

Australia

1. Position and size

Australia, even including the island of New Guinea, New Zealand and Tasmania, and a very large number of islands, which lie scattered over the face of the Pacific Ocean, is far the smallest of the continents. With its 3.000000 square miles Australia proper –i.e. the island continent including Tasmania – compares in size with the United States or Canada. In position, we may note that the tropic of Capricorn cuts the continent of Australia almost in half, so that the northern half lies in the tropics and the southern half in the South Temperate Zone.

The latitude of 40° S. passes through Bass Strait between Australia and Tasmania. And passes through the north island, of New Zealand just north of wellington.

Longitude 135° E. Almost cuts Australia into two halves. Notice the remoteness of Australia and New Zealand from the principal countries of the world. That helps to explain why they remained so long unknown and

2. Physical features

We will deal first with Australia itself, leaving new Zealand and new guinea for separate description later.

Australia falls naturally into three physical divisions :

- a) A great western plateau , mostly between 600 and 1500 feet above sea – level.
- b) A central lowland, or succession of low – lying basins, some of which are areas of inland drainage and part actually below sea – level.
- c) The eastern mountains, these mountains are not mountains, but are really formed by edge of a plateau, which slopes gradually from east to west.

The whole range is often called the “Great Dividing Range ”but different parts have different names- Blue Mountains in new south Wales , Australian Alps in Victoria . The gentle slope to the west is the great grassland region, of which the darling downs of Queensland are part. There is only a very narrow plain between the mountainous edge of the plateau and sea, but it forms a rich and important region.

There is only one important river system in Australia that is the marry –darling. Notice how the streams rise from the dividing range and flow westwards down the gentle plateau slope.

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المرحلة الاولى/ قسم الجغرافية/ مادة استراليا

عنوان المحاضرة/ Position and size