Australia, Oceania, and Antarctica Today
Chapter Objectives

- Describe the various economic activities in Australia and Oceania.
- Discuss the challenges to the region’s environment.
Living in Australia, Oceania and Antarctica

Section 1
Objectives

- Describe how people in Australia, New Zealand, and Oceania make their living.
- Discuss the role that trade plays in the economies of South Pacific countries.
- Identify the means of transportation and communications that are used in the region.
Terms to Know

- Station
- Grazier
- Copra
A Geographic View
Geographic Literacy

- Australia consists of six states and two territories: New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, Western Australia, South Australia, Tasmania, the Australian Capital Territory, and the Northern Territory. New South Wales, whose capital is Sydney, is home to about 6.3 million people, but fewer than 200,000 live in the Northern Territory.
Agriculture

- Agriculture is the South Pacific area’s chief economic activity.
- Australia is the world’s leading producer of wool.
- New Zealand produces dairy products, lamb, beef, and wool.
- Most of Australia is devoted to raising livestock.
- Ranches can be as large as the state of Connecticut.
- Irrigation and modern farming methods help Australians make maximum use of the country’s limited farmland (about 10 percent of the total land).
- Crops include wheat and sugarcane.
About half of New Zealand’s land is used for agriculture, including livestock; the country is home to 25 animals for every person.

Crops include wheat, barley, potatoes, and fruits.

Most farmers in Oceania are subsistence farmers.

Taro, cassava, and sweet potatoes are staple foods.

Pigs, chickens, and fish add to the standard diet.

On islands that have a high percentage of fertile soil, people grow tropical fruits, sugarcane, coffee, and coconuts for export.
Mining and Manufacturing

- Australia mines and exports diamonds, opals, gold, bauxite, and iron ore.
- There are few mineral resources elsewhere in the South Pacific region.
- New Zealand has a large aluminum smelting industry.
- Antarctica has rich, untapped mineral resources, but international agreements prohibit mining on the continent.
- Food processing is the major manufacturing industry in Australia and New Zealand.
- Small-scale manufacturing operations in Oceania produce textiles and crafts.
Service Industries

- Most people in Australia and New Zealand work in service industries. In most of Oceania, there are no service industries other than tourism.
- **Tourism** The expansion of air travel has encouraged tourists to come to the South Pacific region.
- **World War II in the Pacific** Several countries in Oceania are promoting their World War II battle sites as tourist attractions.
Service Industries
Global Trade Links

- Improved transportation and communication links have recently increased trade between the South Pacific region and other parts of the world.
- The region’s countries export agricultural products, minerals, timber, fish, spices, and handicrafts to many countries of the world.
- Until recently, Australia and New Zealand traded exclusively with the United Kingdom and the United States. Today they trade with Asian countries as well.
- Some South Pacific islands depend on foreign aid or outside investment because they have few natural resources.
Transportation and Communication

- **Land Travel**
  - Australia and New Zealand have well-developed, well-maintained highway and road systems.
  - Urban areas have subway systems.
  - In the barren interior of Australia, there are few roads.
  - In Oceania countries are just beginning to build or improve roads and bridges, hoping to boost economic growth.
  - Antarctica has no roads or rail systems because it has no permanent settlements.
Transportation and Communication

- **Air and Water Travel**
  - Because places in the South Pacific region are far apart, air and water travel are vitally important.
  - Ships and planes carry both cargo and passengers.
  - Many Pacific islanders use boats for personal travel.
  - Ferries link North and South Islands of New Zealand.
  - Almost every station in Australia’s outback owns a plane or helicopter.
Transportation and Communication

- **Communications**
  - Modern technology has increased communications within the region and has helped overcome geographical obstacles.
  - Some large stations in the Australian outback have their own post offices and telephone exchanges.
  - Cellular phones and the Internet are common in urban areas.
People and Their Environment

Section 2
Objectives

- Specify why Australia, Oceania, and Antarctica face many environmental challenges.
- Explain the effects that nuclear testing had on the region.
- Discuss why global warming and the thinning of the ozone layer are special challenges for the region.
Terms to Know

- marsupial
- introduced species
- food web
- ozone layer
- El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO)
- diatom
A Geographic View
Norfolk Island—in the Pacific Ocean about 930 miles (1,496 km) east of Australia—is an Australian dependency. From the late 1700s to the early 1800s, it was a British penal colony. In 1856, descendants of the HMS Bounty mutineers were relocated here. Many of the nearly 2,000 people that live on Norfolk Island today trace their ancestry to this group.
Managing Resources

- Australia’s Unusual Animals Australia’s physical isolation means that many of its animal species, such as kangaroos and koalas, are found nowhere else.
- Nonnative species introduced by people have no natural predators in Australia; they have multiplied and taken over native species’ habitats.
- Some species have become either extinct or endangered.
- Australians have established hunting and trapping programs, created wildlife reserves, and built fences in an effort to restore ecological balance.
Managing Resources
Managing Resources

- **Forest, Soil, and Water**
  - Soil conservation in the South Pacific region is closely linked to reducing deforestation.
  - Countries with valuable timber resources are replanting so that they can continue to export wood without damaging the environment.
  - In Australia’s Murray-Darling River Basin, the river’s flow has been reduced by growing urban and agricultural demands.
  - Island nations in Oceania often have limited freshwater resources.
  - Desalination may be a long-term solution.
  - The Great Barrier Reef and other South Pacific reefs are threatened by agricultural runoff, organic and toxic waste, divers, and boaters. As pollution destroys the tiny sea creatures that make up coral reefs, larger animals and plants that depend on them for food also die off.
Managing Resources
Managing Resources

• **The Nuclear Legacy**
  - During the late 1940s and early 1950s, the United States and other countries tested nuclear weapons in the region.
  - A nuclear test on Bikini Atoll exposed the population of a nearby atoll to massive doses of radiation.
  - Atolls affected by nuclear testing are still uninhabitable, but the environments may eventually recover.
  - During the 1990s, the United States contributed funds to help decontaminate atolls and provide for blast survivors and their offspring.
  - Antinuclear activism is a major force in regional politics.
  - In 1986 New Zealand banned nuclear-powered ships and those carrying nuclear weapons from entering its waters.
Atmosphere and Climate

- There is a hole measuring 9 million square miles (23 million sq km) in the ozone layer over Antarctica.
- In 1989 a similar hole was discovered over the Arctic region.
- This loss of protective ozone may be related to the global rise in skin cancer and cataracts and to global warming.
- The South Pacific region is highly vulnerable to variations in the El Niño weather pattern.
- El Niño-Southern Oscillation can cause droughts in Australia and cyclones in the South Pacific.
- If global warming melts the polar ice caps, many of Oceania’s islands will be submerged.
Section 1 - Summary

- Agricultural is the most important economic activity in the region, although mining is done in Australia and some island countries.
- Manufacturing in Australia and New Zealand centers on food processing while the rest of the region engages in small-scale production of clothing and crafts.
- The importance of service industries is increasing in the economies of the region.
- Transportation and communications technologies such as air travel, satellite communication, and the Internet, are helping people in the region to overcome geographic obstacles.
Section 2 – Summary

• Australia, Oceania, and Antarctica have many natural resources, but the region’s environment is threatened by human activity.

• Governments and individuals in the region are focusing on balanced management of water resources, forest, land, and wildlife.

• Nuclear testing conducted in Oceania during the 1940s and 1950s has had a lasting impact on people and the environment.

• Scientists are studying global warming and the thinning ozone layer to prevent potential risks.