

History Level 10

Chapter 2 — Investigation: Australia (1750–1914)

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Why Britain founded colonies in Australia

For the teacher — planning notes

This block is teacher-facing. It is not printed on student pages.

- **Chapter:** 2 — Investigation: Australia (1750–1914). **Section:** 2A.
 - **Owns:** VC2HH10K08 (Historical Knowledge and Understanding · Investigation: Australia (1750–1914)). Per TOC §2A the CD's First Nations framing is recorded as **ACCEPTED** and is not taught; the CD is taught neutrally, as the causes of British colonisation of Australia during the 1700s and early 1800s.
 - **Draws on (MCQ/coverage links, not teaching order):** VC2HH10K08.E02, VC2HH10K08.E03. .E01 is **excluded entire** per TOC §2A and is retained as a linkage key only: no secret instructions, no terra nullius, and no content derived from them appears anywhere in this section.
 - **Scope:** 1776–1836. Part 1 the penal crisis (the end of transportation to America, the hulks, the Bloody Code, prison overcrowding); Part 2 strategic rivalry with France (the La Perouse expedition, Van Diemen's Land 1803, the Albany garrison 1826, Swan River 1829); Part 3 economic motives and the Industrial Revolution (Matra's 1783 proposal, Norfolk Island flax and timber, population growth); Part 4 the types of colony established, their locations, and the primary and secondary evidence (E03); Part 5 ranking the causes and the historians' debate (E02).
 - **Boundaries (TOC §2A and chapter notes):** no Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander content anywhere in this section (Rule 1) — no frontier contact, no treaty questions, no Cook's secret instructions; Federation belongs to 2B; the experiences of convicts, colonists and migrants belong to 2C; turn-of-century life belongs to 2D; the social-laboratory interpretations belong to 2E; formal source skills (features, value, perspectives) belong to Chapters 7–8 — sources are read as evidence here and the sourcing habit is named, not taught in full. Nothing is assumed from Level 9 (D1): key terms are re-established at first use.
 - **Volume calibration (TOC §3):** one teaching sequence (Parts 1–5); two worked inquiries built from real, dated, checkable sources; six scaffolded practice tasks; four unscaffolded tasks; one source-based inquiry task built on a genuine primary source (Arthur Phillip's dispatch of 15 May 1788).
 - **Key subject terms (defined at first use):** colony, colonisation, convict, transportation, penal colony, hulk, garrison, free settlement, strategic interest, systematic colonisation, emigration fund, primary source, secondary source, cause. *Significance* is a contested term handled per **CONTESTED_TERMS.md** Rule 1: defined once, attribution given, both historian positions steelmanned, marking on reasoning not conclusion.
 - **Vocabulary note (D2):** student text sits at or below Year 10 on the vocabulary ladder and passes the gate (`src/_vocab_gate_2a.py`, built on the house vocabulary gate, ceiling rank 10). The single recorded exemption is *judicature* (quoted from the statute long title “Court of Criminal Judicature” in a cited primary source). The CD is cited by code, not quoted; the gate's **SUBJECT** and **PROPER** exempt classes were prepared but in the end not needed — every student-facing word sits at or below rank 10.
 - **Suggested sequence (about 5–6 hours):** (1) hook — “In 1776 Britain lost the place where it sent its prisoners. Twelve years later, eleven ships crossed half the world. Why?”; (2) Where and when + Figure 1; (3) Part 1, Figures 2–3; (4) Part 2, Figure 4; (5) Part 3, Figures 5–6; (6) Part 4, Figures 7–8; (7) Part 5, Figures 9–10; (8) worked inquiries 1–2; (9) practice tasks; (10) source-based inquiry.
 - **Sources:** every statistic and quotation carries a source line with a retrieval date (all web sources retrieved 25 August 2026; full list at the end of the section). Historians' readings are attributed to their published books with publication years. All figures are original diagrams made for this book from the values shown; none is reproduced from any publisher.
-

Where and when are we?

In the 1770s, Britain lost its American colonies in the American Revolution. Until then, British courts had sent thousands of convicts across the Atlantic every generation. When that route closed, the government spent more than a decade looking for somewhere else — and in 1786 it chose the coast of New South Wales. Two years later the First Fleet arrived, and between 1788 and 1836 a string of British colonies was established in Australia.

This section asks the historian's question about all of it: **what were the causes?**

Two words first. A **colony** is a place settled and ruled by another country, usually one far away. **Colonisation** is the process of establishing colonies. (You may have met these words before; they are used in exactly this sense here.) A **convict** is a person found guilty of a crime by a court. A **penal colony** is a colony established, in whole or in part, to hold convicts sent from the home country — *penal* comes from the Latin word for punishment.

By the end of this section you will be able to:

- explain the main causes of the establishment of the British colonies in Australia — the penal crisis, strategic rivalry with France, and economic interests, set against the background of the Industrial Revolution;
- rank those causes and defend your ranking with dated evidence (elaboration E02);
- summarise in a table the types of colony established, their locations and the reasons for each, using evidence from primary sources and secondary sources (elaboration E03);
- tell the difference between a primary and a secondary source, and read a real primary source the way a historian does.

A cause is an event, condition or decision that helps make something happen. Historians sort causes as **short-term** (close to the event, often the trigger) or **long-term** (building slowly over decades). Keep both kinds in view as you read: the decision of 1786 had triggers, but it also had roots going back to the 1710s.

Figure 1 — The colonies this section explains, 1788–1836

Six British colonies, six answers to “why?”		
Established 1788–1836 — each one with its own mix of causes		
New South Wales Penal colony	Founded to receive convicts after the American route closed; also served strategic and economic aims.	1788
Norfolk Island Military and resource outpost	A small party occupied the island for its native flax and timber for naval use.	1788
Van Diemen's Land Penal and strategic settlement	Established 1803, partly to forestall a possible French settlement; a separate colony from December 1825.	1803 / 1825
Moreton Bay Place of secondary punishment	A harsher penal settlement for convicts who reoffended; closed 1842.	1824
Swan River Free settlement with a strategic purpose	Founded 17 June 1829 amid a rumour that the French were about to establish a penal colony nearby.	1829
South Australia Planned free colony	Founded on private investment under the South Australia Act 1834; convict labour banned.	1836
One empire, six different colonies — what caused each one?		

A panel showing the six British colonies and settlements this section explains, arranged in date order: New South Wales, a penal colony from 1788; Norfolk Island, a small military and resource outpost from 1788; Van Diemen's Land, a penal and strategic settlement from 1803 and a separate colony from 1825; Moreton Bay, a place of secondary punishment from 1824; the Swan River colony, a free and strategic settlement from 1829; and South Australia, a planned free colony from 1836. A note at the bottom asks: one empire, six different colonies — what caused each one?

Notice that the colonies were not all the same kind. Some were built to hold convicts, some to keep other empires out, and some to make money for private investors. Explaining those differences is the work of Part 4 — but first, the causes.

Check point. Before you go on, make sure you can answer:

1. In your own words, what is a colony? What is a penal colony?
 2. What two kinds of cause does this section ask you to keep in view?
 3. What happened in the 1770s that started the problem this section explains?
-

Part 1 — The prison crisis: the penal cause

Transportation. From 1718, British courts regularly sentenced convicts to **transportation** — being sent overseas to serve their sentence as forced labour. Between 1718 and 1775, about 50,000 convicts were transported to the American colonies.

(Source: “History of Australia (1788–1850)”, Wikipedia, retrieved 25 August 2026.)

Then the American Revolution cut that route off. Transportation across the Atlantic ended with the outbreak of the war, and from 1776 the sentence was suspended.

(Sources: “Convicts in Australia” and “Bloody Code”, Wikipedia, retrieved 25 August 2026.)

Why were the courts sending out so many convicts? Because the law demanded it. In a system historians call the **Bloody Code**, the number of crimes carrying the death penalty in England and Wales grew from about 50 in 1689 to 220 by the end of the 18th century — most of them property crimes such as theft. Courts did not want to hang people for small thefts, so juries often undervalued stolen goods on purpose to keep cases out of the death penalty, and judges often sentenced convicts to transportation instead. Transportation with indentured servitude became a more common sentence, expanded by an act of 1717.

(Source: “Bloody Code”, Wikipedia, retrieved 25 August 2026.)

So by the late 1770s Britain had a system that produced large numbers of transported convicts — and nowhere to send them.

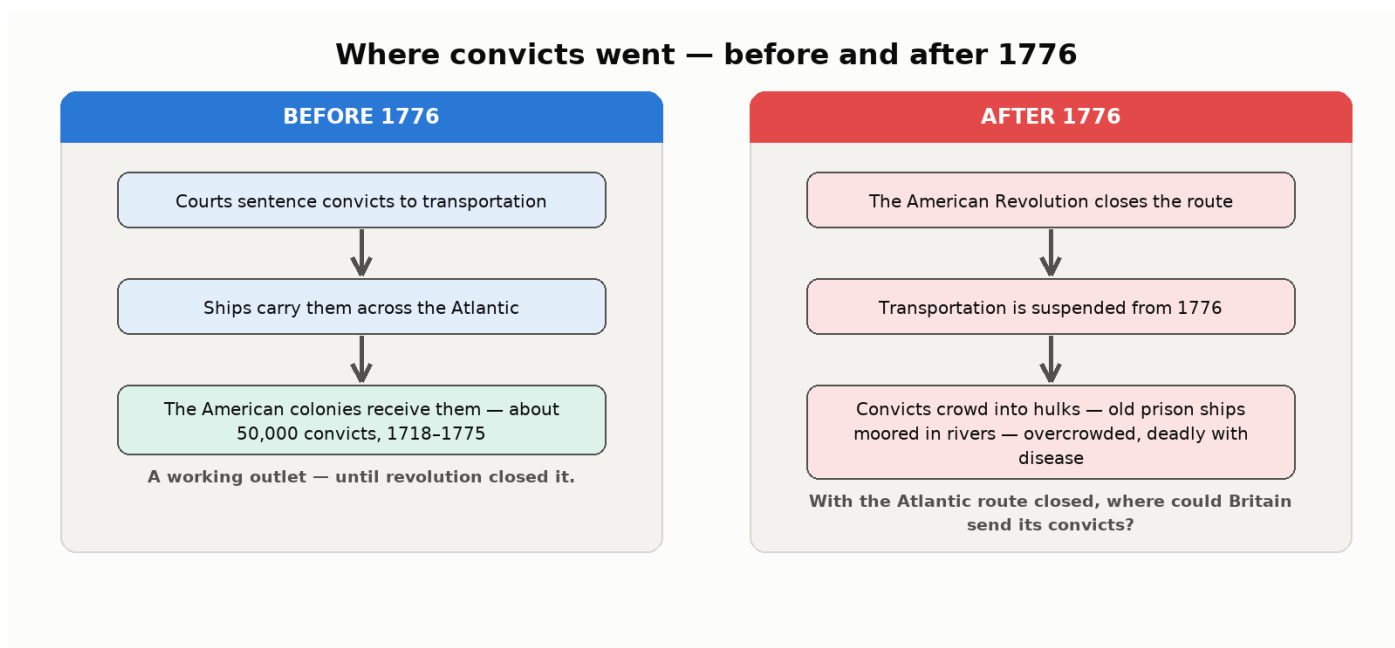
The hulks. In April and May 1776, Parliament passed emergency legislation, and on 15 July 1776 the first **hulk** came into use. A hulk is an old, unseaworthy ship moored in a river and used as a floating prison. Between 1776 and 1779, three such ships held 510 convicts at any one time.

(Source: “Prison hulk”, Wikipedia, retrieved 25 August 2026.)

Conditions on board were terrible. Each prisoner had an average sleeping space about 1.8 metres long and 46 centimetres wide; the weekly ration was biscuits and pea soup; and disease ran through the ships. In October 1776 a prisoner from Maidstone Gaol brought typhus aboard, and over the seven months to March 1778, 176 inmates died — 28 per cent. Even as conditions improved, deaths continued: in 1783, 89 of 486 inmates died (18 per cent).

(Source: “Prison hulk”, Wikipedia, retrieved 25 August 2026.)

Figure 2 — Where convicts went: before and after 1776



Two panels comparing the flow of transported convicts before and after 1776. The left panel shows the flow before 1776: courts sentence convicts to transportation and ships carry them to the American colonies, about 50,000 between 1718 and 1775. The right panel shows the flow after 1776: the American Revolution closes the route, transportation is suspended, and convicts crowd into prison ships called hulks moored in rivers, with terrible conditions and high death rates. A note asks: with the Atlantic route closed, where could Britain send its convicts?

(Sources: “History of Australia (1788–1850)”, “Bloody Code” and “Prison hulk”, Wikipedia, retrieved 25 August 2026.)

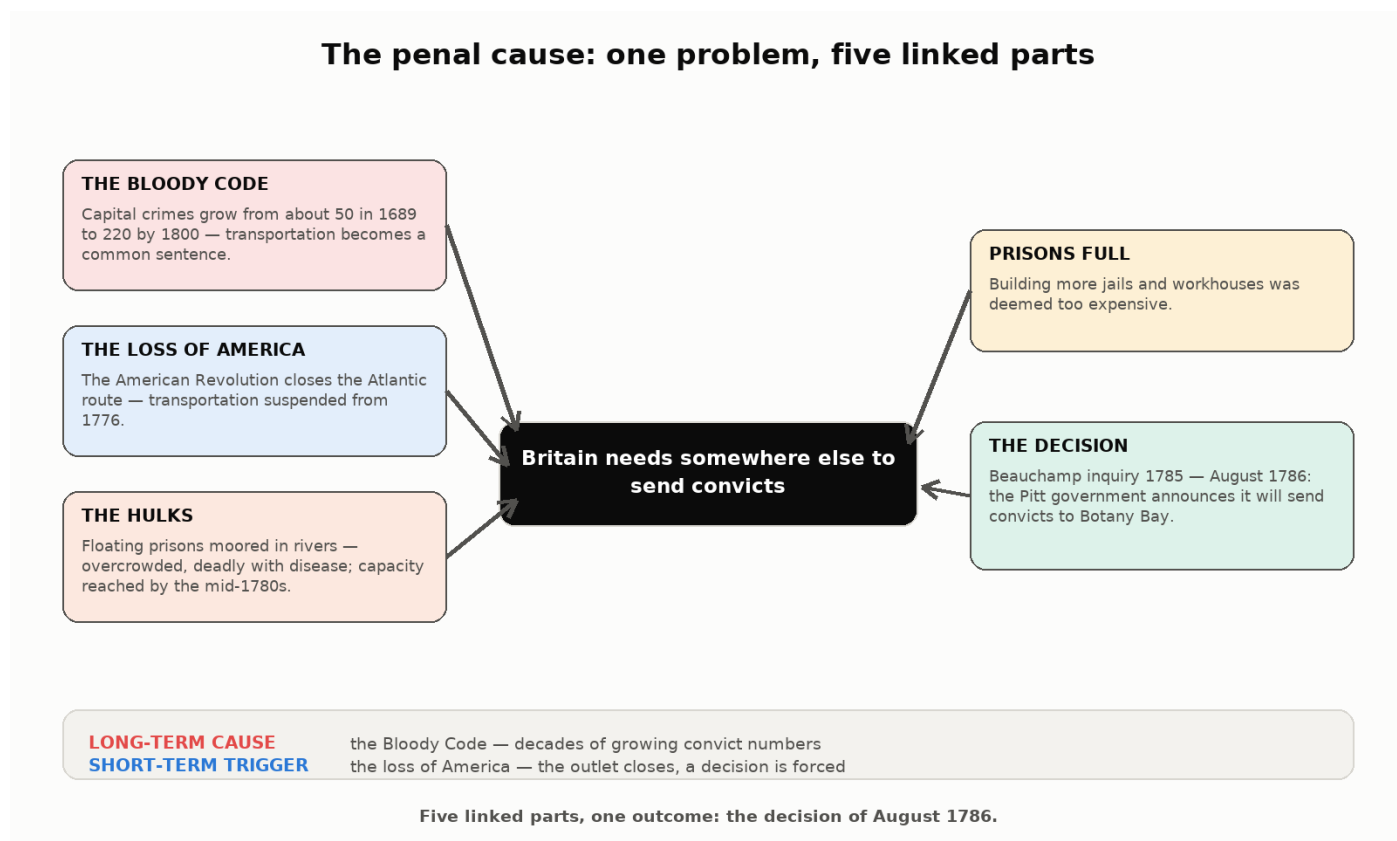
By the mid-1780s the floating prisons had reached capacity and become a public health hazard, and building more jails and workhouses was deemed too expensive. In 1785 a parliamentary select committee chaired by Lord Beauchamp inquired into the problem. In August 1786, the Pitt government announced its intention to send convicts to Botany Bay, on the coast of New South Wales.

(Source: “History of Australia (1788–1850)”, Wikipedia, retrieved 25 August 2026.)

The man given responsibility for devising the plan was Thomas Townshend, Lord Sydney, the Home Secretary — the colony of New South Wales was later named Sydney after him in his honour. Sydney chose Arthur Phillip to command the expedition.

(Source: “Thomas Townshend, 1st Viscount Sydney”, Wikipedia, retrieved 25 August 2026.)

Figure 3 — The penal cause: one problem, five linked parts



A cause map for the penal cause with a central box labelled “Britain needs somewhere else to send convicts” and five linked parts feeding into it: the Bloody Code, with the number of capital crimes growing from about 50 in 1689 to 220 by 1800, producing many transport sentences; the loss of America, with transportation suspended from 1776; the hulks, overcrowded floating prisons with deadly disease; prisons full and new jails judged too expensive; and the 1785 Beauchamp inquiry and the August 1786 decision to send convicts to Botany Bay. A note at the bottom says: long-term cause — the Bloody Code; short-term trigger — the loss of America.

Read the two time-scales in that map. The Bloody Code was a **long-term** cause: it had been filling the courts’ convict lists for decades. The loss of America was the **short-term** trigger: it closed the existing outlet and forced a decision. Historians who stress the penal cause argue that this problem alone is enough to explain the colonies of 1788. You will weigh that argument in Part 5.

Check point.

4. What was transportation, and roughly how many convicts were sent to America between 1718 and 1775?
5. Give two reasons why the courts transported so many convicts.
6. What was a hulk? Give two facts about conditions on board.
7. What did the Pitt government announce in August 1786?

Part 2 — Empire and rivals: the strategic cause

A **strategic interest** is a reason that has to do with power, security and position — where a country’s navy can reach, what its rivals might seize, and which sea routes stay open. In the 1780s, Britain’s great rival in the Pacific was France.

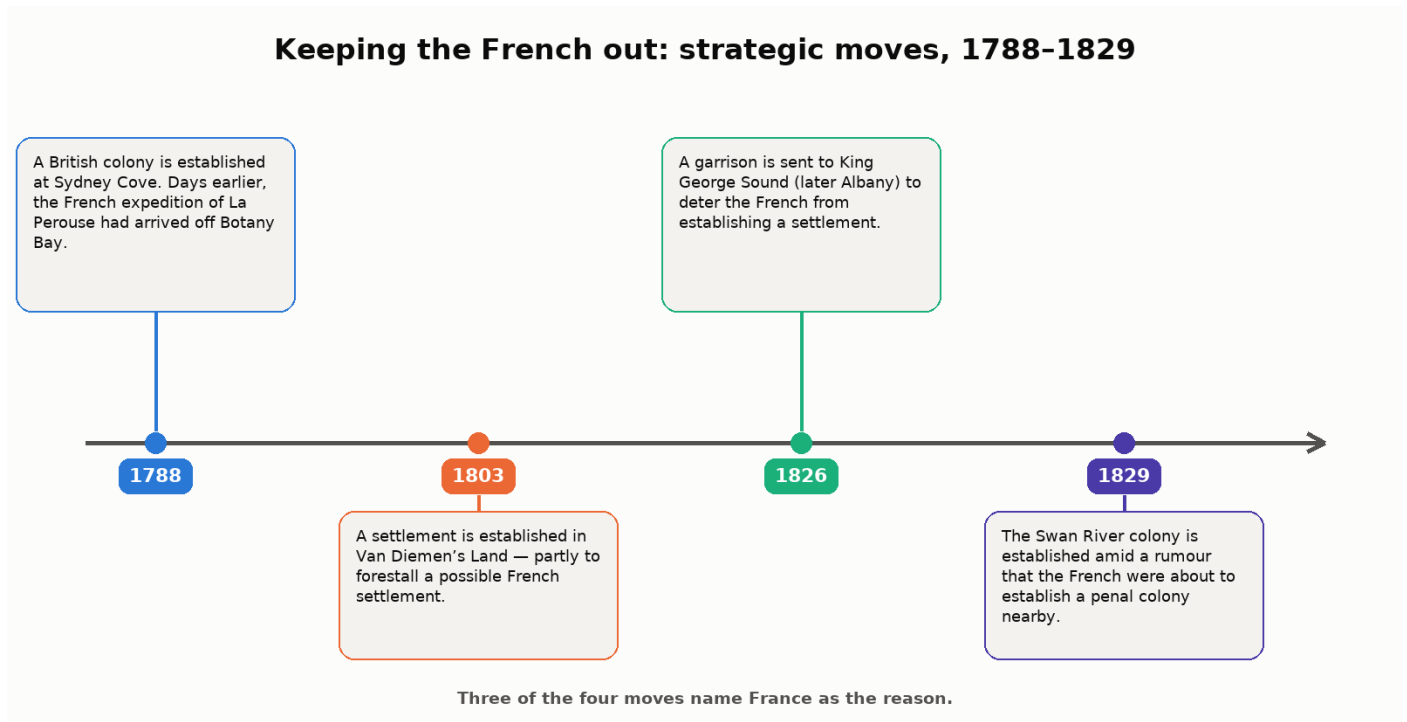
The French expedition. In 1785 France sent a major Pacific expedition under Jean-Francois de Galaup, comte de Lapérouse. Its purpose was to correct and complete the existing charts of the Pacific, to establish trade contacts, and to open new sea routes — and to keep an eye on British intentions. On 24 January 1788, the two French ships arrived off Botany Bay — just days after the First Fleet. The French officers visited the British, but the two commanders never met in person. The French stayed until 10 March, then sailed north; the expedition was lost at sea, and its fate became one of the Pacific’s great mysteries.

(Sources: “Jean-François de Galaup, comte de Lapérouse” and “History of Australia (1788–1850)”, Wikipedia, retrieved 25 August 2026.)

That near-miss mattered. La Perouse’s visit showed the interest of France in the new land — and British planners had not forgotten it.

Strategic thinking shaped where colonies went next. Look at the pattern across the next forty years.

Figure 4 — Keeping the French out: strategic moves, 1788–1829



A timeline of strategic moves: 1788, a British colony is established at Sydney Cove, and days later the French expedition of La Perouse arrives at Botany Bay; 1803, a settlement is established in Van Diemen’s Land, partly to forestall a possible French settlement; 1826, a small garrison is sent to King George Sound in the south-west, to deter the French from establishing a settlement; and 1829, the Swan River colony is established amid a rumour that the French were about to establish a penal colony nearby. A note reads: three of the four moves name France as the reason.

(Sources: “History of Australia (1788–1850)”, “Swan River Colony” and “Jean-François de Galaup, comte de Lapérouse”, Wikipedia, retrieved 25 August 2026.)

Three points to notice:

- **Van Diemen’s Land, 1803.** Governor Phillip Gidley King decided to establish a settlement there in 1803, partly to forestall a possible French settlement. It became a separate colony from New South Wales in December 1825.
- **King George Sound, 1826.** A garrison was sent to the south-west coast — later the town of Albany — to deter the French from establishing a settlement. A **garrison** is a body of troops stationed in a place to defend it.
- **Swan River, 1829.** The Swan River colony was established on 17 June 1829 under Captain James Stirling, amid a rumour that the French were about to establish a penal colony nearby.

(Sources: “History of Australia (1788–1850)” and “Swan River Colony”, Wikipedia, retrieved 25 August 2026.)

There was also a harder strategic argument made about the first colony itself. A naval base in New South Wales could protect British trade routes into the Pacific and the Indian Ocean — and, as some argued at the time, facilitate attacks on Dutch and Spanish interests in wartime. Whether the government weighed that heavily in 1786 is one of the questions historians still argue about (Part 5).

(Source: “History of Australia (1788–1850)”, Wikipedia, retrieved 25 August 2026.)

Check point.

8. In your own words, what is a strategic interest?
 9. What was the purpose of the Lapérouse expedition, and when did it reach Botany Bay?
 10. Name two colonies or settlements whose establishment is linked, in the record, to keeping the French out.
-

Part 3 — Trade and resources: the economic cause

An **economic factor** is a cause to do with money, trade and resources. From the start, supporters of the colony argued that New South Wales would pay for itself.

Matra’s proposal, 1783. The clearest early statement of the economic case was written by James Matra. On 24 August 1783 he submitted a paper titled *A Proposal for Establishing a Settlement in New South Wales*. Matra argued the new settlement could serve British trade in the Pacific and supply valuable resources. Strikingly, his first plan proposed settlers who were American Loyalists, Chinese and South Sea Islanders — but not convicts. Convicts were added to the plan later, as the prison crisis pressed.

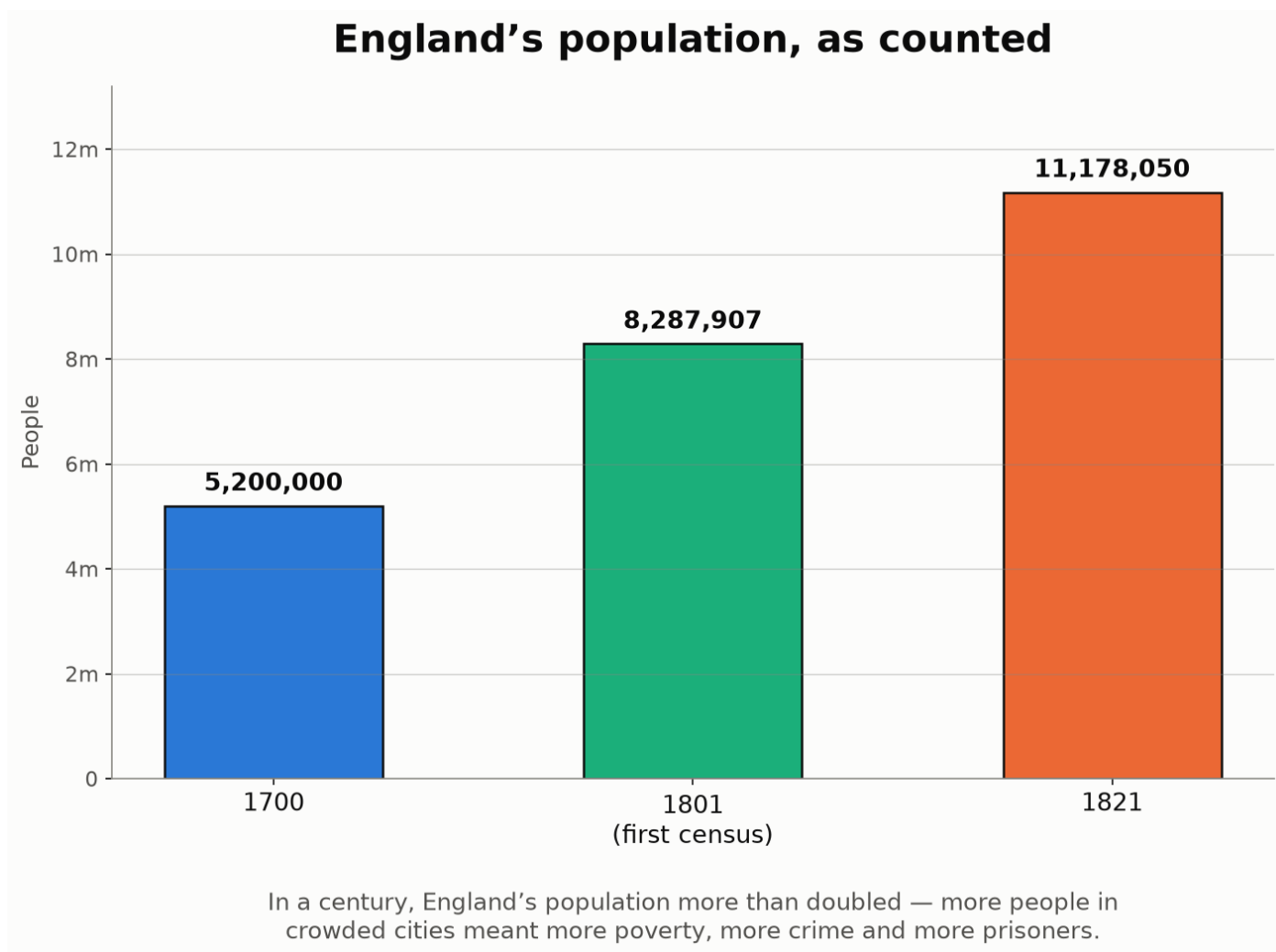
(Source: “First Fleet”, Wikipedia, retrieved 25 August 2026.)

Flax and timber. The strongest resource argument was naval. Fighting ships needed vast quantities of rope and masts, and Britain relied on distant suppliers for the flax and timber to make them. Norfolk Island, a small island over a thousand kilometres east of the mainland, was thought to hold native flax and timber for naval purposes — so much so that it was included in the plans for the new colony from the beginning, and a small party occupied it in 1788.

(Sources: “First Fleet” and “History of Australia (1788–1850)”, Wikipedia, retrieved 25 August 2026.)

The Industrial Revolution in the background. All of this sat inside a larger change. The **Industrial Revolution** — the shift from farm and workshop production to machine and factory production — began in Britain around 1760 and was still transforming British society through the 1840s. Two of its effects fed directly into the story of the colonies.

Figure 5 — England's population, as counted

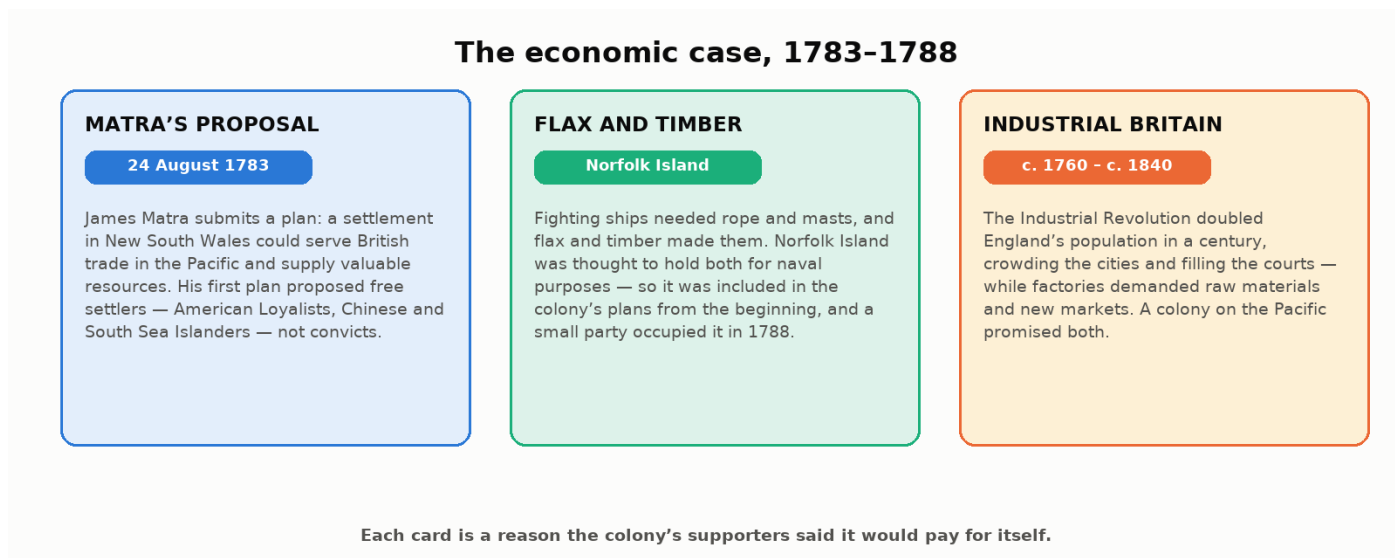


A bar chart of England's population at three dates: 5,200,000 in 1700; 8,287,907 at the first census in 1801; and 11,178,050 in 1821. A note reads: in a century, England's population more than doubled — more people in crowded cities meant more poverty, more crime and more prisoners.

(Source: "Demography of England", Wikipedia, retrieved 25 August 2026.)

- **More people, more prisoners.** England's population more than doubled in a century — from 5,200,000 in 1700 to 8,287,907 at the first census of 1801 and 11,178,050 in 1821. Growing, crowded cities saw more poverty and more property crime — which fed the courts, and with them the demand for transportation, exactly when the American outlet closed. The Industrial Revolution did not cause the colonies by itself, but it made the prison problem worse.
- **More demand for resources and trade.** Industrial Britain needed raw materials for its factories and new markets for its goods. A colony on the Pacific rim promised both — resources like flax and timber, and a base closer to the trade routes of the Pacific.

Figure 6 — The economic case, 1783–1788



A panel with three cards. Card one: Matra's proposal, 24 August 1783 — a settlement in New South Wales could serve British trade in the Pacific and supply resources; its first plan proposed free settlers, not convicts. Card two: Norfolk Island flax and timber — naval rope and masts mattered to a sea power, so the island was included in the colony's plans from the beginning. Card three: Industrial Britain — a doubling population crowded the cities and filled the courts, while factories demanded raw materials and new markets. A note reads: each card is a reason the colony's supporters said it would pay for itself.

(Sources: "First Fleet", "History of Australia (1788–1850)", "Demography of England" and "Industrial Revolution", Wikipedia, retrieved 25 August 2026.)

Check point.

11. What did Matra's 1783 proposal argue — and who did it first propose as settlers?
12. Why did flax and timber matter to Britain?
13. Give two effects of the Industrial Revolution that fed into the story of the colonies.

Part 4 — From causes to colonies: what was established (E03)

Causes produce consequences. Between 1788 and 1836, six distinct colonies and settlements were established. Historians summarise them in a table: **type, location, date, reason, and the evidence**. Here is the completed version — study how each row names its evidence.

Figure 7 — The types of colony established: a summary table

The types of colony established — a summary table				
Type · location · date · reason · evidence				
Settlement	Type	Established	Reason	Evidence
New South Wales	Penal colony	1788	Founded to receive convicts after the American route closed; also served strategic and economic aims.	The New South Wales Courts Act 1787 and Governor Phillip's dispatch of 15 May 1788 — both primary sources.
Norfolk Island	Military and resource outpost	1788	Native flax and timber for naval use — rope and masts for the navy.	The First Fleet's planning records and early dispatches — primary sources.
Van Diemen's Land	Penal and strategic settlement	1803; separate colony December 1825	A convict settlement, established partly to forestall a possible French settlement.	Government correspondence of Governor King — primary sources.
Moreton Bay	Place of secondary punishment	1824; closed 1842	A harsher penal settlement for convicts who reoffended.	Government records of the penal settlement — primary sources.
Swan River	Free settlement with a strategic purpose	17 June 1829	Free settlement for its agricultural potential — and to act ahead of a rumour that the French were about to establish a penal colony nearby.	The colony's founding records and Captain Stirling's reports — primary sources.
South Australia	Planned free colony	1836	A free colony based on private investment at little cost to the British government; convict labour banned.	The South Australia Act 1834 itself — a primary source.

Four types emerge: penal colonies, places of secondary punishment, free settlements with a strategic purpose, and planned free colonies.

A table summarising each colony's type, location, date, founding reason and evidence. Rows: New South Wales, established 1788 at Sydney Cove, a penal colony founded to receive convicts after the American route closed, also serving strategic and economic aims — evidence: the New South Wales Courts Act 1787 and Governor Phillip's dispatch of 15 May 1788, both primary sources. Norfolk Island, occupied 1788, a small military and resource outpost for naval flax and timber — evidence: colonial dispatches and records of the First Fleet's plans, primary sources. Van Diemen's Land, established 1803 and a separate colony from December 1825, a penal and strategic settlement, partly to forestall a possible French settlement — evidence: government correspondence, a primary source. Moreton Bay, established 1824 and closed 1842, a place of secondary punishment for convicts who reoffended — evidence: government records, primary sources. Swan River, established 17 June 1829, a free settlement with a strategic purpose, founded amid a rumour that the French were about to establish a penal colony nearby — evidence: the colony's founding records and Stirling's reports, primary sources. South Australia, established 1836, a planned free colony based on private investment, with convict labour banned — evidence: the South Australia Act 1834 itself, a primary source.

(Sources: "First Fleet", "History of Australia (1788–1850)", "Convicts in Australia", "Swan River Colony" and "South Australia Act 1834", Wikipedia, retrieved 25 August 2026.)

Four types of colony emerge from that table:

1. **Penal colonies** — established to receive convicts: New South Wales (1788) and Van Diemen's Land (1803).
2. **Places of secondary punishment** — harsher penal settlements for convicts who reoffended: Moreton Bay (1824), closed in 1842.
3. **Free settlements with a strategic purpose** — founded by free settlers but positioned to keep rivals out: Swan River (1829).
4. **Planned free colonies** — designed from London as investments, with no convicts at all: South Australia (1836).

South Australia shows the economic cause at its purest. The South Australia Act 1834 empowered the Crown to erect South Australia into a British province, as a convict-free settlement — it forbade the transportation of convicts. The scheme grew from the ideas of Edward Gibbon Wakefield, who argued that colonies should be founded by **systematic colonisation**: land sold at a fixed price (a minimum of twelve shillings per acre), with the revenue paid into an **emigration fund** to bring out free workers. A body of Colonization Commissioners in London ran the plan, and the first migrant ship, the *John Pirie*, sailed in February 1836. The intention was to found a free colony based on private investment at little cost to the British government.

(Sources: “South Australia Act 1834” and “History of Australia (1788–1850)”, Wikipedia, retrieved 25 August 2026.)

How do we know all this? Primary and secondary sources. A **primary source** is an object, record or document from the time being studied. A **secondary source** is a later account that interprets the evidence.

Figure 8 — Primary and secondary sources for this section

Primary and secondary sources for this section

PRIMARY — from the time being studied

New South Wales Courts Act 1787
An act of the British Parliament (27 Geo. 3. c. 2) enabling a court of criminal judicature on the eastern coast of New South Wales.
A STATUTE

Arthur Phillip’s dispatch to Lord Sydney
15 May 1788 — describing Port Jackson as “the finest Harbour in the World”.
A LETTER

James Matra’s proposal
24 August 1783 — a plan for a settlement in New South Wales to serve British trade.
A PROPOSAL PAPER

South Australia Act 1834
15 August 1834 — erected South Australia into a province and forbade the transportation of convicts.
A STATUTE

SECONDARY — later interpretations

Geoffrey Blainey, The Tyranny of Distance (1966)
Rejects a purely “place of exile for convicts” explanation and stresses broader strategic and commercial factors.

A. G. L. Shaw, Convicts and the Colonies (1966)
The great study of penal transportation from Great Britain and Ireland to Australia.

Modern reference articles and histories
The works used on this page to check every date, figure and quotation.

Primary sources come from the time being studied; secondary sources interpret that evidence later.

Two columns of source cards. The primary column lists: the New South Wales Courts Act 1787, an act of the British Parliament, 27 George III c. 2, which enabled a court of criminal judicature on the eastern coast of New South Wales; Arthur Phillip’s dispatch to Lord Sydney, 15 May 1788, describing Port Jackson as the finest harbour in the world; James Matra’s proposal for a settlement in New South Wales, 24 August 1783; and the South Australia Act 1834, 15 August 1834, which forbade the transportation of convicts. The secondary column lists: Geoffrey Blainey, *The Tyranny of Distance*, 1966, which stresses broader strategic and commercial factors; A. G. L. Shaw, *Convicts and the Colonies*, 1966, the great study of penal transportation; and the modern encyclopaedia articles and histories used to check the facts on this page. A note reads: primary sources come from the time being studied; secondary sources interpret that evidence later.

Notice that the four primary sources are four different *kinds* of thing: a statute, a letter, a proposal paper, and another statute. Each was written for a different purpose — and purpose shapes what a source can tell you, as you will practise in the source-based inquiry at the end of this section.

Check point.

- Using Figure 7, name the type of colony for each of: New South Wales, Moreton Bay, Swan River and South Australia.
- What was systematic colonisation, and how was it funded?
- In your own words, what is the difference between a primary and a secondary source? Give one example of each from this section.

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Part 5 — Ranking the causes (E02): which mattered most?

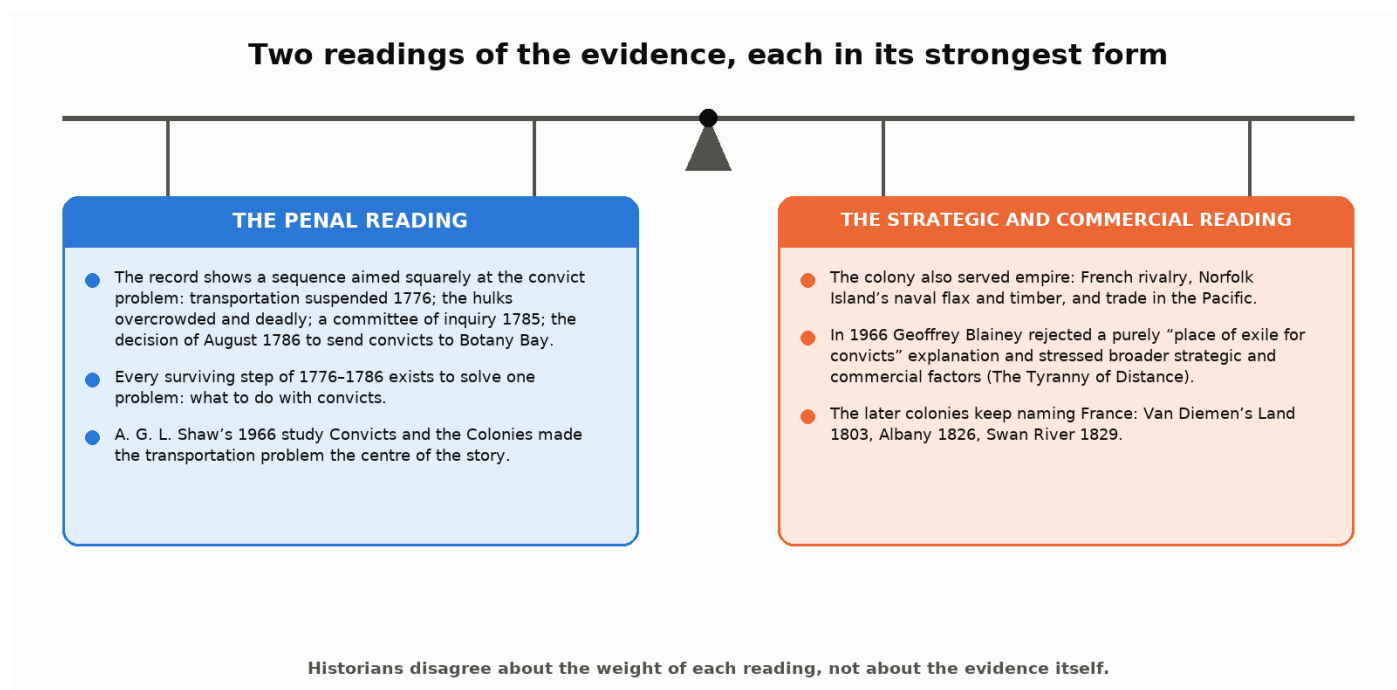
Elaboration E02 asks you to **rank the causes of British colonisation and explain your choices**. The factors usually weighed are the economy, the effects of the Industrial Revolution, the need for penal colonies, and rivalry with other powers.

A note about the word *significant*. The Victorian Curriculum uses the term *significant* but does not define it, and historians use it in different ways. This section therefore treats it as **important enough to have shaped the outcome** — and every ranking can be defended on that definition alone. Two students who produce different rankings can both do excellent work, if both reason well from evidence.

To rank causes, historians test each one with three questions:

- **Pressure** — how urgent was the problem it solved? Could the government have ignored it?
- **Directness** — is there evidence linking it straight to the decision (a law, a letter, a committee report)?
- **Reach** — how much of the pattern does it explain: just 1788, or the later colonies too?

Figure 9 — Two readings of the evidence, each in its strongest form

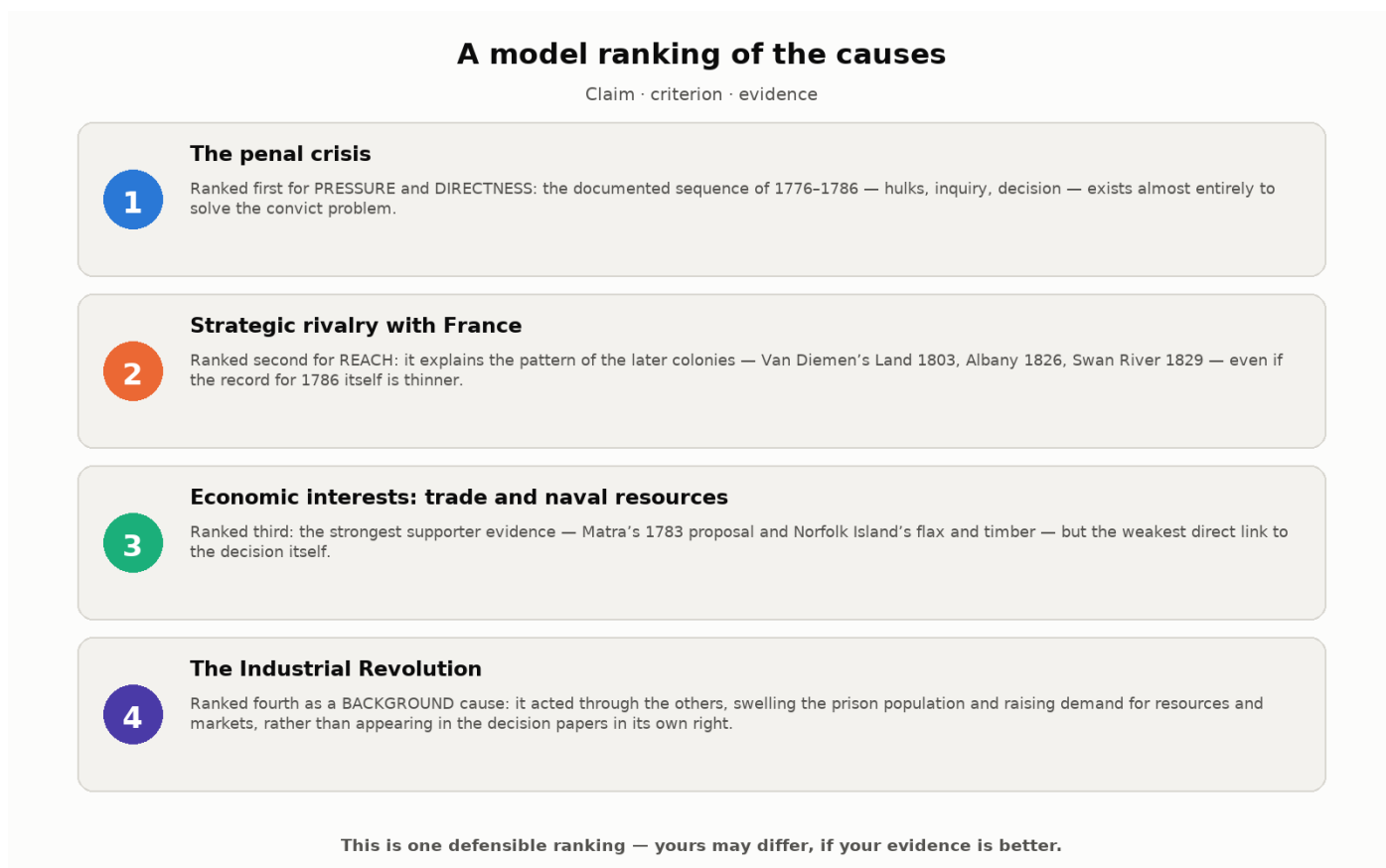


A balance diagram with two sides. The left side is the penal reading, in its strongest form: the record shows a sequence aimed squarely at the convict problem — transportation suspended in 1776, hulks overcrowded and deadly, a committee of inquiry in 1785, and a decision announced in August 1786 to send convicts to Botany Bay; A. G. L. Shaw's 1966 study *Convicts and the Colonies* made the transportation problem the centre of the story. The right side is the strategic and commercial reading, in its strongest form: the colony also served empire — French rivalry placed at Sydney Cove, Norfolk Island's naval flax and timber, and trade in the Pacific; in 1966 Geoffrey Blainey rejected a purely "place of exile for convicts" explanation and stressed broader strategic and commercial factors, in *The Tyranny of Distance*; the later colonies — Van Diemen's Land 1803, Albany 1826, Swan River 1829 — name France as their reason. A note at the bottom reads: historians disagree about the weight of each reading, not about the evidence itself.

(Sources: "Geoffrey Blainey" and "A. G. L. Shaw", Wikipedia, retrieved 25 August 2026; Geoffrey Blainey, *The Tyranny of Distance: How Distance Shaped Australia's History*, 1966; A. G. L. Shaw, *Convicts and the Colonies: A Study of Penal Transportation from Great Britain and Ireland to Australia*, 1966.)

Both readings are strong, because the evidence supports both. The penal reading has the tightest documentary chain: every step from 1776 to 1786 is about convicts. The strategic and commercial reading has the wider reach: it explains not only 1788 but the pattern of the next fifty years, from Norfolk Island to Swan River. A careful historian can hold both: the penal crisis was the pressure that forced a decision in 1786, while strategic and commercial hopes shaped where the colonies went and why they kept being established.

Figure 10 — A model ranking, with justification



A model ranking of four causes. Rank one: the penal crisis — the need to empty the hulks and find a destination for transported convicts — ranked first for pressure and directness, because the documented sequence of 1776 to 1786 exists almost entirely to solve it. Rank two: strategic rivalry with France — ranked second for reach, because it explains the pattern of later colonies — Van Diemen's Land 1803, Albany 1826, Swan River 1829 — even if the record for 1786 itself is thinner. Rank three: economic interests, trade and naval resources — ranked third, with the strongest supporter evidence, Matra's 1783 proposal and the plans for Norfolk Island's flax and timber, but the weakest direct link to the decision itself. Rank four: the Industrial Revolution — ranked fourth as a background cause, because it acted through the others, swelling the prison population and raising demand for resources and markets rather than appearing in the decision papers in its own right. A note reads: this is one defensible ranking — yours may differ, if your evidence is better.

Study the shape of that argument: each rank is paired with the test (pressure, directness, reach) that earns it. That pairing — claim, criterion, evidence — is what your own ranking needs.

Check point.

17. What three tests does this section use to rank causes?
18. Give one piece of evidence the penal reading relies on, and one the strategic and commercial reading relies on.
19. Why is it possible for two historians to rank the same causes differently and both be arguing well?

Worked inquiry 1 — Explaining the decision of 1786 (scaffolded)

The question: *Why did the Pitt government decide in 1786 to send convicts to Botany Bay?*

Task: *complete the explanation below by filling each gap with the best evidence from Parts 1–3. The first gap is done for you.*

The decision of 1786 was caused by several pressures acting together. The long-term background was the **Bloody Code** (1), which had grown from about 50 capital crimes in 1689 to 220 by 1800 and made transportation a common sentence. The short-term trigger was _____ (2) _____, which closed the American route to transportation from 1776. With the sentence suspended, convicts crowded into _____

(3) _____, which by the mid-1780s had reached capacity and become a health hazard. After a committee of inquiry in 1785, the Pitt government announced in _____ (4) _____ that it would send convicts to Botany Bay. The plan also carried strategic and economic hopes: a base ahead of _____ (5) _____ interest in the Pacific, and resources such as _____ (6) _____ for naval use.

Model completion.

1. Bloody Code
2. the American Revolution
3. the hulks (floating prison ships)
4. August 1786
5. French
6. Norfolk Island's flax and timber

Why this works: each gap is filled with a dated, sourced fact from the section, and the finished paragraph keeps the long-term cause, the short-term trigger and the secondary motives distinct — exactly the structure a cause explanation needs.

Worked inquiry 2 — Building the evidence table (E03)

The question: *Which type of colony was each settlement, and what evidence supports the classification?*

Task: *a historian's table has been scrambled. Match each settlement to its type, date and strongest evidence, then check your version against the model.*

Settlement	Type	Date	Strongest evidence
South Australia	?	?	?
Moreton Bay	?	?	?
New South Wales	?	?	?

Model table (three of the six rows).

Settlement	Type	Date	Strongest evidence
New South Wales	penal colony	1788	New South Wales Courts Act 1787 (primary); Phillip's dispatch, 15 May 1788 (primary)
Moreton Bay	place of secondary punishment	1824	government records of the penal settlement (primary)
South Australia	planned free colony	1836	South Australia Act 1834 — the founding statute itself (primary)

Why this works: each row carries its type, its date, and the name of a specific, checkable source — and the source is classified as primary or secondary. A table like this is the deliverable of elaboration E03: you should be able to produce the full six-row version yourself as task U2 asks you to do.

Practice tasks — scaffolded

Q1. Vocabulary match. Match each term to its meaning. Write the letter.

Term	Meaning
1 transportation	a an old ship moored in a river and used as a floating prison
2 hulk	b a body of troops stationed in a place to defend it
3 penal colony	c the sending of convicts overseas to serve their sentence
4 garrison	d a colony established, in whole or in part, to hold convicts
5 free settlement	e a colony founded by settlers who were not convicts
6 emigration fund	f money raised from land sales to pay for workers' passage

Q2. Reading Figure 2. (a) Where were convicts transported between 1718 and 1775, and roughly how many? (b) What closed that route? (c) Where were convicts held after 1776, and from what date was the first such ship in use?

Q3. Reading Figure 3. Sort the five parts of the cause map into long-term cause and short-term trigger.

Q4. Reading Figure 4. (a) Which two settlements were established, in part, to keep the French out? Give their dates. (b) What happened in 1826 on the south-west coast? (c) In what year did Van Diemen's Land become a separate colony?

Q5. Reading Figure 7. Copy the table and add a sixth row for Norfolk Island, using the information in Part 4.

Q6. Sorting sources. From the cards in Figure 8, list (a) two primary sources and what kind of thing each is, and (b) one secondary source.

Practice tasks — unscaffolded

Q7. Rank the four causes studied in this section — the penal crisis, strategic rivalry with France, economic interests, and the Industrial Revolution — from most to least significant for the establishment of the colonies. Justify each rank using the three tests (pressure, directness, reach). You may disagree with Figure 10; the marking rewards your reasoning, not your order.

Q8. Compare a penal colony (New South Wales or Van Diemen's Land) with a planned free colony (South Australia). In a paragraph, explain how their purposes differed and name one primary source that evidences each.

Q9. "*The loss of America alone explains the British colonies in Australia.*" Do you agree? Write a paragraph arguing your position with at least three dated facts from this section.

Q10. Explain how the Industrial Revolution acted as a background cause of the colonies, rather than a direct one. Use the tests of directness and reach in your answer.

Source-based inquiry task — Reading a real primary source

The source. On 15 May 1788, Governor Arthur Phillip wrote a dispatch to Lord Sydney, the Home Secretary who had planned the expedition. In it he explained why the colony had moved from Botany Bay to Port Jackson:

"We got into Port Jackson early in the Afternoon, and had the satisfaction of finding the finest Harbour in the World ... in which a thousand Sail of the line may ride in the most perfect security."

(Source: Arthur Phillip, dispatch to Lord Sydney, 15 May 1788, quoted in “Port Jackson”, Wikipedia, retrieved 25 August 2026.)

Context you need. The First Fleet had reached Botany Bay in January 1788, but Phillip found little fresh water, swampy shores, poor soil, and a bay so open that ships could not anchor close to land safely. He moved the settlement north to Port Jackson, where Sydney Cove offered sheltered water and a spring of fresh water.

(Source: “Botany Bay”, Wikipedia, retrieved 25 August 2026.)

Task — five questions.

1. **Origin:** Who wrote this source, to whom, and when?
 2. **Purpose:** Why was Phillip writing to Sydney? (Think about who chose Phillip and sent him.)
 3. **Content:** What does Phillip’s wording tell you about what the British valued in a harbour? Why might “a thousand Sail of the line” riding “in the most perfect security” matter to a government thinking about causes in Part 2?
 4. **Limits:** What can this source NOT tell you about the causes of the colony? Name one question it cannot answer.
 5. **Corroboration:** Find one fact somewhere else in this section that supports the source, and one that it does not mention at all. What does that tell you about relying on a single source?
-

Answers and model responses

Check point answers. 1. A colony is a place settled and ruled by another country, usually far away; a penal colony is a colony established, in whole or in part, to hold convicts sent from the home country. 2. Short-term causes (triggers) and long-term causes (slow-building roots). 3. Britain lost its American colonies in the American Revolution — closing the route to which it transported convicts. 4. Transportation was the sentence of sending convicts overseas to serve as forced labour; about 50,000 were sent to America between 1718 and 1775. 5. Any two of: the Bloody Code made many crimes punishable by death, so courts preferred transportation; transportation had been expanded by an act of 1717; juries undervalued stolen goods to avoid death sentences, keeping more cases within the transportable range. 6. An old, unseaworthy ship moored in a river and used as a floating prison. Any two of: sleeping space about 1.8 metres by 46 centimetres; rations of biscuits and pea soup; typhus killed 176 inmates in seven months (28 per cent); 89 of 486 died in 1783. 7. Its intention to send convicts to Botany Bay on the coast of New South Wales. 8. A reason to do with power, security and position — naval reach, rivals' moves, and open sea routes. 9. To correct and complete Pacific charts, establish trade contacts, open new sea routes and observe British intentions; it arrived off Botany Bay on 24 January 1788. 10. Any two of: Van Diemen's Land (1803), the King George Sound garrison (1826), the Swan River colony (1829). 11. That a settlement in New South Wales could serve British Pacific trade and supply resources; its first plan proposed American Loyalists, Chinese and South Sea Islanders — not convicts. 12. Fighting ships needed rope and masts, and flax and timber were the materials to make them; Britain relied on distant suppliers. 13. Any two of: a more than doubled population crowded the cities and fed the courts with more property crime; factories raised demand for raw materials; new markets were sought for British goods. 14. New South Wales — penal colony; Moreton Bay — place of secondary punishment; Swan River — free settlement with a strategic purpose; South Australia — planned free colony. 15. Systematic colonisation was Wakefield's scheme of founding a colony by selling land at a fixed price (minimum twelve shillings an acre) and using the revenue — the emigration fund — to bring out free workers. 16. A primary source comes from the time being studied (e.g. Phillip's dispatch of 15 May 1788); a secondary source is a later interpretation of the evidence (e.g. Blainey's *The Tyranny of Distance*, 1966). 17. Pressure (how urgent), directness (how close the evidence links it to the decision), reach (how much of the pattern it explains). 18. Penal: any step of the 1776–1786 sequence (hulks, the 1785 inquiry, the August 1786 announcement). Strategic/commercial: Norfolk Island's flax and timber, Matra's proposal, or the later colonies naming France. 19. Because significance is contested: the tests can be weighted differently, and marking rewards reasoning from defined terms and dated evidence, not a particular order.

Q1. 1–c, 2–a, 3–d, 4–b, 5–e, 6–f.

Q2. (a) To the American colonies; about 50,000 between 1718 and 1775. (b) The American Revolution. (c) On hulks — floating prison ships moored in rivers; the first came into use on 15 July 1776.

Q3. Long-term cause: the Bloody Code (decades of growing capital-crime numbers feeding the courts). Short-term triggers and responses: the loss of America (1776), the hulks, prison overcrowding, and the 1785 inquiry leading to the August 1786 decision. Award any answer that places the Bloody Code as long-term and the rest as the crisis sequence it fed.

Q4. (a) Van Diemen's Land, 1803 (partly to forestall a possible French settlement) and the Swan River colony, 1829 (amid a rumour of a French penal colony). (b) A garrison was sent to King George Sound (later Albany) to deter the French from establishing a settlement. (c) December 1825.

Q5. Norfolk Island — type: military and resource outpost; location: Norfolk Island, east of the mainland; date: occupied 1788; reason: native flax and timber for naval purposes; evidence: the First Fleet's planning records and early dispatches (primary sources).

Q6. (a) Any two of: the New South Wales Courts Act 1787 (a statute); Phillip's dispatch of 15 May 1788 (a letter); Matra's proposal of 24 August 1783 (a proposal paper); the South Australia Act 1834 (a statute). (b) Blainey, *The Tyranny of Distance* (1966), or Shaw, *Convicts and the Colonies* (1966), or the modern reference articles used on the page.

Q7. No single correct order. Award a complete ranking in which every rank is paired with one of the three tests and at least one dated fact. Model (penal first): the penal crisis ranks first on pressure and directness — the whole documented sequence from the hulks (1776) to the August 1786 announcement exists to solve the convict problem; strategic rivalry ranks second on reach — it explains the later colonies (Van Diemen's Land 1803, Albany 1826, Swan

River 1829) even if the 1786 record is thinner; economic interests rank third — Matra’s 1783 proposal and Norfolk Island’s flax and timber show strong supporter evidence but a weaker direct link to the decision; the Industrial Revolution ranks fourth as a background cause acting through the others. A model ranking France first on reach is equally creditable if defended.

Q8. Model: New South Wales was founded in 1788 primarily as a penal colony — the New South Wales Courts Act 1787 (a primary source) enabled the government of a settlement designed to receive convicts, and the First Fleet carried about 1,400 people, most of them convicts and their guards. South Australia, by contrast, was a planned free colony: the South Australia Act 1834 (itself a primary source) forbade the transportation of convicts and founded the province on private investment and Wakefield’s systematic colonisation. One colony solved Britain’s prison problem; the other was designed so that problem could not enter it.

Q9. No single correct answer; award a clear position with three dated facts. Model (disagree): I disagree. The loss of America was the trigger, but not the whole story. First, even after America closed, the government did not act for a decade — the hulks crisis of the 1780s (first hulk in use 15 July 1776; capacity reached by the mid-1780s) shows the penal pressure kept building. Second, the plan carried economic hopes from the start: Matra’s proposal of August 1783 argued for Pacific trade and resources, and Norfolk Island’s flax and timber were included in the colony’s plans for naval use. Third, strategic rivalry shaped the whole pattern that followed — Van Diemen’s Land in 1803, the Albany garrison in 1826 and Swan River in 1829 were all linked to keeping the French out. America’s loss explains the timing; the other causes explain the colony’s purposes and its growth.

Q10. Model: The Industrial Revolution was a background cause because it appears in the story through other causes, not in the decision papers in its own right. On the test of directness, no statute or dispatch of 1786 says “because of the Industrial Revolution” — instead the documents name convicts, hulks and Botany Bay. On the test of reach, industrial change acted through the penal and economic causes: a population more than doubled between 1700 and 1821 crowded the cities and fed the courts with property crime at the very time the American outlet closed, while industrial demand for raw materials and markets gave weight to the flax, timber and trade arguments. It made the crisis bigger; it did not, by itself, decide anything.

Source-based inquiry. 1. Arthur Phillip, first Governor of New South Wales, writing to Lord Sydney (Thomas Townshend), the Home Secretary who planned the expedition; 15 May 1788. 2. To report the settlement’s progress to the minister who chose and sent him — an official account from commander to planner. 3. Depth, shelter and room for a great navy: “a thousand Sail of the line” riding “in the most perfect security” shows the British valued a harbour that could hold a fleet — which connects to the strategic cause in Part 2 (a naval base in the Pacific). 4. Any one of: it says nothing about the convicts, the prison crisis, trade hopes or the French; it cannot tell you why the government chose New South Wales in 1786 — Phillip is describing a harbour, not explaining a policy. 5. Supports: the section’s record that Botany Bay had little fresh water, swampy shores and poor soil, forcing the move. Not mentioned: e.g. the penal crisis, Norfolk Island’s flax and timber, or the La Perouse visit of January 1788. Lesson: a single source is strong on what its author saw and cared about, and silent on everything else — historians corroborate with several sources before drawing conclusions.

Sources for this section

All web sources retrieved 25 August 2026.

- **“First Fleet”** (Wikipedia) — eleven ships (two Royal Navy vessels, three storeships, six convict transports); over 1,400 people; convicts 582 men, 193 women and 14 children; departed Portsmouth 13 May 1787; Botany Bay arrivals 18–20 January 1788; the move to Sydney Cove, Port Jackson, 26 January 1788; causes — the end of transportation to North America after the American Revolution and the need for a base in the Pacific to counter French expansion; Norfolk Island’s native flax and timber for naval purposes; the decision made by Thomas Townshend, Lord Sydney; Joseph Banks, the greatest proponent of settlement in New South Wales; James Matra, *A Proposal for Establishing a Settlement in New South Wales*, 24 August 1783, proposing American Loyalists, Chinese and South Sea Islanders — but not convicts.
- **“History of Australia (1788–1850)”** (Wikipedia) — about 50,000 convicts transported 1718–1775; the hulks at capacity and a public health hazard; new jails deemed too expensive; the parliamentary select committee chaired by Lord Beauchamp, 1785; the Pitt government’s announcement of August 1786; the naval-base

argument; La Perouse's visit showing the interest of France; Van Diemen's Land 1803, partly to forestall a possible French settlement, separate colony December 1825; the Albany garrison 1826; Moreton Bay 1824 as a place of secondary punishment, closed 1842; Swan River 1829, the first convict-free colony, convicts accepted from 1850; South Australia 1836, a free colony based on private investment with convict labour banned; about 161,700 convicts transported 1788–1868, of whom 25,000 were women; 55,000 convicts arrived in New South Wales and 60,000 in Van Diemen's Land, 1821–1840.

- **“Convicts in Australia”** (Wikipedia) — about 162,000 convicts transported between 1788 and 1868; transportation across the Atlantic ended with the start of the American Revolution; hulks left over from the Seven Years' War used as floating prisons; 9,668 convicts transported to Western Australia on 43 ships; transportation to New South Wales abolished 1 October 1850; to Tasmania ended 1853; the last ship arrived in Western Australia on 10 January 1868.
- **“Prison hulk”** (Wikipedia) — legislation passed April and May 1776; the first hulk in use 15 July 1776; three ships held 510 convicts at any one time, 1776–1779; sleeping space 1.8 metres by 46 centimetres; rations of biscuits and pea soup; typhus from October 1776, 176 deaths in seven months (28 per cent); 89 of 486 dead in 1783 (18 per cent).
- **“Bloody Code”** (Wikipedia) — capital crimes in England and Wales grew from about 50 (1689) to 220 by the end of the century; transportation expanded by the act of 1717, suspended 1776, resumed to Australia after 1785; over one-third of all criminals convicted between 1788 and 1867 were transported; juries undervalued stolen goods on purpose.
- **“Demography of England”** (Wikipedia) — England's population 5,200,000 (1700); 8,287,907 (1801 census); 11,178,050 (1821).
- **“Industrial Revolution”** (Wikipedia) — dating, about 1760 to about 1840, beginning in Great Britain.
- **“Thomas Townshend, 1st Viscount Sydney”** (Wikipedia) — Home Secretary 23 December 1783 to 5 June 1789; given responsibility for devising the plan to settle convicts at Botany Bay; chose Arthur Phillip; originator of the plan of colonization for New South Wales.
- **“Arthur Phillip”** (Wikipedia) — appointed commodore of the fleet in September 1786; the assignment to transport convicts and soldiers to establish a colony at Botany Bay; formally inaugurated 7 February 1788.
- **“Botany Bay”** (Wikipedia) — reasons the settlement moved: insufficient fresh water, swampy foreshores, an open and unprotected bay, water too shallow for ships to anchor close to shore, poor soil; the move to the excellent natural harbour of Port Jackson.
- **“Port Jackson”** (Wikipedia) — Arthur Phillip, dispatch to Lord Sydney, 15 May 1788: “We got into Port Jackson early in the Afternoon, and had the satisfaction of finding the finest Harbour in the World ... in which a thousand Sail of the line may ride in the most perfect security.”
- **“Jean-François de Galaup, comte de Lapérouse”** (Wikipedia) — the expedition sailed to correct and complete charts, establish trade contacts and open new sea routes; arrived off Botany Bay 24 January 1788; the commanders never met in person; departed 10 March 1788.
- **“Swan River Colony”** (Wikipedia) — Captain James Stirling, the founding father of Western Australia; established 17 June 1829; reasons — agricultural potential, free settlement, and the rumour that the French were about to establish a penal colony.
- **“South Australia Act 1834”** (Wikipedia) — assented 15 August 1834; convict-free settlement, forbidding the transportation of convicts; Wakefield's colonisation scheme; land at a minimum of twelve shillings per acre; the Emigration Fund; the Colonization Commissioners; first migrant ship the *John Pirie*, February 1836.
- **“New South Wales Courts Act 1787”** (Wikipedia) — 27 Geo. 3. c. 2; long title “An Act to enable His Majesty to establish a Court of Criminal Judicature on the Eastern Coast of New South Wales and the Parts adjacent”; the colony created primarily as a penal colony.
- **“Joseph Banks”** (Wikipedia) — the greatest proponent of settlement in New South Wales; advocated Botany Bay as a place for the reception of convicts.
- **“Geoffrey Blainey”** (Wikipedia) — *The Tyranny of Distance: How Distance Shaped Australia's History* (1966): rejects a purely “place of exile for convicts” explanation and stresses broader strategic and commercial factors.
- **“A. G. L. Shaw”** (Wikipedia) — Alan George Lewers Shaw; *Convicts and the Colonies: A Study of Penal Transportation from Great Britain and Ireland to Australia* (1966), a study of penal transportation to Australia.

Secondary sources cited by publication: Geoffrey Blainey, *The Tyranny of Distance: How Distance Shaped Australia's History*, 1966; A. G. L. Shaw, *Convicts and the Colonies: A Study of Penal Transportation from Great Britain and Ireland to Australia*, 1966.

Figures 1–10 are original diagrams made for this book, drawn from the values and dates shown above. No figure is reproduced from any publisher.

Events, ideas, people and movements that shaped Australian society, 1750–1914

For the teacher

This section is one teaching sequence (parts 1–8) with two worked inquiries built from real, dated, checkable primary sources, six scaffolded practice tasks, four unscaffolded tasks and one source-based inquiry task, per the §3 volume calibration. Register is direct-address prose at or below the Yr10 ceiling (D2). Subject terms are defined at first use (D2 exemption 2); the contested term “White Australia” ideal carries the CONTESTED_TERMS Rule 1 fallback definition before use and both sides of the Federation debate are steelmanned (Rules 4–5). All First Nations content is excluded per Rule 1 and §2A; none may be authored in later, including as context or a caption.

Curriculum alignment: VC2HH10K09 — Historical Knowledge and Understanding · Investigation: Australia (1750–1914)

Draws on (linkage only, D7): VC2HH10K09.E03 (partial — non-First Nations groups only) · VC2HH10K09.E04 · VC2HH10K09.E05 · VC2HH10K09.E06.

- VC2HH10K09.E03 — taught through the non-First Nations groups only (*see D3 note*)
- VC2HH10K09.E04
- VC2HH10K09.E05
- VC2HH10K09.E06

D3 note (binding): VC2HH10K09.E01 (Torres Strait Islands colonisation and pearling) and VC2HH10K09.E02 (Victorian frontier violence, the Eumeralla Wars) are **excluded entire**; their ids are retained as linkage keys and reported ACCEPTED in coverage audits. VC2HH10K09.E03 is taught through its remaining groups — the six non-First Nations groups of part 2 (local-born colonists, Chinese migrants, cameleers, working people and unions, religious groups, different regions) — with the First Nations groups dropped from the brainstorm. The excluded material must not be authored in later, including as context, background or a caption.

Teaching choices (chapter block spec, §3): this section teaches continuity and change through **Federation and democracy**: defence and economic concerns, the key steps (Australasian Federation Conference 1890, the Federal Constitutional Conventions, the referendums), and the significance of women’s voting rights to Australian democracy. The group-contributions brainstorm keeps its non-First Nations groups. Skills cross-links: sequencing and source ordering (7B), source purpose and context (7C), continuity and change (8A), causes and consequences (8B).

Subject words — define at first use (D2 exemption 2):

Word	Gloss used in this section
colony	a settlement ruled by another country
federation	a union in which separate colonies or states join one nation but keep some powers of their own
constitution	the set of rules for how a country is governed
referendum	a vote in which the people themselves decide a question
democracy	a system of government in which the people choose their representatives by voting
suffrage	the right to vote in elections
nationalism	pride in and loyalty to one’s own nation
egalitarianism	the belief that all people should be treated as equals
primary source	a record made at the time being studied
secondary source	an account made later by someone using primary sources
significance	how important something was, judged by its effects

Sources (SOURCE_USE — real referents carry a source line; retrieved 2026-08-25 where a collection was consulted, otherwise the original document is cited):

Referent	Source line
Tenterfield Oration, 24 October 1889: Parkes's call for an Australian government and nation	Reported in the <i>Sydney Morning Herald</i> , 25 October 1889; delivered at the Tenterfield School of Arts
Australasian Federation Conference, Melbourne, February 1890	Official record of proceedings, State Library Victoria collection
First National Australasian Convention, Sydney, 2 March – 9 April 1891	<i>Official Record of the Debates of the National Australasian Convention</i> , 1891
Second National Australasian Convention, Adelaide (Mar–Apr 1897), Sydney (Sep 1897), Melbourne (Jan–Mar 1898)	<i>Official Record of the National Australasian Convention Debates</i> , 1897–1898
First referendum, 3 June 1898 (NSW, Vic, SA, Tas); second referendum, 20 June 1899; Queensland, 2 September 1899; Western Australia, 31 July 1900; NSW statutory minimum of 80,000 votes in 1898	Colonial electoral returns, held in state archives; Parliament of Australia, House of Representatives Federation records
Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act 1900, royal assent 9 July 1900; preamble quoted in part 5	Original statute (63 & 64 Vict. c. 12), UK Parliamentary Archives
Federation Day, 1 January 1901, Centennial Park, Sydney; first federal election 29–30 March 1901; first federal parliament opened in Melbourne 9 May 1901	Government Gazette of NSW, 1 January 1901; Parliamentary records
Commonwealth Franchise Act 1902 (No. 8 of 1902): federal vote and right to stand for women	Original statute, National Archives of Australia
Constitutional Amendment (Adult Suffrage) Act 1894 (South Australia)	Original statute, Parliament of South Australia
Women's suffrage petition (the "Monster Petition"), Victoria, 1891, approx. 30,000 signatures	Public Record Office Victoria, VPRS 3622/P/1
<i>Shearing the Rams</i> , Tom Roberts, 1890	National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
<i>Fire's On</i> , Arthur Streeton, 1891; <i>On the Wallaby Track</i> , Frederick McCubbin, 1896	Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney
<i>The Bulletin</i> , founded Sydney 1880; masthead motto "Australia for the White Man" from 1886	State Library of New South Wales, serial collection
German annexation of north-eastern New Guinea, 1884	German imperial proclamation, 3 November 1884
Major-General Sir Bevan Edwards, report on Australian defence, 1889	Report presented to the colonial governments, 1889

1. The big question

Between 1750 and 1914, Australian society was changed from the ground up. In 1750 there were no British settlements on the continent. By 1914, six British colonies had joined together to form one new nation — the Commonwealth of Australia — with its own parliament, its own laws and its own sense of who it was.

This section asks the chapter's big question: **what events, ideas, people and movements shaped Australian society in these years?** You will use three ideas from your historical skills:

- **Continuity and change** — what stayed the same and what changed.
- **Causes and consequences** — why things happened, and what followed from them.
- **Significance** — how important something was, judged by its effects.

A **colony** is a settlement ruled by another country. By the late 1800s there were six British colonies: New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia and Tasmania. Each had its own government, its

own laws and its own customs duties at its borders. The colonies cooperated in some ways, but they also competed. The story of this section is how they came to form one nation — and who pushed for that change.

2. Who built colonial society?

Australian society in these years was not shaped by governments alone. Many groups contributed to it. Look at the grid of groups below. It is a **brainstorm** — a starting map of ideas that you will add to as you work through this section.

Groups that built colonial society, 1750-1914

A brainstorm to add to as you work through the section

Local-born colonists - Born locally, not in Britain - Farms, towns, businesses - Pushed self-government	Chinese migrants - From the 1850s gold rushes - Merchants, market gardens - Shopkeepers, cabinet makers	Cameleers ('Afghans') - Inland transport from 1860s - Overland telegraph, 1872 - The Ghan takes their name
Working people & unions - Organised in the 1880s-90s - Strikes of the early 1890s - Then formed parties	Religious groups - Schools, hospitals, charities - Led reform campaigns - Temperance movement	Six regions - Different economies - Wool, wheat, sugar, gold - Free trade vs tariffs

A grid of the six groups that built colonial society, 1750–1914: local-born colonists, Chinese migrants, cameleers, working people and unions, religious groups, and the six colonies as different regions. Each group lists short examples of its contributions.

- **Local-born colonists.** By the 1850s, more people in the colonies were born locally than had arrived from Britain. Local-born people were sometimes called “currency” colonists, to distinguish them from the “sterling” — those born in Britain. They built farms, towns and businesses, and pushed for self-government.
- **Chinese migrants.** From the gold rushes of the 1850s, thousands of Chinese migrants came to the colonies. They worked the goldfields, then became merchants, market gardeners, cabinet makers and shopkeepers, supplying food and goods to whole districts.
- **Cameleers.** From the 1860s, camel drivers — often called “Afghans”, though many came from Afghanistan and what is now Pakistan — carried wool, supplies and equipment across the dry inland where horses and bullocks could not work. Camel trains supported the building of the overland telegraph line, finished in 1872. The famous inland train, the Ghan, takes its name from them.
- **Working people and unions.** Shearers, miners, wharf workers and domestic servants organised unions in the 1880s and 1890s. After the big strikes of the early 1890s, workers formed political parties to speak for them in parliament.
- **Religious groups.** Churches built schools, hospitals and charities. Some religious groups also led reform campaigns; the temperance movement, which campaigned against alcohol, was one of the largest — and it became a major force for women’s voting rights, as you will see in part 7.
- **Different regions.** The six colonies had different economies and interests. New South Wales grew wool and favoured free trade; Victoria built factories and protected them with tariffs; Queensland grew sugar; South

Australia grew wheat and mined copper; Western Australia boomed on gold in the 1890s; Tasmania farmed and supplied the other colonies. These differences made joining together hard — and interesting.

Task A (scaffolded). Copy the grid into your book. Add one more contribution for any three groups, using what you already know or can find in a reliable source.

3. Why unite? Six factors behind Federation

A **federation** is a union in which separate colonies or states join one nation but keep some powers of their own. By the 1890s, a growing number of people argued that the six colonies should federate. The factors below explain why.

Six factors behind Federation

1. Defence concerns

Tiny colonial forces
Huge coastline to guard
European powers in the Pacific; Edwards report, 1889

2. Economic concerns

Tariffs at colonial borders
Railway gauges did not match
1890s depression: banks failed, work was lost

3. The 'White Australia' ideal

Each colony had its own immigration laws; many wanted one national law (defined in the section)

4. Nationalist ideals

Growing Australian identity
Artists and writers
Australian Natives Association, founded 1871

5. Egalitarianism

Mateship and the 'fair go'
People judged by work, not by birth
A national parliament

6. Overseas models

British Westminster system: responsible government
USA federal model: Senate with equal state seats

Six factor cards explaining why the colonies federated: defence, the economy and the 1890s depression; also the “White Australia” ideal, nationalism, egalitarianism, and overseas models such as Britain’s Westminster system and the United States federal model.

1. Defence concerns. Each colony had only a small military force, and the continent’s coastline was huge. European powers were active in the Pacific: Germany took over north-eastern New Guinea in 1884, and France held New Caledonia. The British government encouraged the colonies to unite their defence. In 1889, British Major-General Sir Bevan Edwards toured the colonies and reported that only a united force could defend Australia properly.

2. Economic concerns. The colonies taxed each other’s goods at their borders, and their railway lines did not even use the same gauge, so trains could not cross from colony to colony. Then came the depression of the 1890s: banks failed, businesses closed and men lost work. Many people concluded that six separate economies were weaker than one.

3. Nationalist ideals. More and more people felt they were Australian, not just British. Artists and writers celebrated bush life, and groups such as the Australian Natives Association — a society for Australian-born men, founded in 1871 — made federation their cause. This pride in the nation is called **nationalism**.

4. Egalitarianism. Colonists liked to describe their society as one where people were judged by their work, not by their birth. They called this mateship and a “fair go”. Historians use the word **egalitarianism**: the belief that all people should be treated as equals. Many people believed a national parliament could protect these ideals better than six separate ones.

5. The “White Australia” ideal — a contested term, defined before use.

The Victorian Curriculum uses the term “*White Australia*” ideal but does not define it. This section therefore treats it as follows: the widely held aim in the 1890s of restricting immigration of non-European people, so that Australia would remain a place of British-style settlement. The term was a slogan of the time: *The Bulletin* magazine printed “Australia for the White Man” across its front from 1886. Some supporters argued the policy would protect wages and working conditions from cheap labour. The aim was racist: it judged people by race and sought to exclude them on that basis, including people such as Chinese residents who had already made lives in the colonies. The laws built on it, including the Immigration Restriction Act 1901, were dismantled by later parliaments through the twentieth century. Other definitions of the phrase exist and are not interchangeable with this one.

For federation, this factor mattered because each colony had its own immigration laws, and many people wanted one national law instead.

6. Overseas models. Colonists looked at two systems. From Britain’s **Westminster system** they took responsible government — a parliament in which ministers must keep the support of the elected house. From the United States they took the federal model designed in Washington: a written **constitution** that divides power between a national government and the states, with a Senate in which every state has equal seats. Australia’s founders borrowed ideas from both.

Two sides of the debate. Historians record the strongest arguments on each side, and so should you.

Supporters of federation said	Opponents of federation said
United defence would keep the continent safe.	The smaller colonies — Tasmania, South Australia, Western Australia — would always lose the vote and be dominated by New South Wales and Victoria.
One market, one set of trade laws, one railway plan would end the depression faster.	A national parliament would cost money the colonies did not have, and the distance between colonies made one government clumsy.
A nation would give Australia one voice in the world.	Some union leaders feared the new Senate, with two states’ worth of wealthy members, would block laws that helped workers.

Sir George Reid, the New South Wales premier, became famous for his 1898 “Yes-No” speech: he said the draft constitution needed changes before he could support it. The referendum results in part 4 show how divided voters were.

4. The key steps to Federation, 1885–1901

Federation did not happen in a single leap. It took more than a decade of speeches, conferences, conventions and votes. The timeline below shows the key steps.

The key steps to Federation, 1885-1901



A horizontal timeline of the key steps to Federation from 1885 to 1901: the Federal Council of Australasia (1885), the Tenterfield Oration (1889), the 1890 Australasian Federation Conference, the 1891 Federal Constitutional Convention, the Corowa plan (1893), the Bathurst People's Convention (1896), the 1897–1898 Federal Constitutional Convention, the first referendum (1898), the second referendum (1899), the Constitution Act (July 1900), then Federation Day (1 January 1901).

The steps, in order:

1. **1885 — the Federal Council of Australasia.** An early, weak attempt at cooperation. New South Wales never joined it, and it showed that talk alone was not enough.
2. **24 October 1889 — the Tenterfield Oration.** Sir Henry Parkes, the Premier of New South Wales, spoke at Tenterfield near the Queensland border. In the words reported the next day, he asked whether the time had come to create an Australian government and an Australian nation on the Australian continent. It is remembered as the speech that put federation on the public agenda.
3. **February 1890 — the Australasian Federation Conference, Melbourne.** Politicians from all the colonies agreed that federation was the goal and called a convention to plan it.
4. **March–April 1891 — the first Federal Constitutional Convention, Sydney.** Delegates drafted a constitution — a set of rules for the new nation. Sir Samuel Griffith, the Premier of Queensland, led the drafting. But the depression hit, money and attention ran out, and the draft stalled.
5. **1892–1896 — the movement kept alive.** Federation leagues and the Australian Natives Association kept the idea in public view. In 1893, at Corowa on the Murray River, John Quick proposed a new plan: let the people elect the convention delegates themselves. In 1896, a people's convention at Bathurst, New South Wales, pressed the same demand.
6. **1897–1898 — the second Federal Constitutional Convention.** Delegates met in Adelaide, then Sydney, then Melbourne. This time the people elected the delegates in most colonies, so the draft belonged to the voters.

Two Federal Constitutional Conventions

	First convention (1891)	Second convention (1897-1898)
Where and when	Sydney, March-April 1891	Adelaide (Mar-Apr 1897), Sydney (Sep 1897), Melbourne (Jan-Mar 1898)
How delegates were chosen	Chosen by the colonial parliaments	Elected by the people (Queensland's chosen by its parliament)
What it produced	A draft constitution, led by Sir Samuel Griffith	A revised draft, approved for the people to vote on
What happened next	Stalled: the depression took money and attention	Put to the referendums of 1898 and 1899

The second convention's draft is the one the people voted on in the referendums

A comparison table of the two Federal Constitutional Conventions: the 1891 Sydney convention and the 1897-1898 convention held in Adelaide, Sydney and Melbourne, compared by when they met, how delegates were chosen, what they produced and what happened next.

7. **3 June 1898 — the first referendum.** A **referendum** is a vote in which the people themselves decide a question. Voters in New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania voted on the draft constitution. Three colonies voted yes. In New South Wales, yes votes outnumbered no votes — but the colony's law required at least 80,000 votes in favour, and the yes vote fell short. The first attempt failed.
8. **January–February 1899 — the premiers compromise.** The colonial premiers met and changed the draft to win over New South Wales voters.
9. **20 June 1899 — the second referendum.** Four colonies voted again — all yes. Queensland voted separately on 2 September 1899, and Western Australia on 31 July 1900, after the British Act had been passed: yes all round. All six colonies had agreed.
10. **9 July 1900 — the Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act.** The British parliament in London passed the constitution into law.
11. **1 January 1901 — Federation Day.** In Centennial Park, Sydney, the first Governor-General took up the role and the Commonwealth of Australia began. The first federal election followed in March 1901, and the first federal parliament opened in Melbourne on 9 May 1901.

The Federation referendums: how each colony voted

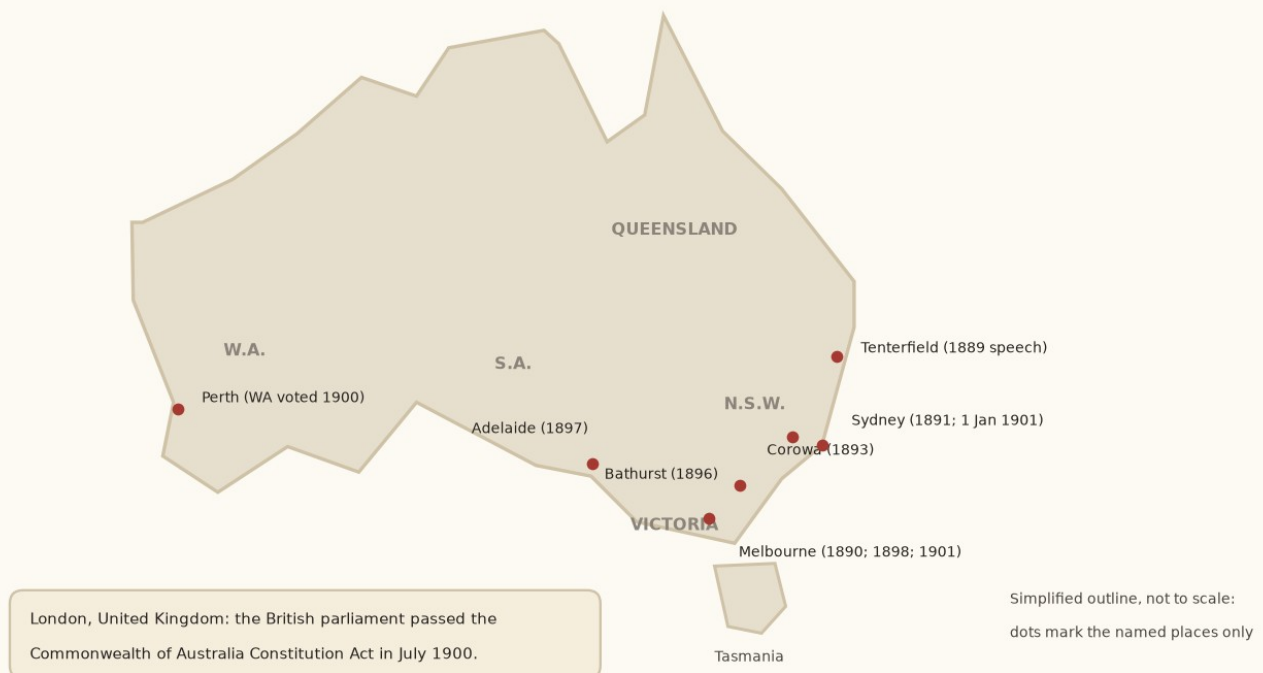
Colony	First referendum, 3 June 1898	Second referendum, 20 June 1899	Later votes
New South Wales	Yes majority - but short of the 80,000 required	Yes	-
Victoria	Yes	Yes	-
South Australia	Yes	Yes	-
Tasmania	Yes	Yes	-
Queensland	Did not vote	Yes, voted separately 2 September 1899	-
Western Australia	Did not vote	Did not vote	Yes, 31 July 1900

Green: yes. Red: failed in 1898 despite a yes majority. By 1900 all six colonies had agreed.

Note: New South Wales failed in 1898 because its yes vote was below the minimum the colony's law required.

A table of the Federation referendums showing how each colony voted: in the first referendum of 3 June 1898, Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania voted yes and New South Wales had a yes majority but fell short of the minimum yes votes its law required; in the second referendum of 20 June 1899 all four voted yes, with Queensland voting yes separately on 2 September 1899; Western Australia voted yes on 31 July 1900.

Where Federation happened: key places in the six colonies



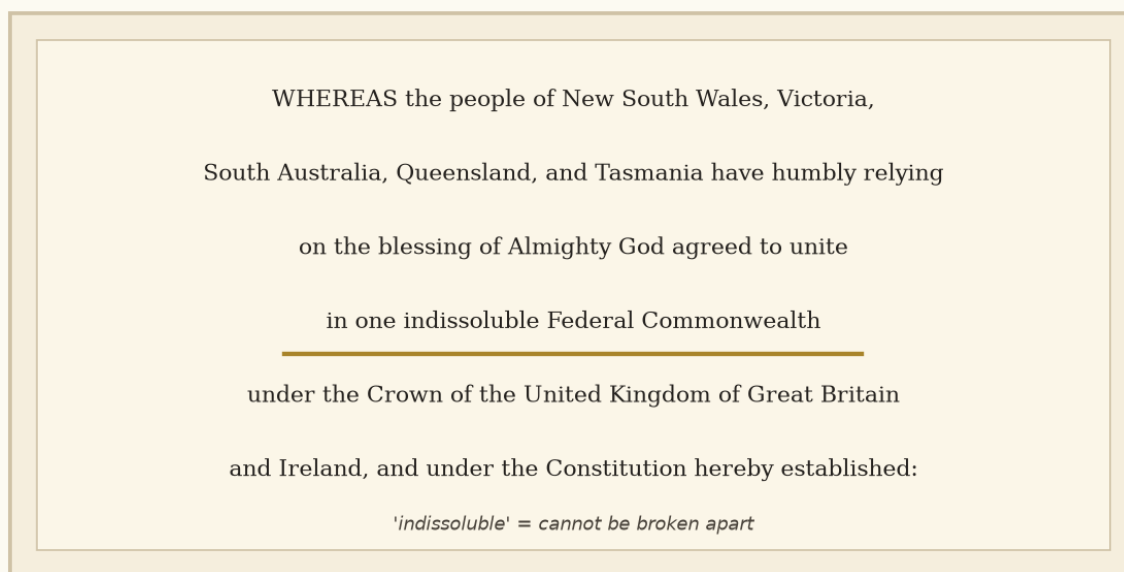
A map of the six colonies in 1900 marking the key places of the Federation story: Tenterfield, Bathurst, Corowa, Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide and Perth, plus London where the Constitution Act was passed.

Task B (scaffolded). Without looking back at the timeline, write these ten steps in order: Tenterfield Oration, Melbourne conference, first convention, Corowa plan, Bathurst convention, second convention, first referendum, second referendum, the Constitution Act, Federation Day. Then check yourself against the timeline and correct any errors.

5. Worked inquiry 1 — reading the preamble

Historians build their accounts from **primary sources** — records made at the time being studied — and test them against **secondary sources** — later accounts that use them. Let us read one of Federation’s most important primary sources together: the opening words of the Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act 1900, called the **preamble**.

The opening words of the new nation's founding law



Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act 1900, preamble (extract, set in modern type)

A primary source: written and passed at the time being studied

A framed reproduction, set in modern type, of the opening words (the preamble) of the Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act 1900; a note beneath the quote explains its hardest word.

Read the preamble again, then follow the three questions.

Question 1 — What does it say? Find the words that tell us *who* agreed to unite. *Modelled answer:* “the people of New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, Queensland, and Tasmania”. The constitution claims its authority from the people, not just from politicians — that is why the referendums mattered.

Question 2 — What does it reveal? The underlined phrase in the preamble (the figure explains its hardest word) means a union that cannot be broken apart, in which power is shared between the nation and the states. What does this tell you about what the founders wanted the new nation to be like? *Modelled answer:* permanent, and genuinely federal — the states would not simply be swallowed up.

Question 3 — What are its limits? The preamble says the people agreed — but not *all* people living in the colonies were allowed to vote in the referendums. Who might be missing from “the people”? *Modelled answer:* women were not enrolled to vote in New South Wales or Victoria in 1898, and many other residents could not vote either; the source reflects the franchise of its own time.

This is how source analysis works: say what it says, then what it reveals, then what it leaves out.

6. The people and groups who pushed Federation

The curriculum asks you to **evaluate contributions** — to judge how much different individuals and groups did to bring Federation about, using evidence.

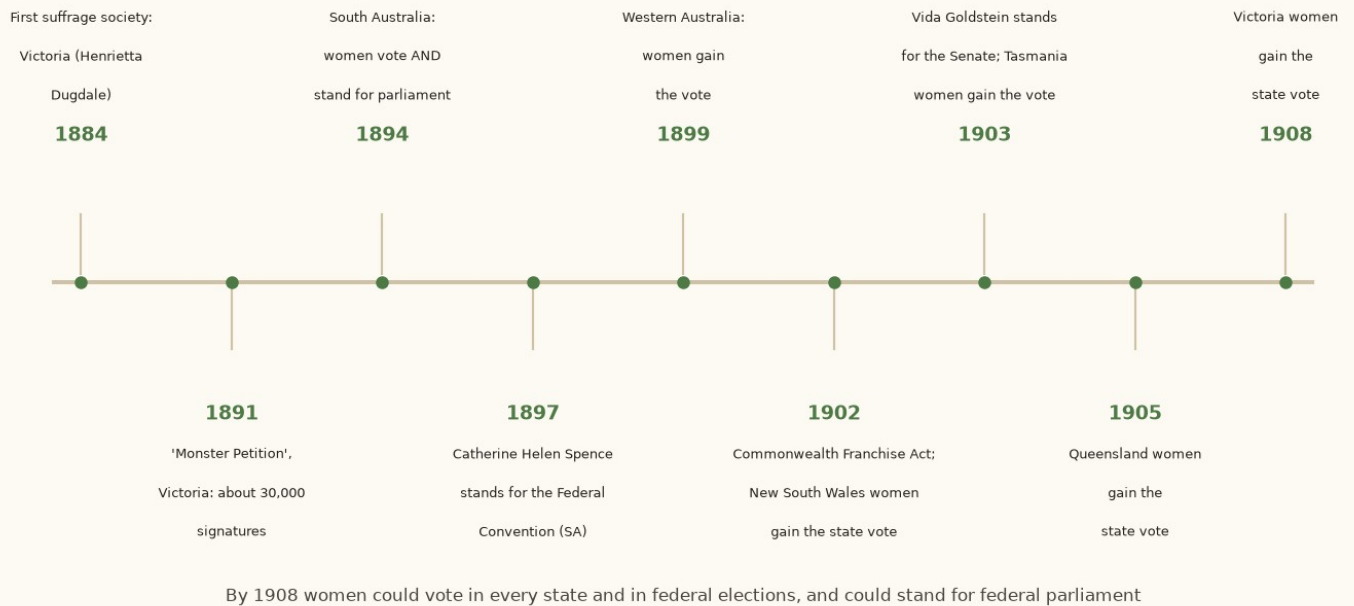
Person or group	What they did
Sir Henry Parkes (NSW)	Five times Premier of New South Wales; his 1889 Tenterfield Oration put federation on the public agenda. He died in 1896, five years before Federation came, and is often called the “Father of Federation”.
Sir Samuel Griffith (Qld)	Led the drafting of the 1891 constitution; later the first Chief Justice of the High Court of Australia.
Edmund Barton (NSW)	Led the federation campaign through the 1890s conventions and referendums; became Australia’s first Prime Minister in January 1901.
Alfred Deakin (Vic)	A driving speaker and organiser at every convention; later Australia’s second Prime Minister.
William Guthrie Spence	Union leader who helped found the shearers’ union; his support showed organised workers could back federation while still demanding fairness for labour.
John Feltham Archibald and <i>The Bulletin</i>	<i>The Bulletin</i> , founded in Sydney in 1880, mixed federation news with nationalist verse and cartoons that made the idea popular.
Australian Natives Association	Friendly society for Australian-born men, founded 1871; ran federation leagues and public campaigns.
Federation leagues	Local groups across the colonies that held meetings, wrote pamphlets and put pressure on politicians.

Artists and writers shaped the nationalism that made federation feel possible. The painters Tom Roberts (*Shearing the Rams*, 1890), Arthur Streeton (*Fire’s On*, 1891) and Frederick McCubbin (*On the Wallaby Track*, 1896) put bush workers and Australian light onto canvas. The writers Banjo Paterson (“The Man from Snowy River”, published in *The Bulletin* in 1890; “Waltzing Matilda”, written in 1895), Henry Lawson (“The Drover’s Wife”, 1892), Joseph Furphy (*Such Is Life*, 1903) and Barbara Baynton (*Bush Studies*, 1902) made Australian characters the heroes of Australian stories.

7. Votes for women

A **democracy** is a system of government in which the people choose their representatives by voting. In 1900, that meant different things in different colonies, because women’s voting rights were won step by step. **Suffrage** means the right to vote in elections.

Winning the vote: women's suffrage in Australia, 1884-1908



A timeline of women's voting rights in Australia from 1884 to 1908: the first suffrage society in Victoria (1884), the Monster Petition in Victoria (1891), South Australia granting women the vote and the right to stand (1894), Western Australia granting women the vote (1899), Catherine Helen Spence standing for the Federal Convention (1897), the Commonwealth Franchise Act (1902), Vida Goldstein standing for the Senate (1903), and the remaining states granting women the vote (New South Wales 1902, Tasmania 1903, Queensland 1905, Victoria 1908).

The movement. Women organised from the 1880s. In 1884, Henrietta Dugdale helped found the Victorian Women's Suffrage Society, the first suffrage society in Australia. In South Australia, Mary Lee worked without tiring for the vote; in New South Wales, Rose Scott hosted weekly meetings where the campaign was planned. The Christian Women's Temperance Union — a religious group campaigning against alcohol — became one of the biggest suffrage organisations, collecting signatures and holding public meetings. In 1891, Victorian women presented a petition of roughly 30,000 signatures — the "Monster Petition" — to their parliament, demanding the vote.

The wins. In 1894, South Australia passed the Constitutional Amendment (Adult Suffrage) Act: women could vote **and** stand for parliament. South Australia was the first Australian colony, and one of the first places in the world, where women could do both. In 1897, Catherine Helen Spence stood for election as a delegate to the Federal Convention — the first woman to stand for political office in Australia. Western Australia gave women the vote in 1899. Then, in 1902, the new federal parliament passed the **Commonwealth Franchise Act**: women who had the vote in their state could not be barred from federal elections because of their sex, and women could stand for federal parliament. Australia became one of the first countries in the world — and is widely recorded as the first — in which women could both vote and stand for the national parliament on the same terms as men. In December 1903, Vida Goldstein stood for the Senate in Victoria — one of the first women in the world to stand for her country's parliament. The remaining states followed: New South Wales in 1902, Tasmania in 1903, Queensland in 1905 and Victoria in 1908.

Who won women the vote? Key campaigners, 1884-1903

Who	What they did
Henrietta Dugdale	Helped found the Victorian Women's Suffrage Society in 1884 - the first suffrage society in Australia.
Mary Lee	Worked without tiring for the vote in South Australia, where women won the right to vote and stand in 1894.
Rose Scott	Hosted weekly meetings at her Sydney home where the New South Wales campaign was planned.
Christian Women's Temperance Union	A religious group campaigning against alcohol; one of the biggest suffrage organisations, collecting signatures and holding meetings.
Catherine Helen Spence	Stood for election to the Federal Convention in South Australia in 1897 - the first woman to stand for political office in Australia.
Vida Goldstein	Stood for the Senate in Victoria in December 1903 - one of the first women in the world to stand for her country's parliament.

Many thousands more women collected signatures, spoke at meetings and wrote letters

A table of key suffrage campaigners and organisations, 1884-1903: Henrietta Dugdale, Mary Lee, Rose Scott, the Christian Women's Temperance Union, Catherine Helen Spence and Vida Goldstein, each with their contribution.

Why it matters. Advancing women's voting rights changed Australian democracy in three ways. First, it roughly doubled the number of people who could choose their representatives. Second, it made politicians answer to women's concerns — health, education, working conditions. Third, it made Australia a watched example: reformers in Britain and the United States pointed to Australia to argue that women's suffrage worked.

8. Worked inquiry 2 — a model paragraph on significance

When you explain why something was significant, build your paragraph in four moves: make a **claim**, give **evidence**, add your **explanation**, then state the **significance**. The figure below shows a worked paragraph, colour-coded by move.

A model paragraph on significance

Question: Why was the Commonwealth Franchise Act 1902 significant for Australian democracy?

CLAIM

The Commonwealth Franchise Act 1902 was an important step in Australian democracy.

EVIDENCE

The Act said that women who had the vote in their state could not be barred from federal elections because of their sex, and that women could stand for federal parliament. In December 1903, Vida Goldstein stood for the Senate in Victoria.

EXPLANATION

Before the Act, women's voting rights depended on the rules of their own state. The Act made the right the same across the new nation, so politicians now had to answer to women voters in every state.

SIGNIFICANCE

This roughly doubled the number of people choosing their representatives, and Australia became an example that reformers in Britain and the United States pointed to in their own campaigns for the vote.

Each move builds on the one before: say it, prove it, explain it, then say why it mattered.

A colour-coded model paragraph on the significance of the Commonwealth Franchise Act 1902 for Australian democracy, labelled by move: claim, evidence, explanation and significance.

Read the paragraph once for sense, then once more move by move. Notice that the evidence names a real law and a real person with a date, and the significance states an effect on Australian democracy rather than repeating the claim.

9. Practice tasks

Scaffolded tasks — work with the supports provided.

1. **Sort the factors.** For each of the six factors in part 3, decide: was it mainly about *security*, about *money*, or about *identity*? Write the factors into the three columns. (Some factors fit two columns — note that too.)
2. **Order the steps.** Use your list from Task B. Write the correct order as a numbered list, then add one phrase per step saying what happened (for example: “1889 — speech at Tenterfield”).
3. **Complete the conventions table.** Copy the comparison table from part 4 and fill in the row for the 1891 convention from memory. Check against the figure and correct your errors.
4. **Read the referendum results.** Using the referendum figure: (a) in which year did New South Wales vote yes? (b) why did the first referendum fail even though most colonies voted yes?
5. **Timeline of the vote.** Copy the suffrage timeline from part 7. Fill in the dates for South Australia, Western Australia and the Commonwealth Franchise Act from memory, then check and correct.
6. **Match the campaigner.** Match each name — Parkes, Griffith, Barton, Deakin, Goldstein, Lee — to its contribution from the tables in parts 6 and 7. Write the pairs as full sentences.

Unscaffolded tasks — no supports; build your answer from scratch.

7. Explain two factors that contributed to Federation. For each, give one specific piece of evidence from this section.
8. Evaluate the contribution of one individual to Federation. State how important their contribution was, and justify your judgement with at least two facts.
9. Explain why the Commonwealth Franchise Act 1902 was significant for the development of Australian democracy. Use the four moves from part 8.

10. Using parts 2 and 7, identify two things that **changed** in Australian society from 1750 to 1914 and one thing that **continued**. Explain each choice in one or two sentences.
-

10. Source-based inquiry

Read this primary source, then answer the questions below it.

Extract, in modern words, from the Commonwealth Franchise Act 1902 (No. 8 of 1902), section 3.

The Act stated, in effect, that no person entitled to vote in elections for a state parliament could be disqualified from voting in federal elections by reason of sex. (*Original statute, National Archives of Australia.*)

1. **Formulate:** write two historical questions this source could help you answer.
2. **Infer:** what does the source tell you about the rights of women in at least some of the states in 1902?
3. **Context:** why was this law passed by the new *federal* parliament in 1902 rather than by the six colonies separately? Use part 4 to help you.
4. **Perspective:** whose voices would you expect to find in the parliamentary debates about this Act, and whose voices might be missing? Explain how the missing voices affect what a historian can learn from the debates.
5. **Evaluate:** is this source more useful for studying *what the law said* or *how women experienced voting*? Explain your answer.

What to look for

Score student work against the band achievement standard (Level 9–10): students analyse the features, content and context of sources; identify the perspectives that individuals and groups held; connect short- and long-term causes with intended and unintended consequences; and judge historical significance by criteria. Expected responses below are a guide, not a script.

- **Groups (part 2, .E03 retained groups):** student can name at least four of the six groups and give a true contribution for each; contributions stay within the non-First Nations groups recorded in §2A — if a student raises excluded material, redirect to the front-of-book note.
- **Factors (part 3, .E04):** student can explain at least two factors with specific evidence (Bevan Edwards's 1889 report; the 1890s depression; the 80,000-vote rule is not required); the contested-terms box is understood as a definition, not a debate prompt about today.
- **Steps (part 4, .E05):** correct order is Tenterfield (1889) → Melbourne conference (1890) → Sydney convention (1891) → Corowa (1893)/Bathurst (1896) → second convention (1897–98) → referendums (1898 fail in NSW; 1899 pass) → Constitution Act (July 1900) → Federation Day (1 January 1901). The 1898 failure is attributed to NSW's statutory minimum, not to a no majority.
- **Preamble inquiry (part 5):** answers show the three moves (what it says, what it reveals, what it leaves out); the limits answer must not be extended into First Nations content (D3) — women and franchise limits are the intended referents.
- **Contributions (part 6, .E05):** evaluations state a judgement plus dated evidence (Parkes's 1889 speech; Griffith's drafting; Barton's first ministry; Deakin's conventions; Spence's union backing; The Bulletin's 1880s–90s influence).
- **Suffrage (part 7, .E06):** student can place SA 1894 (vote and stand), WA 1899, the Commonwealth Franchise Act 1902 and Goldstein's 1903 candidacy in order, and can state why 1902 mattered (doubled the electorate; politicians answered to women; Australia as a model).
- **Model paragraph (part 8):** student writing shows all four moves; evidence is real, named and dated; significance states an effect, not a restatement.
- **Source inquiry (part 10):** questions are genuinely historical (answerable with evidence); the inference notes that some states already let women vote; the context answer links the law to the new federal parliament; the perspective answer names absent voices and their effect on the evidence without drifting into excluded content.

Cross-links to skills sections: sequencing and timeline construction (7B), source purpose and context (7C), value of sources as evidence (7D), perspectives from sources (7E), continuity and change (8A), causes and consequences (8B), significance criteria (8C), sustained interpretation with citations (8D).

Continuity and change: colonists and migrants, 1750–1914

Curriculum trace. Victorian Curriculum 2.0 History, Levels 9 and 10, Historical Knowledge and Understanding — Investigation: Australia (1750–1914). Content description VC2HH10K10. This section teaches the content description through the experiences and perspectives of colonists and migrants. Elaborations taught (cited by code):

Id	Elaboration
.E04	VC2HH10K10.E04
.E05	VC2HH10K10.E05
.E06	VC2HH10K10.E06

The big picture

Between 1750 and 1914 the Australian colonies changed from a handful of British settlements on the coast into six self-governing colonies that joined together as one nation in 1901. That change was driven by the people who arrived: convicts forced to come, free settlers who chose to come, and — especially after gold was found in 1851 — migrants from many parts of the world. Each group experienced the change differently, and each saw it from a different perspective.

The words we are using

Before we go further, let us fix the meaning of the key terms. In this section:

- A **primary source** is something made or written at the time being studied, by someone who was there or took part — a letter, a diary, a law, a photograph, a ship’s log, a building.
- A **secondary source** is something made later, by someone working from primary sources — a historian’s book, a documentary, this workbook.
- An **experience** is what actually happened to a person or group and how it affected them.
- A **perspective** is the way a person or group sees and explains events, shaped by who they are, what they want, and what they value. Two people can watch the same event and describe it in very different ways.
- **Continuity** is what stayed the same across a period. **Change** is what became different. Historians always look for both at once — even in a time of big change, much of life goes on as before.

One idea we will test again and again is the claim that Australia was a land of **opportunity**, where a person could start a **new life**. That phrase is a matter of perspective, not a settled fact. For some arrivals it was true — a transported convict could rise to wealth and respect that England’s strict class system would never have allowed. For other arrivals it was not true — a Chinese miner could work hard and still face violence and laws made to keep people like him out. We will treat both of these views with care, because each one is supported by real evidence. Judging which view fits the evidence best — and for whom — is the historian’s job.

Who came, and why

The colonies grew through three broad streams of arrivals.

1. Convicts (1788–1868). Britain began sending convicts to New South Wales with the First Fleet, which arrived at Sydney Cove in January 1788 under Captain Arthur Phillip — eleven ships carrying about 1,480 people, around 750 of them convicts. Convict colonies followed at Hobart in Van Diemen’s Land (1803) and at Brisbane’s Moreton Bay (1824). Transportation to New South Wales ended in 1840, and the last convict ship reached Western Australia in 1868.

2. Free settlers (1790s onward). Free settlers chose to come. Some were given land and assigned convict workers. New colonies were founded for free settlers rather than convicts: Perth (1829), Melbourne (1835), Adelaide (1836, set up as a convict-free province), and Darwin, first called Palmerston (1869). Brisbane was opened to free settlement in 1842.

3. Non-European migrants (1850s onward). Gold was found in New South Wales and Victoria in 1851, and the gold rushes drew people from around the world. Among them were tens of thousands of Chinese men. From the

1860s, cameleers from British India came to carry goods across the dry interior. From the 1870s and 1880s, Japanese divers joined the pearl-shell industry in northern waters.

The main groups of arrivals to the Australian colonies

Group	Where from	Where they settled	Main work	Main period
Convicts	Britain (England, Ireland, Scotland)	Sydney, Hobart, Brisbane	Assigned labour: building, farming, public works	1788-1868
Free settlers	Britain and Europe	Melbourne, Adelaide, Perth, Darwin	Farming, trade, business, the professions	1790s onward
Chinese migrants	Southern China	Goldfields of Victoria and New South Wales	Gold mining, market gardens, shops	1850s onward
Japanese divers	Japan	Northern ports: Darwin, Thursday Island, Broome	Pearl-shell diving	1870s-1880s onward
Cameleers	British India (now Pakistan, Afghanistan)	Inland routes of central Australia	Camel transport; telegraph and railway building	1860s onward

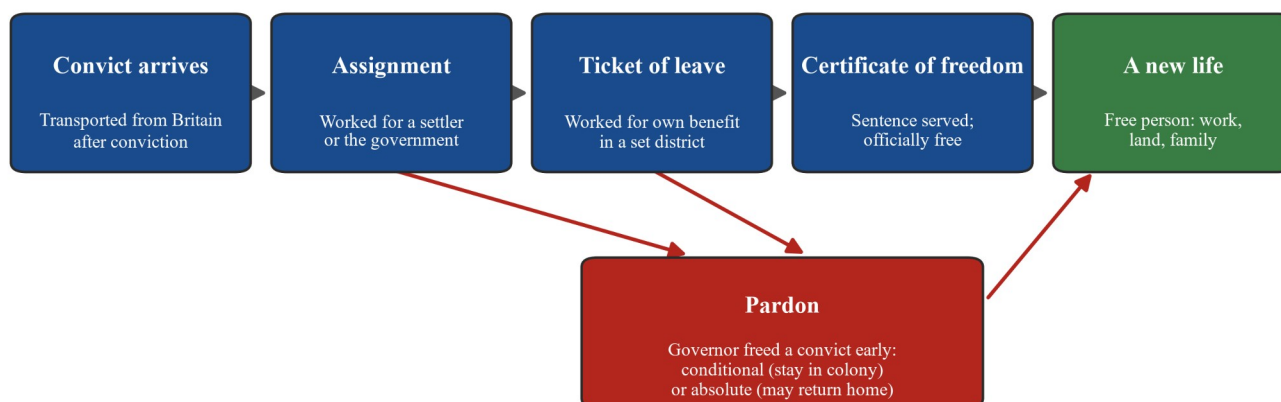
A table of the main groups of arrivals to the Australian colonies, listing where each group came from, where they settled, the work they did, and the main period of arrival

Convicts: a new life away from England's rigid class structure

In England, your birth largely fixed your place in society. A poor labourer stayed poor. A person convicted of a crime was branded a criminal for life. Transportation was meant to be a punishment. But in the colonies, convicts found that the old class rules did not hold as tightly. A convict who had skills, or luck, or sheer hard work could gain freedom and then build a position that would have been closed to them at home.

The path ran through a set of official steps.

The convict's pathway to freedom



Most convicts followed the top path. A governor's pardon (bottom) could free a convict early, before the sentence ended.

A labelled flow diagram showing the stages a convict could pass through, from arrival and assignment, to a ticket of leave, to a certificate of freedom or a pardon, and then to a new life as a free person

- **Assignment.** On arrival, most convicts were assigned to work for a settler or the government.
- **Ticket of leave.** A well-behaved convict could earn a ticket of leave, which let them work for themselves in a set district before their sentence ended.
- **Certificate of freedom.** When the sentence expired, the convict received a certificate of freedom.
- **Pardon.** A governor could grant a pardon, which freed the convict early. A *conditional* pardon freed the person within the colony; an *absolute* pardon let them return to Britain.

Two real lives show what this could mean.

Francis Greenway (1777–1837). Greenway was a builder and architect in Bristol. In 1812 he pleaded guilty to forging a financial document and was sentenced to fourteen years' transportation, a death sentence having been reduced. He reached Sydney in February 1814 on the ship *General Hewitt*. Governor Lachlan Macquarie saw his skill and put him to work designing public buildings. Greenway was freed at the lighthouse on 16 December 1817. He designed some of the colony's finest buildings, including the Macquarie Lighthouse (1816–1818), Hyde Park Barracks (1818–1819), St James' Church (1820–1824) and St Matthew's Church, Windsor (1817). In England a convicted forger was shut out of respectable work. In Sydney the same man shaped the face of the city.

Francis Greenway (1777–1837): from convict to the colony's leading architect

Year	Event in Greenway's life
1777	Born in England; becomes a builder and architect in Bristol
1812	Pleads guilty to forging a financial document; sentenced to 14 years' transportation
Feb 1814	Arrives in Sydney on the ship <i>General Hewitt</i>
1815	Governor Macquarie puts his architectural skills to work on public buildings
1816–1818	Designs the Macquarie Lighthouse
Dec 1817	Freed at the lighthouse
1817	Designs St Matthew's Church, Windsor
1818–1819	Designs Hyde Park Barracks, Sydney
1820–1824	Designs St James' Church, Sydney

Shaded rows mark the turning points: conviction, arrival, and freedom.

A table tracing Francis Greenway's rise from convicted forger to the colony's leading architect, listing the key dates, roles and buildings

Samuel Terry (about 1776–1838). Terry was convicted in January 1800 of stealing 400 pairs of stockings and transported. In Sydney he worked as a stonecutter, then earned a farm in 1808. He married in 1810, bought property on Pitt Street, traded, supplied food to the government, held shares in the Bank of New South Wales, and from 1820 ran flour mills. When he died his personal estate was valued at £250,000, and his Sydney rentals brought in over £10,000 a year. He became one of the richest people in the colony.

Greenway and Terry did not just survive their sentences. They made lasting contributions to colonial society as it emerged — one with buildings that still stand, the other with the wealth and enterprise of a growing economy. Their stories support the view that Australia could offer a new life. But we must ask: whose new life? The opportunities convicts gained were built on land and labour that came at a cost to others. And a convict's "new life" looked very different from a free settler's, or from a non-European migrant's.

Free settlers: choice and its limits

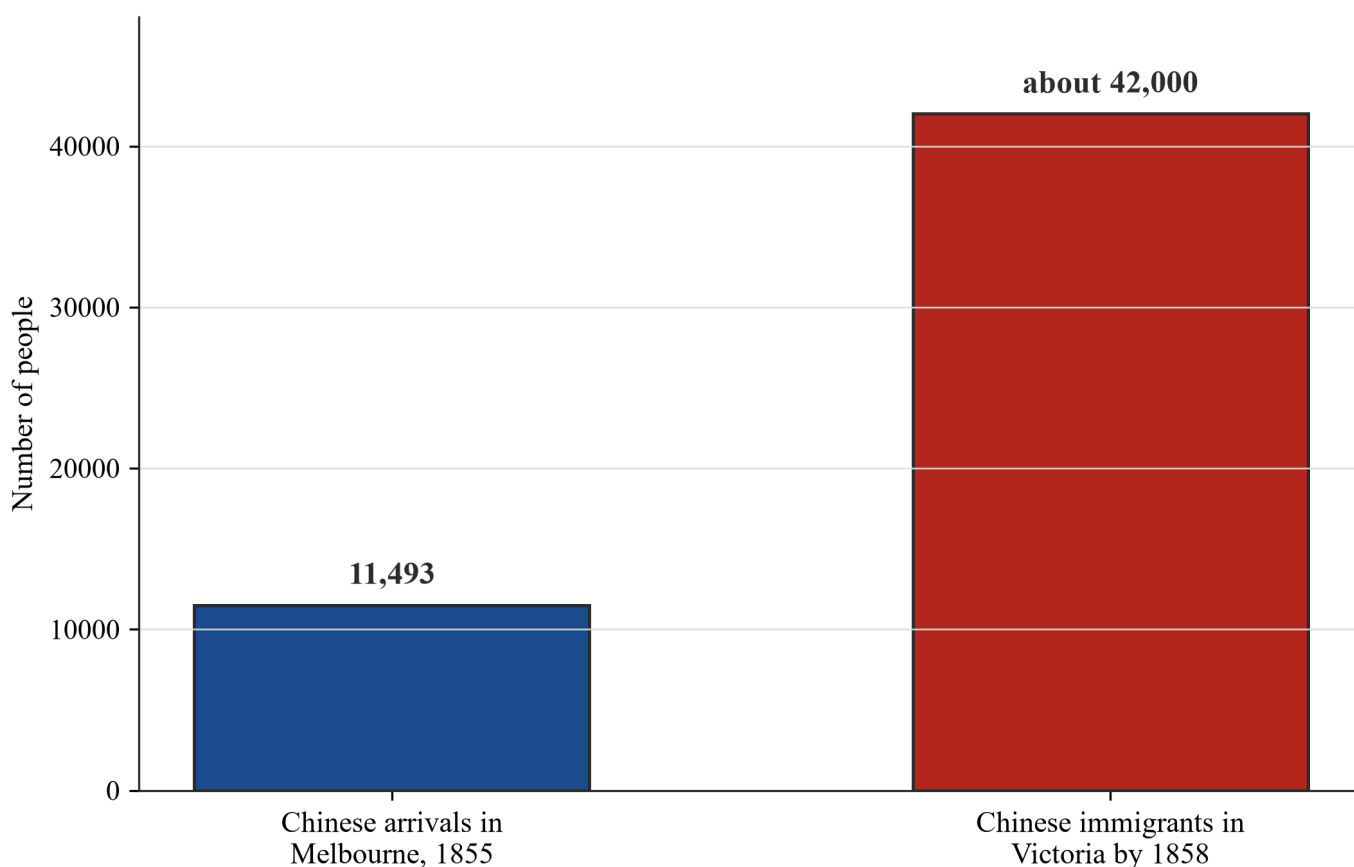
Free settlers came by choice, often with some money or skills, and they arrived with legal rights that convicts did not have. They could own land from the start, employ convicts, and take part in public life as the colonies gained their own parliaments. Many did well. Yet free settlement was not a simple success story. The journey was long and dangerous, the land was unfamiliar, and many newcomers struggled. Assisted migration schemes later helped poorer British families to come, and figures such as Caroline Chisholm (1808–1877) worked to protect newly arrived women. The free settler's perspective often stressed independence and self-reliance — and often looked down on convicts, even as the colony depended on convict labour.

Non-European experiences before the 1900s

The gold rushes and the growth of northern industries drew migrants from beyond Europe. Their experiences show that “opportunity” in Australia came with sharp limits for people who were not European.

Chinese people on the goldfields. Chinese men arrived in large numbers from the early 1850s. In 1855 there were 11,493 Chinese arrivals in Melbourne, and by 1858 about 42,000 Chinese immigrants had reached Victoria. They often worked claims — a miner’s registered patch of ground — that others had given up, and many were successful. But they also met strong prejudice. In July 1857, at the Buckland River in Victoria, around 100 European rioters attacked the Chinese camp; at least three Chinese miners died, and the camp and a newly built joss house, a Chinese temple, were destroyed. From late 1860 to 1861, at Lambing Flat (now Young) in New South Wales, crowds of up to 3,000 attacked Chinese miners, and about 1,000 Chinese were forced off the field. Colonies responded with laws aimed only at the Chinese. Victoria’s law of 1855 imposed a £10 tax on each Chinese person arriving by ship and limited how many Chinese passengers one ship could carry.

Chinese arrivals in Victoria during the gold rush



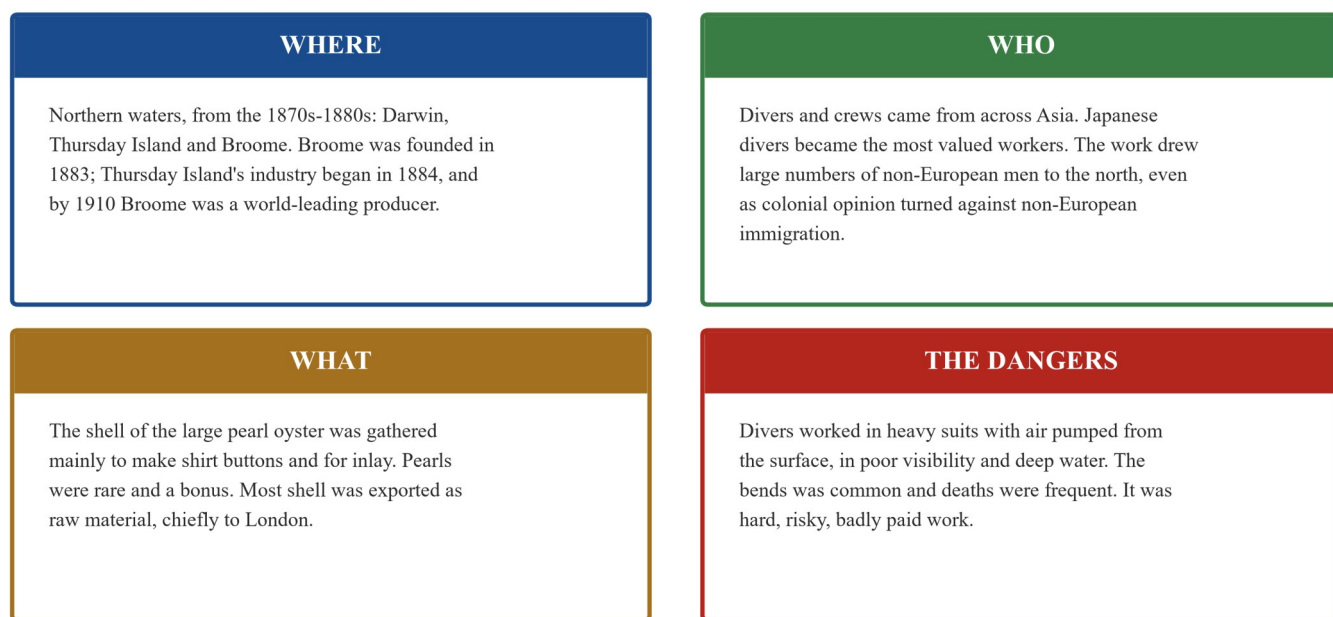
In just three years the number of Chinese arrivals in Victoria grew rapidly, prompting the colony to pass laws aimed only at the Chinese.

A bar chart showing the rise of Chinese arrivals in Victoria during the gold rush, from 11,493 arrivals in Melbourne in 1855 to about 42,000 across Victoria by 1858

Japanese pearlers in northern waters. From the 1870s and 1880s a pearl-shell industry grew in northern waters, from Darwin and Thursday Island to Broome. The shell of the large pearl oyster was gathered mainly to make shirt buttons, and most shell was exported to London. Diving was hard and dangerous work. Divers went down in heavy suits, with air pumped from the surface, into poor visibility and deep water where the bends was common and deaths were frequent. Japanese divers became the most valued workers in the industry. By the 1880s Broome and Thursday Island were busy pearling ports; Thursday Island’s industry was founded in 1884, and by 1910 Broome was one of the world’s leading producers. The work brought non-European divers into the north in large numbers, even as colonial opinion turned against non-European immigration.

The pearl-shell industry in northern Australia

Before the 1900s, pearl-shell was one of the north's biggest industries, and it depended on non-European divers.



An infographic of the pearl-shell industry in northern Australia, showing where it operated, who worked in it, what the shell was used for, and the dangers divers faced

Afghan cameleers in the interior. From the 1860s, cameleers — men from British India, in what is now Pakistan and Afghanistan — brought camels to carry goods across the dry centre, where horses and bullocks could not cope. They supported exploration, supplied remote mines and stations, and helped build the Overland Telegraph Line (completed in 1872) and the railways that followed. The railway later nicknamed “The Ghan” honours them. By 1901 an estimated 2,000 to 4,000 cameleers were at work, and they also established the first mosques in Australia.

Movement of peoples to the Australian colonies, 1788-1914



A timeline of key events in the movement of peoples to the Australian colonies, from the First Fleet in 1788 through the gold rushes, pearling and Federation in 1901

Comparing experiences and perspectives

Set side by side, the groups show why “opportunity” meant different things to different people. A convict, a free settler and a Chinese miner all helped build the colonies, but they did so under very different conditions, and they saw the colonies through different eyes.

Three views of the same colonies: experiences and perspectives

	A convict	A free settler	A Chinese miner
How they came	Forced: transported after conviction	By choice, often with money or skills	By choice, drawn by the gold rushes
What they gained	Freedom, and a chance to rise (for some)	Land, rights and a voice in public life	A living from mining, for many a good one
What stood in their way	A sentence, hard labour, a convict's label	A long, dangerous journey; unfamiliar land	Prejudice, violence and laws aimed only at them
How they likely saw the colonies	A punishment that could become a second chance	A land of independence and self-reliance	A place of hard work that still treated them as outsiders

A table of three views of the same colonies — a convict, a free settler and a Chinese miner — showing what each group gained, what stood in their way, and how each was likely to see the colonies

Continuity and change

The pattern of this whole period is not “everything changed” or “nothing changed”. It is both at once.

Continuity and change, 1750-1914

What CHANGED	What CONTINUED
The colonies grew from one settlement into six, then into one nation in 1901.	British law, language and institutions stayed the foundation of public life.
The population shifted from mostly convicts to mostly free, self-governing people.	The colonies kept relying on unfree or badly paid labour: convicts early on, cheap non-European labour later.
The economy moved from wool and convicts to gold, wheat, mining and industry.	Prejudice against people seen as outsiders continued, moving from convicts to the Chinese and other non-European arrivals.
From the 1850s the population became far more diverse, drawing people from China, Japan, India and Europe.	The chance to own land and rise in the world stayed unequal - it depended on who you were and where you came from.

A table sorting the developments of 1750–1914 into what changed and what continued, for colonists and for migrants

What **changed**: the colonies grew from one settlement into six, then one nation. The population shifted from mostly convicts to mostly free and self-governing people. The economy moved from wool and convicts to gold, wheat, mining and industry. And from the 1850s the population became far more diverse, drawing people from China, Japan, India, and across the Pacific and Europe.

What **continued**: British law, language and institutions stayed the foundation of public life. The colonies kept depending on unfree or badly paid labour at key moments — convict labour early on, and cheap non-European labour in pearling and other industries later. And prejudice against people seen as outsiders continued too, moving from

convicts to the Chinese and other non-European arrivals. Watching both the change and the continuity at the same time is the point of this section.

Worked inquiries

These two worked inquiries show you how to build a historical answer from real evidence. Follow each step, and notice how every claim is tied to a dated fact or a named source.

Worked inquiry 1 — scaffolded: How far did convicts begin a “new life”?

Question. Using Francis Greenway as a case study, explain how a transported convict could begin a new life away from England’s rigid class structure.

Step	What we do	Why it matters
1. Restate the question	We are explaining how a convict could start again, using one real person as evidence.	Keeps the answer focused on the question, not on a life story.
2. Establish the “before”	Greenway was a Bristol builder; in 1812 he pleaded guilty to forgery and was sentenced to fourteen years’ transportation.	To show a “new life” we must first show what his old life and punishment were.
3. Establish the change	He reached Sydney in February 1814 on the <i>General Hewitt</i> ; Governor Macquarie put his architectural skills to work; he was freed on 16 December 1817.	These dated facts are the turning points — the moment the old life stopped and the new one began.
4. Give evidence of the “new life”	He designed the Macquarie Lighthouse (1816–1818), Hyde Park Barracks (1818–1819), St James’ Church (1820–1824) and St Matthew’s, Windsor (1817).	Concrete, surviving buildings are strong evidence that he rose to a respected position.
5. Link back to class structure	In England a convicted forger was shut out of respectable work; in Sydney he became the colony’s leading architect.	This is the analytical point — the contrast with England’s rigid class system is what makes it a “new life”.
6. Add a limit	His skills were rare. Many convicts never rose above hard labour, and his rise depended on a governor who valued him.	A good answer admits limits — the “new life” was not guaranteed for every convict.

Model answer. Francis Greenway’s life shows how a convict could begin a new life because the colony judged him by what he could do, not by his conviction. In England his guilty plea for forgery in 1812 marked him out and ended his prospects; the sentence of fourteen years’ transportation was meant to remove him from society. Yet after he reached Sydney in February 1814, Governor Macquarie used his skill as an architect, and once freed in 1817 Greenway designed buildings such as Hyde Park Barracks and St James’ Church that still stand. His case supports the view that Australia offered a new life away from England’s rigid class structure. The limit is that his success was unusual: it rested on a rare skill and a governor’s favour, so it cannot stand for every convict’s experience.

Worked inquiry 2 — scaffolded: How does a law reveal perspective?

Question. What does Victoria’s 1855 law on Chinese arrivals tell us about the experiences of Chinese miners and the perspective of the colonial government?

Step	What we do	Why it matters
1. Identify the source type	It is a law — a primary source made	A law is a primary source; knowing

Step	What we do	Why it matters
	by the colonial government in 1855, at the height of the gold rushes.	who made it tells us whose perspective it carries.
2. State what it did	It imposed a £10 tax on each Chinese person arriving by ship and limited the number of Chinese passengers one ship could carry.	These are the facts of the source — what it actually says.
3. Ask who it targets	The tax and the passenger limit applied only to the Chinese, not to other migrants.	A law aimed at one group shows that the government saw that group as a problem to be managed.
4. Infer the government's perspective	The government wanted to slow and control Chinese immigration, reflecting the prejudice on the goldfields.	Laws reveal official attitudes; this one shows an official wish to keep Chinese numbers down.
5. Infer the Chinese experience	For Chinese arrivals the law made the journey costlier and harder, and marked them out as unwelcome.	This links the law to the lived experience of the people it targeted.
6. Corroborate	The law sits alongside goldfields violence, such as the Buckland River attack of July 1857 and the Lambing Flat attacks of 1860–1861.	Other evidence confirms that the law was part of a wider pattern of hostility.

Model answer. Victoria's 1855 law is a primary source that reveals an official perspective: the colonial government wanted to limit Chinese immigration. By charging a £10 tax only on Chinese arrivals and capping how many could travel on one ship, the law treated the Chinese as a group to be controlled, not welcomed. For Chinese miners this made arrival more costly and signalled that they were seen as outsiders. The law is one part of a wider pattern, because it appeared alongside violence such as the Buckland River attack of 1857 and the Lambing Flat attacks of 1860–1861. So the source tells us both what the government thought and what non-European migrants had to endure.

Practice tasks

Scaffolded

These tasks give you the steps. Work through each prompt in order.

Task 1. The arrival groups. (a) Name the three broad streams of arrivals described in this section. (b) For each, give one example of where they settled and one kind of work they did. (c) Use the arrivals table to check your answers.

Task 2. The convict's path. (a) List the four official stages a convict could pass through, in order, from arrival to freedom. (b) Explain the difference between a conditional pardon and an absolute pardon. (c) Explain why a ticket of leave was valuable to a convict.

Task 3. Samuel Terry. (a) State the crime Terry was convicted of and the year. (b) List three ways he built his wealth after gaining freedom. (c) Give one figure that shows how wealthy he became. (d) Explain why Terry's story supports the idea of a "new life".

Task 4. Free settlers. (a) Give two ways a free settler's legal position was better than a convict's. (b) Name one difficulty free settlers still faced. (c) Explain one reason a free settler might look down on convicts, and one reason the colony still depended on convict labour.

Task 5. Chinese goldfields. (a) In what year was gold found, and what effect did this have on migration? (b) How many Chinese arrivals were recorded in Melbourne in 1855, and how many across Victoria by 1858? (c) Describe what happened at the Buckland River in July 1857.

Task 6. Cause and consequence. (a) Give one cause of Chinese migration to Victoria in the 1850s. (b) Give one consequence of that migration for the Chinese, and one consequence for colonial policy. (c) Explain how the 1855 law connects the two.

Unscaffolded

These tasks give you the question only. Plan and structure your own answer.

Task 7. “Transportation was meant to be a punishment, but for some convicts it became an opportunity.” Using Francis Greenway and Samuel Terry, assess this claim. Give reasons and limits.

Task 8. Explain how the experiences of Chinese miners show that Australia was a land of opportunity for some people but not for others. Use dated evidence.

Task 9. Choose one group of non-European migrants from this section (Chinese miners, Japanese pearlers, or Afghan cameleers) and explain both their contribution to the colonies and the obstacles they faced.

Task 10. Using evidence from this section, explain one thing that changed and one thing that continued between 1750 and 1914 for people arriving in the Australian colonies. Explain why it is important to notice both.

Source-based inquiry

Task 11. Read the primary source below, then question it as a historian would. The source is a summary of the key provisions of a Victorian law, passed in 1855, often called the Chinese Immigrants Statute. It was the first of several colonial laws aimed only at Chinese arrivals.

Primary source — Victorian law on Chinese arrivals, 1855 (key provisions, summarised). The law imposed a tax of £10 on every Chinese person who arrived in Victoria by ship, to be paid by the ship’s master. It also limited the number of Chinese passengers a ship could carry, based on the ship’s size, so that only a set number could land at one time.

VICTORIA

No. 13 of 1855

AN ACT TO MAKE PROVISION FOR CERTAIN IMMIGRANTS

(key provisions, summarised)

Be it enacted that the following provisions shall apply to persons of the Chinese race arriving in the Colony of Victoria by ship.

- I.** Every Chinese person arriving in Victoria by ship shall pay a tax of TEN POUNDS (£10), to be collected from the master of the ship before the passenger may land.
- II.** No ship shall carry into Victoria more than one Chinese passenger for every TEN TONS of the ship's burden, so that the number who may land at one time is limited by the size of the vessel.
- III.** A master of a ship who carries more Chinese passengers than this Act allows, or who lands one before the tax is paid, shall be liable to a penalty for each passenger carried in excess.

Source: Victorian statute of 1855, commonly called the Chinese Immigrants Statute. Provisions summarised for study. It was the first of several colonial laws aimed only at Chinese arrivals.

A styled reproduction of the key provisions of the 1855 Victorian law on Chinese arrivals, showing the ten pound tax and the passenger limit as a primary source document

Answer these questions in full sentences:

- (a) What kind of source is this, and who made it? When was it made?
 - (b) What two things did the law do?
 - (c) Who did the law apply to — and who did it leave out? What does that tell you about the government's perspective?
 - (d) How would this law have changed the experience of a Chinese person trying to reach the goldfields?
 - (e) What other evidence from this section could you use to check (corroborate) what this source suggests about attitudes to the Chinese?
 - (f) Would this source be more useful for understanding the government's perspective, or the Chinese miners' experience? Explain your choice.
-

Answers

Key points for the scaffolded and unscaffolded tasks. Use these to check your work, not to copy it.

Task 1. (a) Convicts, free settlers, non-European migrants. (b) Convicts: Sydney, Hobart or Brisbane; assigned labour such as building, farming or government works. Free settlers: Melbourne, Adelaide, Perth or Darwin; farming, trade, business. Non-European migrants: Chinese on the Victorian and NSW goldfields; Japanese in northern pearling; cameleers in the interior; mining, diving, transport. (c) Check against the arrivals table.

Task 2. (a) Assignment → ticket of leave → certificate of freedom → pardon (a pardon could come before the sentence ended). (b) A conditional pardon freed the convict within the colony; an absolute pardon also let them return to Britain. (c) A ticket of leave let the convict work for themselves and earn money before their sentence ended, giving them a head start on a free life.

Task 3. (a) Stealing 400 pairs of stockings, convicted in January 1800. (b) Any three of: stone cutting; earning a farm (1808); Pitt Street property; trading and supplying food to the government; shares in the Bank of New South Wales; flour milling from 1820. (c) His personal estate was valued at £250,000, or his Sydney rentals earned over £10,000 a year. (d) He arrived as a convict with nothing and became one of the colony's richest people — a position England's class system would not have allowed.

Task 4. (a) Any two of: could own land from the start; could employ convicts; arrived with legal rights and could take part in public life. (b) Long dangerous journey; unfamiliar land; many struggled despite assistance schemes. (c) Looked down on convicts because convicts were criminals and free settlers saw themselves as respectable; the colony depended on convict labour for building, farming and public works.

Task 5. (a) Gold was found in 1851; it drew migrants from around the world, including tens of thousands of Chinese men. (b) 11,493 Chinese arrivals in Melbourne in 1855; about 42,000 across Victoria by 1858. (c) Around 100 European rioters attacked the Chinese camp; at least three Chinese miners died; the camp and a newly built joss house were destroyed; the Chinese were driven across the river.

Task 6. (a) The discovery of gold in 1851 (the pull of the goldfields). (b) For the Chinese: they arrived in large numbers but faced prejudice, violence and restrictive laws. For policy: the government passed laws such as the 1855 statute to limit Chinese arrivals. (c) The law was the government's response to the rising number of Chinese arrivals, and it in turn shaped the Chinese experience by making arrival costlier and harder.

Task 7. A strong answer argues both sides. For the claim: Greenway rose from a convicted forger (arrived February 1814, freed December 1817) to the colony's leading architect, designing the Macquarie Lighthouse, Hyde Park Barracks and St James' Church; Terry rose from a convict convicted in 1800 to one of the richest people in the colony, with an estate of £250,000. Against/limits: both had rare advantages — Greenway a rare skill and a governor's favour, Terry luck and enterprise; many convicts never rose above hard labour; and their opportunities were built on land and labour that came at a cost to others. Marks go to clear use of dated evidence plus a genuine limit.

Task 8. A strong answer shows both sides with dates. Opportunity: from 1851 gold drew Chinese migrants; by 1858 about 42,000 had reached Victoria, and many worked claims successfully. Limits: they faced prejudice and violence — the Buckland River attack of July 1857 (at least three dead) and the Lambing Flat attacks of 1860–1861 (about 1,000 Chinese forced off the field) — and laws aimed only at them, such as the 1855 statute's £10 tax and passenger limit. The conclusion should weigh the evidence: opportunity existed but was narrower for the Chinese than for European arrivals.

Task 9. Chinese miners: contribution — worked gold claims, many successfully, and swelled the colony's population and wealth; obstacles — prejudice, goldfields violence, and restrictive laws such as the 1855 statute. Japanese pearl-ers: contribution — became the most valued divers in a major export industry (pearl shell for buttons, exported to London); obstacles — dangerous work, poor visibility, the bends, frequent deaths, and a political climate turning against non-European immigration. Afghan cameleers: contribution — carried goods across the dry interior, supported exploration, mines and stations, and helped build the Overland Telegraph and railways; obstacles — working in harsh country far from support, and later being replaced when railways and roads took over their work.

Task 10. Change: the colonies grew from one settlement into six and then one nation in 1901, and the population shifted from mostly convicts to a more diverse mix of free and non-European arrivals. Continuity: British law and

institutions stayed the foundation of public life, and prejudice against people seen as outsiders continued, moving from convicts to the Chinese and other non-European arrivals. It is important to notice both because it stops us seeing the period as simple progress or simple sameness; the truth is that much changed on the surface while key structures and attitudes held firm.

Task 11. (a) It is a primary source — a law — made by the colonial government of Victoria in 1855. (b) It imposed a £10 tax on each Chinese person arriving by ship, and it limited how many Chinese passengers one ship could carry. (c) It applied only to the Chinese and left out other migrants; this shows the government saw the Chinese as a group to be controlled and slowed, not welcomed. (d) It made the journey more costly and harder, and marked the Chinese out as unwelcome before they even landed. (e) The Buckland River attack of 1857 and the Lambing Flat attacks of 1860–1861 confirm the hostile attitudes the law reflects. (f) Either can be argued: it is most directly useful for the government’s perspective, because it is the government’s own view in action; but by showing what the Chinese had to face, it also helps us infer their experience. Marks go to a clear choice plus a reason tied to who made the source.

Model responses

These are fully worked answers. Read them to see how a strong response is built: a clear point, dated evidence, a link back to the question, and an honest limit.

Model for Task 11 (source-based inquiry) — extended response

Victoria’s 1855 law on Chinese arrivals is a primary source: it is a law made by the colonial government at the height of the gold rushes, so it carries the perspective of the people in power. It did two things. First, it imposed a £10 tax on every Chinese person arriving by ship, to be paid by the ship’s master. Second, it limited how many Chinese passengers a ship could carry based on the ship’s size. Both measures applied only to the Chinese, not to other migrants. That targeting is the key: it shows the government saw Chinese immigration as a problem to be managed and slowed, which reflects the prejudice then common on the goldfields. For a Chinese person hoping to reach the goldfields, the law made the journey costlier and harder, and it sent a clear signal that they were not wanted. We can check this reading against other evidence in this section: the Buckland River attack of July 1857 and the Lambing Flat attacks of 1860–1861 show the same hostility at work among ordinary diggers, not just in parliament. The source is most useful for understanding the government’s perspective, because it is that perspective put into action; but because it shows what the Chinese had to overcome, it also helps us infer their experience. A law like this one reminds us that Australia’s “new life” was not open to everyone on equal terms.

Model for Task 7 (unscaffolded) — extended response

Transportation was designed as a punishment, yet for some convicts it opened a path to a new life that England’s rigid class structure would have closed. Francis Greenway’s case makes this clear. In England, his guilty plea to forgery in 1812 ended his standing and brought a sentence of fourteen years’ transportation. But after he reached Sydney in February 1814, Governor Macquarie valued his skill as an architect, and once freed in December 1817 Greenway designed buildings such as the Macquarie Lighthouse, Hyde Park Barracks and St James’ Church that still define Sydney. Samuel Terry’s rise was even more striking: convicted in 1800 of stealing stockings, he worked his way to freedom and became one of the colony’s wealthiest people, with an estate valued at £250,000 and rental income over £10,000 a year. Both men gained a position their birth and their conviction would have denied them at home. Yet the claim has limits. Both had unusual advantages — Greenway a rare professional skill and a governor’s favour, Terry luck and sharp business sense — and most convicts never rose above hard, assigned labour. A fair judgement is that transportation could become an opportunity, but only for some, and often because of skill, luck or favour rather than the system itself.

Australia around 1900: continuity and change in daily life, institutions and culture

For the teacher

This section is one teaching sequence (parts 1–11) with two worked inquiries built from real, dated, checkable primary sources, six scaffolded practice tasks, four unscaffolded tasks and one source-based inquiry task, per the §3 volume calibration. Register is direct-address prose at or below the Yr10 ceiling (D2). Subject terms are defined at first use (D2 exemption 2). The one genuine debate in this section — the size of sectarianism’s impact on the new nation — is presented with both interpretations steelmanned (CONTESTED_TERMS Rules 4–5). VC2HH10K11 is not in the §2A register: the CD and all four elaborations carry no First Nations material, and none may be authored in later, including as context, background or a caption.

Curriculum alignment: VC2HH10K11 — Historical Knowledge and Understanding · Investigation: Australia (1750–1914)

Draws on (linkage only, D7): VC2HH10K11.E01 · VC2HH10K11.E02 · VC2HH10K11.E03 · VC2HH10K11.E04.

D3 note (binding): VC2HH10K11 and all four of its elaborations are **not** listed in the §2A register — the CD carries no First Nations material. The exclusion still binds forward: no First Nations content may be authored into this section later, including as context, background or a caption. Take care with 1901 census material: give the population figure without any content about who was or was not counted in it.

Teaching choices (chapter block spec, §3): this section teaches continuity and change around 1900 through **living and working conditions from photographs and sources** (part 2–3), **housing, sanitation, transport and industry compared with early colonisation around 1800** (parts 4–5, per .E03’s full feature list: housing, sanitation and transport, then education, agriculture and industry), **federal legislation — the Harvester Judgement and the introduction of pensions** (parts 6–8, .E04), **how Protestant–Catholic sectarianism affected society and politics** (part 9, .E02), and **cultural expression** (part 10). Worked inquiry 1 reads a primary-source extract from the Harvester Judgement; worked inquiry 2 models a continuity-and-change paragraph. Skills cross-links: source purpose and context (7C), continuity and change (8A names this section as its content source), causes and consequences (8B), significance (8C), sustained interpretation (8D).

Subject words — define at first use (D2 exemption 2):

Word	Gloss used in this section
standard of living	how well people can live — their food, housing, wages and comfort
sanitation	how a community removes its waste and keeps its water clean
slum	a crowded city area where housing is poor and unhealthy
sectarianism	hostility between religious groups — in Australia, most often between Protestants and Catholics
secular	not run by or tied to any church
excise	a tax on goods made inside the country
arbitration	settling a dispute by letting an official judge decide, instead of striking or locking workers out
basic wage	the lowest wage a court judged enough for a worker’s family to live on
pension	a regular payment from the government to people who cannot earn a living
means test	a check of a person’s income and property to decide if they qualify for support
primary source	a record made at the time being studied

Word	Gloss used in this section
secondary source	an account made later by someone using primary sources
continuity	what stayed the same across a period
change	what was different by the end of a period

Sources (SOURCE_USE — real referents carry a source line; retrieved 2026-08-25 where a collection was consulted, otherwise the original document is cited):

Referent	Source line
First Commonwealth census, 31 March 1901: population 3,773,801; Sydney and Melbourne each near half a million	Census returns of the Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics, 1901; Australian Bureau of Statistics historical tables
Kerry & Co. photographs of Sydney streets and workplaces, 1880s–1890s (Charles Kerry, 1857–1928)	Kerry & Co. negative collection, State Library of New South Wales
Sydney's Bondi Ocean Outfall Sewer, opened 1889 — the colony's first deep-sewer scheme	NSW Public Works records, NSW State Archives
Melbourne's sewage farm at Werribee, receiving sewage from 1897; Spotswood pumping station, 1898	Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works records, Public Record Office Victoria
Sydney plague outbreak, January 1900; more than 100 deaths; resumptions and clean-ups of waterfront districts including The Rocks	NSW Government Gazette, 1900; medical reports on the Sydney plague, 1900
First steam railways: Melbourne to Port Melbourne, 12 September 1854; Sydney to Parramatta, 26 September 1855	Melbourne and Hobson's Bay Railway Company records; NSW Government Railways records
First cable tram in Melbourne, 1885; first electric tram line in Sydney, 1898	Melbourne Tramway records, Public Record Office Victoria; NSW Government Tramways records
Education Act 1872 (Victoria) and Public Instruction Act 1880 (New South Wales): free, secular and compulsory state schooling	Original statutes, state archives
Excise Tariff Act 1906; Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Act 1904	Original statutes, National Archives of Australia
The Harvester Judgement, 8 November 1907: Justice H. B. Higgins, Commonwealth Court of Conciliation and Arbitration; H. V. McKay's Harvester Works, Sunshine, Victoria; 7 shillings a day declared a fair wage	Judgement text, Commonwealth Court of Conciliation and Arbitration, 1907
<i>R v Barger</i> (1908): the High Court struck down the Excise Tariff Act 1906	High Court of Australia, reported decisions, 1908
Invalid and Old-age Pensions Act 1908 (No. 17 of 1908): up to 10 shillings a week, means-tested, from age 65, paid from July 1909; earlier state schemes — Victoria 1900, New South Wales 1901	Original statute, National Archives of Australia; NSW and Victorian state archives
Cardinal Patrick Francis Moran, Catholic Archbishop of Sydney 1884–1911; his support for Federation	Archdiocese of Sydney records; Moran's public letters and speeches
New South Wales referendum on state aid to church schools, 1896 — defeated	NSW parliamentary and electoral records, 1896
First Australian cricket team to tour England, 1878; the Melbourne Cup first run in 1861	<i>Sydney Mail</i> and <i>The Australasian</i> cricket reports, 1878; Victoria Racing Club records
First public moving-picture screenings in Australia, Melbourne and Sydney, August 1896	Newspaper reports, <i>The Argus</i> and <i>The Sydney Morning Herald</i> , August 1896

1. The big question

In 1900, Australia was about to become one country. On 1 January 1901 the six British colonies joined together as the Commonwealth of Australia — a new nation with its own federal parliament and its own power to make laws. This section looks at what life was actually like for ordinary people at that turning point: how they lived and worked, what changed around them, what stayed the same, and how the new national government began to change their lives through law.

Your two key ideas here:

- **Continuity** — what stayed the same across a period.
- **Change** — what was different by the end of that period.

And one idea you will need to keep asking about: **standard of living** — how well people can live, taking in their food, housing, wages and comfort.

How big was this new nation? The first Commonwealth census, taken on 31 March 1901, counted 3,773,801 people. By world standards Australia was already one of the most urbanised societies: most people lived in cities and towns, not on the land. Sydney and Melbourne each held nearly half a million people — between them, roughly one in four Australians.

Around 1900, Australians were proud that their wages and living standards were among the highest in the world. But as you will see, that pride hid big differences — between city and bush, rich and poor, and between the religions people belonged to.

2. Life around 1900: three settings

The curriculum asks you to compare living and working conditions **between different settings**. Around 1900 there were three Australias: the city, the country town and the bush. The figure below sets them side by side.

Life around 1900: three settings		
Most Australians lived in cities and towns — but one nation held three very different ways of life.		
The city	The country town	The bush
Housing small terrace houses; crowded inner-city slums	Housing timber cottages with a yard and a garden	Housing slab huts; the station homestead
Work factories, wharves, shops; domestic service	Work railway station, grain stores, shops, trades	Work boundary riding, seasonal shearing teams
Wages 8-hour day won in some union trades	Wages steady but modest; a garden and a cow	Wages long hours, low pay; work when it came
Water & light piped water and gas in most streets	Water & light tanks and wells; kerosene, then gas	Water & light tanks, dams, bores; kerosene lamps
Schooling state schools within walking distance	Schooling the local state school in town	Schooling small provisional schools, or none
Transport trains, cable and electric trams	Transport the railway to the port; horse and buggy	Transport horse and dray; news by post and telegraph
Each column is one setting — compare down the rows to see how the same areas of life differed by place.		

A three-column comparison of life in Australia around 1900 in three settings: city, country town and bush. Each column lists housing, work, water and light, schooling and transport for that setting.

The city. Sydney and Melbourne were cities of factories, wharves, warehouses and shops. Working families crowded into rows of small terrace houses near their workplaces. In some inner city districts the housing was poor and overcrowded; areas like The Rocks and Surry Hills in Sydney, and the lanes of inner Melbourne, were known as **slums** — crowded city areas where housing was poor and unhealthy. Skilled union members in some trades had won the eight-hour day; unskilled labourers worked longer hours for less. Many women earned their living as domestic servants — one of the largest jobs open to women — or in factories, shops and laundries.

The country town. Railways had tied the country towns to the ports by 1900. A wheat or wool town lived by its railway station: grain and bales went out, and shop goods came in. Towns had a main street of shops and banks, a newspaper, a school and usually a racecourse. Living standards were modest but steady, and most families kept a vegetable garden, poultry and a cow.

The bush. On pastoral stations — large sheep and cattle runs — life was harder and more isolated. Work was seasonal and rough: shearing teams moved from station to station, and boundary riders patrolled the fences. Homes were small and plain; water came from tanks, dams or bores, and light from kerosene lamps. Supplies came slowly by horse and dray, and news came later still by post and telegraph.

Task A (scaffolded). Copy the three-setting table into your book. For each setting, add one detail from the text above that you think most affected the **standard of living** of the people there, and say in one sentence why.

3. Reading photographs of the past

Historians use **primary sources** — records made at the time being studied — to find out how people actually lived. For the 1900s, one of the richest kinds is the photograph. Studios such as Kerry & Co. in Sydney sent photographers into the streets, wharves and workplaces of the city in the 1880s and 1890s; thousands of their glass negatives survive today in the State Library of New South Wales.

But a photograph is not a window with no frame. The photographer chose where to stand, what to point at, and often asked people to pose. Use the checklist below every time you read one.

Reading a photograph of the past

Five questions to ask of every archival photograph — like the Kerry & Co. street and workplace scenes of 1880s–1890s Sydney.

1

What is actually in the frame?

People, buildings, tools, clothing, vehicles — describe what you see before you explain it.

2

What is outside the frame?

The photographer chose where to stand and where to point. What did that choice leave out?

3

Who took it, and why?

A studio job, a souvenir, evidence for a report, or an advertisement? Purpose shapes what was shown.

4

Posed, or taken as life happened?

People asked to hold still look different from people caught at work. Say which you think it is.

5

What can a photograph never show?

Smells, sounds, wages, feelings, and what happened before and after the shutter clicked.

Photographs are primary sources — records made at the time being studied. They are evidence, not proof.

A checklist for reading an archival photograph, with five questions: what is actually in the frame, what is outside it, who took the photograph and why, was it posed or taken as life happened, and what can a photograph never show.

Try the checklist on any Kerry street photograph: you can count the hats, read the shop signs and see how the road is surfaced. You cannot smell the drains, hear the trams, or learn the wages of the people in the frame. That is not a fault of the source — it is a limit you must say out loud.

Task B (scaffolded). Choose one photograph of working life around 1900 from your teacher or your library. Run the five checklist questions over it and write one sentence for each.

4. Housing, sanitation and transport: 1900 against 1800

To see what changed, set 1900 against the earliest years of British settlement, around 1800. **Sanitation** means how a community removes its waste and keeps its water clean.

Six feature areas: around 1800 and around 1900

The features that shaped how people lived and worked around 1900.

Feature	Around 1800 - early colonisation	Around 1900 - the new nation
Housing	Bark huts, tents and convict barracks; officials in brick.	Terrace houses and timber cottages; gas; outdoor toilet, no bathroom.
Sanitation	No sewers: waste in cesspits; Sydney's water from a fouled creek.	Deep sewers: Bondi 1889, Werribee 1897; plague clean-ups from 1900.
Transport	On foot, on horseback, by bullock dray or sailing ship.	Steam trains from 1854; cable and electric trams; steamships; bicycle.
Education	A few church schools; most convicts' children unschooled.	Free, secular, compulsory state schools (Vic 1872, NSW 1880).
Agriculture	Small farms around Sydney; wool only just beginning.	Wool the backbone; wheat belt; dairying; refrigerated export ships.
Industry	No factories: government workshops; goods came by ship.	Factories, mines, gasworks, ship-yards; Broken Hill silver, 1885.

Read across a row to see one feature's change; read down a column to see a whole era.

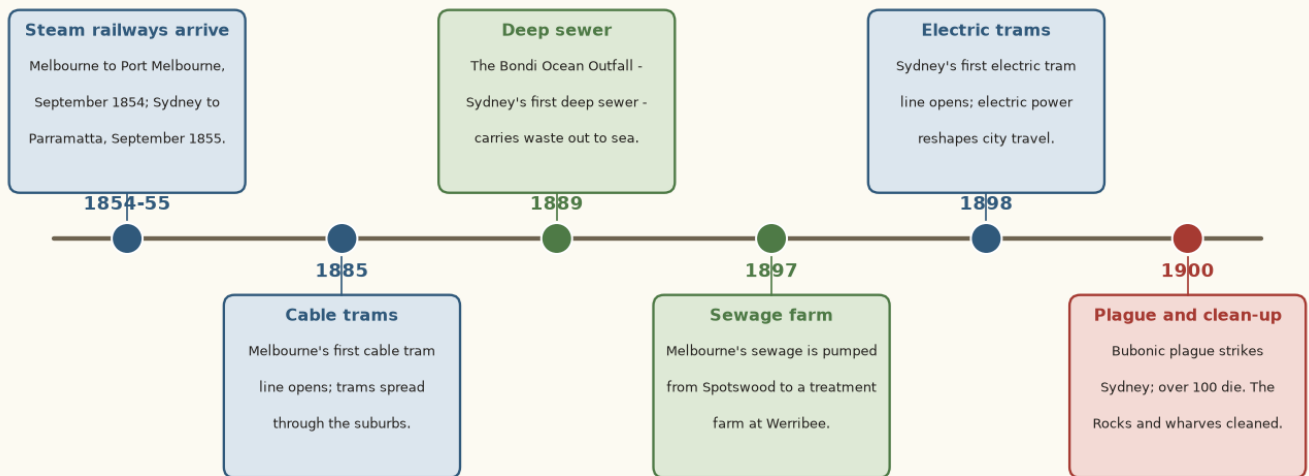
A comparison table with six rows — housing, sanitation and transport, then education, agriculture and industry — and two columns, around 1800 and around 1900, each cell giving the key features of that area at that time in Australia.

Housing. In 1800 the first homes were bark huts, tents and the brick barracks where convicts slept; officials lived in the few proper brick houses. A century later, city workers lived in terrace houses and timber cottages. The better homes had gas for light and cooking, and some had running cold water; most working-class homes had no bathroom, and the toilet was a small outdoor shed whose pan was collected by the night-soil cart.

Sanitation. This is where the change was starkest. In 1800 there were no sewers at all: Sydney's waste went into cesspits and its water came from a creek that the town itself fouled. By 1900 the biggest cities had begun big public works. Sydney's deep sewer carried waste out to the ocean at Bondi from 1889; Melbourne pumped its sewage from 1897 to a treatment farm at Werribee. The urgency was real: in January 1900 an outbreak of bubonic plague struck Sydney, killing more than 100 people. The government cleaned up, demolished and rebuilt parts of the waterfront, including The Rocks.

Cities remade: urban change, 1854-1901

Railways, trams and sewers changed city living standards within one lifetime.



Within fifty years, the big colonial cities gained the railways, trams and sewers of a modern world.

A timeline of urban change in Australia from 1854 to 1901: the first steam railways (1854-1855), Melbourne's first cable tram (1885), Sydney's ocean outfall sewer at Bondi (1889), Melbourne's sewage farm at Werribee (1897), Sydney's first electric tram line (1898) and the Sydney plague outbreak and clean-up (1900).

Transport. In 1800 everything moved at walking pace — on foot, on horseback, by bullock dray, or by sailing ship along the coast. The first steam railways came in the 1850s (Melbourne to Port Melbourne in September 1854; Sydney to Parramatta in September 1855), and by 1900 a web of suburban railways and country lines carried people and produce. City streets changed too: Melbourne's cable trams began in 1885, and Sydney's first electric tram line opened in 1898. Between the colonies, steamships ran regular services. And in the 1890s, the bicycle gave ordinary people their first taste of fast, cheap personal transport.

Task C (scaffolded). Using the table above, list the three changes you think did most to raise city living standards between 1800 and 1900. Number them in order of importance and give one reason for your top choice.

5. Education, agriculture and industry: 1900 against 1800

Education. In 1800 there was almost no organised schooling: a few church schools existed, and most children of convicts learned little or nothing at school. By 1900 every colony had free, compulsory and **secular** — that is, not run by any church — state schools: Victoria passed its Education Act in 1872 and New South Wales its Public Instruction Act in 1880. Most children attended school, and by Federation nearly all young Australians could read and write. This was a change with huge consequences: a literate population could read newspapers, organise unions and vote.

Agriculture. In 1800 farming meant small patches of crops around Sydney, with wool just beginning to grow in importance. By 1900, wool remained the backbone of the rural economy, the wheat belt had spread across new farming land in the 1890s, and dairy farming had grown into a major export. From the 1880s, refrigerated ships carried frozen meat and butter to Britain — a technology that changed what farmers could sell and where.

Industry. In 1800 there were no factories: the government ran workshops for bricks, rope and timber, and most goods came from Britain by ship. By 1900 Sydney and Melbourne were industrial cities: boot and clothing factories, furniture workshops, food processing, gasworks, engineering shops and shipyards. Coal came from the mines of the Hunter Valley and the Illawarra, and silver and lead from Broken Hill, where the company that became BHP was

formed in 1885. Factories gave work to tens of thousands — and some gave work that was badly paid and dangerous, a problem the new federal parliament would soon be asked to fix.

6. Worked inquiry 1 — reading the Harvester Judgement

Historians build their accounts from primary sources and test them against **secondary sources** — later accounts that use them. Let us read together one of the most famous legal texts in Australian working life: an extract from the **Harvester Judgement**, delivered by Justice Henry Bournes Higgins of the Commonwealth Court of Conciliation and Arbitration on 8 November 1907.

A primary source: the Harvester Judgement

The judge's test for a fair and reasonable wage, delivered 8 November 1907

COMMONWEALTH COURT OF CONCILIATION AND ARBITRATION

In the matter of the Excise Tariff Act 1906 and the Harvester Works

I shall adopt as the basis of my calculations
the normal needs of the average employee,
regarded as a human being
in a civilised society.

- Justice Henry Bournes Higgins, 8 November 1907

On this test, Higgins fixed the fair wage at seven shillings a day -
42 shillings for a six-day week. McKay's Harvester Works was paying less, and lost its case.

This passage is quoted from the judgement text as printed in the court's records.

A framed reproduction, set in modern type, of the famous passage from the Harvester Judgement of 8 November 1907, with the words: I shall adopt as the basis of my calculations the normal needs of the average employee, regarded as a human being in a civilised society. Below the frame, a note explains that Justice Higgins fixed the fair wage at seven shillings a day, or 42 shillings for a six-day week.

Follow the three questions.

Question 1 — What does it say? Find Higgins's test for a fair wage. *Modelled answer:* the “normal needs of the average employee, regarded as a human being in a civilised society”. The wage is not set by what the employer can get away with paying, but by what a person needs to live.

Question 2 — What does it reveal? To decide what those needs were, Higgins heard evidence from workers and their wives about their household budgets — the cost of rent, food, fuel, clothing and boots for a family. What does this tell you about the judge's method? *Modelled answer:* he based the wage on real evidence about the cost of living, not on guesswork; he treated the worker's family, not just the worker, as the unit to support.

Question 3 — What are its limits? The judgement set a wage for men whose work came before the court. It says nothing directly about women workers, farm workers in the bush, or workers in states the court could not reach. *Modelled answer:* the source is strong evidence for the principle and the rate, but not for how all Australian workers lived in 1907.

This is source analysis: say what it says, then what it reveals, then what it leaves out.

7. The Harvester Judgement and the basic wage

Here is the story behind the extract, because it shows how a federal law changed working conditions.

The Harvester Judgement: six facts

How a tax law became the foundation of Australia's basic wage.

THE COURT

Commonwealth Court of Conciliation and Arbitration, Justice Henry Bournes Higgins.

THE DATE

Heard in October 1907; judgement delivered 8 November 1907.

THE CASE

Hugh Victor McKay's Harvester Works at Sunshine, Victoria, sought to be excused from excise.

THE QUESTION

Did McKay pay "fair and reasonable" wages, as the Excise Tariff Act 1906 required?

THE RATE

A fair wage was fixed at seven shillings a day - 42 shillings for six days.

WHAT FOLLOWED

The High Court struck the Act down in 1908 (*R v Barger*), but the basic wage principle stayed.

"The basic wage" means the lowest wage a court judged enough for a worker's family to live on.

Six fact cards setting out the Harvester Judgement: the court and the judge, the date, the case, the question the court had to answer, the rate it fixed, and what happened next.

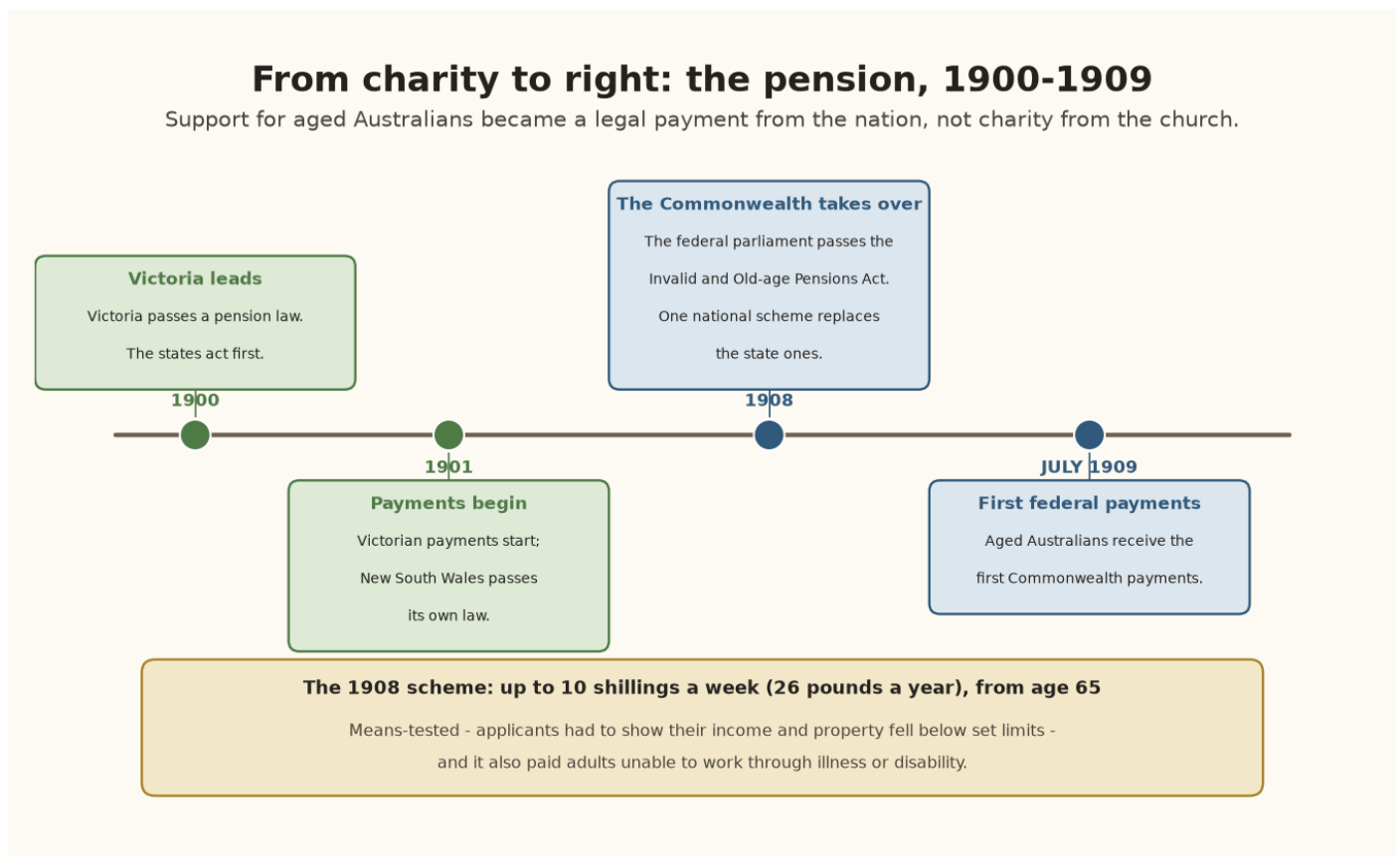
In 1906 the federal parliament passed the **Excise Tariff Act**. An **excise** is a tax on goods made inside the country. This Act taxed farm machines made in Australia — but excused any maker who paid “fair and reasonable” wages. Hugh Victor McKay, owner of the huge Harvester Works at Sunshine in Victoria, applied for the exemption. His workers said his wages were not fair, and the case went to the Commonwealth Court of Conciliation and Arbitration — a court created in 1904 to settle wage disputes by **arbitration** (settling a dispute by letting an official judge decide, instead of striking or locking workers out).

Justice Higgins heard the case in October 1907. He examined the cost of keeping a family, and on 8 November 1907 he ruled that a fair and reasonable wage was **seven shillings a day** — 42 shillings for a six-day week. McKay was paying less, so he lost his exemption.

Two consequences followed. First, the courts had the last word on the law itself: in 1908, in the case known as *R v Barger*, the High Court struck down the Excise Tariff Act, ruling that the parliament could not use an excise to force wages up. Second — and this is the lasting one — the **basic wage** principle survived. The basic wage is the lowest wage a court judged enough for a worker’s family to live on, and Higgins kept applying his seven-shilling standard in later arbitration awards. The idea that there is a floor below which wages should not fall became a fixed feature of Australian working life for most of the twentieth century.

8. The old-age pension: a national safety net

The second great federal change to living standards was the pension. A **pension** is a regular payment from the government to people who cannot earn a living.



A timeline of the old-age pension in Australia from 1900 to 1909: Victoria's pension law (1900, paid from 1901), New South Wales following (1901), the Commonwealth Invalid and Old-age Pensions Act (1908), the first federal payments (July 1909) and the rate and conditions.

Before pensions, aged Australians who could not work and had no family to keep them depended on charity or on institutions for the poor. From 1900 the states began to act: Victoria passed a pension law in 1900, with payments starting in 1901, and New South Wales followed in 1901. Then the new federal parliament took over the job. The **Invalid and Old-age Pensions Act 1908** paid a pension of up to 10 shillings a week — £26 a year — to people aged 65 and over, and to adults who were unable to work because of illness or disability. The first federal payments went out in July 1909.

The pension was not handed to everyone. It was **means-tested**: a **means test** is a check of a person's income and property to decide if they qualify for support. Applicants had to show they could not keep themselves. Even so, the change in attitude was profound. Support for the old became a legal right paid by the nation, not charity handed out by the church. Together with the basic wage, the pension showed how the new federal parliament could raise the standard of living by law — one reason Australia at this time was watched by reformers around the world.

9. Religion and the new nation: the impact of sectarianism

Around 1900, religion was not private in the way it often is now. It shaped schools, newspapers, clubs and politics. Nearly all Australians were Christian. About one in four was Catholic — most of them of Irish descent — and the rest were mostly Protestant: Church of England, Methodist and Presbyterian, most of them of English or Scottish descent.

Sectarianism means hostility between religious groups — in Australia, most often between Protestants and Catholics. Its sharpest battleground was schooling. When the colonies made their state schools free, secular and compulsory (Victoria 1872, New South Wales 1880), they also stopped paying church schools. Catholic leaders, led from 1884 by

Cardinal Patrick Moran, the Archbishop of Sydney, responded by building a separate Catholic school system, staffed by religious teaching orders. By 1900 two school systems ran side by side.

Religion and its institutions, around 1901

About one in four Australians was Catholic, mostly of Irish descent; most of the rest were Protestant, mostly of English or Scottish descent.

Protestant Australia		Catholic Australia	
Churches	Church of England, Methodist, Presbyterian	Churches	the Catholic Church, led in Sydney by Cardinal Moran from 1884
Schools	used the free, secular state schools once state aid ended	Schools	a separate Catholic system, staffed by religious teaching orders
Societies	Protestant friendly societies and lodges	Societies	Catholic friendly societies, such as the Hibernians
Press	newspapers that backed Protestant interests	Press	newspapers that spoke for Catholic readers

They divided schools, societies and newspapers - but shared workplaces, towns and sporting fields.

A diagram of religion in Australia around 1901: the rough religious make-up of the population and the institutions that ran along Protestant and Catholic lines, including schools, friendly societies, newspapers and clubs.

In politics, sectarianism could run hot. In 1888 the New South Wales Premier, Henry Parkes, made speeches questioning the loyalty of Catholic politicians, and the colony erupted in anger and counter-anger. In 1896, voters in New South Wales were asked in a referendum whether the government should fund church schools: they voted the proposal down. Newspapers took sides, and politicians counted their voters by church.

Yet historians disagree about how deep the divide really was. Both positions below are stated in their strongest form — weigh the evidence before you choose.

How deep was the divide? Two interpretations

Both positions stated in their strongest form - each rests on real, dated evidence.

Interpretation 1

Sectarianism strongly divided the new nation

Schooling split into two systems when the colonies stopped paying church schools: a separate Catholic system was built to answer it.

Parkes's 1888 speeches questioning the loyalty of Catholic politicians caused fury and counter-anger.

The 1896 referendum on state aid in New South Wales was fought bitterly, with newspapers taking sides.

Politicians counted their voters by church, and mixed marriages met family disapproval.

Interpretation 2

The divide was shallow; class and workplace mattered more

There was no religious violence in Australia; Irish and English workers lived side by side.

The 1890s strikes and the new Labor Party united workers across the churches against employers.

Federation was carried by voters of both churches, and Cardinal Moran, the Catholic Archbishop of Sydney, publicly supported it.

Everyday life mixed people at work, at sport and in the towns, and intermarriage happened despite official frowns.

Historians disagree about how much weight to give each body of evidence.

Weigh it yourself: which evidence do you find more persuasive, and why?

Two steelmanned historical interpretations side by side: one arguing that sectarianism strongly divided Australian society at Federation, and the other arguing that Australian sectarianism was mild compared with Ireland and Britain and that class and workplace mattered more, each with its evidence.

Notice that both sides use real, dated evidence. The disagreement is about how much weight to give that evidence — which is exactly what evaluating interpretations means.

Task D (scaffolded). Pick one piece of evidence from each side of the debate figure. In two sentences, explain why the same facts could support different conclusions.

10. Leisure and cultural expression

Ways of life are not only work. Around 1900, Australians with more regular wages and shorter hours began to spend more time on leisure, and their cultural life grew loud and public.

- **Newspapers.** Every city and most towns had their papers. The cheap daily and the weekly magazine — such as *The Bulletin*, founded in Sydney in 1880 — carried news, sport, cartoons and verse to a mass reading public (you met *The Bulletin* in Section 2B).
- **Sport.** Cricket was the great summer passion: the first Australian team toured England in 1878, and test matches drew crowds in the tens of thousands. Horse racing drew every class: the Melbourne Cup, first run in 1861, stopped the nation for a day.
- **Theatre and moving pictures.** Cities had theatres and music halls. In August 1896, the first public screenings of moving pictures took place in Melbourne and Sydney — within a decade, picture shows were everywhere.
- **Church and community life.** Churches ran choirs, concerts, sports days and Sunday schools; friendly societies held marches and socials. For many families, this was the centre of social life.

Cultural expression in 1900 was a mix of the imported — cricket, music hall, church — and the local — the bush ballad, the Aussie slang of *The Bulletin*, and the national team wearing green and gold. It was one more sign that a new national identity was forming.

11. Worked inquiry 2 — a model paragraph on continuity and change

When you explain continuity and change, build your paragraph in four moves: make a **claim**, give **evidence**, add your **explanation**, then state the **significance**. The figure below shows a worked paragraph, colour-coded by move.

A model paragraph on continuity and change

Question: What changed, and what continued, in the ways Australians got around between 1800 and 1900?

CLAIM

Transport changed more than any other part of daily life - but the change reached city people long before it reached people in the bush.

EVIDENCE

In 1800 everything moved at walking pace - on foot, on horseback or by bullock dray. By 1900 suburban railways carried city workers, and Sydney's first electric tram line opened in 1898. Yet on pastoral stations, supplies still came slowly by horse and dray.

EXPLANATION

Railways and trams shrank distance only where the tracks and lines were laid. Two Australians in the same year could therefore live in different centuries of transport - one riding an electric tram, one waiting weeks for the mail coach.

SIGNIFICANCE

This mix of change and continuity explains why the new nation's laws - on wages, pensions and public works - affected people so differently by place, and why where you lived mattered so much in politics after 1901.

Each move builds on the one before: say it, prove it, explain it, then say what followed.

A colour-coded model paragraph on continuity and change in transport between 1800 and 1900, labelled by move: claim, evidence, explanation and significance.

Read the paragraph once for sense, then again move by move. Notice that the evidence carries dates, that the explanation does the work of joining change to continuity, and that the significance states a consequence rather than repeating the claim.

12. Practice tasks

Scaffolded tasks — work with the supports provided.

1. **Three settings.** Using the figure in part 2, complete this sentence for each setting: “Around 1900, life in the [city / country town / bush] meant ...” Then write one sentence comparing the setting where work was least steady with the one where it was most steady.
2. **Then and now.** Copy the six-row table from part 4. Without looking back, fill in the “around 1900” column from memory, then check and correct your errors.
3. **Order the changes.** Put these in order from earliest to latest: Sydney’s first electric tram, the first Sydney–Parramatta railway, Melbourne’s first cable tram, the Bondi ocean outfall sewer, the Sydney plague outbreak. Check against the timeline figure.
4. **The Harvester chain.** Using part 7, fill in the blanks: the Excise Tariff Act of ____ taxed farm machines but excused makers who paid ____; the case was heard by Justice ____ of the ____ Court; the fair wage he fixed was ____ shillings a day; the High Court struck the Act down in the case of ____ in ____; the principle that survived was called the ____.
5. **Pension path.** From the pensions timeline, list: the two states that paid pensions before the Commonwealth; the year of the federal Act; the age at which the pension began; the maximum weekly payment; and what a means test checked.

6. **Match the evidence.** Match each piece of evidence to the side of the sectarianism debate it supports: the separate Catholic school system; Parkes's 1888 speeches; the 1896 referendum result; the 1890s shearers' strikes uniting workers across churches. Write each as one full sentence.

Unscaffolded tasks — no supports; build your answer from scratch.

7. Explain how two federal measures — the basic wage and the old-age pension — changed the standard of living for working Australians. Give one specific fact for each.
 8. Using parts 4 and 5, identify two things that **changed** and one thing that **continued** in Australian daily life between 1800 and 1900. Explain each in one or two sentences.
 9. "The photograph tells us how people lived; it cannot tell us what that life felt like." Using the checklist in part 3, defend or challenge this claim about one photograph of the period.
 10. Choose one of the two interpretations of sectarianism in part 9. In a paragraph using the four moves from part 11, argue that your chosen interpretation is better supported by the evidence — and name one piece of evidence the other side could still use against you.
-

13. Source-based inquiry

Read this primary source, then answer the questions below it.

Extract, in modern words, from the Invalid and Old-age Pensions Act 1908 (No. 17 of 1908), section

4. The Act stated, in effect, that a person who had reached the age of 65, who was of good character, and whose income and property fell below the limits set by the Act, was entitled to receive an old-age pension of up to twenty-six pounds a year, paid weekly. (*Original statute, National Archives of Australia.*)

1. **Formulate:** write two historical questions this source could help you answer.
2. **Infer:** what does the source tell you about life before pensions for aged people with no savings and no family support?
3. **Context:** why did the new *federal* parliament pass this law in 1908 rather than leaving it to the states? Use part 8 to help you.
4. **Perspective:** whose voices shaped a law like this one — members of parliament, public servants, charity workers, the aged poor themselves? Whose voices are missing from the text, and how does that limit what the source can tell a historian?
5. **Evaluate:** is this source more useful for studying *what the pension system required of applicants* or *how aged Australians actually lived*? Explain your answer.

What to look for

Score student work against the band achievement standard (Level 9–10): students analyse the features, content and context of sources; identify the perspectives that individuals and groups held; connect short- and long-term causes with intended and unintended consequences; and judge historical significance by criteria. Expected responses below are a guide, not a script.

- **Three settings (part 2, .E01):** student can describe housing, work and services in at least two of the three settings and make a genuine comparison; the standard-of-living idea is applied, not just restated.
- **Photograph reading (part 3, .E01):** student works through the checklist and states at least one limit of the visual source; limits are stated as a property of the source, not as a failure of it.
- **Then and now (parts 4–5, .E03):** all six feature areas appear — housing, sanitation, transport, education, agriculture, industry — with at least one dated fact per area (Education Act 1872; Public Instruction Act 1880; Bondi outfall 1889; Werribee 1897; first railways 1854–1855; refrigerated export from the 1880s; Broken Hill 1885).
- **Harvester inquiry and story (parts 6–7, .E04):** the three-question moves are present; the story carries the Excise Tariff Act 1906, the court and Higgins, 8 November 1907, seven shillings a day, and the two consequences — *R v Barger* (1908) striking the Act down, and the basic-wage principle surviving in arbitration awards.

- **Pensions (part 8, .E04):** student can give the state beginnings (Victoria 1900/1901, NSW 1901), the Commonwealth Act of 1908, first payments July 1909, 10 shillings a week, age 65, and explain the means test and why the shift from charity to legal right mattered.
- **Sectarianism (part 9, .E02):** student can define sectarianism, give the schooling split (state aid withdrawn; Cardinal Moran's Catholic system), name one political flashpoint (Parkes 1888; the 1896 referendum), and — crucially — can state both interpretations in their strong form before choosing between them; marking rewards the weighing, not the side chosen.
- **Cultural expression (part 10):** student can give at least two concrete forms (newspapers, cricket, racing, moving pictures from August 1896, church social life) and link them to rising leisure time.
- **Model paragraph (part 11):** student writing shows all four moves; evidence is dated; significance states a consequence, not a restatement.
- **Source inquiry (part 13):** questions are genuinely historical (answerable with evidence); the inference notes the dependence on charity or institutions before pensions; the context answer links the law to the new federal parliament taking over from the states; the perspective answer names the absent voices of the aged poor and their effect on the evidence; no answer drifts into First Nations content (D3 note above).

Cross-links to skills sections: reading photographs and source context (7C), value of sources as evidence (7D), perspectives from sources (7E), continuity and change (8A — names this section as its content source), causes and consequences (8B), significance criteria (8C), sustained interpretation with citations (8D).

Debates about Australia's past, 1750–1914: a social laboratory?

For the teacher

This section is one teaching sequence (parts 1–7) with two worked inquiries built from real, dated, checkable sources, two inline scaffolded tasks, six scaffolded practice tasks, four unscaffolded tasks and one source-based inquiry task, per the §3 volume calibration. Register is direct-address prose at or below the Yr10 ceiling (D2). Subject terms are defined at first use (D2 exemption 2); the two contested labels carry `CONTESTED_TERMS` Rule 1 fallback definitions before use, and each label is steelmanned before it is evaluated (Rules 4–5). All First Nations content is excluded per Rule 1 and §2A; none may be authored in later, including as context or a caption — the section's critical testing of the two labels runs through migration policy, gender and the economy only.

Curriculum alignment: VC2HH10K12 — Historical Knowledge and Understanding · Investigation: Australia (1750–1914)

Draws on (linkage only, D7): VC2HH10K12.E03 · VC2HH10K12.E04.

D3 note (binding): VC2HH10K12.E01, VC2HH10K12.E02 and VC2HH10K12.E05 are **excluded entire**; their ids are retained as linkage keys and reported `ACCEPTED` in coverage audits. This section teaches the content description through its remaining, neutral alternative: putting the two labels — ‘the social laboratory of the world’ and ‘a working man’s paradise’ — on trial against evidence drawn from a range of sources. Every First Nations element of this chapter sits in §2A; none is authored around. The excluded material must not be authored in later, including as context, background or a caption — redirect any raised material to the front-of-book note.

Teaching choices (chapter block spec, §3): this section teaches the interpretations strand by putting two famous labels on trial: ‘the social laboratory of the world’ and ‘a working man’s paradise’. The reforms students met in 2B (the secret ballot, women’s voting rights, Federation) reappear here only as *evidence inside an interpretation*, with a world-comparison angle that 2B does not teach; the wages-and-welfare record (eight-hour day, arbitration, the Harvester basic wage, pensions, the maternity allowance) and the labour firsts of 1899 and 1904 are new content. Each label is defined before use with the Rule 1 fallback wording, steelmanned with its strongest evidence, then tested against limits drawn from migration policy, gender and the economy. Skills cross-links: sequencing and source ordering (7B), source purpose and context (7C), value of sources as evidence (7D), perspectives from sources (7E), continuity and change (8A), causes and consequences (8B), significance criteria (8C), sustained interpretation with citations (8D).

Subject words — define at first use (D2 exemption 2):

Word	Gloss used in this section
interpretation	a reasoned reading of the past, built from evidence, that historians argue about
characterisation	describing a place or period with a label that carries a judgement
primary source	a record made at the time being studied
secondary source	an account made later by someone using primary sources
arbitration	settling a dispute by putting it before an independent court or judge
basic wage	the lowest wage a court said employers must pay
depression	a long period in which businesses fail and many people lose their work
dictation test	a test in which an officer read out fifty words for a person to write down, used to bar people from entering Australia

Sources (`SOURCE_USE` — real referents carry a source line; collections consulted and retrieved 2026-08-25; original documents cited where one is reproduced):

Referent	Source line
Secret ballot introduced: Tasmania 7 February 1856, Victoria 19 March 1856, South Australia 2 April 1856; NSW 1858, Queensland 1859, WA 1877; known overseas as the “Australian ballot”	Wikipedia, “Secret ballot”, retrieved 2026-08-25
Eight-hour day: Sydney stonemasons’ ultimatum 18 August 1855, wins celebrated 1 October 1855; Melbourne stonemasons stopped work 21 April 1856, procession 12 May 1856; slogan in use by Robert Owen by 1817	Wikipedia, “Eight-hour day”, retrieved 2026-08-25
William Lane (1861–1917): <i>The Workingman’s Paradise: an Australian Labour Novel</i> printed early 1892 over the pen name “John Miller”; started Brisbane <i>The Worker</i> May 1890; New Australia departure from Sydney 1 July 1893; Cosme May 1894; Lane had left the scheme by 1899	Wikipedia, “William Lane”, retrieved 2026-08-25
1891 shearers’ strike: declared 5 January 1891; strike camps at Barcaldine; leaders tried and jailed; Queensland Labour Party manifesto read under the Tree of Knowledge, Barcaldine, 9 September 1892; “Freedom on the Wallaby” printed in <i>The Worker</i> 16 May 1891	Wikipedia, “1891 Australian shearers’ strike”, retrieved 2026-08-25
South Australia: Constitutional Amendment (Adult Suffrage) Act passed December 1894, in force February 1895 — women could vote and stand; Catherine Helen Spence first woman to stand for political office in Australia, 1897; Commonwealth Franchise Act 1902 (No. 8 of 1902)	Wikipedia, “Women’s suffrage in Australia”; original statute for the 1902 Act, National Archives of Australia
International comparison: New Zealand women’s national vote 1893 (standing from 1919); Australia 1902 first country where women could vote and stand for the national parliament; Finland 1906 both rights for all women and all men, first women MPs 1907; Norway 1913; Denmark 1915	Wikipedia, “Women’s suffrage”, retrieved 2026-08-25
Labour firsts: Anderson Dawson sworn in Queensland 1 December 1899, first Labour government in the world, about one week; Chris Watson first Labour Prime Minister April 1904, first Labour head of government at national level	Wikipedia, “Anderson Dawson” and “Chris Watson”, retrieved 2026-08-25
Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Act 1904, royal assent 15 December 1904	Wikipedia, “Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Act 1904”, retrieved 2026-08-25
Harvester judgement, November 1907: H. B. Higgins, Commonwealth Court of Conciliation and Arbitration; “fair and reasonable” wage of 7 shillings a day (42 shillings a week); employer H. V. McKay, Sunshine Harvester works; quoted words from the judgement	Wikipedia, “Harvester case”, retrieved 2026-08-25; judgement quotation is from the original decision
Commonwealth Invalid and Old Age Pensions Act: passed June 1908 under Deakin; old-age payments began 1909, invalid pensions 1910	Wikipedia, “Alfred Deakin”, retrieved 2026-08-25
Maternity allowance: Fisher government, late 1912, £5 per child paid to the mother	Wikipedia, “Baby bonus”, retrieved 2026-08-25
Immigration Restriction Act 1901 (No. 17 of 1901),	Wikipedia, “Immigration Restriction Act 1901”,

Referent	Source line
royal assent 23 December 1901; dictation test of fifty words in a European language chosen by the officer	retrieved 2026-08-25
W. P. Reeves (1857–1932): New Zealand Minister of Labour 1892–1896; <i>State Experiments in Australia & New Zealand</i> , London: Grant Richards, 1902	Wikipedia, “William Pember Reeves”, retrieved 2026-08-25
Historians: W. K. Hancock, <i>Australia</i> (1930); Russel Ward, <i>The Australian Legend</i> (1958); Marilyn Lake, <i>Getting Equal</i> (1999), <i>Drawing the Global Colour Line</i> (2008), <i>Progressive New World</i> (2019)	Wikipedia biographical entries, retrieved 2026-08-25
First woman elected to the federal parliament: Dame Enid Lyons, 1943	Wikipedia, “Enid Lyons”, retrieved 2026-08-25

1. The big question

Between 1750 and 1914, Australia changed from a set of British settlements into one nation. But what *kind* of place was it? People who lived through those years disagreed, and historians still disagree. This section puts two famous labels on trial:

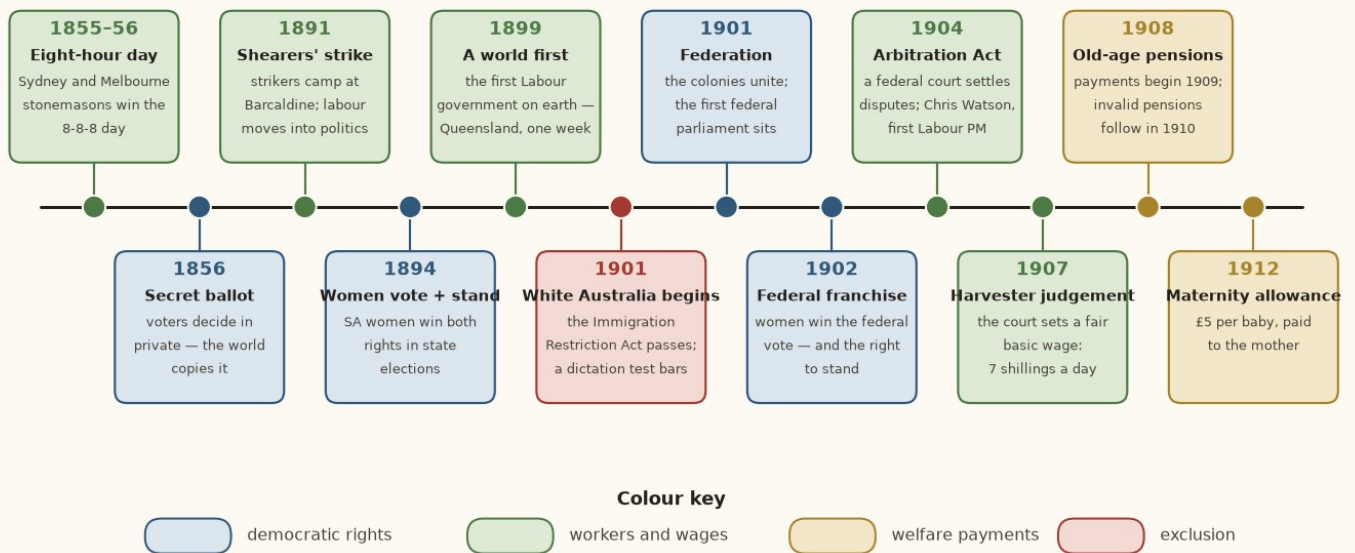
- **‘the social laboratory of the world’** — the claim that Australia was a testing ground where new social and political laws were tried out for other countries to learn from;
- **‘a working man’s paradise’** — the claim that Australia offered ordinary workers better wages, conditions and rights than they could get anywhere else.

An **interpretation** is a reasoned reading of the past, built from evidence, that historians argue about. A label like these two is not a fact: it is a claim to be tested. Your job in this section is to weigh the evidence for and against each label, then make a judgement of your own.

First, look at the record of reforms.

The social laboratory: an age of experiments, 1855-1912

Events are spaced evenly for readability — the point is the run of firsts, not the gaps between them



A timeline of reforms and events in Australia from 1855 to 1912, colour-coded by kind: the eight-hour day won by stonemasons in 1855-56, the secret ballot of 1856, the 1891 shearers' strike, South Australian women winning the vote and the right to stand in 1894, the world's first Labour government in Queensland in 1899, the Immigration Restriction Act of 1901 marking the start of the White Australia policy, Federation in 1901, the federal franchise for women in 1902, the Arbitration Act and Chris Watson as first Labour PM in 1904, the Harvester judgement's basic wage in 1907, old-age pensions from 1908, and the maternity allowance of 1912.

Read the timeline twice: once for the run of events, once for the colour key. Notice two things. First, the 1850s and the years around 1900 both produced reforms that were early by world standards. Second, the timeline includes a red entry: the same parliaments that extended rights also took some away. Historians call that mix the debate about these years.

Task A (scaffolded). Using the timeline, copy the four columns of the colour key into your book (democratic rights; workers and wages; welfare payments; exclusion). Sort all twelve events into the columns. Which column is longest? What does that tell you about what the era was most busy doing?

2. Two labels, defined before use

Both labels are contested — people argue about them. So this section defines each one before using it, and treats each as an interpretation to test, not a fact to repeat.

The Victorian Curriculum uses the term '*social laboratory of the world*' but does not define it. This section therefore treats it as follows: the view, held by many observers at the time and by historians since, that the Australian colonies and the new nation worked as a testing ground in which governments tried out new social and political laws — such as the secret ballot, votes for women and court-set wages — that other countries could watch and learn from. Other definitions of the phrase exist and are not interchangeable with this one.

The Victorian Curriculum uses the term '*working man's paradise*' but does not define it. This section therefore treats it as follows: the view, held by some people at the time and debated by historians since, that

Australia offered ordinary workers better wages, conditions and rights than working people received anywhere else. Other definitions of the phrase exist and are not interchangeable with this one.

Testing an interpretation works the same way in history as in a science lab: you look at the evidence for, you look at the evidence against, and you decide how far the label holds. Three ideas from your skills work do the weighing:

- **Evidence** — the facts a source gives you, and whether the source was made at the time (**primary**) or later (**secondary**).
- **Perspective** — who made the source, and what they wanted people to believe.
- **Continuity and change, causes and consequences** — what the label hides as much as what it shows.

3. The case for ‘the social laboratory of the world’

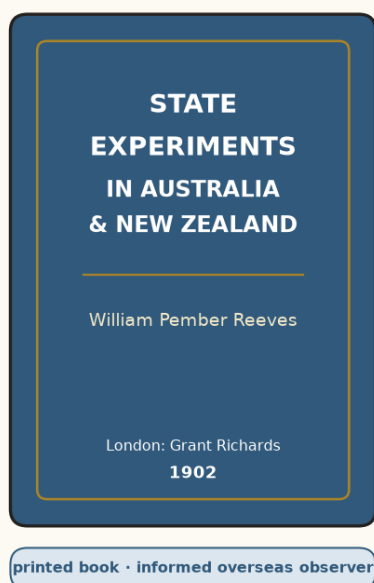
Start with the strongest form of the claim, because that is the form worth testing.

The experiments. The colonies tried democratic reforms early. The secret ballot — voting in private, so that employers and landlords could not check how people voted — was introduced in Tasmania in February 1856, in Victoria that March and in South Australia that April. Overseas it became known as the “Australian ballot”. In 1894, South Australia let women vote **and** stand for parliament, one of the first places in the world to do both. In 1899, Queensland formed the first Labour government anywhere; in 1904, Chris Watson became the first Labour prime minister of a nation. In 1907 a court set a basic wage by human need, and in 1908 and 1912 the national parliament paid old-age pensions and a maternity allowance.

The outside gaze. A laboratory only earns the name if other people watch the experiments. They did. Read Source A.

Source A — State Experiments in Australia and New Zealand (1902)

the book that told the English-speaking world to watch Australia



Who was Reeves?

A New Zealand politician and writer. As Minister of Labour from 1892 to 1896 he helped build New Zealand's own system for settling workplace disputes — he knew this Australasian world of reform from the inside.

What kind of source is it?

A book published in London in 1902 by a close observer. It is a secondary account — Reeves is explaining the colonies to British readers — but it is also direct evidence of how informed people in that era saw Australia: as a place where governments were trying out new social laws.

Why does it matter here?

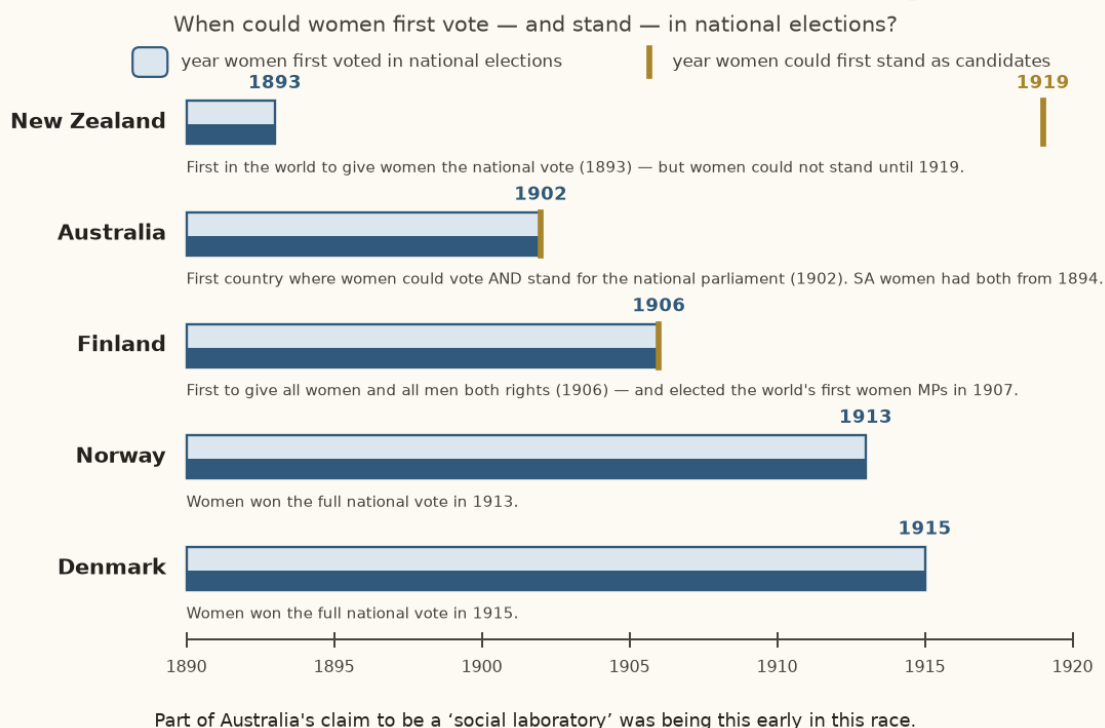
Its title says it all: state experiments. Reeves treated Australia and New Zealand as places running tests in democracy and welfare that the rest of the world could learn from. That outside gaze is part of what the label ‘social laboratory of the world’ is about — and it is a claim you will now test.

A source card for the book State Experiments in Australia and New Zealand by William Pember Reeves, published in London in 1902, showing a drawn book cover and three panels: who Reeves was (a New Zealand politician and Minister of Labour from 1892 to 1896), what kind of source the book is (a secondary account that is also direct evidence of how informed observers saw Australia), and why it matters (its title treats Australia and New Zealand as places running social experiments).

Reeves was not an Australian cheerleader: he was a New Zealand minister who had run his own reforms. When a practical insider like that titled his book *State Experiments*, the laboratory idea was not just local pride — it was how the Australasian colonies looked to the world.

The race to be first. Part of the laboratory claim is being early. Check the record against other countries.

Australia and the world: women and national parliaments



A bar chart comparing five countries by the year women first voted in national elections and the year women could first stand as candidates: New Zealand vote 1893 but stand only 1919; Australia vote and stand 1902, with South Australian women holding both from 1894; Finland both rights for all in 1906 and the world's first women MPs in 1907; Norway 1913; Denmark 1915.

Read the chart carefully. New Zealand gave women the national vote first, in 1893, and that win mattered enormously. But the chart shows something else too: Australia was the first country where women could both vote **and** stand for the national parliament. Finland then went further still in 1906, giving all women and all men both rights and electing the world's first women members of parliament in 1907. The honest reading is a relay, not a solo win — and being in the lead group is exactly what the laboratory claim rests on.

Task B (scaffolded). Using the chart: (a) which country was first for the vote, and which was first for the vote and stand together? (b) one supporter of the laboratory label said “the world watched Australia”. Give one piece of evidence from Source A that agrees, and one reason a doubter might say watching is not the same as learning.

4. Worked inquiry 1 — evaluating ‘the social laboratory of the world’

Now watch a full evaluation being built, move by move. The paragraph below makes a **claim**, gives **evidence**, tests the **limits**, and ends with a weighed **verdict**.

Model paragraph: evaluating ‘the social laboratory of the world’

one judgement, four moves — claim · evidence · limits · verdict

CLAIM

Between about 1890 and 1914, Australia could fairly be called ‘the social laboratory of the world’.

EVIDENCE

The record backs part of the claim: the secret ballot (from 1856), women voting and standing for parliament (in SA from 1894, federally from 1902), the world’s first Labour governments (Queensland 1899, federally 1904), a court-set basic wage (1907) and old-age pensions (1908). Overseas observers such as W. P. Reeves wrote the experiments up as lessons for their own countries.

LIMITS

But the laboratory had walls. The first federal parliament also passed the Immigration Restriction Act 1901, whose dictation test let officers bar most non-European arrivals — the start of the White Australia policy. And although women could stand for federal parliament from 1902, none was elected until 1943.

VERDICT

So the label is partly earned. Australia did test democratic and social laws ahead of most countries, and the world watched. It was not a laboratory open to all: its experiments mostly served white Australians, and men more than women.

Notice the moves: claim → dated evidence → limits → weighed verdict. Task 6 asks you to build the same paragraph for the other label.

A colour-coded model paragraph evaluating ‘the social laboratory of the world’: a blue claim panel stating the label could fairly be applied between about 1890 and 1914; a green evidence panel listing the secret ballot from 1856, women voting and standing from 1894 and 1902, the first Labour governments of 1899 and 1904, the court-set basic wage of 1907 and old-age pensions of 1908; a red limits panel noting the Immigration Restriction Act of 1901 and that no woman was elected to the federal parliament until 1943; and a gold verdict panel judging the label partly earned but not a laboratory open to all.

Read the paragraph once for sense, then once more move by move.

Question 1 — Where is the evidence dated? *Modelled answer:* every green claim carries a date (1856, 1894, 1902, 1899, 1904, 1907, 1908). A label without dates is an opinion; a label with dates is an interpretation.

Question 2 — What do the limits do? *Modelled answer:* the red move does not smash the label. It draws its walls: the experiments were real, but they were not open to everyone. That is what testing a characterisation looks like — you find where it holds and where it stops.

Question 3 — Why is the verdict “partly earned” rather than yes or no? *Modelled answer:* because the evidence genuinely runs both ways, and the honest judgement says how far the label holds instead of forcing a yes or no that the evidence does not support.

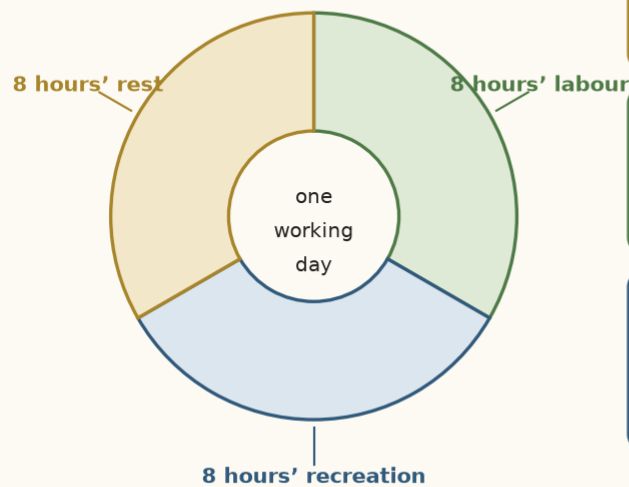
5. The case for ‘a working man’s paradise’

The second label is older and more emotional. Again, start with its strongest form.

The day itself. The paradise claim began with the working day. Read the slogan below as a worker in 1856 would have read it: as a promise kept.

'Eight hours' labour, eight hours' recreation, eight hours' rest'

the slogan behind Australia's most famous early win for workers



Where the slogan came from

The British reformer Robert Owen was using it by 1817. Workers carried it to the colonies with them.

Who won it first?

Sydney's stonemasons in 1855 and Melbourne's stonemasons in April-May 1856 — among the first workers anywhere in the world to win the eight-hour day.

Why it matters

It proved that workers could organise and win. For the rest of the century, the eight-hour day was both a symbol and an argument: evidence that Australia treated workers better than the old world did.

The 8-8-8 day sits at the heart of the claim that Australia was 'a working man's paradise'.

A labelled diagram dividing one working day into three equal parts of eight hours each — labour, recreation and rest — with panels noting that the slogan came from the British reformer Robert Owen by 1817, that Sydney's stonemasons won it in 1855 and Melbourne's in April-May 1856 among the first workers in the world to do so, and that the win became a symbol and an argument that Australia treated workers better than the old world.

Winning the eight-hour day in the 1850s put Australian workers among the first in the world to hold it. For the rest of the century it was celebrated in processions, and it gave the paradise claim its hardest piece of evidence: time.

Source B — The Workingman's Paradise (1892)

the novel that fixed a famous phrase to Australia

THE WORKINGMAN'S PARADISE

An Australian Labour Novel

printed early 1892

published as 'John Miller' —
the author was William Lane

printed novel · written for the strikers' cause

Who was William Lane?

Born in England in 1861, Lane became a journalist and union organiser in Queensland. He started the Brisbane newspaper *The Worker* in May 1890 and helped found the Australian Labour Federation.

Why did he write it?

The novel was printed to back the striking shearers of 1891. It appeared under a pen name so it could reach readers as a story, not just as a union pamphlet. Lane later led settlers out to found a 'New Australia' colony in Paraguay in July 1893; a second settlement, Cosme, followed in May 1894, and Lane had left the scheme by 1899.

Why is it famous?

Its title fixed the phrase 'a working man's paradise' to Australia. The phrase was used proudly by some and bitterly by others. In this section you will test it against the evidence — the same way you will test 'social laboratory of the world'.

*A source card for the novel *The Workingman's Paradise*, printed early in 1892 over the pen name John Miller but written by William Lane, showing a drawn book cover and three panels: who Lane was (born in England in 1861, journalist and union organiser, founder of the *Brisbane Worker* in May 1890, later leader of the *New Australia* settlement in Paraguay), why he wrote the novel (to back the striking shearers of 1891, under a pen name), and why it is famous (its title fixed the phrase a working man's paradise to Australia).*

Notice two things. First, the phrase was famous enough by 1892 to be a book title — and a book written for strikers, which tells you the phrase was argued about, not just admired. Lane himself was so disappointed with Australia after the strike defeats that he led settlers to Paraguay to build his own "New Australia". The paradise label was always contested, even by its own supporters.

The wage itself. The paradise claim's legal centrepiece came in 1907. Read Source C.

Source C — the Harvester judgement, November 1907

a court decides what a 'fair and reasonable' wage should mean

*...the normal needs of the average employee, regarded as a human being
in a civilised community.'*

Judge H. B. Higgins, Commonwealth Court of Conciliation and Arbitration

genuine primary source — the words of the judgement itself

The case

Did the Sunshine Harvester works in Victoria, owned by H. V. McKay, pay its workers 'fair and reasonable' wages? To answer, the court had to say what those words should mean in practice.

The result

Higgins fixed a basic wage of 7 shillings a day — 42 shillings a week — measured against what a worker needed to live on, not only against what an employer wanted to pay.

Why it matters

It was one of the first times anywhere that a court fixed pay by human need. It became a centrepiece of the argument that Australia was 'a working man's paradise' — and a target for everyone who doubted it.

Read the quote twice, then ask: whose 'normal needs' did the court actually have in mind?

A source card for the Harvester judgement of November 1907: a framed quotation of the judgement's words, the normal needs of the average employee regarded as a human being in a civilised community, attributed to Judge H. B. Higgins of the Commonwealth Court of Conciliation and Arbitration; three panels give the case (did H. V. McKay's Sunshine Harvester works pay fair and reasonable wages), the result (a basic wage of 7 shillings a day, 42 shillings a week, measured against a worker's needs), and why it matters (one of the first times a court fixed pay by human need).

Arbitration — putting a dispute before an independent court — was itself one of the “experiments” from part 3: the Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Act was passed in 1904. The **basic wage** it produced was the paradise claim in legal form: a wage measured against what a human being needed, not only against what an employer offered.

6. Worked inquiry 2 — discussing 'a working man's paradise'

The curriculum asks you to *discuss* this label using evidence drawn from a range of sources — which means more than one kind of source: a slogan, a novel, a judgement, a timeline. The model paragraph below uses all four kinds.

Model paragraph: discussing ‘a working man’s paradise’

one judgement, four moves — interpretation · evidence for · testing the evidence · verdict

INTERPRETATION

From the 1890s, some Australians called their country ‘a working man’s paradise’. William Lane made the phrase famous in his 1892 novel, written to back the striking shearers.

EVIDENCE FOR

There was real ground for it: the eight-hour day won by stonemasons in the 1850s, strong unions, a court-set basic wage (Harvester, 1907), and governments that paid old-age pensions (from 1908) and a maternity allowance (1912). Overseas reformers admired the record and wrote about it.

TESTING THE EVIDENCE

But paradise is a strong word. The 1890s depression closed banks and threw men out of work. The great strikes of 1890–94, beginning with the shearers, were broken. And the ‘paradise’ had a colour line and a gender line: the Immigration Restriction Act 1901 aimed to keep non-European workers out, and no woman won a seat in the federal parliament until 1943.

VERDICT

The phrase caught something real — ordinary workers in Australia did enjoy rights and wages that overseas observers admired. But it was always an argument, not a fact: it worked hardest to hide who was left out.

Compare the two model paragraphs: same four moves, different label. That is what evaluation looks like.

A colour-coded model paragraph discussing ‘a working man’s paradise’: a blue interpretation panel dating the phrase to the 1890s and to William Lane’s 1892 novel; a green evidence panel citing the eight-hour day of the 1850s, strong unions, the Harvester basic wage of 1907, old-age pensions from 1908 and the maternity allowance of 1912; a red testing panel citing the 1890s depression, the broken strikes of 1890–94, the Immigration Restriction Act of 1901 and the fact that no woman won a federal seat until 1943; and a gold verdict panel judging that the phrase caught something real but worked hardest to hide who was left out.

Question 1 — Which sources are primary, which secondary? *Modelled answer:* the slogan, the novel and the judgement are primary — made at the time. The model paragraph itself is secondary: it is a later account built from them.

Question 2 — What does the red move add that the green move cannot? *Modelled answer:* the green move shows what the label caught; the red move shows who the label left out and when it broke down. A depression that closes banks is evidence a paradise is conditional.

Question 3 — Why does the verdict call the phrase “an argument, not a fact”? *Modelled answer:* because calling a place a paradise is itself a move in a debate — Lane used it to shame Australia into being one, employers rejected it, workers invoked it to demand more. The phrase did work; it did not just describe.

7. Testing the labels — the limits

Every strong label hides something. Three limits do the most work in this debate, and none of them is secret: they are on the timeline in part 1.

1. The colour line at the door. The first federal parliament’s first major laws included the Immigration Restriction Act 1901. Under it, an officer could make a new arrival write out a **dictation test** of fifty words in a European language of the officer’s choosing — a test designed to be failed, so that non-European people could be barred while the law avoided saying so plainly. The policy it enforced is known as the White Australia policy.

The Victorian Curriculum uses the term ‘*White Australia*’ policy but does not define it. This section therefore treats it as follows: the aim, written into law from 1901, of stopping non-European people from settling in Australia. Supporters argued it protected wages and working conditions from cheap labour. The

aim was racist: it judged people by race and sought to exclude them on that basis. The laws built on it were dismantled by later parliaments through the twentieth century. Other definitions of the phrase exist and are not interchangeable with this one.

Read that definition against the paradise label and you see the sharpest test of all: a paradise for some workers was kept, in part, by locking other workers out.

2. The gender line. Women could stand for the federal parliament from 1902 — but no woman was elected to it until 1943, when Dame Enid Lyons won a seat in the House of Representatives. The laboratory experimented on many things; electing women was not one of them for four decades.

3. The economy's veto. The 1890s depression closed banks and threw men out of work, and the great strikes of 1890–94 — beginning with the shearers who camped at Barcaldine in 1891 — were broken. A “paradise” that can be switched off by a bad decade is a paradise with conditions.

Both sides, steelmanned. Before you judge, give each side its strongest say.

Supporters of the labels said

Australia tried reforms — the secret ballot, votes for women, a court-set wage — years before Britain or the United States dared to.

Workers really did win the eight-hour day and a basic wage measured by human need — gains most workers in other countries lacked.

Overseas insiders such as Reeves studied Australian laws as lessons for their own countries.

Doubters of the labels said

The same parliaments passed the Immigration Restriction Act 1901; a laboratory with a colour line at the door tests freedom only for some.

The depression and the broken strikes of 1890–94 showed employers still held the upper hand; the gains were real but conditional.

Being watched is not being copied; and no woman sat in the federal parliament until 1943, so half the population stayed outside the experiment.

The historians' debate. The argument did not end in 1914. Each generation of historians has weighed the same evidence with different questions.

Historians keep the debate open

three writers, three generations, one question: what was this era really?

W. K. Hancock

Australia, 1930

One of the most influential early accounts of the nation by a historian. The tone is ironic — Hancock could admire Australia and criticise it in the same sentence. He attacked tariff protection, the wall of duties that sheltered Australian industry from overseas competition.

Russel Ward

The Australian Legend, 1958

Argued that life in the bush bred an egalitarian spirit, and that this spirit shaped Australian culture. The book placed the bush worker at the centre of how historians tell Australia's story.

Marilyn Lake

Getting Equal, 1999 ·
Drawing the Global Colour Line, 2008 ·
Progressive New World, 2019

Reads the era both ways at once: Australian reforms — votes, wages, welfare — were watched and copied around the world, and so was the White Australia policy. Progress and racial exclusion ran together.

Each generation asks new questions of the same evidence. That is what keeps the debate alive — and what makes it yours to enter.

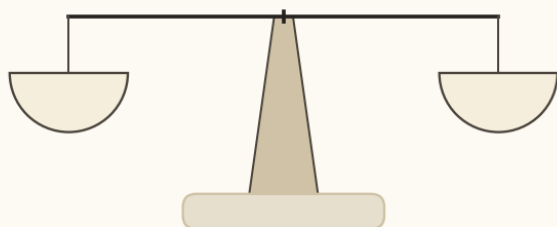
A table of three historians across three generations: W. K. Hancock, whose influential Australia of 1930 admired and criticised the nation in the same breath and attacked tariff protection; Russel Ward, whose The Australian Legend of 1958 argued that bush life bred an egalitarian spirit that shaped Australian culture; and Marilyn Lake, whose books of 1999, 2008 and 2019 read the era both ways at once, showing that Australian reforms were watched and copied around the world and so was the White Australia policy.

Your weighing. The two scales below are level on purpose.

Two labels on trial

each beam stays level on purpose — the debate is not settled until you weigh the evidence

'the social laboratory of the world'

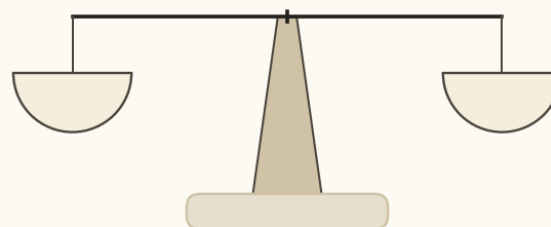


What holds the label up What weighs it down

the secret ballot, 1856
women vote and stand,
1894-1902
first Labour governments,
1899 and 1904
a court-set basic wage,
1907
old-age pensions, 1908

Immigration Restriction
Act 1901 — a colour line
at the door
no women in federal
parliament until 1943
the experiments mostly
served white, male
Australians

'a working man's paradise'



What holds the label up What weighs it down

the eight-hour day from
the 1850s
strong unions
a fair basic wage, 1907
pensions 1908; maternity
allowance 1912

1890s depression — banks
fail, work disappears
the strikes of 1890-94 are
broken
the gates closed to
non-European workers, 1901

The scales are level on purpose. Your job in this section is to decide where each beam tips — and to say why, with dated evidence.

Two level balance scales, one for each label. Under the social laboratory scale, one pan lists what holds the label up — the secret ballot of 1856, women voting and standing in 1894-1902, the first Labour governments of 1899 and 1904, the court-set basic wage of 1907, old-age pensions of 1908 — and the other pan lists what weighs it down: the Immigration Restriction Act 1901, no women in the federal parliament until 1943, and experiments that mostly served white, male Australians. Under the working man's paradise scale, one pan lists the eight-hour day, strong unions, the basic wage of 1907 and the pensions and maternity allowance, and the other pan lists the 1890s depression, the broken strikes of 1890-94 and the closing of the gates to non-European workers in 1901.

8. Practice tasks

Scaffolded tasks — work with the supports provided.

1. **Date the evidence.** Match each piece of evidence to its year: secret ballot in three colonies; SA women vote and stand; first Labour government anywhere; women vote and stand federally; Harvester basic wage; old-age pensions Act; maternity allowance. Years: 1856, 1894, 1899, 1902, 1907, 1908, 1912.
2. **Sort the sources.** For Sources A, B and C: (a) primary or secondary? (b) who made it, and when? (c) one thing each source is strong evidence *for*.
3. **Order the world.** Using the chart in part 3, put New Zealand, Australia, Finland, Norway and Denmark in order of the year women first voted in national elections. Circle the country where women could first both vote and stand.
4. **Complete the scales.** Copy the paradise scale from part 7. From memory, fill in both pans; then check against the figure and correct your errors.
5. **Say it in a sentence.** For each label, write one sentence that states the strongest form of the claim (steelmanning it, the way the tables in parts 3 and 7 do).
6. **Move-spotting.** List the four moves of the model paragraphs in order, and say which move the figures colour red and why red suits it.

Unscaffolded tasks — no supports; build your answer from scratch.

- Put the label ‘the social laboratory of the world’ on trial: evaluate it using the four moves from part 4, at least three dated pieces of evidence and at least one limit.
 - Weigh the label ‘a working man’s paradise’ against the record: discuss it using evidence from at least three *different kinds* of source in this section (for example: a slogan, a novel, a judgement, a chart).
 - Which of the two labels is better supported by the evidence in this section? State your judgement and justify it with dated evidence for both labels.
 - Name one way the evidence in this section shows **change** in Australian society from 1750 to 1914, and one way it shows **continuity**. Explain each in one or two sentences.
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9. Source-based inquiry

Read the two sources, then answer the questions below them.

Source 1 — primary source, quoted from the original decision. Harvester judgement, November 1907, H. B. Higgins, Commonwealth Court of Conciliation and Arbitration: the fair and reasonable wage must be judged by “the normal needs of the average employee, regarded as a human being in a civilised community”. (*Original judgement; see Source C in part 5.*)

Source 2 — extract, in modern words, from the Immigration Restriction Act 1901 (No. 17 of 1901).

The Act stated, in effect, that a person seeking to enter Australia could be required to write out, from dictation, a passage of fifty words in any European language the officer chose — a test an officer could use to fail almost anyone. (*Original statute; see the source table above.*)

- Formulate:** write two historical questions that Source 1 could help you answer, and one question that needs Source 2 as well.
- Infer:** what does Source 1 assume a wage should cover? What does Source 2 assume about who should be allowed in?
- Context:** both sources come from the first decades of a new nation. Explain how a law that sets a wage by human need (Source 1) and a law that bars people by a rigged test (Source 2) could come from the same parliaments within six years of each other.
- Perspective:** whose interests does each source protect? Whose voices would be missing from the records that produced them? (The intended referents here are non-European workers and women; if other material comes to mind, note that the front-of-book statement covers it and move on.)
- Evaluate:** taken together, do these two sources support or weaken the label ‘a working man’s paradise’? Write a short evaluation using the four moves from part 6.

What to look for

Score student work against the band achievement standard (Level 9–10): students analyse the features, content and context of sources; identify the perspectives that individuals and groups held; connect short- and long-term causes with intended and unintended consequences; and judge historical significance by criteria. For this strand, that analysing is aimed at interpretations: the labels are claims to weigh, not facts to repeat. Expected responses below are a guide, not a script.

- Reforms and the big question (part 1):** student can read the timeline as evidence, not just events — at least three reforms with dates, and the red entry named as a limit rather than ignored.
- Definitions (part 2):** both contested labels are used as defined interpretations; if a student raises excluded material, redirect to the front-of-book note (D3) without authoring it.
- Laboratory case (part 3, .E03):** the steelman is real — dated reforms plus the outside gaze (Reeves) plus the world chart read honestly (NZ first for the vote; Australia first for vote-and-stand; Finland first for all, with the first women MPs).
- Worked inquiry 1 (part 4, .E03):** student can name all four moves, explain why evidence is dated, and accept “partly earned” as a judgement rather than a fudge.

- **Paradise case (part 5, .E04):** student can use more than one kind of source (slogan, novel, judgement) and say what each adds; the Harvester quote is handled as a primary source.
- **Worked inquiry 2 (part 6, .E04):** primary/secondary sorting is correct (novel, slogan and judgement primary; model paragraph secondary), and the phrase is treated as an argument with a job to do, not a description.
- **Limits and weighing (part 7):** all three limits are available (the 1901 Act and its rigged test; no woman elected federally until 1943; the depression and the broken strikes of 1890–94); the two-sides table is used to steelman before judging; limits stay within migration, gender and economy per D3.
- **Practice and inquiry (parts 8–9):** evaluations show the four moves with dated evidence; source sorting is accurate; the perspective answer names missing voices (non-European workers, women) and their effect on the record without drifting into excluded content; task 10 links the labels to continuity and change.

Cross-links to skills sections: sequencing and timeline construction (7B), source purpose and context (7C), value of sources as evidence (7D), perspectives from sources (7E), continuity and change (8A), causes and consequences (8B), significance criteria (8C), sustained interpretation with citations (8D).