The Panama Canal

For centuries, to travel by sea from the eastern coast of North America to its western coast, seafarers had to sail around the entire length of South America, a trip that took months to complete. However, people were aware that in parts of Central America—at what is today Panama—the two oceans were tantalizingly close. They knew that a route connecting the two oceans would save thousands of miles of travel, an important consideration for transporting materials for trade, among other reasons.

The Spanish made the first proposal to link the oceans through Panama in 1524. At that time, the Spanish transported the gold and silver they took from their South American colonies to Panama City, which lies on the Pacific Ocean side of Panama. Then they used mules to carry the metals to the Atlantic side. The gold and silver were then loaded on to ships bound for Spain. The king of Spain ordered a survey for a route through Panama. He wanted to make the trip from Spain to Peru easier, not only to shorten the trip for the gold and silver, but also to give the Spanish a military advantage over the Portuguese. The king abandoned the plans when the Spanish governor in Panama sent an unfavorable report regarding the proposed canal. The route was not shown to be possible until a Spanish expedition of the area from 1788 to 1793. However, construction never began.

Then as travel and trade in the Western Hemisphere increased, many countries became interested once again in Panama as a possible way to shorten the trip. In 1881, a French company made an attempt to build a canal through Panama to connect the two oceans. It began by cutting a path from coast to coast, often through dense jungle. Then it began digging, which continued for several years. However, the company never finished building the canal. It abandoned the effort in 1888 as a result of several factors, including flooding and rockslides, disease and death of workers, lack of money, and inexperienced engineers. In 1894, a second French company took over the equipment and maintenance of the uncompleted work and it sought a buyer for these assets.
In 1902 under President Theodore Roosevelt, the United States agreed to buy the rights to the canal property and equipment from the French. At the time, Panama was part of Colombia, so the United States needed permission from Colombia to build the canal across the Panama isthmus. Colombia turned down the proposal. When angry Panamanian businessmen rose up in revolution, the United States backed them. They put pressure on Colombia and got a treaty letting them build the canal. In 1903, as a result of the treaty, Panama was declared a republic.

United States construction on the canal began in 1904, and the canal officially opened to world commerce in 1914. The Americans attempted to address the problems that the French had faced, two of which were malaria and yellow fever. New advances in medicine had shown that these diseases are transmitted by mosquitoes. With that knowledge, the United States was able to follow procedures that made building the canal much safer. However, workers still faced unexpected rockslides that dramatically increased the amount of material to be excavated. The total cost of building the canal is an estimated $375 million. Some 25,000 lives may have been lost, mostly during the French era.

Today, the canal is widely regarded as a modern wonder of technology. It is about 50 miles (80 kilometers) long. It takes about nine hours to make the journey through the canal. As many as 15,000 ships make the journey through the canal each year.

**Applying Geography to History**

**Directions:** Read the information about the Panama Canal and examine the map. Then answer the questions below.

1. **Explaining** What is the Panama Canal?

   ________________________________

   ________________________________

   ________________________________

   ________________________________

   ________________________________
2. Determining Central Ideas  Why is the Panama Canal important?

3. Stating  Why did the Spanish propose the canal in the 1500s?

4. Recognizing Relationships  Suppose that Panama decided not to allow the United States use of the Panama Canal. What do you think might happen to the price of some consumer products in the United States? Why?

Mapping Activity  Use the scale on the map. Use a sheet of paper, line the map, corner of paper at mark the distance. Next measure the distance. Then use the scale in miles.

1. Calculate the distance from Puerto Rico to the northern coast of Chile when sailing around South America.

2. Calculate the distance from Puerto Rico to the northern coast of Chile when sailing through the Panama Canal.

3. Subtract the two to find the distance sailors saved by using the Panama Canal.
Directions: Study the map below that shows the world’s continents. Different countries in each continent are shaded differently. Then complete the following sentences.

1. The continent that is directly east of South America is ______________________.
2. The southernmost continent is ______________________.
3. The ocean that meets the eastern coast of North America is ______________________.
4. The ocean that circles Antarctica is ______________________.
5. Australia is both a country and a ______________________.
6. The continent that contains the most countries is ______________________.

* Continents and Oceans are written in all UPPERCASE.
Bantu Migration

The word Bantu is often used to describe 500 related African languages and the 85 million speakers of those languages. How did so many related languages spring up across Africa? Historians think the languages can be traced to a group of people who lived in West Africa thousands of years ago. The early Bantu were most likely farmers, in contrast to the hunters and gatherers in many parts of Africa at that time. Farming societies tend to have food surpluses, which lead to increases in population. Increases in population lead to the need for more land. The Bantu began to move in search of new land around 1000 B.C.

Heading South

The Bantu migration may have been more of a steady trickle than a mass movement. Farmers most likely moved on to new lands when soils were exhausted or space was limited. The Bantu displaced people already living on the lands. They did not meet heavy resistance because in addition to agriculture, the Bantu knew how to work iron—they had bigger and better weapons than their foes. The Bantu migrated in different routes. One route extended south along the western coast of Africa. A second route headed east across Africa before turning south. By A.D. 300, most Africans south of the Sahara Desert spoke Bantu.

Cultural Changes

The Bantu displaced many people, but their arrival had its benefits. They brought three major innovations to the areas they settled: language; ironworking; and the cultivation of bananas, taro, and yams. Historians are unsure when and where these innovations originated. For example, most early people who independently discovered how to work iron first worked bronze. There is no evidence that the Bantu ever worked bronze, so they most likely learned ironworking from some other group. Regardless of the origins of the innovations, the Bantu profoundly affected the culture of Africa.
Applying Geography to History

Directions: Read the information about the Bantu migration. Then answer the questions below.

1. Describing What does the word Bantu describe?

2. Comparing Compare the two migration routes of the Bantu. One route extended
The second route headed

3. Determining Cause and Effect Why did the Bantu meet little resistance during their migrations?

4. Assessing Which Bantu innovation do you think had the most lasting impact on Africa? Explain your answer. Why?
Lesson 1: Physical Geography

ESSENTIAL QUESTION
How does geography influence the way people live?

Terms to Know
- Outback: the most rural and isolated parts of Australia's Central Lowlands
- Monolith: a single standing stone
- Aboriginal people: first humans to live in Australia
- Coral reef: a giant community of marine animals called corals
- Hot spring: pool of naturally occurring hot water
- Geyser: spouts of hot water that shoot from the ground
- Drought: long period of little or no rain
- Marsupial: mammal that raises its young in a pouch on the mother's body
- Eucalyptus: native Australian evergreen tree with stiff, pleasant-smelling leaves

Where in the World: Australia and New Zealand

Mark #3 on this map.
Australia and New Zealand

Lesson 1: Physical Geography, continued

The Land of Australia and New Zealand

Guiding Question: What physical features make Australia and New Zealand unique?

Australia is the world's smallest continent. It is divided into three regions. The Western Plateau makes up the western half of Australia. It has rocky land with few water sources. Near the center are the interior highlands.

The Central Lowlands are a rough, dry region. Although rivers run through the area, it is mostly desert. The most rural and isolated parts of the Central Lowlands are called the Outback. In the Outback, strong winds cause harsh dust storms to blow across desert plains. Water is difficult to find.

In the Central Lowlands stands a massive, solid stone called a monolith. Many Australians call it Ayers Rock. The Aboriginal people, the first humans to live in Australia, call it Uluru. Uluru is sacred to many Aboriginal people. The Eastern Highlands, called the Great Dividing Range, run parallel to Australia's east coast. They are filled with mountains and valleys.

Just off Australia's northeastern shore is one of the most complex ecosystems on Earth—the Great Barrier Reef. It teems with marine life. This living coral reef is a giant community of marine animals called corals. It is made up of nearly 3,000 smaller coral reefs formed over millions of years, as shown below.

Just south of Australia's southeastern coast is the island of Tasmania. It is covered with mountains, valleys, plateaus, and cool, temperate rain forests. Some of the world's wildest, unexplored rain forests grow in Tasmania.

Few large rivers flow across the dry land of Australia. The largest permanent rivers flow from the eastern mountains. Most people get their water from underground aquifers.

Located in the southeastern Pacific Ocean, New Zealand is made up of two main islands, North Island and South Island, plus many small islands. Many of North Island's landforms were created by volcanic activity. A huge volcanic plateau makes up the center of the island.
Lake Taupo, New Zealand's largest lake, is in a massive crater formed by a volcanic eruption millions of years ago. The lake is surrounded by fertile plains and valleys. Northeast of Lake Taupo is an area famous for hot springs, mud pools, and geysers. Hot springs are pools of hot water that occur naturally. Geysers are huge spouts of hot water that shoot out of the ground. The water in hot springs and geysers is warmed by heat energy from deep within Earth.

New Zealand's South Island is famous for its Southern Alps. These towering mountains cover hundreds of miles along the western side of the island. The southern end of South Island is filled with a variety of landforms, including many fjords. These are deep glacier valleys filled with ocean water. New Zealand is located in the Ring of Fire. This is a region where active volcanoes and the frequent movement of tectonic plates often result in earthquakes.

**Climates of the Region**

**Guiding Question** What types of climates and climate zones are found in Australia and New Zealand?

The climate in Australia changes dramatically from one part of the country to another. The northern third of Australia has a warm, tropical climate. Winters are dry while summers are rainy and hot. Seasonal monsoons can bring heavy winds and rainfall.

The other two-thirds of Australia have a subtropical climate. Winters in Queensland, the Northern Territory, and Western Australia are warm and dry. Most rainfall occurs during spring and summer. Coastal areas tend to be sunny and dry with seasonal rains.

Much of central and western Australia has a desert climate with bands of semiarid steppes to the north, east, and south. Because Australia is the driest inhabited continent in the world, drought is a major problem. A drought is a long period of little or no rain. Droughts can threaten the survival of wildlife, livestock, and farm crops. In addition, low water reserves can lead to poor-quality drinking water for humans. Geographers can predict some droughts by monitoring climate changes caused by changes in global winds and ocean currents.

New Zealand's climate ranges from subtropical in the south to subtropical in the north. Most areas on North Island and South Island have mild, temperate climates and both islands receive plenty of rain.
Australia and New Zealand

Lesson 1: Physical Geography, continued

If you do not have color, mark light and dark pencil lines. (#9)

Plant and Animal Life

Guiding Question What plants and animals are unique to Australia and New Zealand?

Millions of years ago, the landmasses that became Australia and New Zealand separated from other lands. The animal and plant life developed in isolation from living things on other landmasses. Over millions of years, they adapted to live in their own unique environments. Many of New Zealand's animals, trees, ferns, and flowering plants are not found on other continents.

Australia's kangaroos, koalas, and bandicoots are marsupials. This is a type of mammal that raises its young in a pouch on the mother's body. Marsupials range in size from tiny kangaroo mice to 6-foot-tall kangaroos. Koalas have adapted to eat only one type of plant—the leaves of the eucalyptus tree. Eucalyptus are Australian evergreen trees with stiff, pleasant-smelling leaves. The leaves contain water, which can be difficult to find in drier regions. The table below lists some of New Zealand's unique animals.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Animal</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lizard</td>
<td>geckos</td>
<td>common</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reptile</td>
<td>chevron skink</td>
<td>rare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flightless birds</td>
<td>kiwi</td>
<td>common</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>moa</td>
<td>extinct</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reading Progress Check

10. Explain why animals and plants native to Australia and New Zealand are different from living things in other parts of the world.

Writing

Check for Understanding

1. Narrative Write a paragraph explaining what you would be interested in seeing on a trip to Australia or New Zealand. Be sure to include interesting landscapes, ecosystems, climates, and other features.

2. Informative/Explanatory List three features that make Australia unique and three that make New Zealand unique.
Australia and New Zealand
Lesson 2: History of the Region, continued

First People

Guiding Question How and when did the first humans settle in Australia and New Zealand?

Fossil evidence shows that humans began migrating to Australia at least 50,000 years ago. These Aboriginal people were hunter-gatherers. They gathered fruit, roots, and other plant parts for food. They also hunted animals. They developed a flat, bent, wooden weapon called a boomerang. Hunters threw this to stun their prey.

Some hunter-gathers were nomadic and did not practice farming. They owned a type of animal called a dingo. Dingoes are a species of domestic dog brought to Australia about 4,000 years ago. (Today, wild dingoes roam free in the Outback and other parts of Australia.) Other Aboriginal people settled permanently in one location. Eventually they began farming.

Aboriginal people living in different parts of Australia developed their own languages, religions, traditions, and ways of life. Today they share some common beliefs and cultural traditions.

Aboriginal Beliefs and Traditions

- Are closely connected to the natural world
- Have traditional beliefs about the creation of Earth
- Music, song, dance, poetry, storytelling, and visual arts are important
- Dreaming, or the Dreamtime, explains the creation of the world

In New Zealand, the first humans were the Maori. Historians believe the Maori began traveling from Polynesian islands in canoes between A.D. 800 and 1300. They settled first on North Island, where they built villages and lived in tribal groups led by chiefs. The Maori fished, gathered plants, and hunted animals for food. Eventually, the Maori introduced the food crops of taro and yams.

The Maori have a spiritual belief system based on the concept that all life in the universe is connected. At the heart is tikanga. Tikanga are Maori customs and traditions passed down through generations. Tikanga includes kapahaka, a traditional art form combining music, dance, singing, and facial expressions.

One of the most important parts of any culture is language. The Maori language almost died out after the British colonized the country, but it saw a rebirth in the 1970s and 1980s. Today it is an official language of New Zealand. Facial tattooing has long been a unique part of Maori culture. Each tattoo was unique and showed the person’s status, profession, and relationships. Other Maori art forms include weaving, painting, and wood carving.
Colonial Times

Guiding Question  What happened when Europeans came to Australia and New Zealand?

During the 1600s, 1700s, and 1800s, Dutch, Spanish, French, and Portuguese explorers visited Oceania. Perhaps the most important was the British Captain James Cook. He explored the area in the 1760s and 1770s. After his voyages, the British government decided to send settlers to the wild lands of Australia. In 1788, a group of British ships brought convicted criminals from the British Isles. This was the first shipment of about 160,000 convicts sent to Australia during the next 80 years.

Beginning in the late 1700s, a settlement formed in Sydney, which grew into a busy center of trade and industry. By 1851, gold was discovered, and people from all over the world flocked to Australia. When coal, tin, and copper were discovered, workers came for mining jobs.

Over time, small towns grew into cities. Farmers planted crops and ranchers brought sheep and cattle from overseas. Vast ranches called stations covered millions of acres in the Outback and other areas.

As humans from other parts of the world moved to Australia, they brought along animals with which they were familiar. These are called introduced species. These are animals not native to an area but brought from other places. Ranchers brought dogs for guarding and herding sheep. Landowners brought European rabbits for hunting. Cane toads were brought to help get rid of a beetle that was destroying the sugarcane crop. Sometimes these new animals had devastating effects on Australia’s environment.

British settlers often forced native Aboriginal people off their land. Also, European diseases reduced the Aboriginal population. Aboriginal survivors were forced to move to rugged lands that European settlers did not want.

In 1901, the six British colonies set up in Australia took action to unify as a federation. Together they formed the Commonwealth of Australia. This new country was a dominion, a largely self-governing country within the British Empire.
In New Zealand, British colonists and British, American, and French traders and whalers built settlements on North Island. At first relations between the Maori and foreign settlers were peaceful.

In 1840, the British government convinced Maori leaders to sign a treaty giving legal ownership and control of New Zealand to Great Britain. As Europeans continued to arrive, the Maori saw more of their land taken by foreign settlers. Conflict between the Maori and British reached a head in 1872 when many Maori were killed. Most of their land was lost to the British.

As in Australia, businesses, industries, farms, and sheep ranches were built across New Zealand. Sheep ranching changed the land. In addition, introduced species such as rabbits, goats, and rodents destroyed natural habitats.

Throughout the 1800s, New Zealand residents pushed for independence from Great Britain. In 1907, the British government named New Zealand an independent dominion with a British-style parliamentary democracy. Even before independence, New Zealand was the first country in the world to legally recognize women's right to vote.

Australia and New Zealand were pulled into World War I and II because of their ties to Great Britain. After the wars, Australia became completely independent. In 1951, Australia signed a mutual security treaty with New Zealand and the United States called the ANZUS Pact. This treaty was meant to guarantee protection and cooperation among the three countries in case of military threats in the Pacific region.