land area around Hudson Bay is known as the **Canadian Shield**. This mineral-rich region extends across most of eastern Canada.

South of Hudson Bay, at the U.S. border, are the five **Great Lakes**: Lake Huron, Lake Ontario, Lake Michigan, Lake Erie, and Lake Superior. (These lakes can be remembered with

the acronym HOMES.) The Great Lakes account for 21% of Earth’s surface freshwater. Connecting the Great Lakes to the Gulf of St. Lawrence and the Atlantic Ocean is the **St. Lawrence River** in eastern Canada.



Canada is the northernmost country located in North America. It is bordered to the south (and northwest, if one counts Alaska) by the United States. While the overwhelmingly majority of Canadians are English speakers, **Quebec**, located in eastern Canada, is French speaking. The cultural identity of this **province** can be traced back to the colonial period.

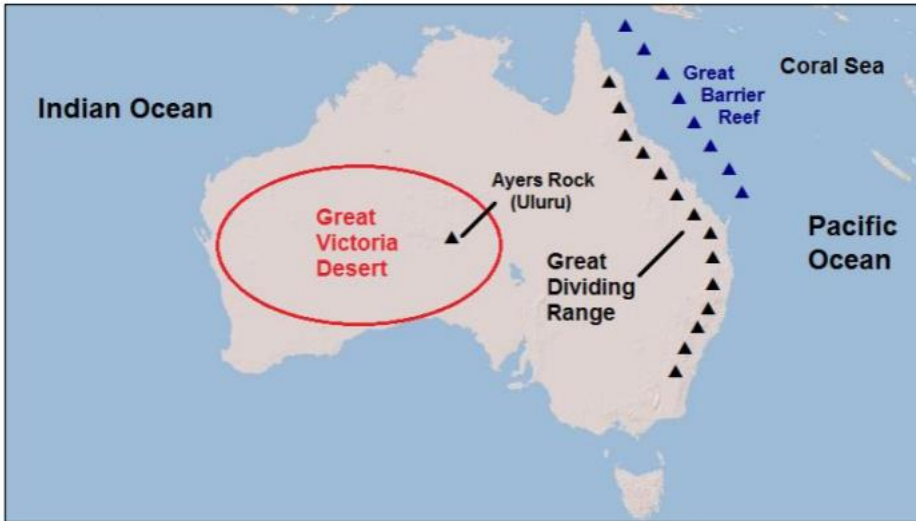
<u>Provinces & Territories Map Key:</u>	
<u>Provinces:</u>	<u>Territories:</u>
AB – Alberta	NT - Northwest
BC – British Columbia	NU - Nunavut
MB – Manitoba	YT - Yukon
NB – New Brunswick	
NL – Newfoundland & Labrador	
NS – Nova Scotia	
ON – Ontario	
PE – Prince Edward Island	
QC – Quebec	
SK - Saskatchewan	

AUSTRALIA PHYSICAL AND POLITICAL FEATURES

VOCABULARY PREVIEW:

Oceania – the lands of the central and south Pacific Ocean, including Australia and New Zealand

Australia, the world’s smallest continent, is located southeast of the Asian mainland in a region known as **Oceania**. It is situated between the **Indian Ocean** (west) and the **Pacific Ocean** (east.)

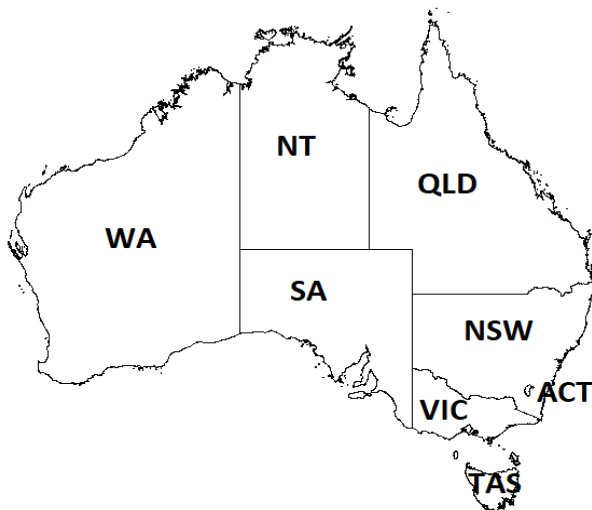


The **Coral Sea**, an extension of the Pacific Ocean, lies off Australia’s northeast coast. It is home to the **Great Barrier Reef**, which is Earth’s largest coral reef. Extending for some 1,200 miles, the Great Barrier Reef is home to thousands of species of fish and mollusks (e.g., snails, clams, octopi), as well as over 400 types of coral!

The **Great Dividing Range**, located along the eastern coast of Australia, is the continent’s largest mountain range. At over 2,100 miles, it is the third longest mountain range in the world.

Dominating the landscape of western and central Australia is the **Great Victoria Desert**. Named for the British monarch Queen Victoria in 1875, it covers more than 160,000 square miles of terrain, which is to say nearly 4.5% of the continent!

Nestled in the eastern extent of the Great Victoria Desert, in central Australia, is **Ayers Rock** – or **Uluru** (oo-loo-ROO) as it is called by the Australian Aborigines. This six-mile-wide, nearly twelve-story rock formation is composed of sandstone and feldspar. Iron present in Ayers Rock causes it to rust at the surface and turn a reddish color. Uluru plays a prominent role in local Aboriginal creation myths.



Provinces & Territories Map Key:	
<u>Provinces:</u>	<u>Territories:</u>
NSW – New South Wales	ACT – Australian Capital Territory
VIC – Victoria	NT – Northern Territory
QLD – Queensland	
SA – South Australia	
WA – Western Australia	
TAS - Tasmania	

CANADA – LOCATION, CLIMATE, NATURAL RESOURCES & POPULATION

VOCABULARY PREVIEW:

- hydroelectricity – electrical power produced from the movement of water
- precipitation – scientific term for rainfall, snow, or hail

Canada is located in the northern extent of the North American continent. At over 3.8 million square miles, it is the largest country in North America, and the second largest country in the world after Russia.

The climate in Canada varies tremendously. The nation's Pacific coast is mostly temperate with substantial **precipitation**. Southeastern Canada, along the Atlantic coast, has a humid continental climate. Central Canada's climate is not moderated by ocean currents, and as such tends to experience cool summers and long, cold winters. The northern extent of the country ranges from subarctic to arctic temperatures.



Most of Canada's population is concentrated in the south of the country, within 100 miles of the U.S. border. This population distribution is partly the result of Canada's hard northern climate extremes, but also because of U.S.-Canadian economic cooperation along their shared 3,000-mile border. The population is especially dense in the Great Lakes / St. Lawrence region of southeastern Canada where manufacturing jobs and commercial shipping routes are most heavily concentrated.

In terms of natural resources, Canada has an abundance of mineral wealth: iron ore, nickel, zinc, copper, gold, lead, diamonds, and silver. Canada's central prairie provinces grow cereal grains, particularly wheat. Canada also boasts a large timber industry and is a major producer of hydroelectricity.

AUSTRALIA – LOCATION, CLIMATE, NATURAL RESOURCES & POPULATION

VOCABULARY PREVIEW:

- arid – dry or desert-like
- climate – the average annual weather conditions in a given location
- Outback – term for the sparsely populated interior of the Australian continent
- temperate – climate characterized by mild temperatures
- urban – an industrialized area of a city or town

Situated some 2,000 miles southeast of the Asian mainland, Australia is located in the southern and eastern hemispheres. As such, summer occurs between December and March in Australia, while winter is from June to September.



Southeast and southwest Australia tend to have a **temperate climate**, while northern Australia, nearest the equator, is tropical. Australia's largely **arid** interior – known colloquially as the **Outback** – is only sparsely populated and receives very little rainfall.

Most Australians live in the coastal areas of the continent, particularly in the southwest, east, and southeast. Around 80% of all Australians live in **urban** areas.

Australia has abundant land suitable for farming and livestock grazing. It also possesses large quantities of coal, iron ore, gold, copper, tin, silver, uranium, and nickel, as well as oil and natural gas. Trade in both agricultural and mineral resources has made Australia one of the top fifteen richest nations in the world! Australia's top trading partners are China, Japan, and the United States.

CANADA – ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

VOCABULARY PREVIEW:

- acid rain – toxic rain which results when noxious gases are released into the atmosphere and mix with water molecules
- clear-cutting – cutting down and completely removing all trees in a given area

The Great Lakes / St. Lawrence region of southeastern Canada is the site of most of the nation's industrial factories, commercial shipping, hydroelectric and coal-burning power plants, etc. While business is booming in this area, so, too, unfortunately is pollution.

Vehicle exhaust and the smoke released from burning coal has created an ecological phenomenon known as acid rain. **Acid rain** results when noxious gases – such as carbon dioxide, sulfur dioxide, and nitrogen oxide – combine with water molecules in clouds. When these clouds burst, the rain released is toxic. Acid rain pollutes freshwater sources, poisons fisheries, kills forests, and even degrades architecture.

It should be noted, however, that Canadian industries in this region are not solely (or even mostly) to blame. Some 50-75% of the pollution which causes acid rain is actually coming from vehicles and factories on the U.S. side of the border. The Canadian government has passed laws calling for stronger regulation of factory and vehicle exhaust emissions. It has also encouraged its citizens to use mass transit. U.S.-Canadian cooperation will be required to fully eliminate this ecological threat though.



Canada's mining industry is concentrated in the Canadian Shield region which surrounds Hudson Bay. This area contains large deposits of gold, silver, copper, zinc, lead, iron ore, uranium, and nickel. Although the mining industry is very lucrative, the processes used to extract Canada's mineral wealth (i.e., blasting and digging) often result in environmental degradation, particularly in the areas around the mines themselves.

Sulfur dioxide released from mining equipment reduces the air quality, and chemical runoff from mining processes often contaminates water supplies. The Canadian government has passed legislation to limit the amount of mining-related pollution allowed in its waterways, namely in an effort to protect fisheries and seafood safety.

Canada's timber industry is also important to the nation's economy. Canada's forests are a source of lumber, plywood, and wood pulp. Like mining, however, there is an environmental downside to the timber industry. The destruction of natural habitats caused by **clear-cutting** is critical. Additionally, the heavy machinery used for logging frequently compacts the soil of the forest floor such that new growth is hindered. The Canadian government has done quite a bit in recent years to limit the damage associated with deforestation. As a result, Canada's deforestation rate is currently the lowest in the world.

