

History Level 6

Chapter 1 — Australia 1800–1900: the British colonies

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Why British colonies were established after 1800: penal and free colonies, land, resources and Britain's economy

Teacher note — for teachers only (not student text). **Owns:** VC2HH6K01 (VCAA export). Delivered in neutral context per TOC §2A: the colonial-causes content is taught without the First Nations clause of the CD, and elaboration .E04 is **excluded** and must not be taught or assessed. **Draws on:** .E01 .E02 .E03 .E05 .E06. **Prerequisites assumed, not re-taught:** VC2HH4K07 (the 1788 colony at Sydney), VC2HH4K08 (life in the early colony: officials and convicts). **Achievement standard link:** this section delivers the *causes* half; 1B/4B carry consequences. **Teaching sequence (suggested):** (1) Open at 1800 and define key terms; read the timeline and colony table (Figures 1-2). (2) Penal colonies: Van Diemen's Land and Moreton Bay; read the transportation chart (Figure 3). (3) Free colonies: Swan River, South Australia and Port Phillip; Henty, Batman, Fawcner; source work with the Batman journal card (Figure 4) and Worked demonstration 1. (4) Economic causes: Britain's unemployment and poverty after 1815, land and resources, the wool trade; push-pull diagram and wool chain (Figures 5-6). (5) Where people settled: water, ports, rivers, gold; map and population chart with Worked demonstration 2 (Figures 7-8). (6) Consolidate with the cause-web thinking routine (Figure 9) and the evidence-based writing task. **Cross-subject note:** Figure 7-8 mapping work links to same-year Geography (VC2HG6S02/S03) — planning note only. **Sources:** every primary source extract and dataset in this section is a real, cited artifact; retrieval date 24 August 2026 (see end-of-section source lines).

Background knowledge

You already know the first part of this story from earlier years: in 1788, Britain began its first colony in Australia, New South Wales. This section starts in **1800**, when Britain was deciding to start more colonies around the coast.

Key terms. A **colony** is a place where people from another country come to live, while the home country still rules it. **Colonisation** is the process of one country sending its people to settle in and rule land in another part of the world. A **convict** is a person who broke the law and was sent far away as a punishment. A **penal colony** is a colony set up mainly to hold and punish convicts (*penal* means to do with punishment). A **free colony** is a colony set up for **free settlers** — people who chose to move there, not as convicts. **Migration** is the movement of people from one place to another to live. A **cause** is why something happened; a **consequence** is what happened next because of it. A **primary source** is something made at the time being studied, such as a diary, letter or newspaper; a **secondary source** is something written later using primary sources, such as most history books.

New British colonies in Australia, 1800-1859

1803	●	First British settlement begins in Van Diemen's Land
1824	●	Moreton Bay penal settlement is founded
1825	●	Van Diemen's Land becomes a separate colony
1829	●	Swan River Colony is founded as a free colony
1834	●	The Henty family arrives at Portland Bay (free)
1835	●	Batman's and Fawkner's parties reach Port Phillip (free)
1836	●	South Australia is founded as a free colony - no convicts
1842	●	Moreton Bay closes to convicts and opens to free settlers
1850	●	Transportation of convicts to New South Wales ends
1851	●	Victoria becomes a separate colony; gold is found
1853	●	Transportation of convicts to Van Diemen's Land ends
1859	●	Queensland becomes a separate colony

● Penal (convict) event ● Free-settlement event ● Gold changes everything

Vertical timeline of twelve events from 1803 to 1859, with red dots for penal events, green dots for free settlement events and a gold dot for the 1851 gold discovery

Figure 1. New British colonies in Australia, 1800-1859.

The British colonies of Australia: penal and free

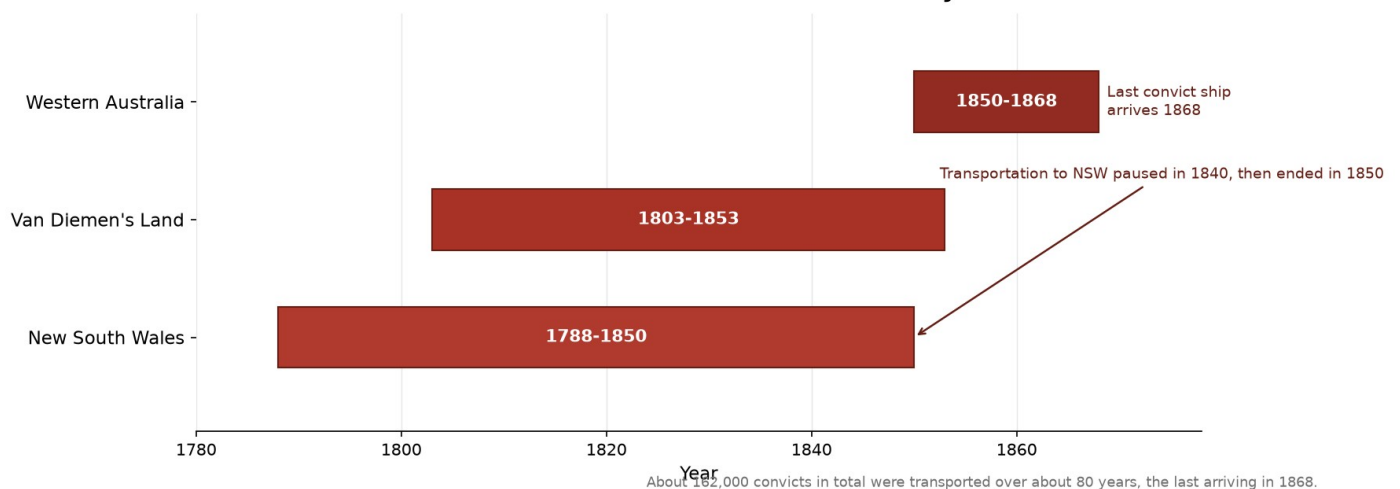
Colony	When it began	Penal or free?	Why was it set up?
New South Wales	From 1788 (you studied this in Years 3-4)	Penal - Britain's first convict colony	Prisons in Britain were full, so convicts were sent there.
Van Diemen's Land	Settled 1803, separate colony 1825	Penal colony	A place to send convicts, including those who broke rules again.
Moreton Bay district (later Queensland)	Penal settlement 1824; Queensland separates 1859	Penal first, then free	A harsh place to punish reoffending convicts; later open to free settlers.
Swan River (Western Australia)	1829	Free colony (convicts sent from 1850)	Land for farming, and a watch on the west coast.
South Australia	1836	Free colony - no convicts ever	Land sales paid for poor workers to migrate from Britain.
Victoria (Port Phillip district)	Settled 1834-35, separates 1851	Free colony	Rich grass for sheep; new farms for settlers.

Table with one row per colony showing when it began, whether it was penal or free, and why it was set up

Figure 2. The British colonies of Australia: penal and free.

Cause 1 — prisons and punishment. After 1800, prisons in Britain were overcrowded, and people found guilty of crimes were sent to the colonies as convicts. New South Wales could not take everyone, so Britain set up more penal places. A small British camp began in **Van Diemen's Land** in 1803, and in 1825 it became a separate colony. Its station at Port Arthur held convicts who kept breaking the rules. In 1824 a penal settlement was founded at **Moreton Bay** (the future Brisbane) as a harsh punishment for convicts who broke the rules again after arriving in Australia.

When were convicts sent to each colony?



Horizontal bars showing the years convicts were sent to each colony: New South Wales 1788 to 1850, Van Diemen's Land 1803 to 1853, Western Australia 1850 to 1868

Figure 3. When were convicts sent to each colony? In total about 162,000 convicts were transported over about 80 years, the last arriving in 1868. *Source: figures compiled from the Wikipedia articles “Convicts in Australia” and “Penal transportation”, accessed 24 August 2026.*

Cause 2 — free colonies and new starts. Not every colony was for convicts. The **Swan River Colony** (Western Australia) began in 1829 as a free colony: Captain James Stirling had reported good farming land, and the British government also did not want ships from other countries setting up on the west coast. **South Australia** began in 1836 as a free colony with **no convicts ever**: the British government’s plan said that land would be sold, and the money would pay for poor workers in Britain to migrate to the colony. A writer named Edward Gibbon Wakefield argued for this plan: sell the land, and use the money to bring out workers.

In the south-east, the Port Phillip district attracted free settlers from Van Diemen’s Land who wanted more land for their sheep. The **Henty family** arrived at Portland Bay on 19 November 1834 after a voyage of 34 days, bringing stock and supplies; Edward Henty ploughed the first soil for a farm there. In 1835, **John Batman** crossed from Van Diemen’s Land with the Port Phillip Association, a group of investors hoping to gain land, and explored Port Phillip. His party was followed months later by **John Pascoe Fawkner’s** group, which camped on the Yarra River — the site of the future Melbourne. In 1851 the Port Phillip district separated from New South Wales and became the colony of **Victoria**, and in the same year gold was found. The **gold rush** — the great rush of miners to the diggings — had begun.

Reading a primary source: what did John Batman want?

SOURCE CARD

Extract from the journal of John Batman
Monday 8 June 1835, Port Phillip district

“ ... the boat went up the river I have spoken of,
which comes from the east ”

“ about six miles up found the river all good water
and very deep ”

“ This will be the place for a village. ”

Source: copy of John Batman’s journal, State Library of
Victoria. This is a primary source — written at the time.

Old paper card with three short lines quoted from John Batman’s journal dated Monday 8 June 1835, naming the river’s good deep water and a place for a village, with a source line for the State Library of Victoria

Figure 4. Source card: extract from the journal of John Batman, Monday 8 June 1835 (a primary source). *Source: copy of John Batman’s journal held at the State Library of Victoria, accessed 24 August 2026.*

Cause 3 — land, resources and money. Colonies were also about wealth. Sheep had been brought to the colonies from 1797, and by the 1830s wool from the colonies was sold in Britain to its cloth factories, which were growing fast. Land was the big attraction: the colonies had wide open country for sheep runs and farms. At the same time, Britain’s own economic troubles pushed people out: after the long European wars ended in 1815, many people had no work, and many families were very poor. For them, a colony offered land, jobs and a fresh start.

Why did people move? Push and pull factors, 1800-1860

PUSH: reasons to leave Britain

PULL: what the colonies offered

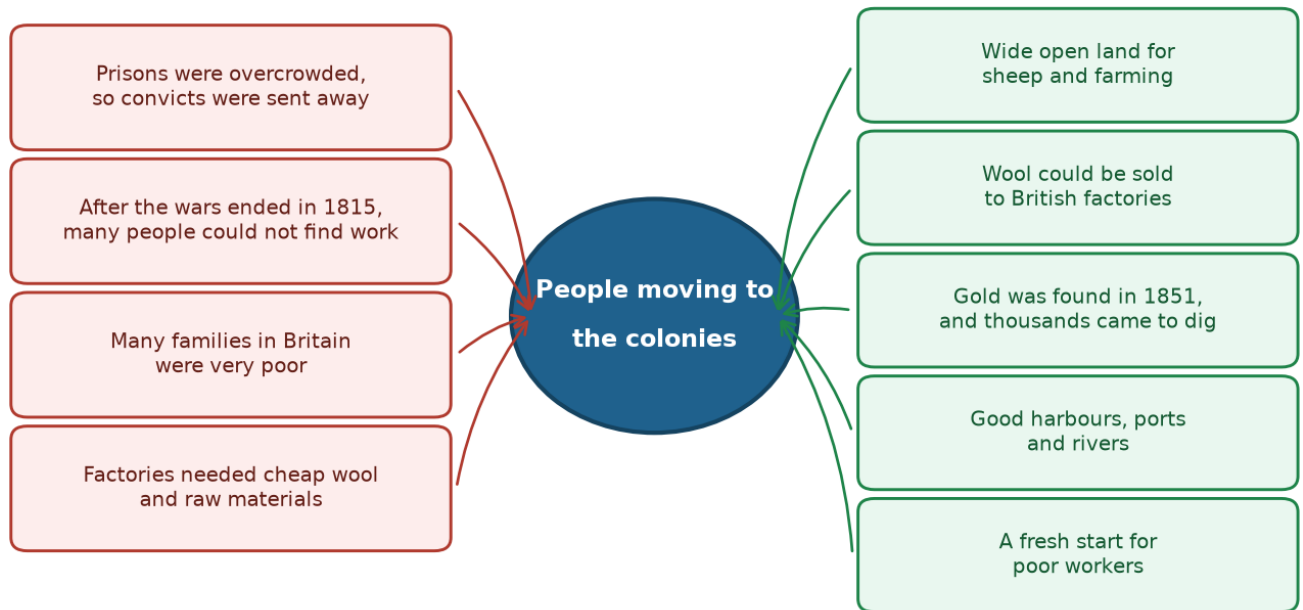
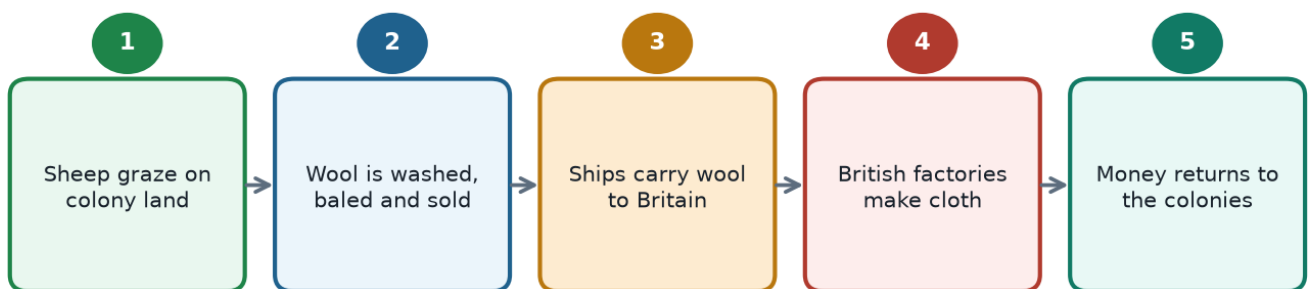


Diagram with two columns of boxes, push factors on the left such as overcrowded prisons and people without work, pull factors on the right such as open land and gold in 1851, with arrows pointing to a central circle labelled people moving to the colonies

Figure 5. Push and pull factors, 1800-1860.

The wool chain: how colonies made money for Britain



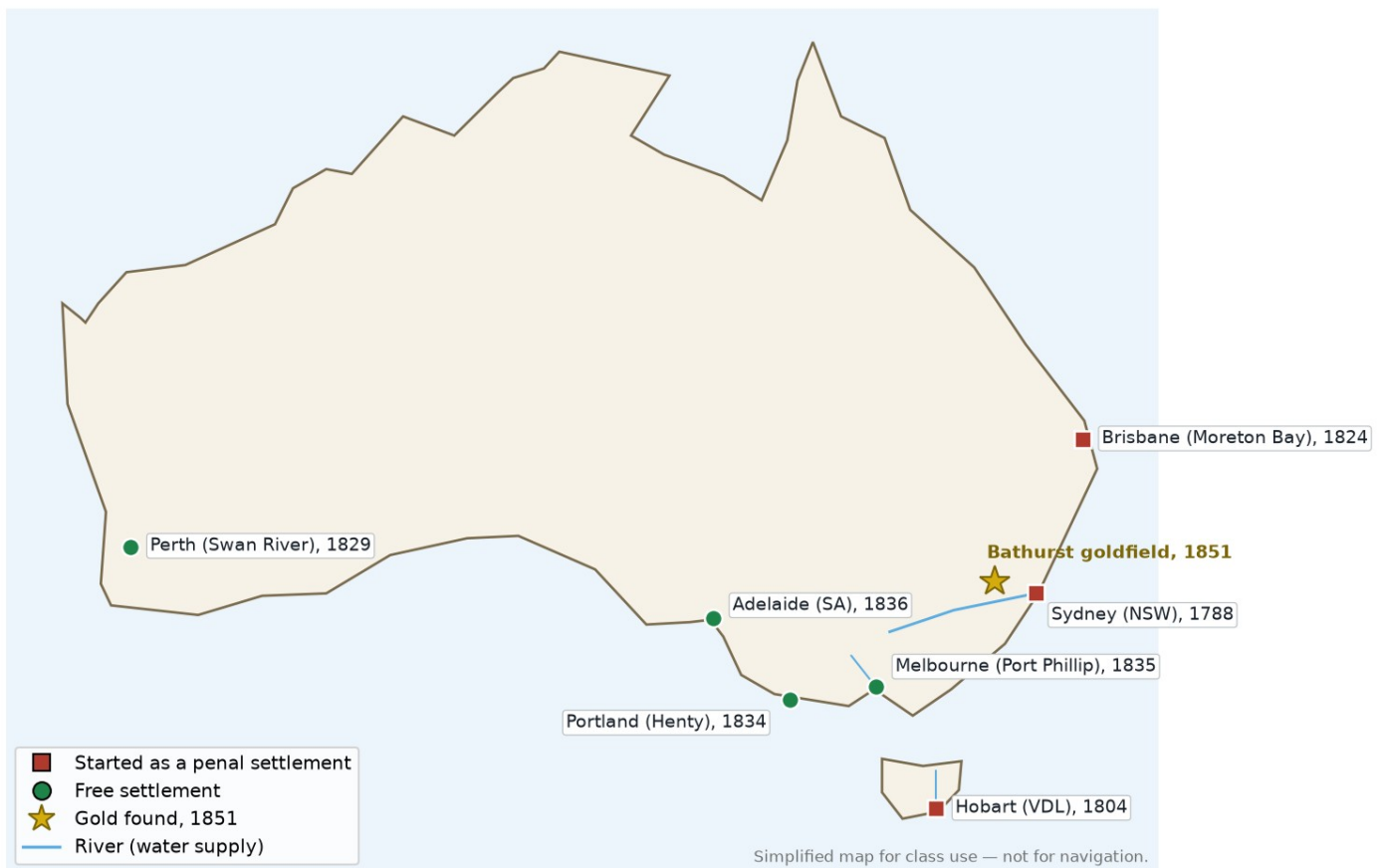
By the 1830s, wool from the colonies was one of the most valuable things Britain bought from its colonies.

Five boxes joined left to right by arrows: sheep graze on colony land, wool is washed packed and sold, ships carry wool to Britain, British factories make cloth, money returns to the colonies

Figure 6. The wool chain: how colonies made money for Britain.

Where people settled. Look at the map in Figure 7. Almost every early town sat on the coast near a **safe port** where ships could land — Sydney, Hobart, Brisbane, Perth, Adelaide and Melbourne are all ports. Towns also needed **fresh water**: the Moreton Bay settlement moved in 1825 because its first site had poor water, and Fawcner's party chose the Yarra River for the same reason. **Climate and good grass** drew settlers to the Port Phillip district and to South Australia. And after 1851, **gold** pulled thousands of people inland to the diggings.

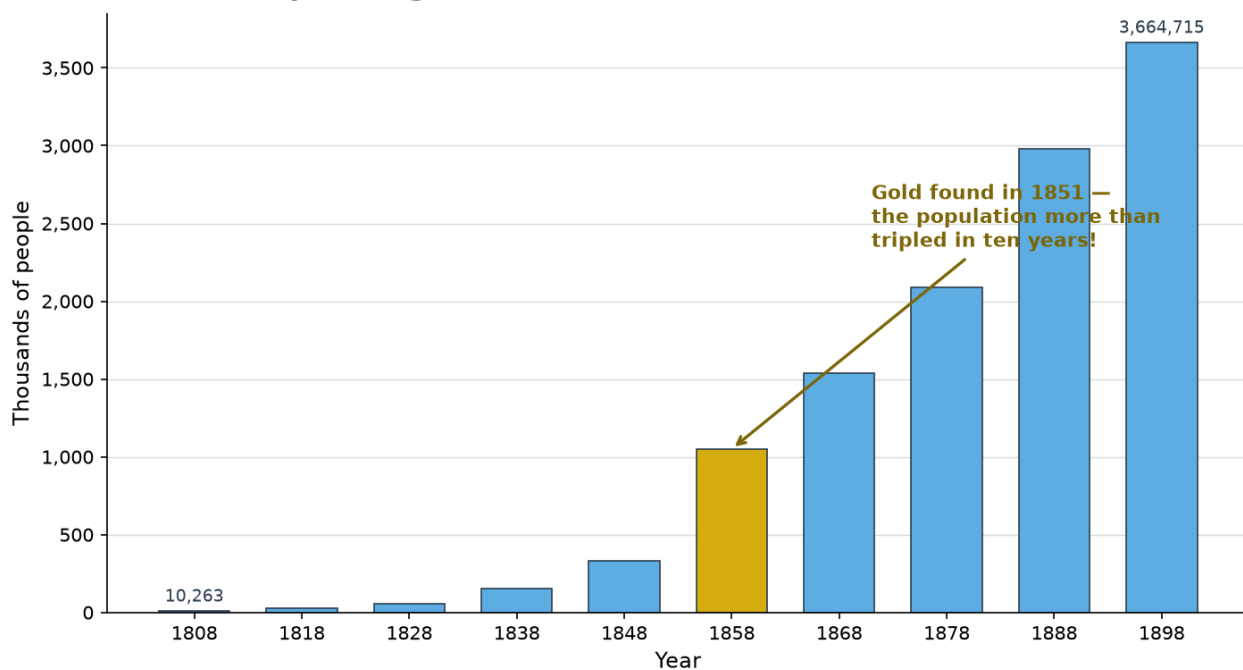
Where people settled, and why: ports, rivers and gold



Simplified map of Australia marking Sydney 1788, Hobart 1804, Brisbane 1824, Perth 1829, Portland 1834, Melbourne 1835 and Adelaide 1836, red squares for penal starts, green circles for free settlements, a gold star at Bathurst for the 1851 gold, and blue lines for rivers

Figure 7. Where people settled, and why: ports, rivers and gold. (Simplified map for class use.)

People living in the British colonies in Australia, 1808-1898



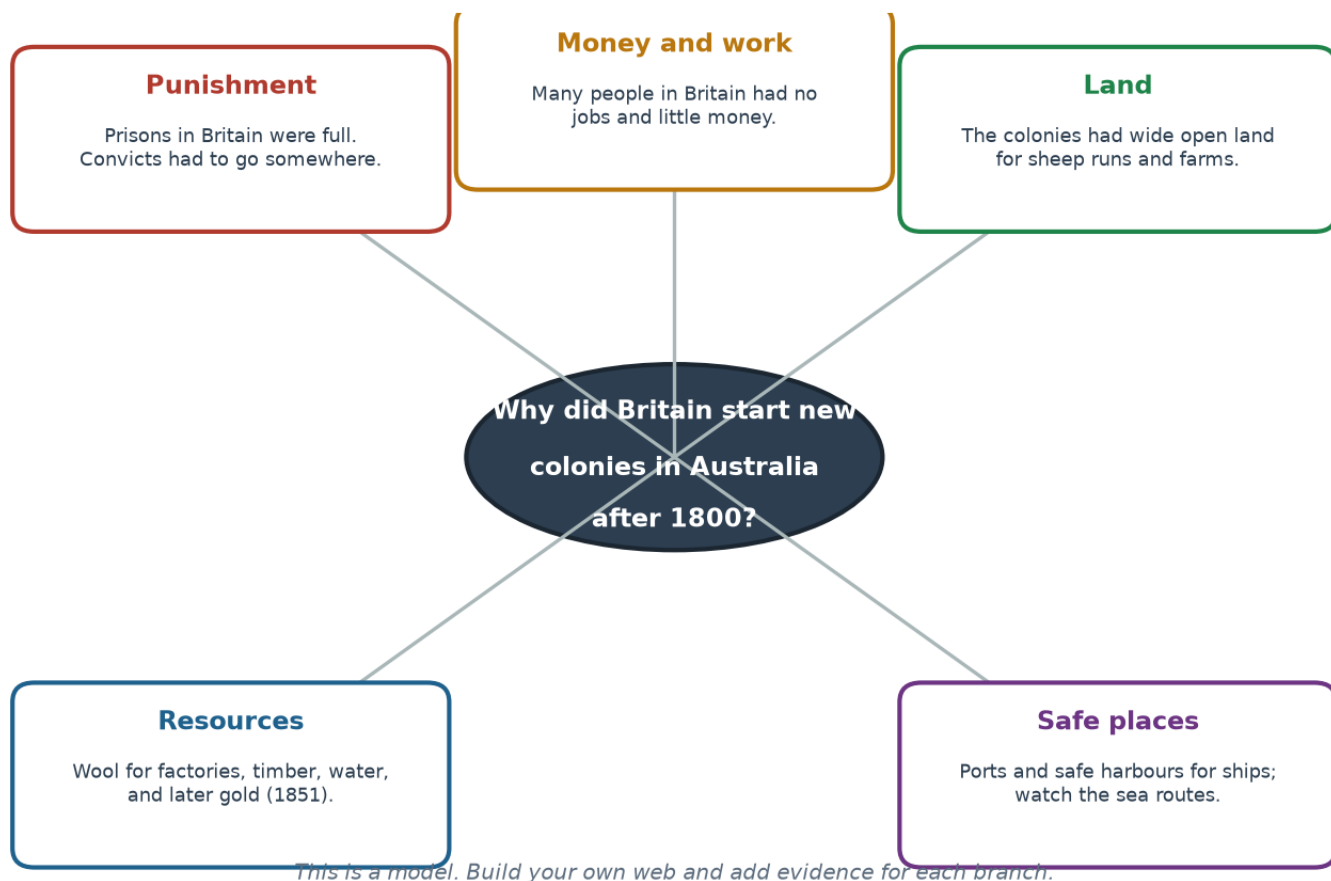
Source: ABS Australian Historical Population Statistics, 2014 (cat. no. 3105.0.65.001), settler-population series; retrieved 24 August 2026.

Bar chart of the settler population of the British colonies every ten years from 1808 to 1898, bars rising slowly at first and jumping after 1851, with an arrow marking that gold was found in 1851

Figure 8. People living in the British colonies in Australia, 1808-1898. *Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Australian Historical Population Statistics, 2014 (cat. no. 3105.0.65.001), settler series, accessed 24 August 2026.*

Pulling the causes together. Figure 9 shows a *cause web* — one way to sort the causes of this section into groups. One question sits in the middle, and each reason branches off it. Before you start the writing task, copy the web and add one or two branches of your own.

Cause web: a thinking routine for sorting the reasons



Cause web with the question why did Britain start colonies in Australia after 1800 in the middle and five branches for prisons and convicts, free land, wool and money, no work and poverty in Britain, and gold after 1851

Figure 9. A model cause web: why did Britain start colonies in Australia after 1800?

Worked demonstrations

Worked demonstration 1 — reading a primary source for motives and perspectives

Goal: use the source card (Figure 4) to work out what John Batman wanted.

Step	What we do	What we find
1. Ask about the source	Who wrote it, and when?	John Batman, in his own journal, on the day it happened (8 June 1835) — a primary source .
2. Read for facts	What does it say?	He went up a river “which comes from the east”; six miles up, the river was “all good water and very deep”.
3. Ask why it matters	Why would a person on a journey care about good, deep water?	Fresh water for people and stock; deep water for boats to use.
4. Read the key line	“This will be the place for a village.”	He was already imagining a town.

Step	What we do	What we find
5. Use what we know	Who was Batman?	He wanted a place to settle and to trade. A sheep farmer from Van Diemen's Land, backed by the Port Phillip Association. Like the Henty family, he was after new grazing land.

Motive found: Batman's journal shows he came to Port Phillip looking for good land, good water and a place where a town could grow. **Perspective:** he saw the district through a farmer's and investor's eyes — as land to settle, use and sell.

Worked demonstration 2 — reading a population chart for causes

Goal: use Figure 8 to find a pattern and suggest a cause.

Step	What we do	What we find
1. Read two bars	1848 and 1858	332,328 people in 1848; 1,050,828 in 1858.
2. Do the maths	$1,050,828 - 332,328$	A growth of 718,500 people — the population more than tripled in ten years.
3. Look for a cause	What happened in between?	Gold was found in 1851, starting the gold rush.
4. State it with care	Pattern + possible cause	"The population more than tripled between 1848 and 1858, <i>probably because</i> the gold rush brought thousands of new people."

Historians always say "probably because" when the evidence suggests a cause — they do not claim certainty from a chart alone.

Practice tasks

Tasks with help

Q1. Use Figure 2. Copy this table and fill the four gaps.

Colony	When it began	Penal or free?	Why was it set up?
Van Diemen's Land	Settled 1803, separate colony 1825	<i>gap 1</i>	A place to send convicts
Swan River	<i>gap 2</i>	Free colony	Farming land; a watch on the west coast
South Australia	1836	<i>gap 3</i>	Land sales paid for poor workers to migrate
<i>gap 4</i>	Settled 1834-35, separates 1851	Free colony	Rich grass for sheep; new farms

Q2. Use Figure 3. (a) Which colony received convicts for the longest time? (b) In what year did the last convict ship arrive in Western Australia? (c) About how many convicts were transported in total, over about how many years?

Q3. Use Figure 1. Put these events in order, starting with the first.

- - a. Victoria becomes a separate colony
- - b. The Moreton Bay penal settlement is founded
- - c. The Henty family arrives at Portland Bay
- - d. Van Diemen's Land becomes a separate colony
- - e. The Swan River Colony is founded

Q4. Use the Source Card (Figure 4). (a) Is this journal a primary or a secondary source? Give one reason for your answer. (b) Complete this sentence with evidence from the card: "Batman was looking for a good place to settle because ..."

Q5. Use Figure 5. Sort these four statements into *push* (reasons to leave Britain) or *pull* (what the colonies offered).

- - a. Prisons in Britain were overcrowded.
- - b. The colonies had wide open land for sheep and farms.
- - c. After 1815, many people in Britain could not find work.
- - d. Gold was found in 1851.

Q6. True or false? Fix any false sentence so it becomes true.

- - a. South Australia was set up as a penal colony.
- - b. Moreton Bay closed to convicts in 1842 and opened to free settlers.
- - c. The Swan River Colony began as a free colony in 1829.

Q7. Use Figure 6. (a) List the five steps of the wool chain in order. (b) Which step shows *why* wool mattered to Britain? Explain in one sentence.

Q8. Use Figure 8. Read the values for 1828 and 1868. How many more people lived in the colonies in 1868 than in 1828? Show your working.

Tasks on your own

Q9. Explain two causes for the founding of the penal colonies of Van Diemen's Land and Moreton Bay. Support each cause with evidence from this section.

Q10. The Henty family (1834) and John Batman (1835) both came to the Port Phillip district from Van Diemen's Land. Using evidence from this section, explain the motive they shared.

Q11. Use Figure 8. (a) Which ten-year step on the chart shows the biggest growth in people? Use two figures from the chart and the difference between them to support your answer. (b) Suggest one cause for that growth.

Q12. "Colonies made money for Britain." Using at least two steps of the wool chain (Figure 6), explain whether you agree.

Writing task — evidence-based paragraph

Q13. Historians hold two views about why Britain established colonies in Australia after 1800.

- **View 1:** the colonies were mainly about punishment — Britain needed places for its convicts.
- **View 2:** the colonies were mainly about land, resources and money — wool, farming land, gold and trade.

Each view is serious and has real evidence behind it. Write one paragraph (5-7 sentences) arguing which view you judge more important. You must: state your view; give at least **three pieces of evidence** from this section (figures, dates or sources all count); and give the *other* view a fair mention with one piece of evidence. Marks are given for the quality of your reasoning — defined terms, evidence used, fair mention of the other side — not for which view you choose.

Answers

Q1. Gap 1: penal colony. Gap 2: 1829. Gap 3: free colony, no convicts. Gap 4: Victoria (Port Phillip district).

Q2. (a) New South Wales (1788-1850). (b) 1868. (c) About 162,000 convicts over about 80 years.

Q3. b (1824), d (1825), e (1829), c (1834), a (1851).

Q4. (a) Primary — written by Batman himself at the time of the events he describes. (b) Any line that ties the river's good, deep water to a place for a village/town, e.g. "he wrote that the river was all good water and very deep, and that this would be the place for a village".

Q5. Push: a, c. Pull: b, d.

Q6. (a) False — South Australia was a *free* colony; no convicts were sent there. (b) True. (c) True.

Q7. (a) Sheep graze → wool washed, packed and sold → ships carry wool to Britain → factories make cloth → money returns to the colonies. (b) The factory step: British factories needed a steady supply of raw wool to make cloth.

Q8. $1,539,552 - 58,197 = 1,481,355$ more people.

Q9-Q12. See Model answers below for the shape of a strong response; your wording will differ.

Q13. Marked with the marking guide in the Model answers.

Model answers

Model for Q9. One cause was that Britain's prisons were overcrowded after 1800, so convicts had to be sent somewhere: Van Diemen's Land was settled in 1803 and became a separate colony in 1825, one reason being to hold convicts, and Port Arthur kept the hardest to manage. A second cause was punishment inside the colonies: Moreton Bay was founded in 1824 as a harsh place for convicts who broke the rules again. Both causes are about punishment, which is why these were penal colonies.

Model for Q11. (a) The step from 1878 to 1888 shows the biggest growth: $2,981,677 - 2,092,164 = 889,513$ people. (b) One cause was continued migration to the goldfields and to farming country; gold had been found in 1851 and the colonies kept attracting new people with land and work.

Marking guide for Q13. Award one point for each of: (1) the view is stated clearly; (2) three distinct pieces of evidence from the section are used and each is tied to the view; (3) one piece of evidence for the other view is given a fair mention; (4) terms such as *penal colony*, *free colony* and *cause* are used correctly. A strong sample opening: "I judge View 2 more important. Free colonies such as South Australia were planned around money — land sales paid for workers to migrate — and after 1851 gold pulled more people than convict ships ever had. Still, View 1 is serious: about 162,000 convicts were transported, and two of the six colonies began as penal places."

Impacts of colonial development on colonists, migrants and the environment

Curriculum links (audit metadata). This section owns VC2HH6K02 (the impacts of colonial development, taught in neutral context per TOC §2A: people born in the colonies, migrants and the environment). Draws on elaborations VC2HH6K02 .E01 (trimmed per the series plan: South Sea Islander, Eureka and rail examples retained; frontier-conflict examples excluded), VC2HH6K02 .E04 (trimmed: First Nations community examples excluded; convict/free, squatter, European/Chinese digger, sugarcane-farmer, cameleer and indentured-labourer examples retained), VC2HH6K02 .E05 (whole) and VC2HH6K02 .E06 (whole). Elaborations .E02 and .E03 are excluded (TOC.md §2A) and are not taught here; the section teaches the CD in a neutral context. Achievement-standard coverage: the standard's colonial-period causes-and-consequences sentence, and its continuity-and-change sentence for 1800–2000.

Teaching sequence (for the teacher). 1. Hook with the local: show two views of the same district, one from around 1800 and one from around 1900 (the Part 6 figure works), and ask “what changed, and what stayed?” 2. Teach the frame early: every impact is an effect of a cause; sort impacts into people born in the colonies, people who migrated, and the land. 3. Worked demonstration 1 models the economic / social / political impact chart with the railway; students then complete it. 4. Worked demonstration 2 models reading two real rules as sources and comparing them; this sets up the fairness discussion with care - the point is that the law treated one group differently, stated plainly and without graphic detail. 5. Use the lives table for pair comparison (similarities and differences); use the map for “factors that shaped where people settled”; use Part 6 for the environment strand - do not let it collapse into the people story. 6. Close with the web figure and the writing task; mark on reasoning (defined terms, evidence, cause-consequence links), not on which conclusion a student reaches.

What you will learn in this section

Between 1800 and 1900, the Australian colonies changed faster than at any time before. Farms and sheep runs spread inland, gold was found, railways were built and towns grew into cities. In this section we ask one big question: **what were the impacts of all this change?**

We will sort the impacts into three groups:

- people **born in the colonies** (often called *colonists*, and the children of colonists);
- people who **moved to the colonies** (*migrants*);
- the **environment** - the land, rivers, plants and animals.

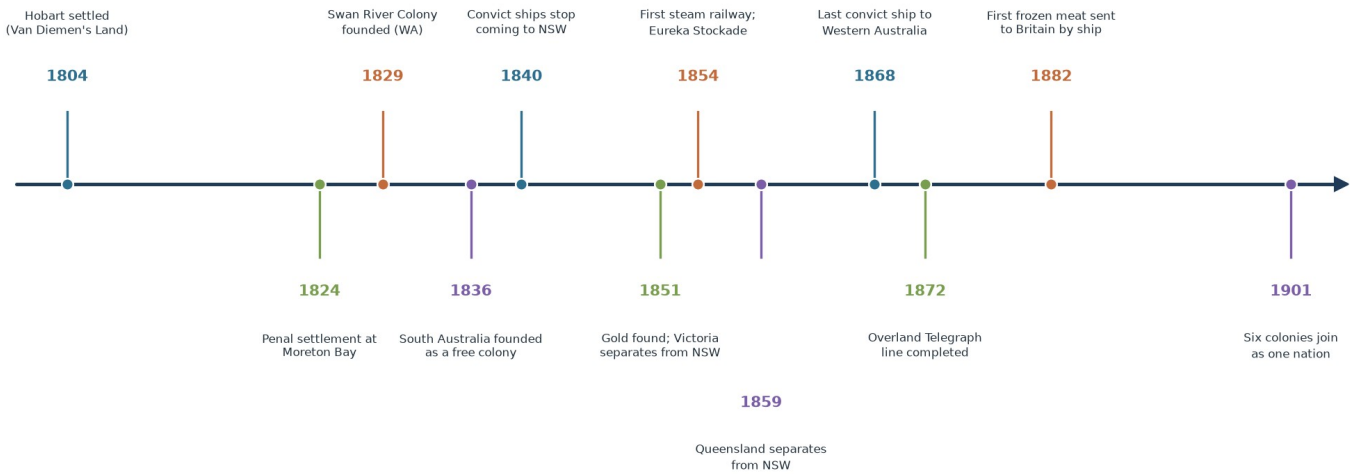
Some words we will use, defined as we meet them:

- **colony** - a place ruled by a far-away power. The Australian colonies were ruled from Britain.
 - **penal colony** - a colony that Britain sent its prisoners to.
 - **migrant** - a person who moves to a new country to live. **Migration** is the movement itself.
 - **cause** - what makes something happen. **Consequence** - what happens as a result.
 - **continuity** - what stays much the same over time. **Change** - what becomes different.
 - **contribution** - what a person or group adds or gives. **Significance** - how important something is, and to whom.
-

Part 1: A growing land

Settlement began at Sydney in 1788 (you studied that in an earlier year level). After 1800, five more colonies grew around the coast, and each of them developed - farms, mines, ports, towns.

A century of colonial development, 1804-1901



Key dates for the growth of the Australian colonies. Settlement began at Sydney in 1788 (studied in an earlier year level).

Timeline showing the main events in the growth of the colonies, from Hobart in 1804 to one nation in 1901

Notice the mix. Some colonies began as **penal colonies**: Moreton Bay (which became Queensland) and Van Diemen's Land (which became Tasmania) received prisoners sent from Britain. Others were **free colonies**: people chose to sail there and start again, as at Swan River (Western Australia) and South Australia. Some colonies changed type along the way - Western Australia began free but took prisoners from 1850 to 1868 because it needed workers.

The six colonies before 1901

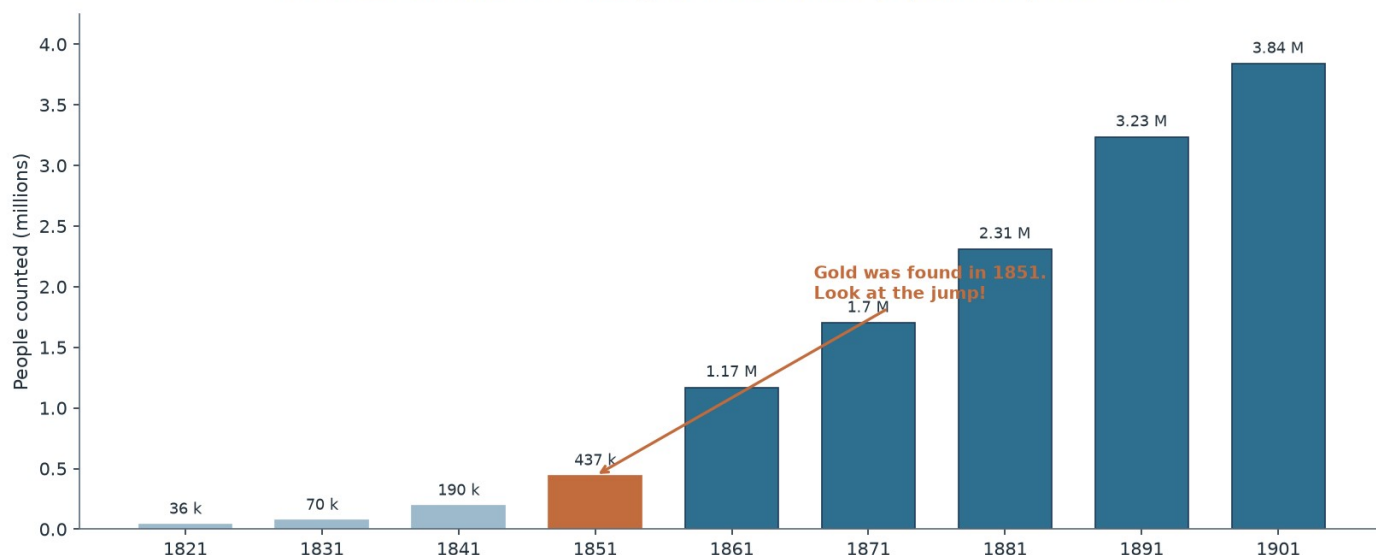
Colony	Settlement began	Free or penal?	A development that changed it
New South Wales	1788, Sydney	Started as a penal colony	Wool farms; gold found 1851; railway 1855
Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania)	1803-04, Hobart	Penal colony	Convict ships stopped 1853; renamed Tasmania 1856
Western Australia	1829, Swan River	Free colony	Took convicts 1850-68 to supply workers
South Australia	1836, Adelaide	Free colony (planned from the start)	Wheat farms and copper mines
Victoria	1834-35, Portland and Port Phillip	Free settlement (part of NSW)	Separated 1851; gold; first steam railway 1854
Queensland	1824, Moreton Bay (penal settlement)	Part of NSW	Separated 1859; sugar farms from the 1860s

A penal colony received prisoners sent from Britain. A free colony was settled by people who chose to come.

Table showing when each of the six colonies began, whether it was free or penal, and one development that changed it

Then came gold. In 1851, gold was found near Bathurst in New South Wales and soon after at Ballarat and Bendigo in Victoria. The **gold rushes** - the huge rush of people to the goldfields from 1851 - changed everything. Look at how fast the population grew:

How fast did the colonies grow? Recorded population, 1821-1901



Figures: official colonial counts (rounded), from Australian Bureau of Statistics, Year Book Australia, historical population tables. Retrieved 24 August 2026.
These counts did not include Aboriginal people, who are not covered in this book (see the notice at the front of the book).

Bar chart showing the recorded population of the colonies growing from about 36,600 in 1821 to about 3.84 million in 1901

In ten years, from 1851 to 1861, the number of people counted in the colonies almost tripled. Most of the new arrivals were migrants: from Britain and Ireland, from Europe, and from China. That is a **change** you can see in one chart - and the **cause** is written right under it.

Part 2: The railway changes everything

Before railways, everything moved slowly. Wool went to port by bullock dray, crawling for weeks. Then came the first steam railways: Melbourne to Port Melbourne in 1854 (about 4 and a half kilometres, the first steam railway line in Australia), Sydney to Parramatta in 1855 (about 22 kilometres), and Adelaide to Port Adelaide in 1856 (railway records, Public Record Office Victoria and State Library of New South Wales; retrieved 24 August 2026). Within a few decades, lines reached the gold towns and the farming districts.

Worked demonstration 1: how to explain the impacts of one development

Step	What we do	Why it works
1	Pick ONE development: the railway.	Impacts are clearer one development at a time.
2	Ask three questions. Money and work? (economic) Daily life and people? (social) Government and who has a say? (political)	Sorting turns a big topic into three small ones.
3	Put each fact into the chart below.	Each fact becomes evidence, not just a list.
4	Write cause-consequence sentences: "Because freight cost less, wool and wheat sales grew."	Words like <i>because</i> , <i>so</i> and <i>as a result</i> show the links.

The economic, social and political impacts of the railway



Flow chart showing the economic, social and political impacts of the railway

A **consequence** that lasted: by 1900, railways had joined farms, mines and towns to the ports, and the colonies that had felt like six separate places began to act like one market.

Part 3: Gold! - and the impacts of the gold rushes

The gold rushes were a development with impacts on almost everyone.

On colonists and migrants: new towns sprang up; shops, hotels and newspapers followed the diggers. Most diggers did not get rich, but the gold paid for roads, bridges and railways. Some migrants stayed on as farmers, cooks, carpenters and storekeepers.

On government and voice: at first, every digger in Victoria had to buy a permit to dig - 30 shillings every month from 1853 - whether or not they found gold (goldfields records, State Library of Victoria; retrieved 24 August 2026). Diggers hated paying a fee when they had no vote and no say in the laws. Their anger led to protests and, on 3 December 1854, to a short armed fight at the Eureka Stockade on the Ballarat goldfields. Before the fight, the diggers wrote down what they wanted in a document called the Ballarat Reform League Charter.

SOURCE The Ballarat Reform League Charter

Ballarat, 30 November 1854 - written by diggers three days before the Eureka Stockade

What the Charter asked for (set out here in plain words):

1. No more monthly gold permit fee.
2. A vote for every man in choosing the parliament.
3. Voting by secret ballot, so no one could be pushed around.
4. Paid members of parliament, so a working man could serve.

The Charter's big idea:

It is unfair to tax people who have no say in making the laws.

What happened next (consequences):

- 1855: the permit fee was replaced by a cheap miner's right.
- 1855: diggers who held a miner's right gained the vote.
- 1856: Victoria's parliament was chosen by all men, with secret ballots.

Original document: Public Record Office Victoria. Wording here is a paraphrase for students.

Source box showing the Ballarat Reform League Charter of 1854 in plain words, with the consequences that followed

Consequences of Eureka: in 1855 the monthly permit was replaced by a cheap **miner's right** (a permit, paid once a year, that let a man dig), diggers who held one gained the vote, and from 1856 Victoria's parliament was chosen by all adult men, with voting by secret **ballot** (a private vote nobody could watch). A mining development had led, step by step, to a political change. That chain - cause to consequence - is exactly what historians look for.

Not everyone was treated the same. Chinese migrants came to the goldfields too, in their thousands. But the Victorian parliament passed a law in 1855 that taxed Chinese arrivals 10 pounds each and limited the number of Chinese passengers a ship could bring (Parliament of Victoria, *An Act to Make Provision for Certain Immigrants*, 1855). No such tax was placed on migrants from Britain. On some fields, Chinese diggers were also driven off their claims by force, as at the Buckland River in 1857. Many Chinese diggers responded by staying: they worked claims others left, grew vegetables, and became market gardeners, cooks and storekeepers.

Worked demonstration 2: reading two real rules as sources

Source	What it said	Who it hit
A. Victorian goldfields rule (from 1853)	Every digger paid 30 shillings a month for a permit to dig.	All diggers, whoever they were.
B. Victorian law of 1855	Chinese arrivals paid a tax of 10 pounds, and one Chinese passenger per ten tonnes of ship.	One group only: Chinese migrants.

Step	What we notice	What it means
1	Source A treats all diggers the same.	A rule can be harsh and still be equal.
2	Source B adds an extra cost to one group.	The law itself made life harder for Chinese migrants.
3	Chinese diggers still came, worked	People respond to hardship; impact

Step	What we notice	What it means
	and stayed.	is not the whole story.

Part 4: Lives in the colonies

The same development could feel completely different depending on who you were. Compare these seven groups:

Colonial lives compared: seven groups in the 1800s

	Convict (Van Diemen's Land, before 1850)	Free settler family	Squatter (sheep or cattle grazier)	European gold digger (1850s)	Chinese gold digger (1850s)	South Sea Islander cane worker (Queensland)	Cameleer (inland carrier)
Their work	Built roads and bridges, or worked on farms	Farmed, or worked in towns as tradespeople and servants	Ran sheep and cattle on large runs of land	Dug for gold in claims; some ran shops and hotels	Dug for gold, often in teams; grew vegetables to sell	Planted and cut cane on Queensland farms	Drove camel teams with wool and supplies across dry country
Home, food and clothing	Barracks or hut; government rations; rough clothes	Timber or slab cottage; garden food, damper, tea; made and mended clothes	Station homestead; meat, flour and tea from stores; wool earnings	Canvas tent; food bought at high prices; work clothes	Group camps; own cooking and clothing; sent money home	Barracks on the farm; rationed food; plain work clothes	Camps and sheds; shared food; kept prayer and customs
Challenges	Punishment; no freedom; far from family	Distance from help; drought; little money to start	Drought; long way to sell the wool	Paid 30 shillings a month for a permit; police checks; no vote	Paid a tax of 10 pounds on arrival; sometimes forced off the fields	Hot, wet conditions; low pay; some were tricked or forced to come	Desert heat; long stretches from home; poor pay at times
Responses they made	Worked for a ticket of leave; many stayed when freed	Formed churches, schools and friendly societies	Later paid for leases of their runs; built wool stores at ports	Protested together; built the Eureka Stockade, 1854	Stayed as farmers, cooks and merchants; built community ties	Worked out their signed term; some stayed and raised families	Built mosques (Adelaide, 1888); ran their own teams and businesses

A squatter was a grazier who ran sheep or cattle on wide land. A cameleer drove camels carrying goods. South Sea Islanders came from Pacific islands to work in Queensland.

Table comparing the work, home life, challenges and responses of seven groups in the colonies

Three groups deserve a closer look.

South Sea Islanders. From 1863, people were brought from Pacific islands - places that are now Vanuatu and the Solomon Islands - to work on Queensland's new sugar farms. Queensland law set their agreements at three years (Parliament of Queensland, *Polynesian Labourers Act*, 1868). Some came willingly; others were tricked or taken by force. They planted and cut cane in hot, wet conditions for low pay, and their work helped make sugar one of Queensland's biggest products. This is a hard part of the story: a colony's development was built on work that was not always the worker's own choice. After the colonies joined as one nation, a law of 1901 (the *Pacific Island Labourers Act*) led to thousands of South Sea Islanders being **deported** - sent away by the government - in the years that followed, while some were allowed to stay.

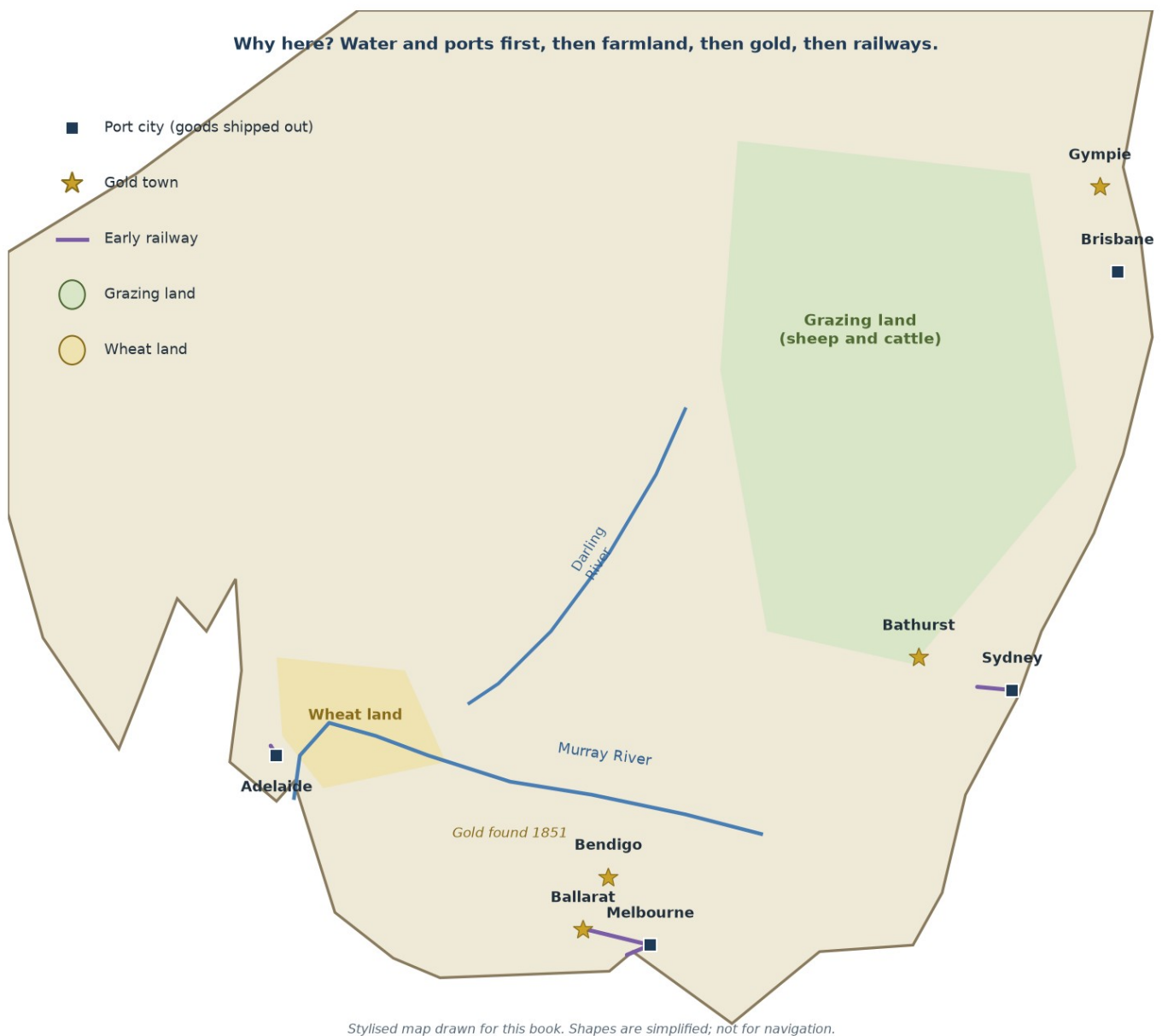
Cameleers. From 1860, camels and their drivers arrived from north-western India and the region of Afghanistan. **Cameleers** - camel drivers - moved wool, food and water across dry country where horses and drays failed. Camel teams carried supplies for the Overland Telegraph line (finished 1872) that joined Adelaide to Darwin and, through it, the world. Most cameleers were Muslim; in 1888 they built a small mosque in Adelaide, the first permanent mosque in Australia. Many faced loneliness and poor pay, and later lost work to railways - yet their contribution to opening the dry interior was large.

Convicts and the freed. In the penal colonies, convicts built the roads, bridges and public buildings that development needed. A convict who behaved well could earn a **ticket of leave** (a permit to work for yourself before your sentence ended), and many stayed on as free workers and farmers when their time was done. Mary Reibey, transported as a teenager, went on to own ships and warehouses in Sydney - one of the colony's most successful businesspeople.

Part 5: Where people settled, and why

Settlement did not spread out the same way in all places. Look at the map:

Where did people settle, and why? South-east Australia (stylised map)



Simple map of south-east Australia showing ports, gold towns, rivers, grazing land, wheat land and early railways

The pattern has causes. People settled first at **ports** (Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, Brisbane), because ships were the link to Britain. They followed **water** (the Murray and Darling rivers), **good farming land** (wheat near Adelaide, grazing on the plains west of the mountains), then **gold** (Ballarat, Bendigo, Bathurst, and later Gympie), and then **railways**, which pulled new towns up around their stations.

Activity (use the map): pick any town on the map and name the two factors that made it grow. Example: *Bendigo - gold found nearby; a railway later joined it to Melbourne.*

Part 6: The land changes

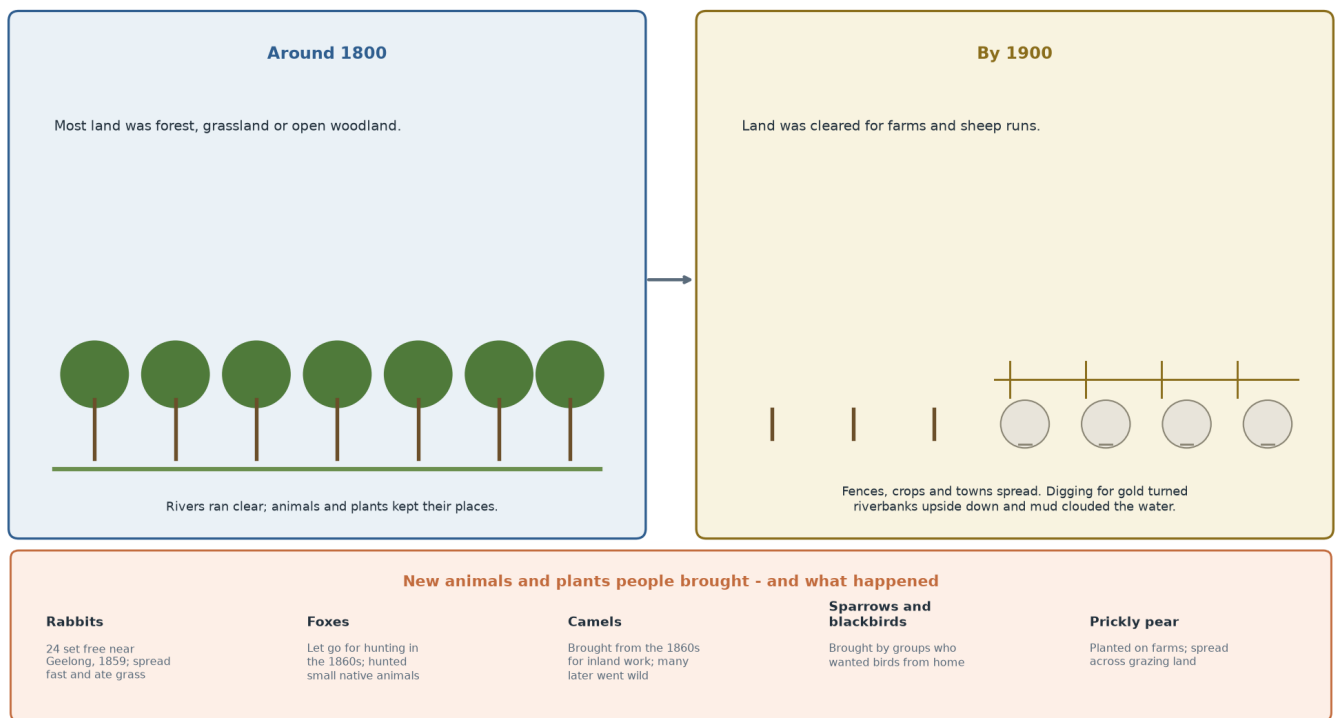
Development did not only change people's lives. It changed the land itself - and this is one of the biggest impacts of the whole 1800s.

Clearing. Forest and woodland were cut or stripped for farms, fences, fuel and mine props. Sheep and cattle spread across the grasslands; where too many animals grazed one paddock, the ground was worn bare and the soil blew or washed away.

Gold's mess. Digging broke up the riverbanks. Mud washed downstream and clouded the water for kilometres; hillsides were cut and washed with strong streams of water to reach the gold.

New arrivals. People brought plants and animals from home - some on purpose, some by mistake. Clubs called **Acclimatisation Societies** (groups that wanted Australian parks to hold birds and beasts from Britain) let loose sparrows and blackbirds in the 1860s.

How colonial development changed the land



Two panels comparing the land around 1800 and by 1900, with a list of the new animals and plants people brought

One story shows how fast it could go wrong. In 1859, a farmer named Thomas Austin set 24 wild rabbits free on his property, Barwon Park, near Geelong, so that guests could hunt them. Rabbits had no natural enemies here, and within a few decades they were spread across much of the southern colonies, eating the grass that sheep needed. A choice made for one afternoon's sport became a continent-sized consequence.

Some people saw the change and spoke up. **Ferdinand von Mueller**, the government botanist of Victoria from 1853, spent his life collecting the colonies' plants. He wrote to governments urging them to protect forests instead of cutting them all away - an early voice for what we would now call caring for the environment (von Mueller's reports and letters, Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria; retrieved 24 August 2026).

Part 7: People who shaped the colonies

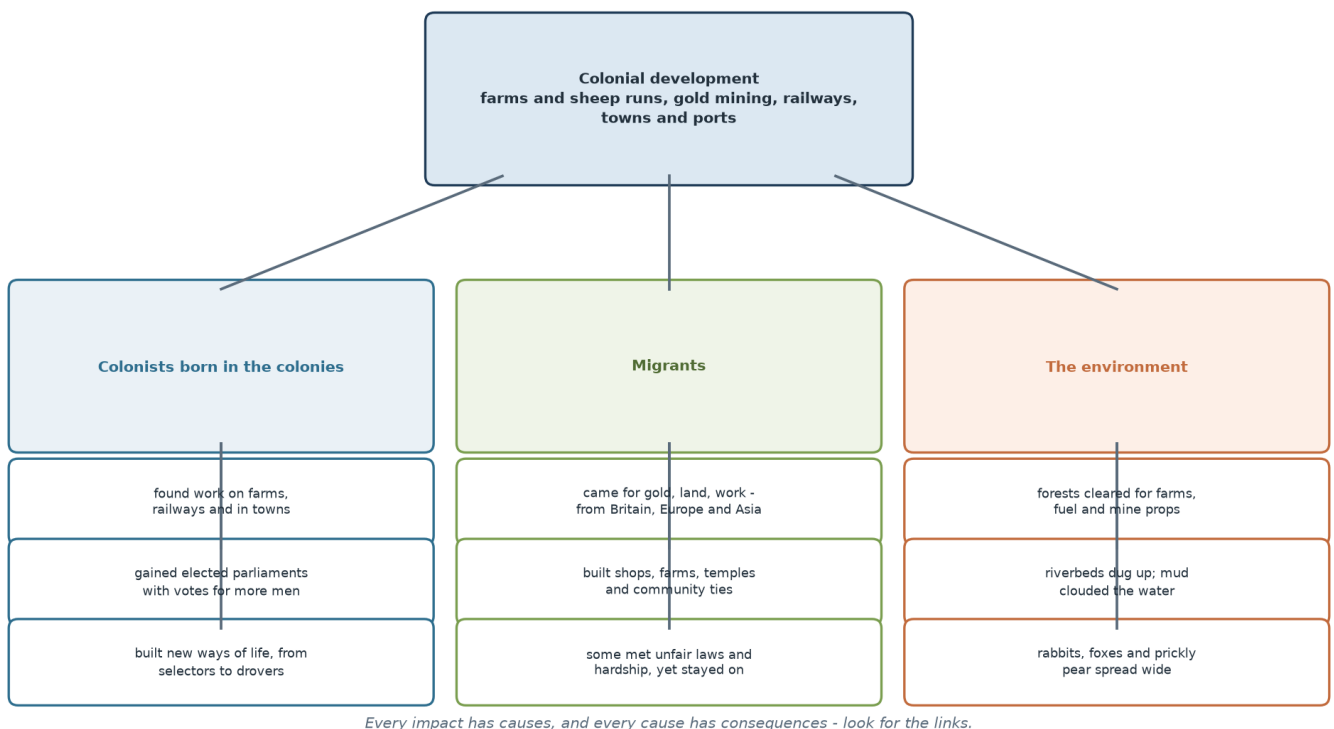
Developments are carried by people. Three examples of **significant** individuals and groups - significant because their **contributions** changed a colony:

- **William Charles Wentworth** (born near Sydney in 1790, a colonist born in the colony). As a young man he crossed the Blue Mountains in 1813 with Gregory Blaxland and William Lawson, opening grazing land to the west. He started *The Australian*, the first newspaper printed in the colonies, in 1824, and argued for years that the colonies should govern themselves through elected parliaments.

- **Mei Quong Tart** (born in China in 1850). He came to the New South Wales goldfields district as a boy and grew into one of Sydney's best-known businesspeople, a tea merchant whose rooms were a meeting place for the whole city. His life is one clear example of a migrant contribution.
- **Groups, not just names.** South Sea Islanders built the sugar industry; cameleers opened the dry interior; Chinese diggers became market gardeners and merchants; selectors - small farmers who took up land from the 1860s - turned scrub into wheat and dairy farms. A colony is shaped by thousands of hands, most of them unrecorded.

Part 8: The big picture - continuity and change

Big picture: who was affected by colonial development?



Concept web showing colonial development in the middle, with its impacts on colonists born in the colonies, migrants and the environment

Two closing habits of a good historian:

- **Look for causes and consequences.** Do not just list what happened. Say what caused it and what followed: "The gold rushes caused a huge migration; one consequence was new laws about who could come and on what terms."
- **Look for continuity as well as change.** Much changed fast - towns, transport, laws, the land. Much also stayed: wool remained one of the colonies' biggest earners through the whole century, most farms were still family-run, and trade still sailed to Britain. Naming what stayed is just as important as naming what changed.

Practice questions - with help

Q1. Use the timeline figure. (a) Which place began as a penal settlement in 1824? (b) In what year did the first steam railway open? (c) Name one development on the timeline that made travel or messages faster.

Q2. Use the population chart. (a) About how many people were counted in 1851? (b) About how many in 1861? (c) Write one sentence giving a cause for the jump, using the word *because*.

Q3. Use the colonies table. (a) Name two free colonies. (b) Which colony began free but later took prisoners? (c) Why might a free colony choose to take prisoners? Give one reason.

Q4. Use the railway impact chart. Sort these impacts into economic, social or political: (a) freight to the ports cost far less; (b) country towns grew around stations; (c) governments borrowed money to build lines; (d) people could travel further and faster; (e) wool and wheat sales grew; (f) country settlers asked parliaments for lines.

Q5. Use Worked demonstration 2. (a) Which group had to pay the 10-pound tax? (b) Which source treated all diggers the same? (c) Was the law fair to Chinese migrants? Answer with one piece of evidence from the sources.

Q6. Use the lives table. Pick two groups. Write (a) one way their challenges were similar, (b) one way their challenges were different, and (c) one response each group made.

Q7. Use the map. (a) Give two factors that made the port cities grow. (b) Why did Ballarat and Bendigo grow quickly after 1851? (c) Why did wheat farms grow on the land shown near Adelaide?

Q8. Sort these environmental changes into two lists: *land cleared or worn* and *new plants and animals brought in*: (a) forests cut for farms and mine props; (b) rabbits set free near Geelong; (c) riverbanks broken up by digging; (d) foxes let loose for hunting; (e) soil worn bare by too many sheep; (f) prickly pear planted on farms and then spreading.

Practice questions - on your own

Q9. Explain one economic, one social and one political impact of the railway. Use the words *cause* and *consequence* at least once each.

Q10. Claim: “The gold rushes changed the colonies more than any other development of the 1800s.” First give the strongest case you can FOR the claim, then the strongest case AGAINST it. Then give your own view with two pieces of evidence from this section.

Q11. Compare the challenges of a Chinese digger and a European digger on the Victorian goldfields. Explain why their experiences differed, using Source A and Source B from Worked demonstration 2.

Q12. Choose two environmental changes from Part 6. For each, state whether people planned it or whether it was an accident, and name one consequence of it that was still felt long after.

Evidence-based writing task

Write a short explanation (about 150 words): **Choose one development - the railway, gold, or the sugar farms - and explain its impacts on one group of people and on the land.**

Your explanation must include:

1. a topic sentence naming your development and who it affected;
2. at least one cause and one consequence, using those words or *because* / *as a result*;
3. two facts from this section, at least one taken from a source or figure, named in your writing;
4. one closing sentence that says what changed and what stayed the same.

Check before handing in: every term you use is either explained in this section or a word a Year 6 reader knows; every claim has a fact behind it.

Answers (questions with help)

Q1. (a) Moreton Bay (later Queensland). (b) 1854. (c) Any of: railways (1854); the Overland Telegraph line (1872).

Q2. (a) About 437,600. (b) About 1.17 million. (c) Example: "Because gold was found in 1851, hundreds of thousands of migrants came, so the count almost tripled by 1861."

Q3. (a) Any two of: South Australia, Western Australia (or Victoria as free settlement). (b) Western Australia. (c) Example: it needed workers and had few people.

Q4. Economic: (a), (e). Social: (b), (d). Political: (c), (f).

Q5. (a) Chinese migrants. (b) Source A. (c) Example: No - Source B taxed one group only, so the law itself made life harder for Chinese migrants.

Q6. Example (European digger and Chinese digger). (a) Both faced hard work, tents and the permit fee. (b) Chinese diggers also paid the 10-pound arrival tax and could be driven off claims. (c) Europeans protested at Eureka; Chinese diggers worked left-over claims and grew vegetables.

Q7. (a) Ships linked them to Britain; goods and people arrived and left there (also rivers and farmland nearby). (b) Gold was found nearby in 1851. (c) Good farming land with enough rain, close to a port to sell the wheat.

Q8. Land cleared or worn: (a), (c), (e). New plants and animals: (b), (d), (f).

Model responses (point form)

Q9. Economic: because the railway cut the cost of moving wool and wheat to port, sales grew - a clear economic consequence. Social: country towns grew around stations, so daily life changed - people travelled further for work, markets and news. Political: governments borrowed money and country settlers pressed parliaments for lines, so railways drew governments deeper into colony life.

Q10. Case for: the gold rushes tripled the population in a decade, brought migrants from many countries, built towns, and led to the miner's right, the vote for diggers and the secret ballot - political change no other development matched. Case against: railways and farming changed the land and how people earned money, and that change lasted - by 1900 wool and wheat still earned more than gold, and railways had changed where people lived. Own view: must pick one side or balance both, with two named facts.

Q11. Both groups faced the same hard digging and the same monthly permit (Source A), but Chinese diggers carried the extra 10-pound tax of Source B and at times were driven off claims, as at the Buckland River in 1857. Their experiences differed because the law and some diggers treated one group as less welcome; the sources show the law doing that directly.

Q12. Example pair. Rabbits (planned for sport, 1859) - consequence: they spread across the southern colonies and left sheep with less grass to eat - a problem that never went away. Washing hillsides with strong streams of water to reach the gold (planned, to get gold) - consequence: rivers ran thick with mud for kilometres, and some waterways never recovered.

Writing task - model points (railway, one example). Topic sentence naming the railway and, say, farming families and the land. Cause: the railway cut the cost and time of moving wool and wheat to port (fact from the railway impact chart). Consequence: wheat and wool sales grew and country towns rose around stations. Land: lines needed timber for sleepers and fuel, adding to the clearing (fact from Part 6). Closing: transport and towns changed fast, while wool stayed the colonies' great earner - change and continuity in the same story.

Continuities and changes in a colony: gold rushes, Eureka, rail and farming

Curriculum focus — teacher block

Owning content description — VC2HH6K03 (Historical Knowledge and Understanding, Australia 1800–1900).

Elaboration linkage (D10 — linkage only, not a teaching order): .E01 (taught without its frontier-conflict example, §2A), .E02 (taught without John Batman’s ‘treaty’, §2A), .E03 (whole).

Achievement standard coverage: this section builds the knowledge base for the standard’s continuity-and-change sentences (comparing how events and people’s lives changed across 1800–2000) and its colonial-period sentence on explaining causes and consequences. The pattern-describing skills themselves (rates, graphic forms) are owned by 4A (VC2HH6S07); source skills are owned by 3C/3D; this section uses sources as evidence in line with D11.

First Nations disposition (§2A): taught in neutral context. No whole-elaboration exclusion. .E01’s frontier-conflict example and .E02’s John Batman ‘treaty’ example are not taught.

Key subject terms defined at first use in this section (D4): continuity, change, cause, consequence, colonisation, gold rush, migration, suffrage, democracy, representative, pastoral, licence, selection.

Teaching sequence (for the teacher)

This section studies one colony — **Victoria** — across roughly 1834 to the 1880s, and sorts what it meets into **continuities** (what stayed the same) and **changes** (what became different). The suggested flow:

1. **Set the scene (1830s):** the Henty family at Portland Bay (1834), pastoralists on sheep runs, the survey and naming of Melbourne (1837). Introduce *continuity* and *change* with local examples.
2. **1851 as a turning point:** separation from New South Wales (1 July 1851) and the gold discoveries in the same year. Work with the population dataset (Worked demonstration 2, Figure 1c_population.png).
3. **The licence and the diggers’ complaints:** use Figure 1c_licence.png to show how the system worked and why diggers objected.
4. **Eureka:** the Ballarat Reform League, the oath (Worked demonstration 1, Figure 1c_oath.png), the stockade of 3 December 1854, and the contested death toll. Present both contemporary views (armed rebellion vs stand for rights) in their strongest form; see CONTESTED_TERMS.md Rule 5.
5. **The reforms that followed:** miner’s right (1855), secret ballot (1856), manhood suffrage (1857), Lalor in parliament. Link to Figure 1c_reforms.png.
6. **Rail and farming:** the first railway (1854), country lines of the 1850s–1880s, the Land Acts (1860, 1862, 1869), selectors and squatters. Figures 1c_rail.png, 1c_selection.png.
7. **Working life:** the eight-hour day (1856) and the later 40-hour week; note the difference between the two (Figure 1c_eight_hours.png).
8. **Consolidate:** sort the whole period into stayed-the-same / became-different (Figure 1c_stayed_changed.png), then the counterfactual writing task (Figure 1c_whatif.png).

Common misconceptions to address: that everything changed at once in 1851 (wool, ports and British government all continued); that Eureka itself gave diggers the vote (the reforms came afterwards, through parliament and the commission); that “exploration” means empty land was found (the curriculum’s quote marks signal the term is contested — the frame used here is stated in the student text); that the eight-hour day of 1856 was the 40-hour week (it was a 48-hour, six-day week).

Key ideas

1. Two useful words: continuity and change

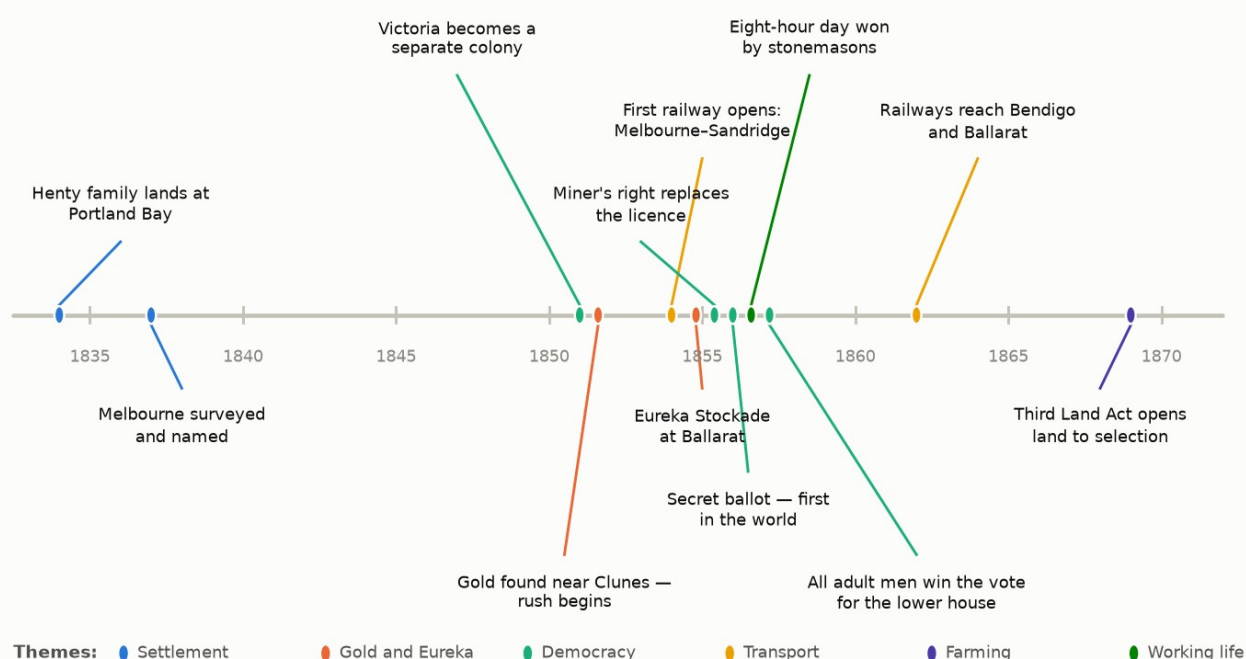
History is not just a list of dates. Historians sort the past into two big ideas.

- A **continuity** is something that **stays the same** across a period of time, even while other things change around it.
- A **change** is something that **becomes different** — it can happen quickly (a battle, a discovery) or slowly (the spread of farms).

The Victorian Curriculum uses the word **colonisation** to mean one group of people settling in and taking control of a place. In this section it refers to British settlers moving into the Port Phillip District and setting up the colony of Victoria.

This section follows one colony — **Victoria** — from the 1830s to the 1880s, and asks two questions at every step: *what changed here?* and *what stayed the same?*

Colony of Victoria — key developments and events, 1834-1869



Timeline of major events in the colony of Victoria from 1834 to 1889, colour-coded by theme such as settlement, gold, democracy, rail and farming

2. The Port Phillip District in the 1830s

Before 1851, the area we now call Victoria was not a separate colony. It was the **Port Phillip District**, part of the colony of New South Wales.

The first permanent settler family arrived on the western coast. In **November 1834**, Edward Henty and his family sailed from Van Diemen's Land (now Tasmania) across Bass Strait in a ship called the *Thistle*. They landed at **Portland Bay** on 19 November 1834. The Hentys brought sheep and cattle, ploughed the first field, sowed the first wheat crop, and set up a whaling station.

Source: Edward Henty's journal, 1834. The State Library of Victoria holds the journal and a written copy of it. The Henty family's arrival at Portland Bay on 19 November 1834 is recorded in local histories and in Edward Henty's own papers (verified 24 August 2026).

Soon after, other settlers followed. The curriculum writes colonist '**exploration**' with quote marks, and that is deliberate. The word is **contested**: it depends on whose point of view you take. In this section the word is used in a narrow frame — European colonists moving into districts new to *them*, looking for grass for their sheep. When a squatter called a district "new" land, that was *his* view, not a fact about the land itself.

By the late 1830s, **pastoralists** — people who ran large sheep and cattle properties called **runs** — had spread across much of western and central Victoria. They were often called **squatters**, because at first they occupied land without official permission. In 1836 the explorer Thomas Mitchell travelled through the western districts and gave the fine grazing country the name *Australia Felix* (“happy Australia”). Wool from these runs became the district’s first big export.

On the coast of Port Phillip Bay, a village grew beside the Yarra River from 1835. In **March 1837** the surveyor Robert Hoddle completed the first official street plan for the town — the grid of streets still used in central Melbourne today. On **10 April 1837** the governor of New South Wales named the town **Melbourne**, after the British prime minister of the day, Lord Melbourne. Land in the new town was sold at public auction from June 1837.

Continuity check: through all of this, one thing did not change. The Port Phillip District stayed part of New South Wales, and the land stayed Crown land — owned by the British government, which decided who could buy or use it.

3. 1851: a new colony — and gold

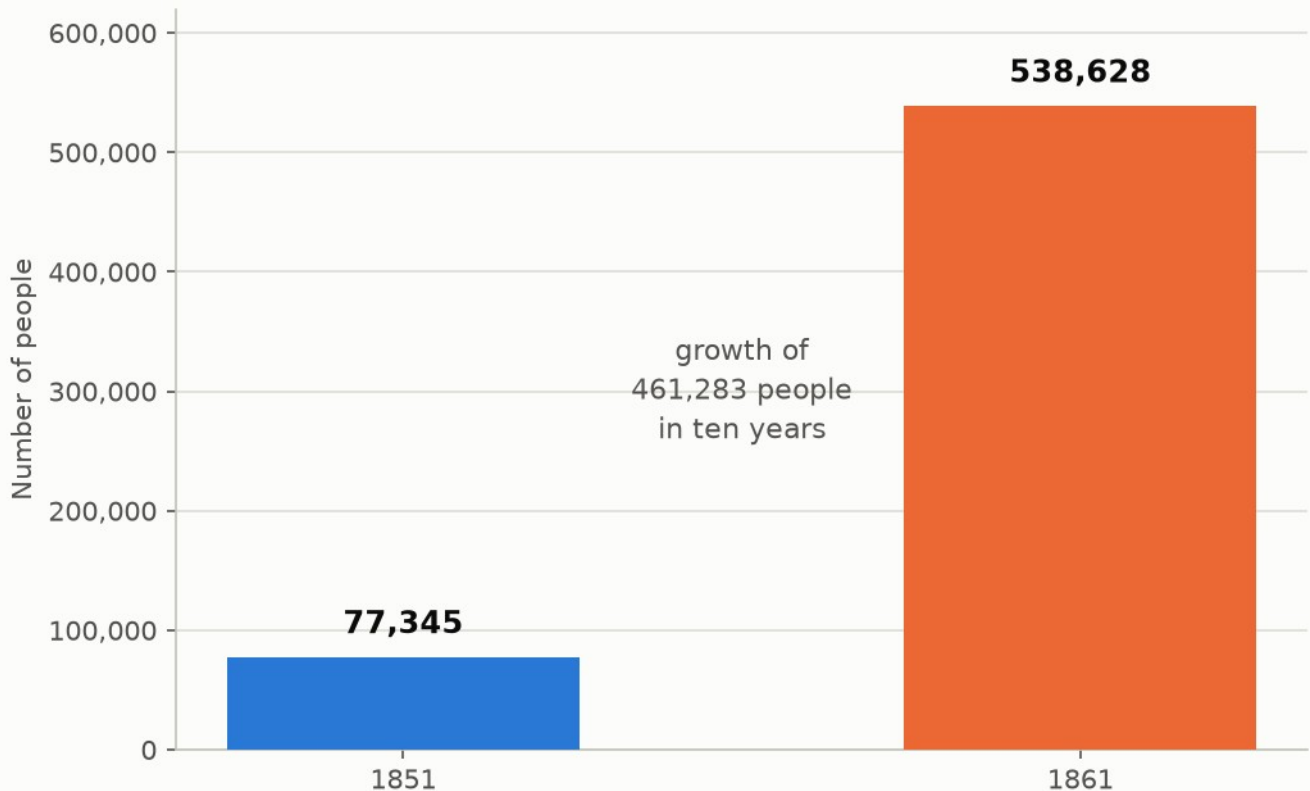
Two enormous things happened in **1851**, and they are linked.

First, on **1 July 1851**, the Port Phillip District separated from New South Wales and became its own British colony, named **Victoria** after Queen Victoria. For the first time, the colony had its own government offices in Melbourne.

Second, in the very same year, gold was found. Small finds had been reported before, but in **July 1851** news spread that gold worth digging for had been discovered near **Clunes**, where a man named James Esmond was mining beside Creswick’s Creek. More finds followed fast: near Buninyong in August, at the diggings soon called **Ballarat**, around **Bendigo** later in 1851, and at Forest Creek and Mount Alexander (near today’s Castlemaine) in September and October.

The gold discoveries began the Victorian **gold rush**. A gold rush is a period when very large numbers of people move quickly to a place where gold has been found, hoping to get rich. The people who were digging for gold were called **diggers** or **miners**.

Population of the colony of Victoria, 1851 and 1861



Source: historical population statistics for Victoria (77,345 in 1851; 538,628 in 1861), as cited in the Wikipedia article 'Victorian gold rush', retrieved 24 August 2026; comparable rounded figures are published by the Parliament of Victoria.

Bar chart showing the population of the colony of Victoria growing from 77,345 in 1851 to 538,628 in 1861

The gold rush was one of the biggest changes the colony ever saw. In 1851, about 77,000 people lived in Victoria. By 1861, there were about 540,000 — the population grew almost **seven times** in ten years. Melbourne grew fastest of all: from about 29,000 people in 1851 to about 123,000 by 1854. **Migration** — people moving to a new place to live — caused this growth. Diggers came from the other Australian colonies, from Britain and Ireland, from Europe, from North America and from China.

Continuity check: even at the height of the gold rush, wool kept flowing from the sheep runs, and Britain still governed the colony through an appointed governor. Gold changed Victoria's size and wealth, but it did not change everything.

4. The licence and the diggers' complaints

The colonial government wanted to control the goldfields and to raise money from them. In August 1851, the government announced that all gold belonged to the Crown, and that every digger had to buy a **licence** to dig. A licence is an official document that gives you permission to do something. The gold licence cost **30 shillings a month** — a big sum — and diggers had to pay it whether or not they found any gold.

How the gold licence system worked, 1851-1855

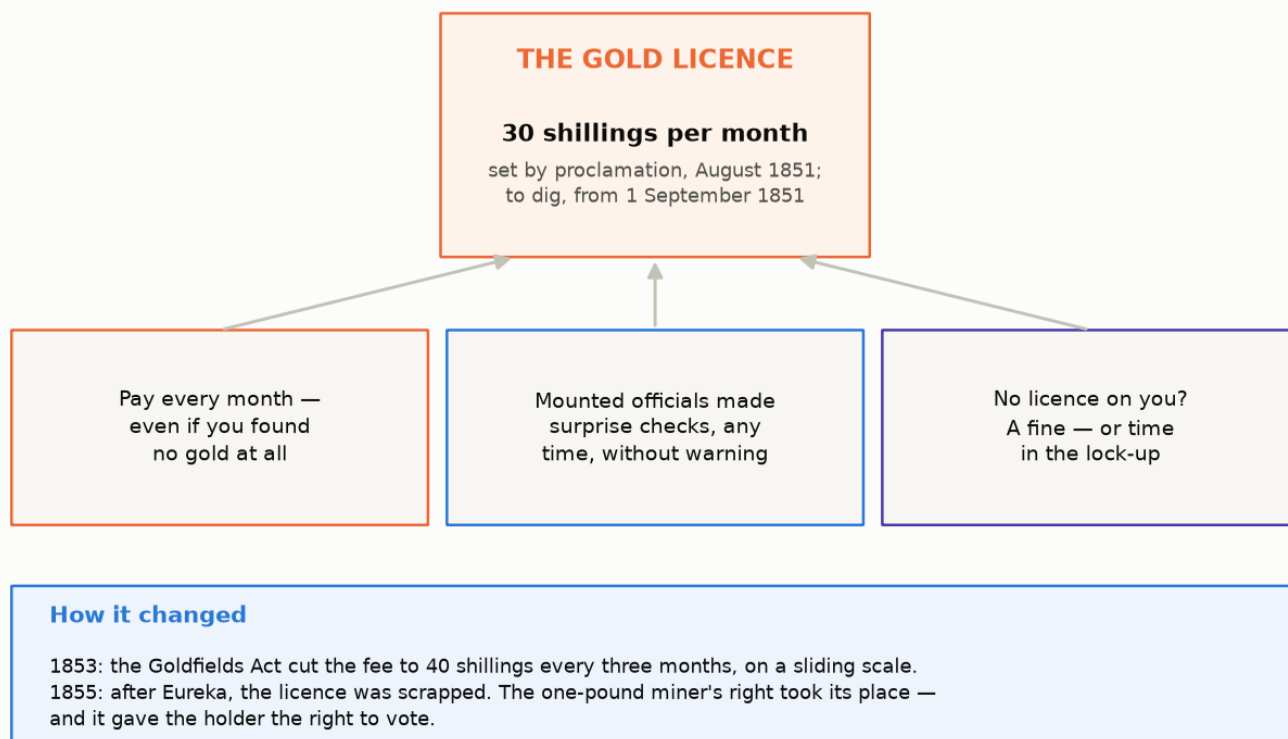


Diagram explaining how the Victorian gold licence system worked between 1851 and 1855, including the fee, the inspections and the changes to the fee

Mounted police and officials carried out surprise licence checks, sometimes several times a week. A digger who could not show his licence was fined, or locked up. The diggers had complaints that went deeper than money:

- the fee was high and unfair, because unlucky diggers paid the same as lucky ones;
- the checks were harsh and insulting;
- diggers had **no vote** and no say in the laws they had to obey;
- they found it very hard to buy land to settle on.

These complaints are the **causes** of what happened next. A cause is something that makes an event happen. The **consequences** — the results, or what happened because of it — reached all the way to parliament.

5. Eureka

At Ballarat, the diggers' anger came to a head in late 1854. In October, a digger named James Scobie was killed near the Eureka Hotel. The man who ran the hotel was put on trial, but the court did not convict him of murder, and the diggers believed the decision was unfair. A crowd burned the hotel to the ground, and three diggers were jailed for it.

On **11 November 1854**, a crowd of more than 10,000 diggers met at **Bakery Hill** in Ballarat and formed the **Ballarat Reform League**. The league asked for the licence to be scrapped, for diggers to get the vote, and for the goldfields to have members in parliament. The league said that “taxation without representation is tyranny” (tyranny means cruel and unfair rule) — being forced to pay a tax when you have no vote.

The government refused, and licence checks went ahead anyway. On **1 December 1854**, on Bakery Hill, an Irish-born digger named **Peter Lalor** climbed a stump, and the diggers swore an oath under a new flag — white stars of the Southern Cross on a deep blue ground. This was the **Eureka Stockade** moment: the diggers promised to stand together.

Source: The Eureka oath, sworn at Bakery Hill, Ballarat, on 1 December 1854, as written down by Raffaello Carboni, an eyewitness who published his account the next year. Carboni, *The Eureka Stockade*

(Melbourne, 1855), p. 68 (verified 24 August 2026). The Eureka flag itself survives and is held at the Art Gallery of Ballarat.

PRIMARY SOURCE

*"We swear by the Southern Cross to stand truly
by each other and fight to defend our rights
and liberties."*

The Eureka oath

Sworn by diggers at Bakery Hill, Ballarat, on 1 December 1854, under the newly made Southern Cross flag. Written down by Raffaello Carboni, an eyewitness, and published the next year in his book *The Eureka Stockade* (Melbourne, 1855), p. 68. The flag itself survives and is held at the Art Gallery of Ballarat.

Ask: what do these words show about what the diggers believed? What can this one source NOT tell us?

The wording of the Eureka oath of 1854 set out as a source card, with its provenance

About 1,000 diggers then marched to a spot called the Eureka lead and built a **stockade** — a rough fence made from pit props and overturned carts, about the size of a football field. In the early morning of **Sunday 3 December 1854**, soldiers and police attacked. The fighting lasted about fifteen minutes. The diggers were beaten. Lalor was shot in the arm, and was hidden away by friends; his arm later had to be removed.

How many people died? This is genuinely contested — the records do not agree. After the battle, the Ballarat registrar entered **27 deaths** in the official register. Peter Lalor counted **22 dead diggers** among his men. The military commander reported **3 soldiers** killed. The exact number cannot be known from the records that survive. When sources disagree, historians say so plainly and give the range.

Two views of Eureka. People at the time — and historians since — have seen Eureka in two ways, and both views deserve their strongest form:

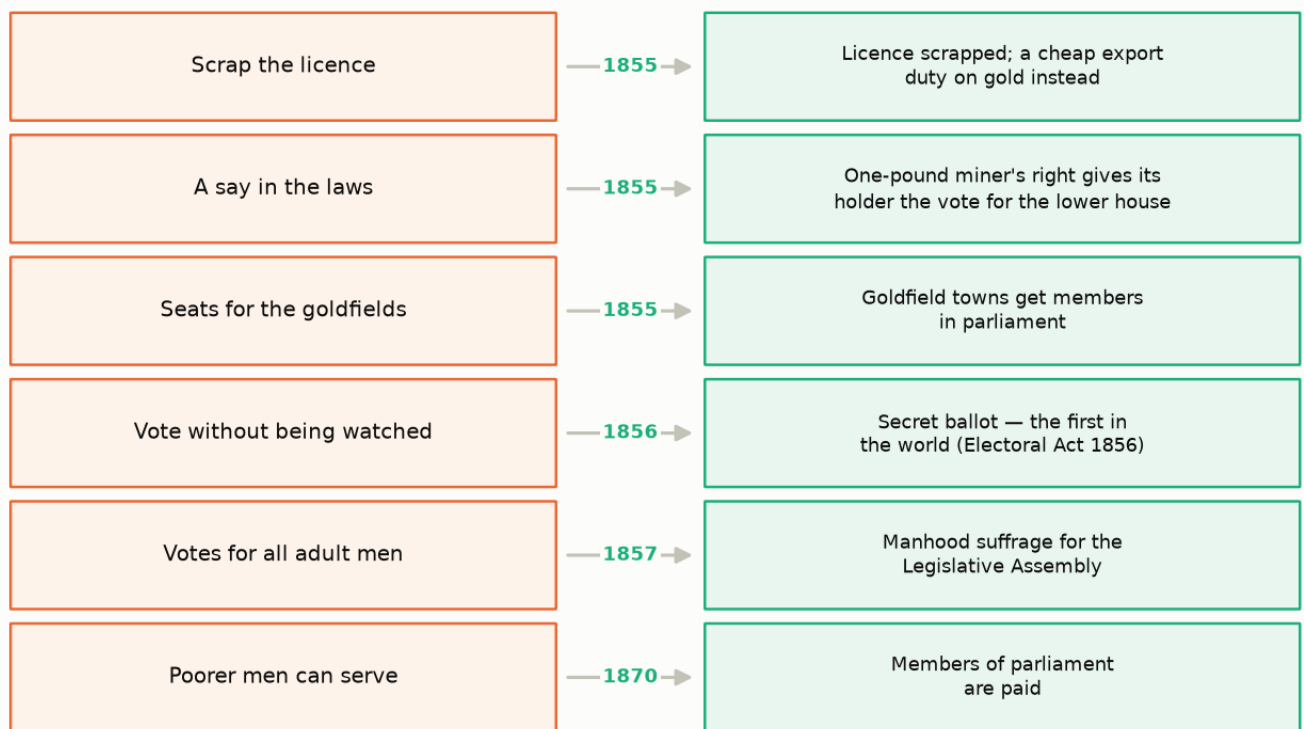
- **A stand for rights and freedom.** Diggers argued that they had asked peacefully for years, had been ignored, and were forced to pay a tax while denied a vote. On this view, the stockade was a last resort to defend their rights and liberties.
- **An armed rebellion against lawful government.** The government argued that the colony had laws and courts, that licence fees were lawful taxes, and that building an armed stockade was rebellion, not protest. On this view, no government could stand by while armed men broke the law.

You will look more carefully at why people interpret Eureka in different ways in Section 1F. Here, the important point is what happened next — because the consequences of Eureka were huge.

What the diggers asked for — and what changed after Eureka

The diggers' demands

The reforms that followed



A royal commission reported in March 1855 that the goldfields had been badly managed.

Chart pairing the diggers' demands at Eureka with the changes to the law that followed between 1855 and 1870

The changes to the law that followed are called **reforms** — fixes to the law that answer people's complaints.

Thirteen captured diggers were tried for **treason** — the crime of acting against the government — but juries found them all **not guilty**. The government set up a commission, which reported in March 1855 that the goldfields had been badly managed. Within a year, almost everything the diggers had asked for had happened:

- the licence was **scrapped** and replaced by a much cheaper **miner's right** — a one-pound document that gave its holder the **right to vote** for the lower house of parliament;
- the hated gold commissioners were replaced by mining wardens;
- the goldfields were given seats in parliament;
- in **November 1855**, Peter Lalor — the wounded rebel leader — was elected to parliament himself.

6. Representative democracy arrives

Eureka is part of a bigger story about **democracy** — a system of government in which people have a say in the laws they live under. In a **representative** democracy, people do not vote on every law themselves; they elect members of parliament to make laws for them. (The word “representative” comes from these elected members *representing* the people.)

Victoria moved fast in the 1850s:

Year	Change
1851	Victoria became a separate colony with its own government
1855	Britain gave Victoria power to run its own affairs; a new parliament was set up with two elected houses
1855	The miner's right gave its holder the right to vote for the lower house

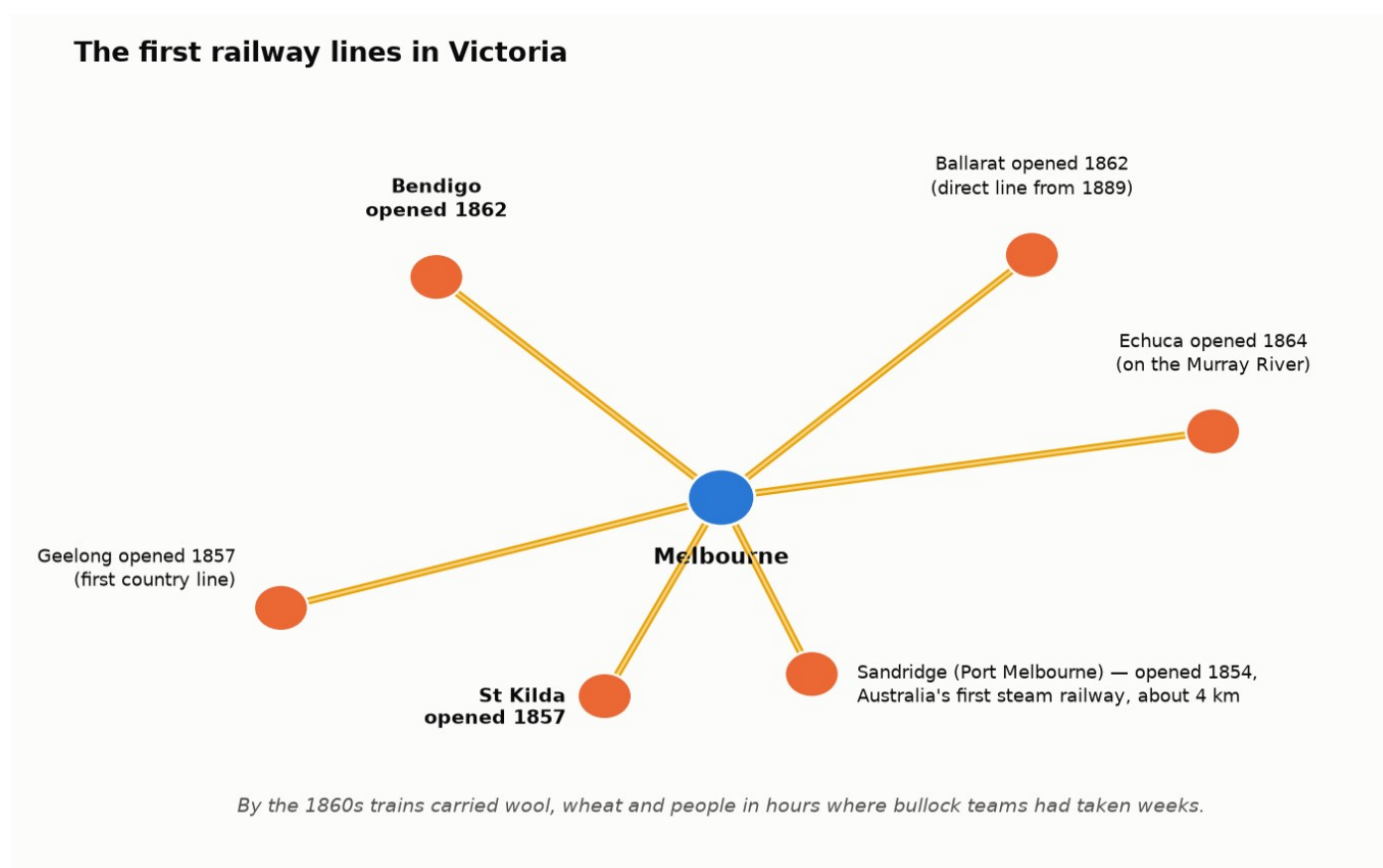
Year	Change
1856	Victoria introduced voting by secret ballot — the first place in the world to do so
1857	All adult men won the vote for the Legislative Assembly (the lower house)
1870	Members of parliament began to be paid, so poorer men could serve

Suffrage means the right to vote. The changes above spread suffrage wider and wider. But not everyone got it: women could not vote, and the upper house (the Legislative Council) kept property requirements — you had to own valuable property to vote for it — until well into the 1900s. Voting was also still done in the open until the secret ballot of 1856, which let people vote without being watched or pressured.

Continuity check: even as democracy grew, Victoria stayed a British colony with an appointed governor, and the Crown still owned all the land.

7. Rail changes the colony

On **12 September 1854**, Victoria's first steam railway opened. It was only about four kilometres long — from the Melbourne city terminus (on the site of today's Flinders Street station) to Sandridge, now called Port Melbourne. It was built by the Melbourne and Hobson's Bay Railway Company, and it carried diggers' gear, wool and passengers between the city and the bay.



Simple map of the first railway lines in Victoria with opening years, radiating from Melbourne to Sandridge, Geelong, Bendigo, Ballarat and Echuca

The little network grew quickly:

- **1857** — the first country line opened, from Melbourne to Geelong; a line to St Kilda also opened;

- **1860** — the government took over the lines and ran them as Victorian Railways;
- **1862** — lines reached the goldfield towns of Bendigo and Ballarat;
- **1864** — the line reached Echuca on the Murray River;
- **1889** — a direct line between Melbourne and Ballarat opened.

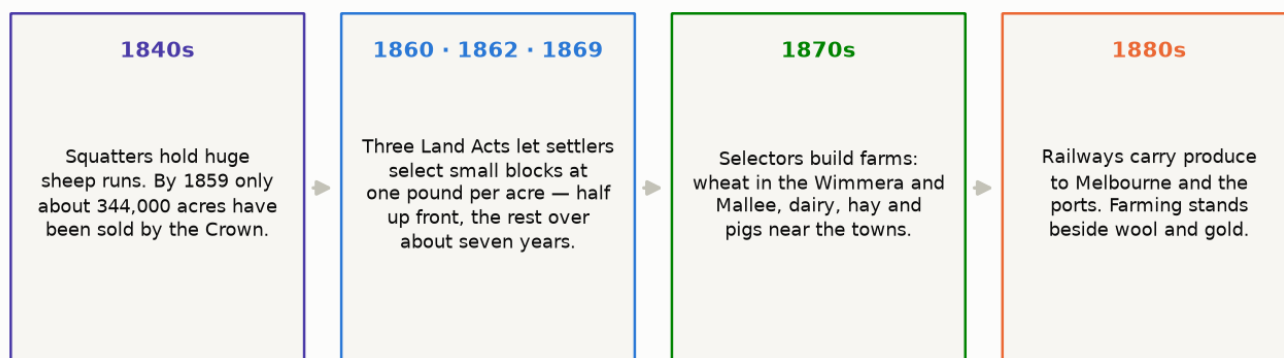
Railways changed how the colony worked. Bullock teams took weeks to haul wool to port; a train took hours and cost far less. Farmers could now send wheat, hay and butter to Melbourne markets before they spoiled. Diggers and their families could reach the goldfields without walking. Country towns along the lines grew, and Melbourne's suburbs spread around its stations.

8. Farming spreads: the Land Acts and selection

For the colony's first decades, most of the land was held by squatters on huge sheep runs. Very little land had been sold: by 1859, only about 344,000 acres had been sold by the Crown across the whole colony. Most diggers who struck gold went home rich in nothing, and many wanted farms of their own — but they found it hard to buy land.

To fix this, the government passed three **Land Acts**, in **1860, 1862 and 1869**. These laws let ordinary settlers **select** — that is, choose and buy — small blocks of farming land, even on the land squatters had occupied. A selector paid one pound per acre, half up front, and paid the rest over about seven years, as long as he made improvements such as fences and a house.

From sheep runs to selected farms: the Land Acts



Selectors and squatters clashed over the same land — in parliament and in the courts.

Flow diagram showing how land in Victoria moved from sheep runs to selected farms between the 1840s and the 1880s

Selection changed the countryside. Wheat farms spread across the Wimmera and the Mallee in the west, and mixed farming — crops, dairy cows, pigs and hay — grew near the railway lines that carried the produce to Melbourne and to the ports. Squatters fought the changes in parliament and in the courts, and many selectors struggled on dry land, but the pattern was set: by the 1880s farming stood beside wool and gold as a pillar of the colony's wealth.

Continuity check: through all this change, wool stayed a major export, and the Crown still owned the land until it was sold or selected.

9. Working life: the eight-hour day

The gold rush brought skilled workers as well as diggers, and workers began to organise. In April **1856**, stonemasons building the new University of Melbourne stopped work and marched to Parliament House. They asked for an **eight-hour day** — eight hours of work, eight hours of rest and eight hours for what they wanted to do — with no cut in pay. The government agreed for public works, and on 12 May 1856 the trades celebrated with a parade of about 700 workers. The Eight Hour March became a once-a-year event in Melbourne, running until 1951, and a monument was raised in 1903.

A small warning about words: the curriculum calls this development “the 40-Hour Week”. That phrase needs care. The diggers’ grandchildren won the eight-hour **day** in 1856 — but they still worked six days, a **48-hour week**. The true **40-hour, five-day week** was won much later, in 1948. Both steps belong to the same long story about working hours.

The eight-hour day, won in Melbourne in 1856

Careful! In 1856 workers still worked six days — a 48-hour week.

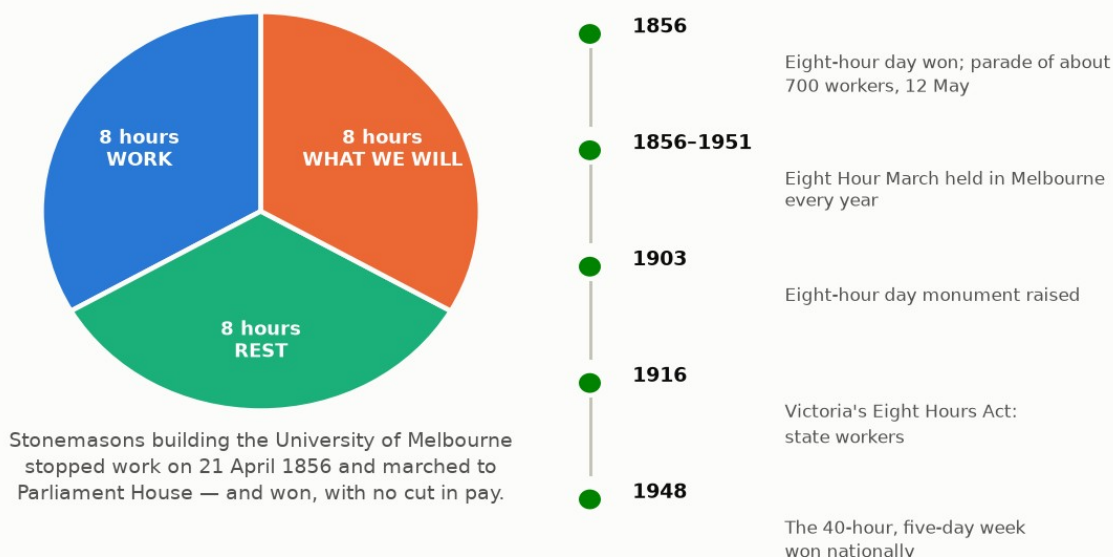


Diagram of the eight-hour day won by Melbourne stonemasons in 1856, shown as three equal parts of the day, with later milestones to the 40-hour week of 1948

10. So what stayed the same, and what changed?

Between the Hentys’ landing in 1834 and the 1880s, Victoria was transformed. Yet several things carried on, unchanged, through the whole period. The chart below sorts the section’s key examples.

Colonial Victoria, 1834–1880s: what stayed the same, and what became different

CONTINUITIES — stayed the same

- Victoria stayed a British colony, with an appointed governor
- Wool from the sheep runs kept flowing as a major export
- The Crown kept owning the land until it was sold or selected
- Melbourne stayed the capital, main port and biggest city
- Women still could not vote

CHANGES — became different

- Population grew almost seven times in ten years (1851–1861)
- Gold made the colony rich and brought hundreds of thousands of migrants
- Diggers won votes: miner's right 1855, secret ballot 1856, manhood suffrage 1857
- Railways replaced slow bullock teams from 1854
- Land Acts (1860–1869) spread farming beyond the sheep runs
- Skilled workers won the eight-hour day in 1856

Chart with two columns listing what stayed the same and what became different in colonial Victoria between 1834 and the 1880s

Notice three things about the pattern:

- Changes cluster around **1851–1856** — separation, gold, Eureka, the railway, the secret ballot, the eight-hour day — but change kept coming through the 1860s and 1880s (Land Acts, railways, farming).
- Some “changes” had limits: only men won the vote; the upper house kept property rules; women’s suffrage came later (you will meet it in Section 2B).
- Continuities mattered just as much: British government, wool, Crown land and Melbourne’s role as the capital and port ran through the whole story.

Worked demonstrations

These two demonstrations show how historians use real evidence from the past: a **written source** and a **dataset**. Watch the moves, then try them yourself in the practice tasks.

Worked demonstration 1 — reading the Eureka oath

The source. On 1 December 1854 at Bakery Hill, Ballarat, diggers swore this oath under the Southern Cross flag, recorded by eyewitness Raffaello Carboni (*The Eureka Stockade*, Melbourne, 1855, p. 68):

“We swear by the Southern Cross to stand truly by each other and fight to defend our rights and liberties.”

How a historian reads it.

Step	Move	What we can say here
1	What is it?	Words sworn by diggers on 1 December 1854, written down by a man who was there.

Step	Move	What we can say here
2	What does it say?	The diggers promised to stand together and to fight for their rights and liberties.
3	What does it show about their beliefs?	They valued rights and liberties enough to swear a serious promise; they believed those things were under threat; they believed in standing together, not acting alone.
4	What does it NOT tell us?	It does not tell us how many diggers swore it, or whether every digger agreed. One source cannot show what a whole crowd thought.

The point to copy: a source is evidence for some questions and silent about others. Good history says what the source *can* show before asking it for more.

Worked demonstration 2 — reading the population dataset

The data. Estimated population of the colony of Victoria: **77,345** in 1851 and **538,628** in 1861. Melbourne: about 29,000 in 1851 and about 123,000 by 1854. (Figures as reported in published historical statistics for Victoria; verified 24 August 2026. See the sources list.)

How a historian reads numbers.

Step	Move	What we can say here
1	Describe the change.	Victoria's population grew almost seven times in ten years; Melbourne more than four times in three years.
2	Link it to a cause.	The growth began in 1851 — the year gold was found — and migration caused it.
3	Work out consequences.	More people meant more towns, more demand for food, land, votes and law — pressure that added to the licence argument and to the Land Acts.
4	Ask what the numbers hide.	The totals do not say where people came from, whether they stayed, or who was counted.

The point to copy: numbers are sources too. Describe the pattern first, then connect it to causes and consequences — and name what the dataset cannot tell you.

Practice tasks (with help)

Q1. Use Figure 1c_timeline.png. List the events shown under the years 1834, 1837, 1851, 1854, 1855, 1856, 1857 and 1869. Then copy the list into your book and sort each event into one of: *settlement, gold, democracy, transport, farming, working life*.

Q2. Look at Figure 1c_licence.png. (a) How much did the gold licence cost in 1851, and how often did diggers have to pay? (b) Name two things diggers disliked about the licence system. (c) What replaced the licence in 1855, and what extra right did it bring?

- Q3.** Read the Eureka oath in Worked demonstration 1 again. (a) Which words show the diggers planned to act together? (b) Which words tell you what they thought was at risk? (c) Write one thing the oath does NOT tell us.
- Q4.** Look at Figure 1c_population.png. (a) What was Victoria's population in 1851 and in 1861? (b) By how many people did it grow? (c) Name the event of 1851 that best explains this growth.
- Q5.** Use Figure 1c_rail.png. Put these places in the order the railway reached them, starting with the first: Bendigo, Sandridge (Port Melbourne), Geelong, Ballarat, Echuca. Then write one sentence about how the railway changed life for a wheat farmer.
- Q6.** Use Figure 1c_selection.png. Fill in the missing words: "The Land Acts of 1860, 1862 and 1869 let ordinary settlers _____ small blocks of land at _____ per acre. These settlers were called _____. They often came into conflict with the _____ who had run sheep on the same land."
- Q7.** Look at Figure 1c_stayed_changed.png. Choose one item from the "stayed the same" column and one from the "became different" column. For each, write one sentence explaining why it matters.
- Q8.** Complete these sentences about working hours: "In 1856, Melbourne _____ won the eight-hour _____. They still worked _____ days a week, a _____-hour week. The five-day, _____-hour week was not won until _____."
-

Tasks to try on your own

- Q9.** In one paragraph, explain two causes of the Victorian gold rush and two consequences of it. Use at least three dates from this section.
- Q10.** "The biggest change in the colony of Victoria between 1851 and 1860 was the growth of democracy." Do you agree? In one paragraph, give your view and support it with evidence from this section. A student who disagrees using good evidence can also do well — the mark goes to the reasoning.
- Q11.** Imagine you live in a small town that the railway reaches in the 1860s. Write a short paragraph describing two changes the railway brings to your town, and one thing that stays the same.
- Q12.** Historians sometimes ask "what if?" questions to test causes. In one paragraph, answer: *what if gold had never been found in Victoria in 1851?* Use what you know about population, democracy and farming to build your answer.
-

Evidence-based writing task

"What if Peter Lalor had told the diggers to keep paying the licence fee instead of resisting it?"

This is a **counterfactual** question — it asks about an outcome that never happened, so your answer must be built carefully from evidence that *did* happen. The Victorian Curriculum asks you to build "what if" scenarios: change one thing about a key event and work out what might have followed.

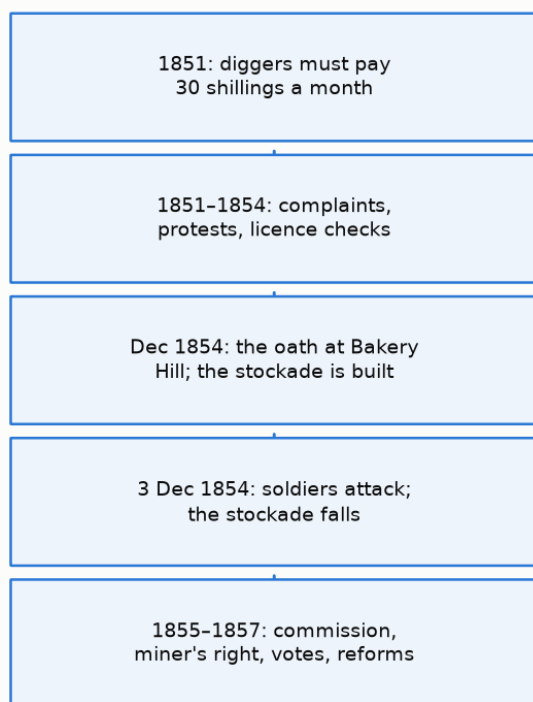
Use Figure 1c_whatif.png to plan, then write one to two paragraphs. Your response must:

1. state what actually happened (the licence, the complaints, the stockade, the reforms) with dates;
2. set out the "what if" chain: if Lalor had urged payment, what would have happened next — to the licence fee? to the diggers' vote? to the reforms of 1855–1857?
3. name at least one thing that would probably have stayed the same anyway, and explain why;
4. finish with a sentence about what your scenario shows about the *causes* of the reforms.

Success checklist: every claim can be traced to a fact, date or source in this section · the "what if" chain has at least three linked steps · at least one continuity is identified · the terms *cause*, *consequence*, *continuity* and *change* are used correctly.

Planning a “what if?” scenario — Peter Lalor and the licence fees

What DID happen



What MIGHT have happened



Ground every step in something that DID happen: a fact, a date or a source from this section.
A “what if” that floats free of the evidence is a story, not history.

Planning chart for a what-if scenario about Peter Lalor and the licence fees, showing the real chain of events beside an imagined chain

Answer guide (for the teacher)

Q1. 1834 — Henty family lands at Portland Bay (settlement); 1837 — Melbourne surveyed and named (settlement); 1851 — Victoria becomes a separate colony *and* gold is found near Clunes (democracy / gold); 1854 — first railway opens *and* the Eureka Stockade (transport / gold); 1855 — miner’s right introduced (democracy); 1856 — secret ballot *and* eight-hour day (democracy / working life); 1857 — all adult men win the vote for the lower house (democracy); 1869 — the third Land Act (farming).

Q2. (a) 30 shillings a month. (b) Any two: the fee was high and paid even when no gold was found; surprise checks were harsh; diggers had no vote; land was hard to buy. (c) The one-pound miner’s right; it gave the holder the right to vote for the lower house.

Q3. (a) “stand truly by each other”. (b) “our rights and liberties” — and the promise to “fight to defend” them. (c) Any one: how many swore it; whether all diggers agreed; what happened next.

Q4. (a) 77,345 and 538,628. (b) 461,283. (c) The gold discoveries / the Victorian gold rush.

Q5. Sandridge (1854), Geelong (1857), Bendigo and Ballarat (both 1862 — either order accepted), Echuca (1864). Example sentence: the railway got wheat to Melbourne and the ports in hours instead of weeks, so it arrived fresh and cost less to send.

Q6. select; one pound; selectors; squatters.

Q7. Award one clear, accurate sentence per item. Example: “Wool stayed a major export, which shows the colony’s wealth never depended on gold alone.” Example: “The secret ballot changed voting because people could vote without being watched or pressured.”

Q8. stonemasons; day; six; 48; 40; 1948.

Q9. Causes (any two): gold found near Clunes in July 1851; news spread through newspapers and shipping.
Consequences (any two): population grew from about 77,000 to about 540,000 by 1861; new goldfield towns; pressure for votes and land; the licence dispute.

Q10. Award marks for reasoning, not conclusion. Strong responses define “biggest”, pick a measure (people affected, lasting effect) and use dated evidence — for example, the reforms of 1855–1857 (miner’s right, secret ballot 1856, manhood suffrage 1857) versus population growth and wealth from gold. Counter-views with evidence (for instance, that population change touched every district while the vote excluded women) are equally eligible.

Q11. Changes might include: faster, cheaper trips to Melbourne; wheat and butter reaching market before spoiling; new shops and jobs near the station; more visitors and new residents. Continuity might include: the town’s main farming work; its church, school or pub; its position on the road.

Q12. Award a plausible chain tied to evidence: without gold, migration would have stayed small; population would have grown slowly around wool; the licence dispute, Eureka and the quick democratic reforms would not have happened as they did; Land Acts might still have come (farming pressure was not gold-driven), but more slowly. Bonus credit for noting a continuity (British government, wool, Crown land) in the imagined scenario.

Writing task. Use the success checklist. Look for: accurate real chain (licence 1851, complaints, Bakery Hill November–December 1854, stockade 3 December 1854, reforms 1855–1857); a “what if” chain with at least three linked steps (for example: fees keep coming in → no stockade → no commission → reforms delayed or weaker, OR grievances kept alive by slow, lawful protest); a named continuity (British government, wool, migration, Crown land); correct use of the four key terms. Marking is on the quality of the reasoning from defined terms and stated evidence; a well-built scenario that reaches a different conclusion from the model still earns full marks.

Sources used in this section (for the teacher)

All sources are real and citable; data verified 24 August 2026.

1. **Edward Henty’s journal (1834)** — State Library of Victoria holds the journal and transcript; the Henty family’s landing at Portland Bay on 19 November 1834 and the first wheat crop are recorded in Henty family papers and local histories of Portland.
2. **Raffaello Carboni, *The Eureka Stockade* (Melbourne, 1855)**, p. 68 — eyewitness account of the oath sworn at Bakery Hill on 1 December 1854; the surviving Eureka flag is held at the Art Gallery of Ballarat.
3. **Peter Lalor, “To the Colonists of Victoria”, *The Argus* (Melbourne), 10 April 1855, p. 7** — Lalor’s own account of the stockade (National Library of Australia, Trove, article 4806503). The description of his letter in this section is in the author’s words.
4. **Victoria’s population, 1851 (77,345) and 1861 (538,628); Melbourne about 29,000 (1851) and about 123,000 (1854)** — historical population statistics for Victoria, as cited in the Wikipedia article *Victorian gold rush* (English edition) consulted 24 August 2026; comparable rounded figures (76,000 to 540,000) are published by the Parliament of Victoria.
5. **Gold production:** Victoria produced about 20 million ounces of gold between 1851 and 1860 — about one third of the world’s output — as published by the Parliament of Victoria (verified 24 August 2026).
6. **Gold licence proclamation (August 1851)** — proclamations of 13 and 27 August 1851 in the *Victorian Government Gazette* reserved goldfield land to the Crown and set the licence at 30 shillings per month from 1 September 1851; the *Goldfields Act 1853* set the sliding-scale fees.
7. **Melbourne’s survey and naming** — Robert Hoddle’s town plan completed 25 March 1837; the town named Melbourne on 10 April 1837 (*New South Wales Government Gazette*, 12 April 1837).
8. **First railway** — Melbourne and Hobson’s Bay Railway Company line from the Melbourne terminus to Sandridge (Port Melbourne), about 4.2 km, opened 12 September 1854; Geelong line 1857; Bendigo line completed 1862; Geelong–Ballarat line 1862; Echuca 1864; direct Melbourne–Ballarat line 1889 — Victorian railway histories, verified 24 August 2026.

9. **Land Acts 1860, 1862, 1869** — selection at one pound per acre, half up front, balance over about seven years with improvement conditions; about 343,916 acres of Crown land sold by 1859 — histories of Australian land selection, verified 24 August 2026.
10. **Eight-hour day** — Melbourne stonemasons' walkout of 21 April 1856; celebration parade of 12 May 1856 (about 700 workers, 19 trades); Eight Hour March to 1951; monument of 1903; Victoria Eight Hours Act 1916; national 40-hour week from 1 January 1948 — histories of the eight-hour movement, verified 24 August 2026.
11. **Eureka tolls** — 27 deaths entered in the Victorian death register by the Ballarat registrar; Lalor's count of 22 dead diggers (in his letter to *The Argus*, 10 April 1855); military report of three soldiers killed — the exact toll remains contested.
12. **Democratic reforms** — royal commission report of 27 March 1855; *Victoria Constitution Act 1855* (royal assent July 1855); miner's right and goldfield representation 1855; *Electoral Act 1856* (Vic) — the world's first secret ballot; manhood suffrage for the Legislative Assembly 1857; payment of members 1870; property qualifications for the Legislative Council remained until 1950.

Migration to the colonies from Europe and Asia: causes, experiences and contributions

In this section you will find out why people left their homes in Europe and Asia to come to the Australian colonies, what their journeys and lives were like, and what they gave to the colonies. You will study one group in depth: the Chinese on the Victorian goldfields.

By the end of this section you can:

- give reasons — push and pull factors — why people migrated to a colony (VC2HH6K04.E01, VC2HH6K04.E04)
- describe the journey, the life and the contributions of one migrant group (VC2HH6K04.E02)
- connect the history in this section to family or community histories, if you wish (VC2HH6K04.E03)
- make a push–pull diagram of your own (VC2HH6K04.E04)
- plan a poster comparing migrants from Europe and from China in 1850s Victoria (VC2HH6K04.E05)

Curriculum: VC2HH6K04

Elaborations this section draws on, in plain words:

- **VC2HH6K04.E01** — give reasons people came (as convicts; on assisted passages; as contract labourers; as gold seekers; or pushed out by the Irish Potato Famine, the Highland Clearances or the Industrial Revolution), using evidence from sources.
 - **VC2HH6K04.E02** — study a group from this list: Germans in South Australia, Afghan cameleers, Japanese in Broome, Chinese on the Victorian goldfields, Pacific Islanders who worked in the Torres Strait.
 - **VC2HH6K04.E03** — connect this history to family histories.
 - **VC2HH6K04.E04** — use push–pull diagrams to explain why people migrated.
 - **VC2HH6K04.E05** — make a poster comparing migrants from Europe and from China in 1850s Victoria.
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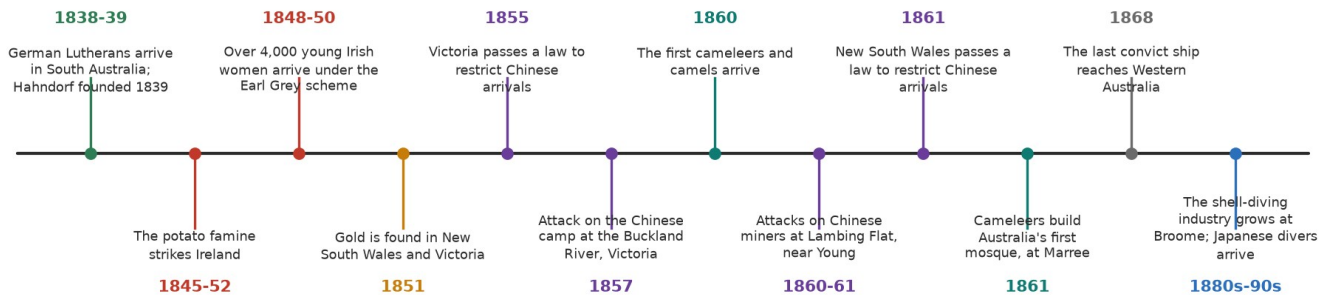
Key words

- **migration** — the curriculum uses this word without defining it. In this book, *migration* means large numbers of people moving from one part of the world to another to live. A **migrant** is a person making that move.
 - **colony, colonist** — a colony is a land ruled from far away by another country. The six Australian colonies were ruled by Britain. A colonist is a person living in a colony.
 - **push factor** — something bad at home that pushes people to leave.
 - **pull factor** — something good in the new place that pulls people to come.
 - **assisted passage** — a ship ticket paid for, or paid in part, by a government or a group, to bring workers to the colonies.
 - **contract labourer** — a worker who signs a contract promising to work for a set time at set pay.
 - **cameleer** — a worker who drives and cares for camels. In Australia they were called “Afghan cameleers”, though many came from several different lands.
 - **trepan** — a sea animal gathered in northern waters and traded to Asia as food.
 - **source** — anything from the past that gives us evidence: a document, a picture, an object, a building, a story.
-

The story in dates

Migration to the Australian colonies, 1838-1901

Some of the key dates in this section. The timeline ends in the 1890s; section 2C picks the story up in the 1900s.



A horizontal timeline of twelve key dates in migration to the Australian colonies from 1838 to the 1890s, with events colour-coded and placed above and below the line.

Figure 1. The key dates of this section at a glance.

Look at Figure 1 before you read on. Two things to notice: people came for many different reasons (not only gold), and some of the dates are about laws made *against* one group of new arrivals. Both belong to this history.

Part 1 — Push: hard times at home

The Industrial Revolution. From the late 1700s, machines and factories changed work in Britain. Many farm workers lost their work, cities grew fast and crowded, and pay was low. Some families decided their chances were better in the colonies, where land was wide and workers were wanted.

The Irish Potato Famine (1845–52). Most poor Irish families lived on potatoes. In 1845 a plant disease made the crop rot in the ground, and the failure went on for years. About a million people died of hunger and sickness. Many more left Ireland for ever. Between 1848 and 1850, more than 4,000 young Irish women — many of them orphans — came to the Australian colonies on assisted passages under the Earl Grey scheme.

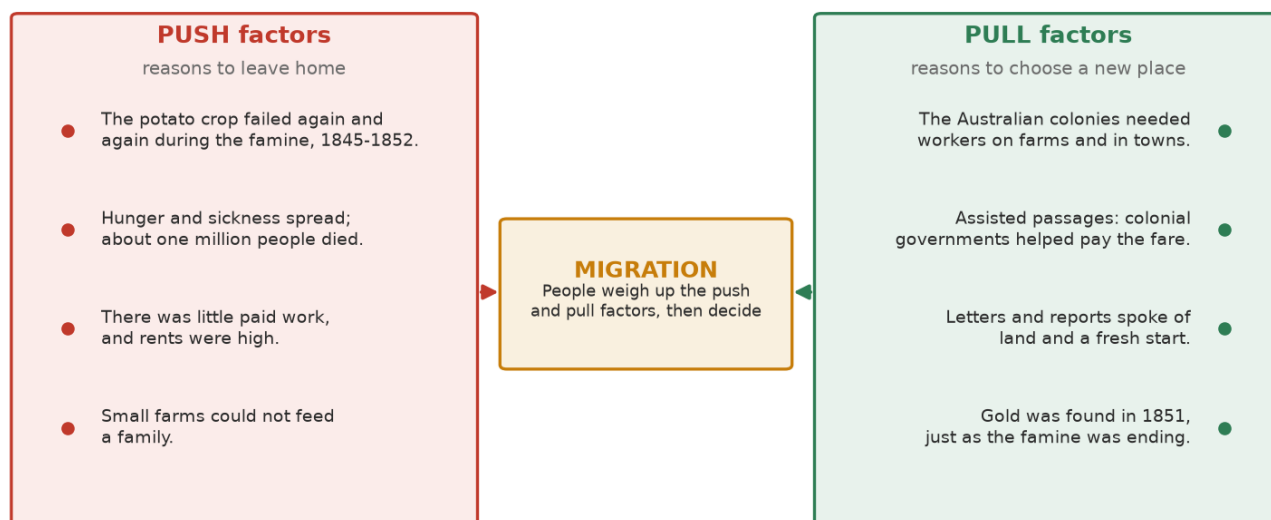
The Highland Clearances. In the north of Scotland, landowners turned small tenant farms into big sheep runs. Tenants were forced off the land they had farmed on for generations, and whole villages sailed away. Many Highlanders came to the colonies in the 1840s and 1850s.

German Lutherans. In parts of Prussia, people who belonged to the Lutheran church were treated badly for their beliefs. Groups of them sailed for South Australia to worship as they chose. The ship *Zebra* brought one of the first groups in 1838, and in 1839 they founded the town of Hahndorf.

Convicts: migration by force. Not everyone chose to come. From 1788, Britain sent convicts to the colonies as punishment. New South Wales stopped receiving convict ships in 1840, but the last convict ship, the *Hougoumont*, reached Western Australia in 1868. For convicts, the push factor was the law.

Push and pull factors: a worked model

Why did Irish families migrate in the 1840s and 1850s?



Most Irish migrants went to North America, which was closer and cheaper to reach. Those who came to Australia faced a sea journey of three to four months.

A worked push-pull diagram for Irish migration in 1845 to 1852, with push factors on the left (famine, deaths, little paid work, small farms), pull factors on the right (workers wanted, assisted passages, letters home, gold from 1851) and a MIGRATION box in the centre.

Figure 2. A worked push–pull diagram: Irish migration, 1845–52. This is a model. Later in the section you will make one of your own (VC2HH6K04.E04).

Part 2 — Pull: what drew people to the colonies

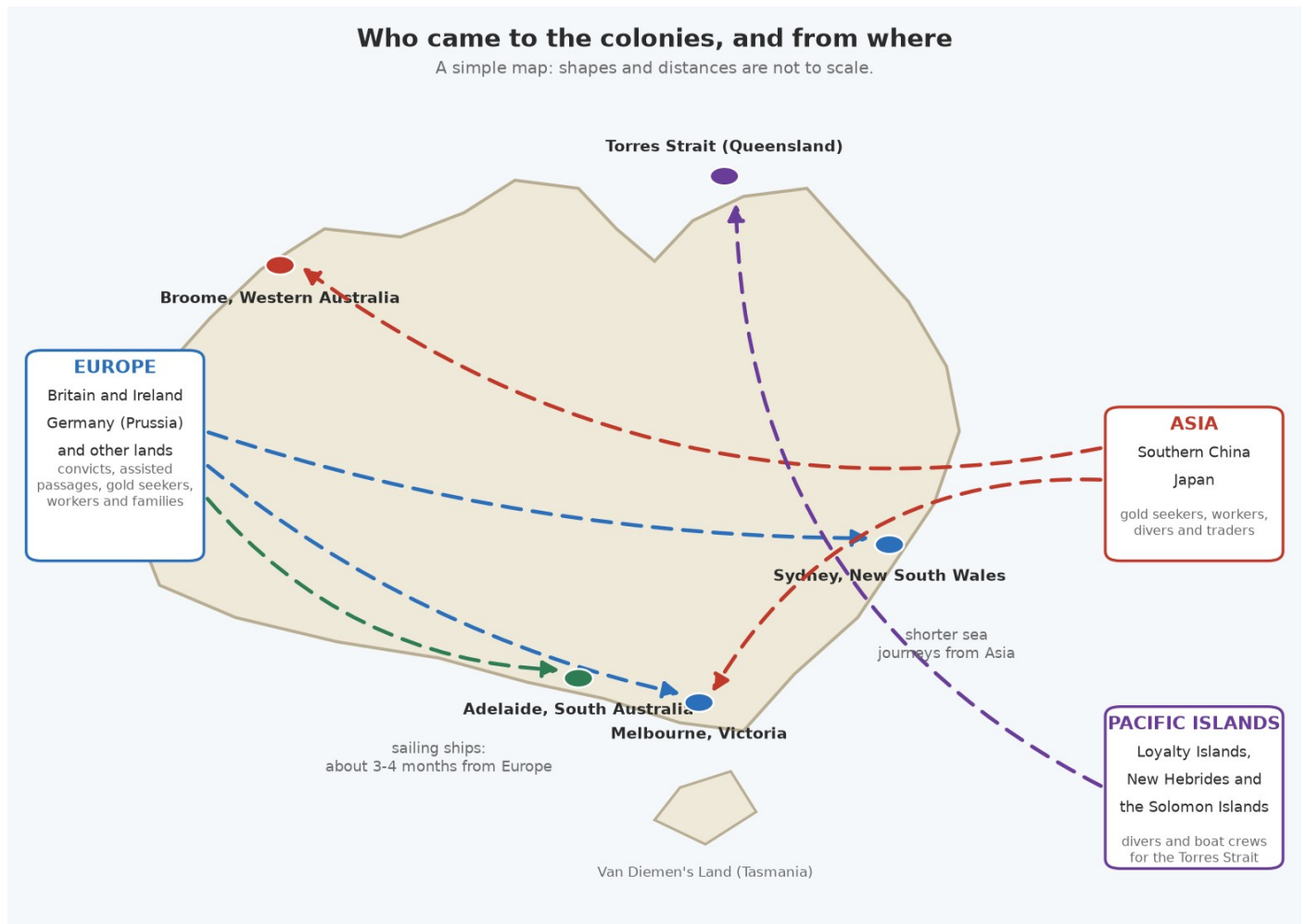
- **Land and work.** The colonies wanted workers. Assisted passages made the fare cheaper or free, and letters home spoke of land, work and a fresh start.
- **Gold.** Gold was found in New South Wales and Victoria in 1851. News raced round the world, and gold became the strongest pull factor of all.
- **Southern China.** In Guangdong, in the south of China, war, floods and hunger made life hard. Gold in Victoria — called “the New Gold Mountain” by Chinese miners — pulled thousands to make their fortune and send money home.
- **The Torres Strait.** From the 1860s, divers and boat crews from the Loyalty Islands, the New Hebrides and the Solomon Islands came to work the trepang and shell trade. Some came as contract labourers, and some were tricked or treated unfairly — this is also part of the story.

Part 3 — The journeys

From Europe, the sailing-ship voyage took about three to four months. Ships were crowded, food was plain, and sickness spread fast below deck. Some people died at sea. Most assisted passengers and most convict ships came this way.

From China the voyage was shorter — a few weeks to a couple of months — but it was still hard. After Victoria’s 1855 law (Part 5), some Chinese passengers got off at ports in South Australia, such as Robe, and walked hundreds of kilometres overland to the Victorian goldfields to avoid paying the tax.

Cameleers travelled with their camels by ship in 1860 — a journey of months, planned so the animals would survive it.



A simple map of Australia showing dashed route arrows from three origin panels — Europe (Britain and Ireland, Germany), Asia (southern China, Japan) and the Pacific Islands (Loyalty Islands, New Hebrides, Solomon Islands) — to destination dots at Melbourne, Adelaide, Sydney, Broome and the Torres Strait.

Figure 3. Who came, and from where. A simple map: shapes and distances are not to scale.

Part 4 — Case study: the Chinese on the Victorian goldfields

By the late 1850s, more than 25,000 Chinese people — mainly men from Guangdong — had come to Victoria. Many worked in groups of ten or twenty, sharing the work and sharing any gold they won. They often worked ground other miners had given up, and they were patient and careful, so they found gold where others had not.

Work. Not everyone struck gold. Many Chinese settlers grew vegetables in market gardens, ran shops, worked as cooks or cabinet-makers, or washed clothes for the goldfields towns. Their market gardens grew food for thousands of people.

Daily life. Camps had their own cooks, shops and places of worship. Festivals such as the New Year were celebrated with drums, flags and feasts. Letters and money were sent home to families in Guangdong. Many men were homesick; most had left parents, children and partners far away.

Perspective. Most Chinese settlers left few written records that survive, so their side of the story is hard to hear. That is why the pamphlet in Part 5 is such a valuable source: it lets us hear Chinese voices speaking for themselves.

Part 5 — Unfair laws and hard times

This part of the story is difficult, and it should be told plainly. On some goldfields, jealousy and racism grew as gold grew scarcer. Some European diggers held angry meetings against Chinese miners, saying the Chinese should not be allowed to dig.

The Victorian law of 1855. In June 1855 the Victorian Parliament passed *An Act to make provision for certain Immigrants*, the first law in the colonies made to restrict one group of people.

SOURCE CARD A — a law

An Act to make provision for certain Immigrants (Victoria, June 1855)

What is it?
A law made by the Victorian Parliament in June 1855.
It was the first law in the Australian colonies made to restrict Chinese people from arriving.

Its two main rules, in plain words:

1. Every Chinese person arriving in Victoria by ship had to pay a tax of one pound to the government.
2. A ship could carry only one Chinese passenger for every ten tons of the ship's weight.

Why was it made?
Many colonists were unhappy about the fast-growing number of Chinese miners on the goldfields. The government acted to slow Chinese arrivals down.

What can this source tell us?
By 1855 the Victorian Parliament was treating Chinese arrivals differently from other migrants. The rules singled out one group of people and made their journey harder and more costly.

A real document of the Victorian Parliament. The rules above are a plain-words restatement, not a quotation.

VIC
1855

A source card describing the Victorian law of June 1855: what it is, its two main rules restated in plain words (a one-pound tax on each Chinese arrival by ship, and one Chinese passenger per ten tons of ship weight), why it was made, and what the source can tell us.

Figure 4. Source Card A — the Victorian law of 1855. The rules are restated in plain words, not quoted.

New South Wales passed a similar law in 1861, and Victoria later added a special tax that only Chinese residents had to pay, every year.

Violence. In 1857, a European mob attacked the Chinese camp at the Buckland River in Victoria, driving people off and destroying their camps. In 1860–61, attacks on Chinese miners at Lambing Flat, near Young in New South Wales, became so serious that police were sent. These attacks were cruel and unfair, and the laws treated one group of people as less welcome than every other.

A Chinese answer in print. In 1879, two Chinese storekeepers of Melbourne, Lowe Kong Meng and Louis Ah Mouy, wrote a pamphlet called *The Chinese Question in Australia*. It argued that Chinese settlers work hard, obey the laws, and came to Australia to work as others did — and that laws singling them out are unfair.

SOURCE CARD B — a pamphlet (a short printed book)

The Chinese Question in Australia (Melbourne, 1879)

What is it?

A pamphlet written in 1879 by Lowe Kong Meng, a storekeeper in Melbourne who had come to Victoria during the gold rushes, together with another Chinese storekeeper, Louis Ah Mouy.

What does it argue, in brief?

Chinese settlers work hard and obey the laws. They came to Australia to work, as others did. Laws that single out Chinese people treat them unfairly.

Why was it written?

Colonies were passing new laws to restrict Chinese people. The authors answered back in print, in their own words.

Why does it matter?

Most written sources about Chinese people in the colonies were written by other people. This one lets us hear Chinese voices speaking for themselves — a rare kind of evidence.



A real pamphlet, printed in Melbourne in 1879. The ideas above are a summary, not a quotation.

*A source card describing the real 1879 pamphlet *The Chinese Question in Australia*, written in Melbourne by Lowe Kong Meng with Louis Ah Mouy: what it is, what it argues in brief, why it was written, and why it matters as a rare source in Chinese voices.*

Figure 5. Source Card B — the 1879 pamphlet. The ideas are a summary, not a quotation.

Part 6 — More migrant groups

Five migrant groups of this section

One row per group. Part 5 studies each group in brief; the Chinese are studied in depth in Part 4.

Group	Where from	Colony and when	Work they did	Contributions still remembered
German Lutherans	Prussia and other German lands	South Australia, from 1838	Farmers, winemakers, bakers and tradespeople	Towns such as Hahndorf and Lobethal; Barossa Valley vineyards; music and schools
Chinese	Mostly southern China	Victoria, in large numbers from the mid-1850s	Gold miners, market gardeners, shopkeepers, cooks and cabinet-makers	Food for the goldfields; shops and temples; New Year festivals still held today
Afghan cameleers	Parts of what are now Afghanistan, Pakistan and India	The dry inland of South Australia, the Northern Territory and beyond, from 1860	Cameleers: carrying wool, supplies and water across the outback	Inland transport; the Overland Telegraph; Australia's first mosques; the name of the Ghan train
Japanese	Japan	Broome, Western Australia, from the 1880s	Shell divers and boat crews in the diving industry	Built Broome's diving industry; the Japanese cemetery tells their story today
Pacific Islanders	Loyalty Islands, New Hebrides, Solomon Islands	Torres Strait, Queensland, from the 1860s	Divers and crews for the trepang and shell trade	Worked the Torres Strait sea trade; many settled on Thursday Island

A five-row table listing the five migrant groups of this section — German Lutherans, Chinese, Afghan cameleers, Japanese, Pacific Islanders — with columns for where they came from, which colony and when, the work they did, and contributions still remembered.

Figure 6. The five groups of this section (the list of VC2HH6K04.E02). The Chinese are studied in depth in Parts 4–5; the others are met here in brief.

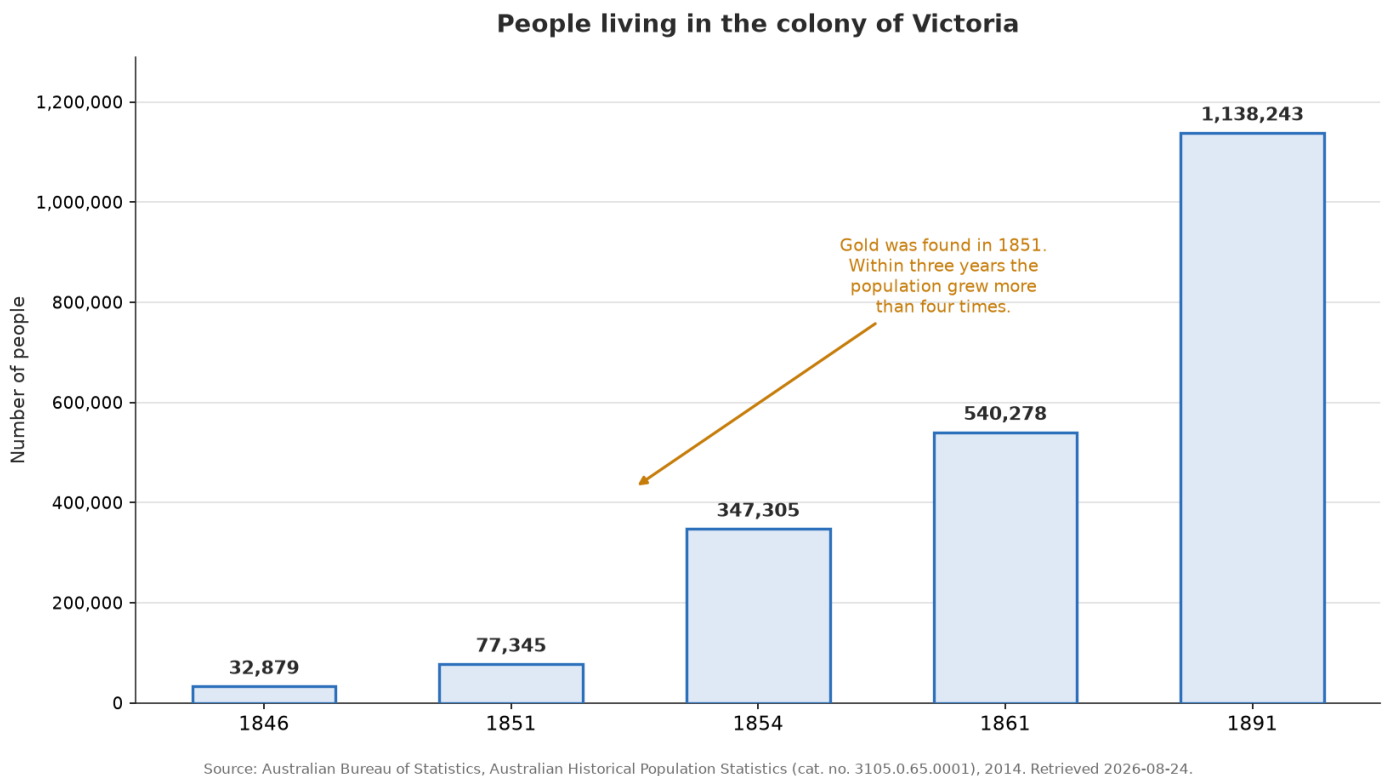
German Lutherans farmed, baked, and planted vineyards in the Barossa Valley. Their towns, such as Hahndorf and Lobethal, still show their German past, and their bands, schools and choirs enriched colony life.

Afghan cameleers arrived from 1860, from lands that are now Afghanistan, Pakistan and India. With their camels they carried wool, supplies and water across country no wagon could cross. They helped build the Overland Telegraph line (finished 1872), built some of Australia's first mosques — the first at Marree in 1861 — and the train called the Ghan is named after them.

Japanese divers and boat crews made Broome's shell-diving industry one of the best in the world from the 1880s. The work was dangerous; the Japanese cemetery at Broome tells their story today.

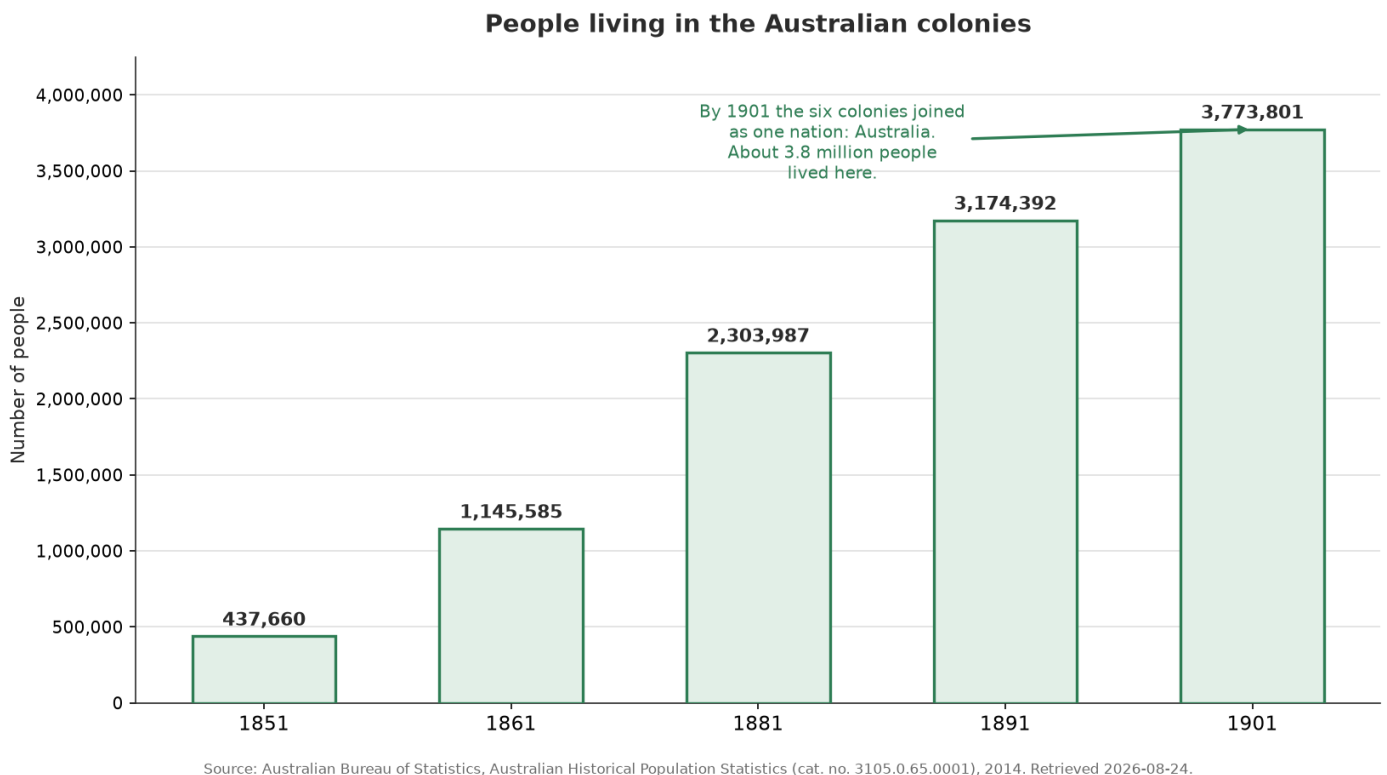
Pacific Islanders from the Loyalty Islands, the New Hebrides and the Solomon Islands worked the trepang and shell trade of the Torres Strait from the 1860s, and many settled on Thursday Island.

Part 7 — What changed: consequences



A bar chart of the population of the colony of Victoria: 32,879 in 1846; 77,345 in 1851; 347,305 in 1854; 540,278 in 1861; 1,138,243 in 1891, with a note that gold was found in 1851 and within three years the population grew more than four times.

Figure 7. People living in the colony of Victoria. Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics.



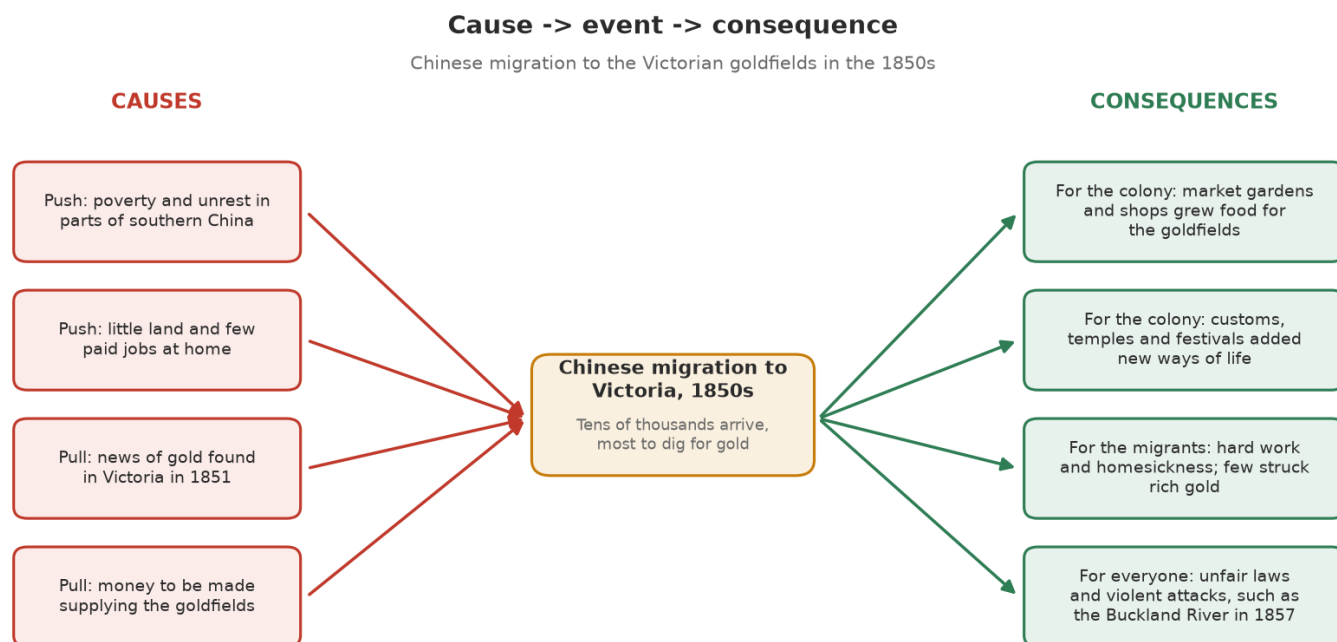
A bar chart of the population of the Australian colonies: 437,660 in 1851; 1,145,585 in 1861; 2,303,987 in 1881; 3,174,392 in 1891; 3,773,801 in 1901, with a note that by 1901 the six colonies joined as one nation.

Figure 8. People living in the Australian colonies. Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics.

A population boom. Migration — more than births — made the boom in Figures 7 and 8. In 1851 the colonies held about 437,000 people; by 1861, more than 1.1 million. New towns, farms, vineyards and industries followed.

A more varied society. Germans, Chinese, Japanese, Irish, Highland Scots, Afghan cameleers and Pacific Islanders brought new foods, crafts, religions, festivals and ways of life. Colonial Australia became a society made of many peoples — the beginning of the multicultural Australia of today.

A long shadow. The unfair laws of the 1850s and 1860s did not end with the gold rushes. In the 1900s, the new nation made further laws to limit who could come to Australia. You will study these in section 2C.



Historians sort causes from consequences after the event. One event can have many consequences — some good, some harmful, at the same time.

A cause-event-consequence web: four red push and pull cause boxes on the left (poverty and unrest in southern China; little land and few paid jobs at home; news of gold in Victoria in 1851; money to be made supplying the goldfields) flow into a central amber box, Chinese migration to Victoria in the 1850s, and four green consequence boxes on the right (market gardens and shops grew food for the goldfields; new customs, temples and festivals; hard work and homesickness for the migrants; unfair laws and violent attacks such as the Buckland River in 1857).

Figure 9. Causes and consequences of Chinese migration to Victoria in the 1850s. One event can have good and harmful consequences at the same time.

Worked demonstrations

Demonstration 1 — Reading Source Card A (Figure 4), the 1855 law.

Question	Answer, and why the answer works
What kind of source is this?	A government document — a law passed by a parliament. Laws are strong evidence of what a government <i>did</i> , not just what people said.
Who made it, and when?	The Victorian Parliament, in June 1855 — during the gold rushes, when Chinese arrivals were growing fast. The date helps explain the source.
What does it say, in plain words?	Every Chinese arrival by ship paid a tax of one pound, and a ship could carry only one Chinese passenger per ten tons of its weight. Both rules target one group only.
Whose perspective does it show?	The perspective of the Victorian government — and

Question	Answer, and why the answer works
What can it <i>not</i> tell us?	behind it, of colonists who wanted Chinese arrivals slowed. A law shows the view of the people with the power to act. Not what Chinese people thought of the law (for that we need Source Card B), and not how the law felt to the people it targeted. Every source is one window, not the whole view.

Demonstration 2 — Using the Figure 7 dataset to back a claim.

Claim: Gold pulled huge numbers of people to Victoria in a very short time.

Step	Working
Evidence	Figure 7: 77,345 people in 1851; 347,305 people in 1854.
Reasoning	That is more than four times as many people in only three years. Births cannot grow a population that fast; arrivals can. The timing matches the 1851 gold discovery, so migration — mainly gold seekers — is the best explanation.
Limits	The figures count people; they do not give reasons. To confirm the <i>why</i> , we check sources of the time, such as letters, newspapers and laws like Source Card A.

Practice questions

Guided

S1. Sort these four reasons for coming to the colonies into push factors and pull factors: (a) gold found in 1851; (b) the potato crop failing in Ireland; (c) assisted passages paying the fare; (d) being forced off your farm in the Highland Clearances.

S2. Using Figure 1, name one date that shows a *pull* factor at work and one date that shows a government acting *against* a group of migrants.

S3. Give two ways the journey from Europe differed from the journey from China.

S4. Complete the sentence using Source Card A (Figure 4): “The 1855 law made it harder for Chinese people to come to Victoria because ... and ...”

S5. Who wrote *The Chinese Question in Australia* (1879), and why is a source like this rare and valuable?

S6. Name two contributions of the Afghan cameleers that are still remembered today.

S7. Using Figure 8, about how many *more* people lived in the Australian colonies in 1861 than in 1851? Show your working.

S8. Match each key word to its meaning: (1) assisted passage; (2) push factor; (3) cameleer; (4) colony. Meanings: (a) a worker who drives and cares for camels; (b) a land ruled from far away by another country; (c) a ship ticket paid for to bring workers out; (d) something bad at home that makes people leave.

On your own

U1. Make your own push–pull diagram for Chinese migration to Victoria in the 1850s (VC2HH6K04.E04). Use at least two push factors and two pull factors from Parts 2 and 4, and label each one.

U2. What does Source Card A tell us about the Victorian government's perspective on Chinese arrivals by 1855? Make one point and back it with evidence from the card.

U3. Compare a German Lutheran family settling in South Australia in 1839 with a Chinese miner on the Victorian goldfields in 1856. Give two similarities and one difference in their experiences.

U4. Choose one consequence of migration to the colonies that you can still see in Australia today (food, a town, a festival, a name, an industry ...). Explain the link from then to now.

Writing and presenting task

W1 — Poster (VC2HH6K04.E05). Plan a poster comparing **European migrants** and **Chinese migrants** to Victoria in the 1850s, using the planning frame in Figure 10. For each group, cover: who they were and why they came (push and pull factors); what the journey was like; what work they did; how they were treated by other people and by government; and at least two contributions each group made.

Plan your poster: European and Chinese migrants in 1850s Victoria

Fill in each box with short notes. Add drawings or pasted pictures if you like.

European migrants in the 1850s	Chinese migrants in the 1850s
Who were they, and why did they come? (push and pull factors)	
(your notes)	(your notes)
What was the journey like?	
(your notes)	(your notes)
What work did they do on the goldfields?	
(your notes)	(your notes)
How were they treated by other people and by the government?	
(your notes)	(your notes)
Contributions each group made to life in the colony	
(your notes — at least two contributions for each group)	

Checklist: every claim backed by a fact from this section · names and dates where you know them · one sentence saying what the two groups shared

A poster planning frame with two column headers, European migrants in the 1850s and Chinese migrants in the 1850s, four prompt rows with space for notes in each column (who they were and why they came; the journey; work on the goldfields; treatment by people and government), a contributions strip, and a checklist line at the foot.

Figure 10. A planning frame for your poster.

Rules of evidence for this task: every claim on your poster must be backed by a fact from this section; use names and dates where you know them; and end with one sentence saying what the two groups *shared*. Present your poster to a partner and answer one question from them.

Optional family history task

F1 (VC2HH6K04.E03). Ask an adult in your family about one ancestor or family group who came to Australia: roughly when did they come, from where, and why? Write three sentences connecting their story to a push or pull factor from this section. *If your family history is unknown or hard to trace*, choose instead a street, shop or suburb near you and find out who its first settlers were, or interview an older person you know about where their family came from. Every history counts; no one is left out of this task.

Answers

S1. Push: (b) potato crop failing; (d) forced off your farm. Pull: (a) gold; (c) assisted passages.

S2. Example: pull — 1851, gold found in New South Wales and Victoria. Government against a group — 1855 (Victoria) or 1861 (New South Wales), laws to restrict Chinese arrivals. (Other readings of the timeline are fine if the event matches the idea.)

S3. Europe: three to four months by sailing ship; crowded and sickly below deck. China: a shorter voyage of weeks to a couple of months; and after 1855 some Chinese arrivals walked overland from South Australia to avoid the Victorian tax.

S4. ... because each Chinese arrival had to pay a tax of one pound, and ships could carry only one Chinese passenger per ten tons — so both the price and the number of places were used against one group.

S5. Lowe Kong Meng and Louis Ah Mouy, Chinese storekeepers of Melbourne. Most written sources about Chinese people were written *by other people*; this pamphlet lets us hear Chinese voices speaking for themselves.

S6. Any two of: inland transport with camels; work on the Overland Telegraph line; some of Australia's first mosques (Marree, 1861); the name of the Ghan train.

S7. $1,145,585 - 437,660 = 707,925$ — about 708,000 more people.

S8. 1–c; 2–d; 3–a; 4–b.

U1. Look for: at least two labelled push factors (e.g. war, floods and hunger in Guangdong) and two pull factors (e.g. gold on the “New Gold Mountain”; work to send money home), laid out like the model in Figure 2.

U2. Example point: by 1855 the Victorian government saw Chinese arrivals as a problem to limit. Evidence: the law taxed only Chinese arrivals and capped their places by ship tonnage. (Other points acceptable if the evidence is from the card.)

U3. Similarities might include: both left hard times or pushed lives behind them; both came hoping for land, work or a better future; both built communities with their own churches, towns and festivals. A difference: the German family came as free settlers welcomed by their colony, while Chinese miners faced special taxes, restrictions and violence.

U4. Accept any consequence with a clear then-to-now link (e.g. Barossa vineyards from German winemakers; market-garden vegetables in Australian cooking; Chinese New Year festivals; the Ghan train's name; Broome's diving history).

W1. Checklist: every claim backed by a fact from the section; both groups covered on all five prompts; at least two contributions each; one shared sentence (e.g. both came seeking a better life, both worked hard, both faced hardship, both helped build the colony).

F1. No single answer. Check that the three sentences name a time or place and connect the story to a push or pull factor.

Teacher notes

Teaching sequence (one suggested order). 1) Key words and Figure 1 as a first look at the story. 2) Parts 1–2 with Figure 2 as the worked push–pull model. 3) Part 3 journeys with Figure 3. 4) Parts 4–5 as the case study, reading Source Cards A and B slowly (the difficult-histories turn). 5) Part 6 groups with Figure 6. 6) Part 7 consequences with Figures 7–9, linking forward to 2C. 7) Demonstration, practice, then the W1 poster as the evidence-based assessment task.

Difficult histories. Racism, violence (Buckland, Lambing Flat) and unfair laws are part of this story and are told plainly, in a few sentences. The framing is: these laws and attacks were unfair, and they are also evidence (perspectives of the people who made them).

Vocabulary. General vocabulary is kept at or below Year 6 level. Subject terms (push/pull factor, assisted passage, contract labourer, cameleer, trepang) are defined at first use. “Migration” is defined clearly because the curriculum uses the word without defining it.

Scope notes. This section contains no Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content. Pacific Islanders are retained per the section list of VC2HH6K04.E02 and are not First Nations peoples. Push–pull factors (VC2HH6K04.E04) are *introduced* here as the seed for section 2C, which picks up the laws of the 1900s that limited who could come.

Sources

All sources are real and citable; the cards restate them in plain words, or give a short account of them, and do not quote them. Retrieved 2026-08-24.

- Victorian Curriculum 2.0, History, Levels 5–6 band: content description VC2HH6K04 and elaborations VC2HH6K04.E01–E05.
- *An Act to make provision for certain Immigrants*, Victoria, 1855 (Figure 4 restates its two main rules in plain words).
- Lowe Kong Meng and Louis Ah Mouy, *The Chinese Question in Australia*, Melbourne, 1879 (Figure 5 gives a short account of its argument).
- Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Australian Historical Population Statistics* (cat. no. 3105.0.65.0001), 2014 (Figures 7 and 8).
- Australian Dictionary of Biography, biographical entry for Lowe Kong Meng (dates and role in Melbourne).
- National Museum of Australia, *Defining Moments in Australian History*: gold rushes (1851); the *Hougoumont* (1868); Afghan cameleers.

Significant individuals and groups in a colony's development: colonists, migrants, industries and women

Teacher note — teaching sequence (teacher-facing, not student text). 1. Lead Part A aloud and put the word-watch cards on the board; students copy the cards they need. 2. Walk Parts B–G in order with the figures on the screen. Pause at each figure and let students say what they notice before you tell them what it shows. 3. Teach Worked examples 1 and 2 with the thinking out loud; students follow on paper. 4. Tasks 1–8 in pairs (guided), tasks 9–12 alone (independent). Collect task 10 to check cause–consequence reasoning. 5. Set the writing task for homework or a supervised draft; students self-check against the Figure F11 shape before handing in. This section teaches VC2HH6K05 using elaborations E02–E06 as trimmed by the notice at the front of this book. E01 is not taught. Do not add First Nations examples in this section (see §2A of the table of contents); the Pacific Islander migrants who worked in the Torres Strait (E02) stay, as a Melanesian migrant group, not as First Nations content.

Part A — The big idea

Between 1800 and 1900, the British colonies in Australia grew from a small settlement at Sydney into busy colonies with farms, ports, towns and parliaments. That growth did not just happen. It happened because of the work of many people and groups: colonists born in the colonies, migrants who sailed in from other lands, and women as well as men.

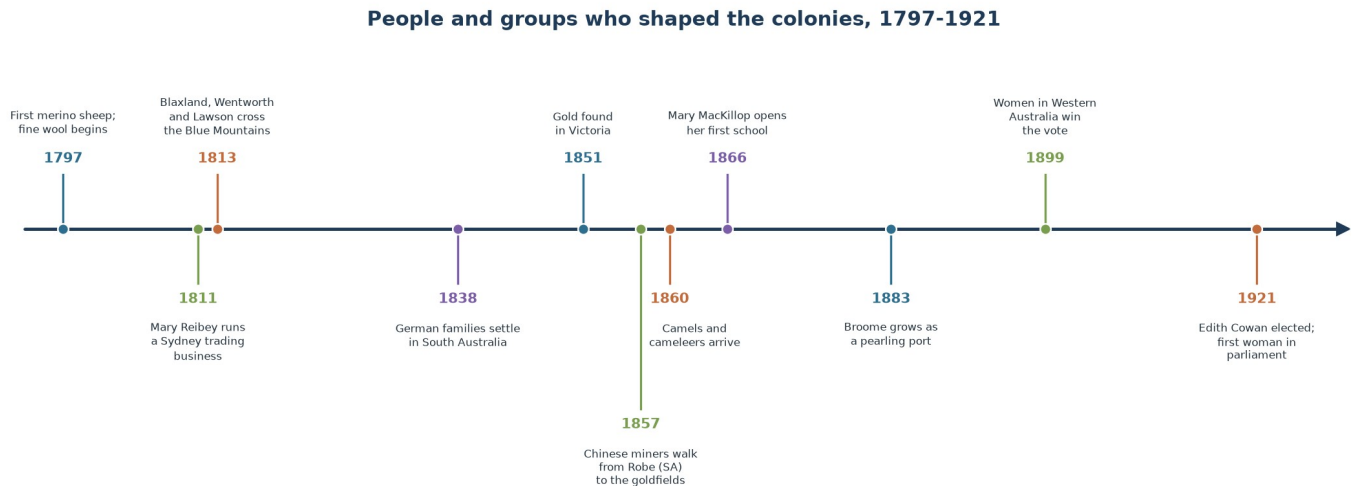
Word watch — our new words.

- **colony** — a land ruled from far away by another country. The Australian colonies were ruled from Britain.
- **colonist** — a person living in a colony.
- **migrant** — a person who moves to a new country to make a life.
- **industry** — a kind of work that grows or makes things to sell, like wool or mining.
- **primary industry** — an industry that gets raw materials from the land or the sea, like farming, fishing or mining.
- **gold rush** — a time when crowds of people rush to a place where gold has been found.
- **merino** — a breed of sheep with very soft, fine wool.
- **cameleer** — a worker who leads and cares for camels on long trips.
- **export** — a product made in one place and sold to another country.
- **cause** — the thing that makes something happen.
- **consequence** — what happens because of the cause.
- **parliament** — the group of people who make the laws of a colony.
- **continuity** — what stays the same over time. **change** — what becomes different over time.
- **significant** — the Victorian Curriculum uses the word *significant* but does not define it. In this section, we call a person or group significant when their work changed the colony in ways we can still point to. Later in this book you will learn fuller ways to test how significant something was.

Historians sort a role into three kinds: **economic** (about money, work and trade), **social** (about daily life, care and learning) and **political** (about laws, votes and power). We will use these three kinds all the way through this section.

Part B — The people and groups on one timeline

Figure F1 puts the key people and groups of this section on one timeline, from 1797 to 1921.



Key moments from this section. British settlement at Sydney began in 1788; that story is studied in an earlier year level.

Timeline from 1797 to 1921 showing eleven moments: first merino sheep 1797; Mary Reibey's Sydney trading business 1811; Blaxland, Wentworth and Lawson cross the Blue Mountains 1813; German families settle in South Australia 1838; gold found in Victoria 1851; Chinese miners walk from Robe to the goldfields 1857; camels and cameleers arrive 1860; Mary MacKillop opens her first school 1866; Broome grows as a pearling port 1883; women in Western Australia win the vote 1899; Edith Cowan elected to parliament 1921.

Figure F1 — The people and groups of this section, 1797–1921.

Read across the timeline and notice two things. Wool was changing the colonies long before gold. And women were still winning new roles long after the gold rushes ended.

Part C — Migrant groups

A **migrant** is a person who leaves one land to make a new life in another. The curriculum picks out five migrant groups. **Germans** came to South Australia from 1838 and built farms, churches and towns. **Chinese migrants** came to the Victorian goldfields from 1851, and later grew vegetables and ran shops and market gardens. **Japanese divers** worked in the shell industry at Broome from the 1880s. **Afghan cameleers** led camels that carried food and goods across the dry inland, where carts could not go. **Pacific Islanders** worked as crews and divers in the shell industry in the Torres Strait from the 1870s.

Migrant groups who helped build the colonies

Group	Came from	Settled	What they added
Germans	Prussia (now Germany)	Hahndorf and the Barossa, South Australia (from 1838)	Farms, vineyards, wine and crafts
Chinese	Southern China	Ballarat and Bendigo goldfields (1850s)	Mining, market gardens and shops
Afghan cameleers	Afghanistan and nearby lands	Inland South Australia and the Northern Territory (from the 1860s)	Camel teams carrying goods across the dry centre
Japanese	Japan	Broome, Western Australia (1880s)	Deep diving in the shell industry
Pacific Islanders	Melanesian islands	The Torres Strait, from the 1870s	Crews and divers in the shell industry

Many other people came too, from Britain and Ireland and from around the world. Dates show when each group first arrived in numbers.

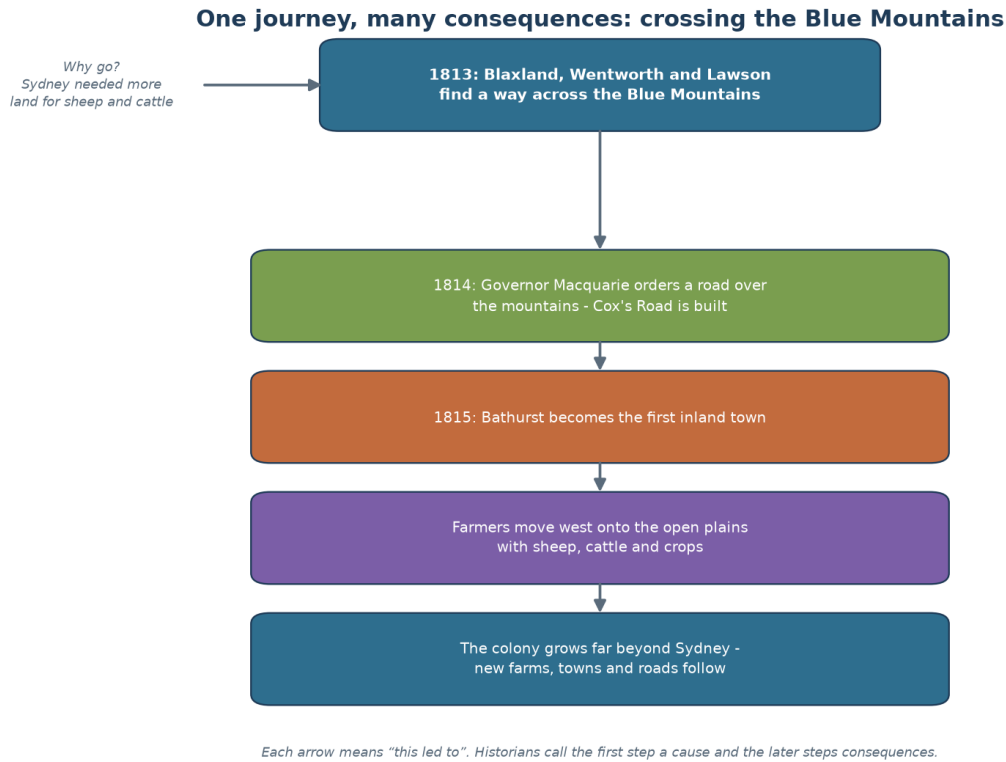
Table of five migrant groups named in the curriculum, with where and when they worked and the work they did: Germans in South Australia from 1838, Chinese at Ballarat and Bendigo from 1851, Japanese in Broome's shell industry, Afghan cameleers carrying goods across the dry inland, and Pacific Islanders who worked the Torres Strait shell industry from the 1870s.

Figure F2 — Five migrant groups, and the work they did.

Each group brought skills that the colony did not have yet. That is one reason migrants matter to a colony's development: they bring new hands and new know-how.

Part D — One journey, many consequences

In 1813, Gregory Blaxland, William Wentworth and William Lawson found a way across the Blue Mountains, west of Sydney. Why go? The colony needed more land for sheep and cattle. Figure F3 shows the consequences that followed the crossing.



Flow chart: the 1813 crossing of the Blue Mountains by Blaxland, Wentworth and Lawson leads to Cox's Road in 1814, to Bathurst as the first inland town in 1815, to farmers moving west with sheep, cattle and crops, and to the colony growing far beyond Sydney.

Figure F3 — One cause, many consequences: crossing the Blue Mountains, 1813.

The crossing is a clean example of **cause and consequence**. The cause is the 1813 journey. Each later box is a consequence. Explorers such as Thomas Mitchell, John Oxley and Charles Sturt mapped more inland country after this, and farmers followed the maps.

Part E — Industries: the wool chain

By the 1840s, wool was the colonies' biggest **export**. Figure F4 lists the main primary industries of the 1800s, and Figure F5 follows wool step by step, from grass to money.

Primary industries of the Australian colonies in the 1800s

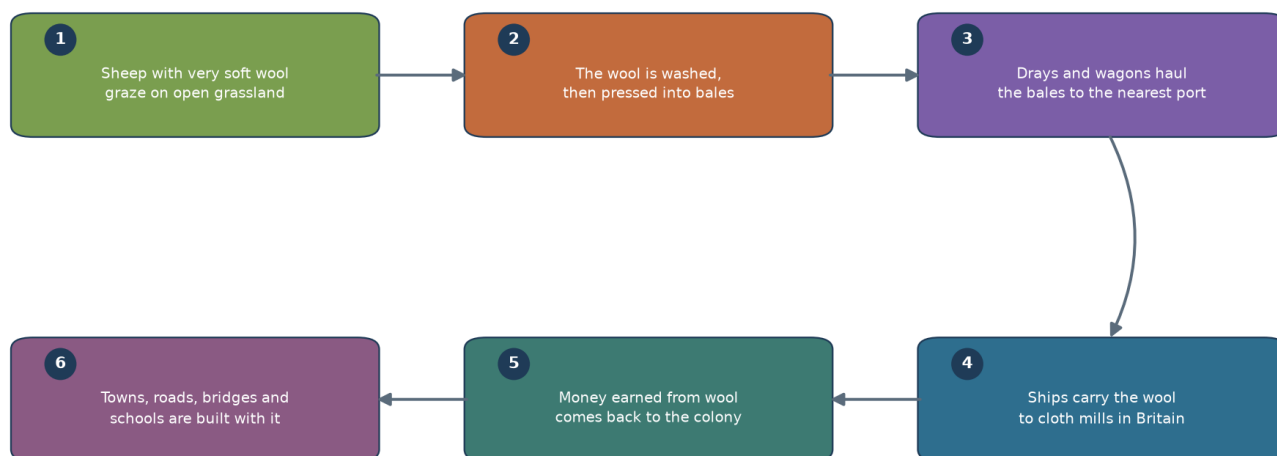
Industry	Product	Where it grew	Why it mattered
Wool	Soft fleece for cloth	New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia	The colonies' biggest export by the 1840s
Gold mining	Gold	Victoria - Ballarat and Bendigo	Brought people, money and new towns from 1851
Wheat	Grain for bread	South Australia, Victoria, New South Wales	Food for the towns; railways carried it to ports
Whaling	Whale oil for lamps	Southern coasts	An early money-maker, before wool and gold
Shell diving	Oyster shells for buttons	Broome; the Torres Strait	Made northern ports busy; divers came from Japan and the Pacific islands
Frozen meat	Beef and mutton	Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria	From about 1880, ships with freezers carried meat to Britain
Sugar cane	Sugar	Queensland	New farms from the 1860s; hard work in hot weather

A primary industry gets raw materials from the land or the sea. Most colonies had several of these industries at once.

Table of seven primary industries of the 1800s: wool, gold mining, wheat, whaling, shell diving, frozen meat and sugar cane, each with its product, where it grew and why it mattered.

Figure F4 — Primary industries of the Australian colonies in the 1800s.

The wool chain: how sheep's fleece became money for the colonies



Elizabeth Macarthur managed large sheep runs and wool work from the early 1800s. By the 1840s wool was the colonies' biggest export.

An export is a product that is made in one place and sold in another country.

Flow chart of the wool chain in six numbered steps: sheep with soft wool graze on grassland; the wool is washed and pressed into bales; drays and wagons haul the bales to a port; ships carry the wool to cloth mills in Britain; money earned from wool comes back to the colony; towns, roads, bridges and schools are built with it.

Figure F5 — The wool chain: how fleece became money for the colonies.

One person stands out in the wool story: **Elizabeth Macarthur**. She managed the family's big sheep runs and wool work from the early 1800s, through the years her husband was away, and helped breed the fine merino flocks the colonies became known for. (Source: Australian Dictionary of Biography, entry on Elizabeth Macarthur. Retrieved 24 August 2026.)

Part F — The women of the colonies

Old records often spent more words on men's work than on women's work, so historians have worked hard to bring the women's stories back. Figure F6 shows five women the curriculum names.

Key women of the early Australian colonies

Woman	Lived	Colony	What she did
Elizabeth Macarthur	1766-1850	New South Wales	Managed big sheep runs and wool work; helped build the wool industry
Mary Bryant	born 1765	New South Wales	Convict who escaped in a small boat and sailed thousands of kilometres to freedom
Mary Reibey	1777-1855	New South Wales	Arrived as a convict; became a wealthy Sydney trader with her own ships
Mary MacKillop	1842-1909	South Australia, Victoria and more	Opened free schools for poor children; co-founded the Sisters of St Joseph
Edith Cowan	1861-1932	Western Australia	Worked for women's rights and children's welfare; in 1921 became the first woman elected to an Australian parliament

"Lived" shows birth and death years; Mary Bryant's death date is not known. Many other women shaped the colonies too - these five are a starting point.

Table of five women of the early colonies: Elizabeth Macarthur, 1766 to 1850, New South Wales, managed sheep runs and wool work; Mary Bryant, born 1765, New South Wales, convict who escaped by boat to freedom; Mary Reibey, 1777 to 1855, New South Wales, arrived as a convict and became a wealthy Sydney trader; Mary MacKillop, 1842 to 1909, South Australia and Victoria, opened free schools for poor children; Edith Cowan, 1861 to 1932, Western Australia, worked for women's rights and children's welfare and in 1921 became the first woman elected to an Australian parliament.

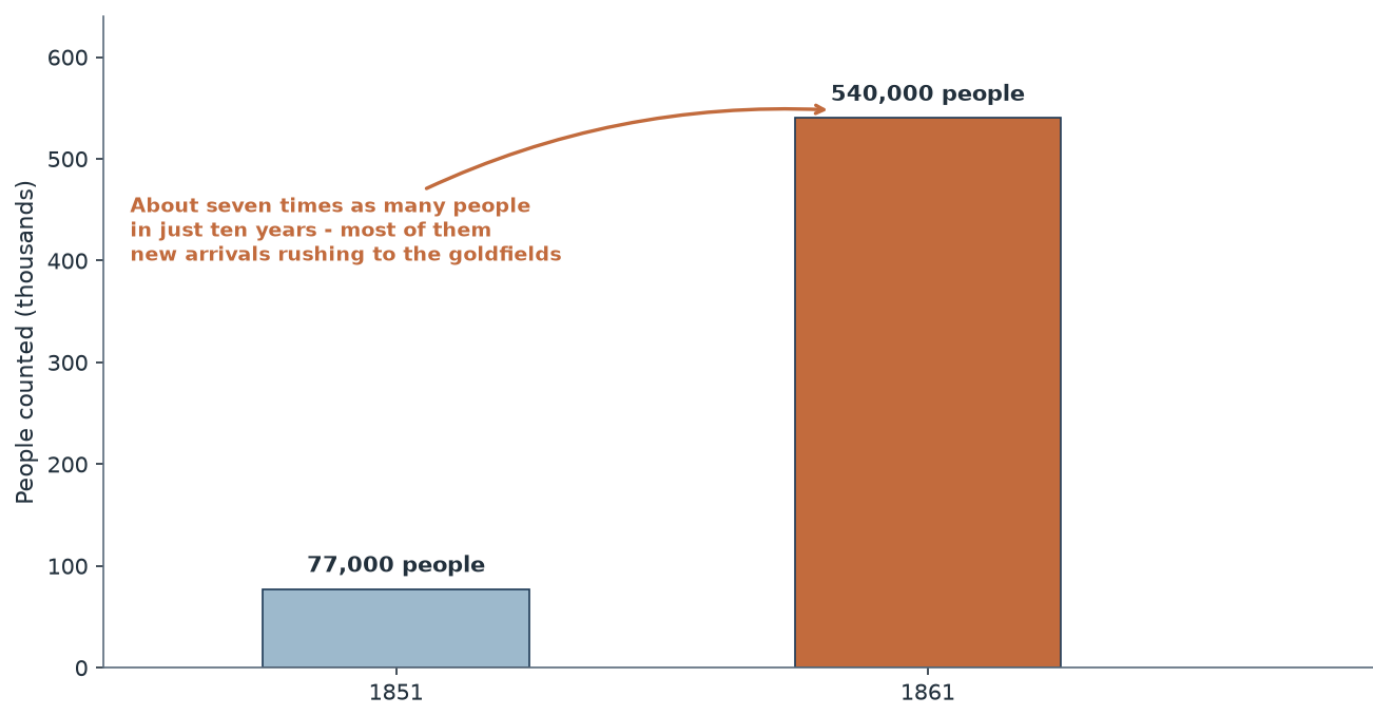
Figure F6 — Key women of the early Australian colonies.

Two of the five began as **convicts** — people sent to the colonies as a punishment. Mary Bryant escaped by sea. Mary Reibey stayed and built a trading business with her own ships. Their stories show that a person's start in the colony did not decide their whole life.

Part G — Gold rush Victoria: reading two charts

Gold was found in Victoria in 1851. Figure F7 shows what happened to the colony's counted people over the next ten years, and Figure F8 zooms in on one group within that rush, the Chinese miners.

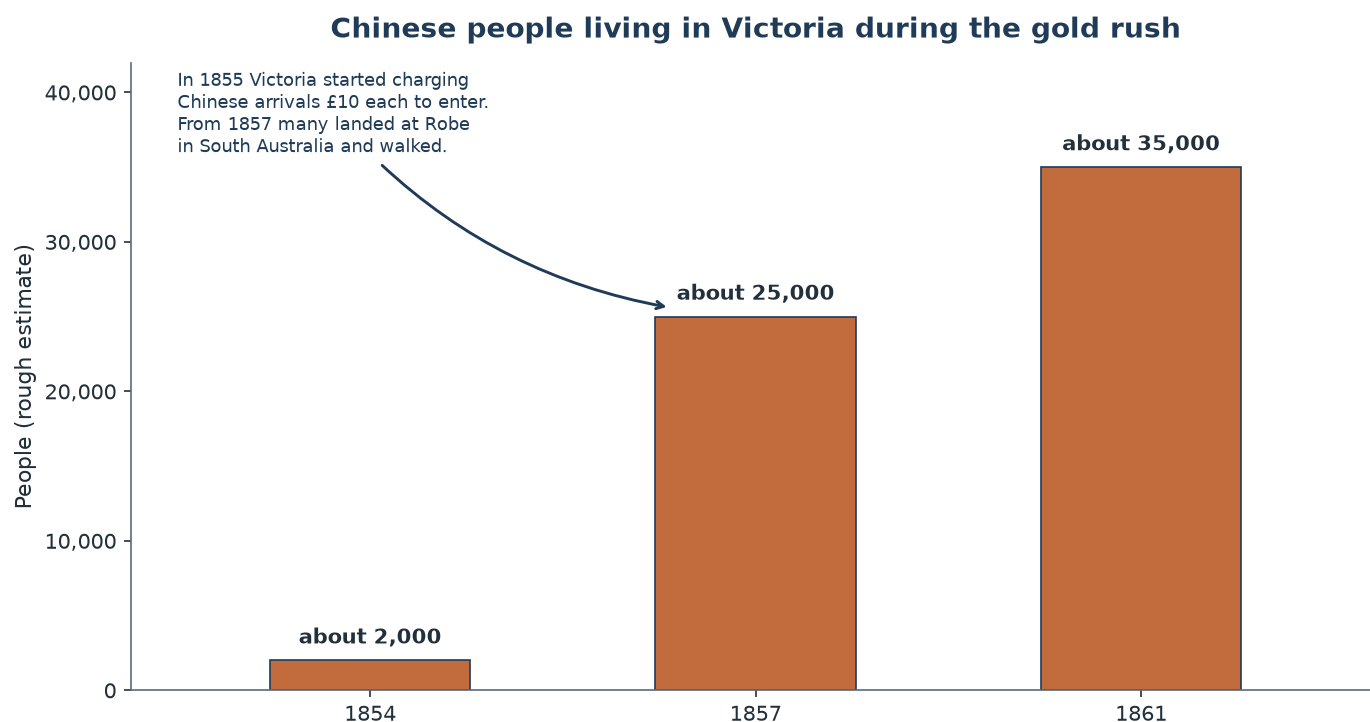
What did gold do to Victoria? Recorded population, 1851 and 1861



Figures: official colonial counts (rounded), Australian Bureau of Statistics, Australian Historical Population Statistics. Retrieved 24 August 2026.
These counts did not include Aboriginal people, who are not covered in this book (see the notice at the front of the book).

Bar chart of Victoria's counted people: 77,000 in 1851 and 540,000 in 1861, about seven times as many in just ten years, most of them new arrivals rushing to the goldfields.

Figure F7 — Victoria's counted people before and after gold.



Rounded estimates from Victorian census and government records, as reported by Museums Victoria and Sovereign Hill, Ballarat. Retrieved 24 August 2026. Most of the people counted were men; counts at the time often missed people living in camps away from the towns.

Bar chart of Chinese people living in Victoria during the gold rush: about 2,000 in 1854, about 25,000 in 1857 and about 35,000 in 1861, with a note that in 1855 Victoria began charging Chinese arrivals ten pounds each to enter, so from 1857 many landed at Robe in South Australia and walked to the goldfields.

Figure F8 — Chinese people living in Victoria during the gold rush.

In 1855, Victoria began charging Chinese arrivals £10 each to enter the colony. So from 1857, many Chinese miners landed at Robe in South Australia and walked hundreds of kilometres to the Victorian goldfields. The long walk is one of the great migrant stories of the colonies. (Sources for Figures F7 and F8: official colonial counts, Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Australian Historical Population Statistics*; and Victorian census records as reported by Museums Victoria and Sovereign Hill, Ballarat. Retrieved 24 August 2026. The counts did not include Aboriginal people, who are not covered in this book — see the notice at the front of the book.)

Part H — Tools for sorting, testing and writing

The rest of this section uses three tools. Figure F9 is a frame for sorting any person or group into economic, social and political roles. Figure F10 gives three “what if?” cards for testing how much a person or event really mattered. Figure F11 shows the shape of a strong paragraph built on facts.

Three kinds of roles: sorting the people of this section

How did each person or group change the colony?

Economic roles About money, work and trade	Social roles About daily life, care and learning	Political roles About laws, votes and power
Wool earned money from Britain	Mary MacKillop opened schools	Eureka miners pushed for a say in government
Chinese diggers found gold	Edith Cowan worked for children's welfare	Women worked for the vote
Cameleers carried goods where carts could not go	Market gardens gave food to the towns	Governor Macquarie built roads, towns and hospitals

One person or group can fit more than one column. Use this frame when you explain a role in your own writing.

Sorting frame with three columns, economic, social and political roles, each with a short meaning and three example cards: wool earned money from Britain; Chinese diggers found gold; cameleers carried goods where carts could not go; Mary MacKillop opened schools; Edith Cowan worked for children's welfare; market gardens gave food to the towns; Eureka miners pushed for a say in government; women worked for the vote; Governor Macquarie built roads, towns and hospitals.

Figure F9 — Three kinds of roles: sorting the people of this section.

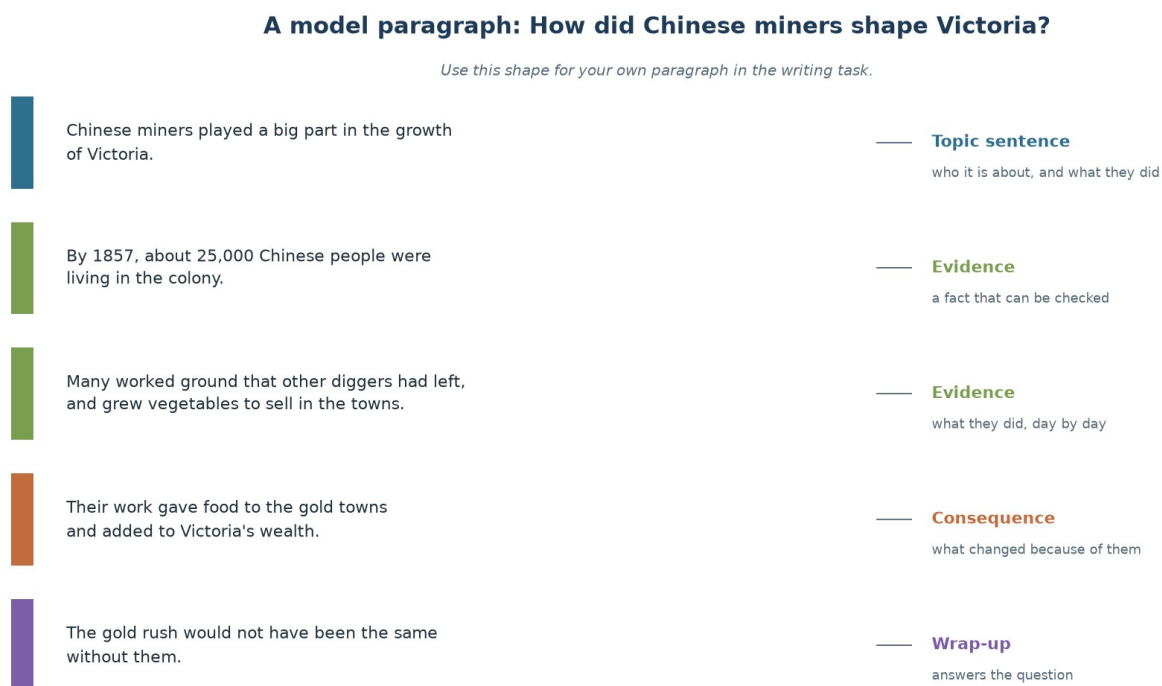
"What if?" - testing what really mattered

What if Chinese miners had not been allowed to land at Robe?	What if Governor Macquarie had stayed in office after 1821?	What if there had been no gold rush in Victoria?
Real past: from 1857, many Chinese miners landed at Robe in South Australia and walked to Victoria's goldfields.	Real past: Macquarie built roads, towns, schools and hospitals, but his enemies in Britain had him recalled.	Real past: gold was found in 1851 and hundreds of thousands of people rushed to Victoria within ten years.
You change that one thing. What might happen instead? Two possible results: 1. ... 2. ...	You change that one thing. What might happen instead? Two possible results: 1. ... 2. ...	You change that one thing. What might happen instead? Two possible results: 1. ... 2. ...

Historians ask "what if?" to test how much a person or event changed things. Always give reasons for your answers.

Three what-if cards, each showing the real past and a dashed space to change that one thing and give two possible results: what if Chinese miners had not been allowed to land at Robe; what if Governor Macquarie had stayed in office after 1821; what if there had been no gold rush in Victoria.

Figure F10 — “What if?” cards for testing what really mattered.



A model paragraph about Chinese miners in Victoria with each sentence labelled: topic sentence, evidence, evidence, consequence, wrap-up, each with a short note on what that part does.

Figure F11 — The shape of a strong paragraph built on facts.

Worked example 1 (we do) — How did Chinese migrants shape Victoria?

Question: Use Figures F7 and F8 to explain the role of Chinese migrants in Victoria’s development.

Step 1 — Read the charts. Figure F7: Victoria’s counted people jumped from 77,000 to 540,000 in ten years. Figure F8: Chinese people in Victoria went from about 2,000 (1854) to about 25,000 (1857) and about 35,000 (1861). By 1861, roughly one person in fifteen in Victoria was Chinese.

Step 2 — Sort the roles (Figure F9). Economic: they mined gold on ground other diggers had left, and grew vegetables to sell in the towns. Social: their market gardens gave food to the gold towns. Political: the £10 charge and the Robe walk show how the law shaped their story — and how they kept coming anyway.

Step 3 — Draft the paragraph using the F11 shape. “Chinese miners played a big part in the growth of Victoria. By 1857, about 25,000 Chinese people were living in the colony. Many worked ground that other diggers had left, and grew vegetables to sell in the towns. Their work gave food to the gold towns and added to Victoria’s wealth. The gold rush would not have been the same without them.”

Step 4 — Check. Two checkable facts (the 25,000; the market gardens)? Yes. One consequence sentence? Yes (“gave food to the gold towns and added to Victoria’s wealth”). A wrap-up that answers the question? Yes.

(Sources: the same sources as Figure F7 and Figure F8. Retrieved 24 August 2026.)

Worked example 2 (we do) — How did wool and Elizabeth Macarthur help the colony grow?

Question: Use Figures F4 and F5 to explain why wool, and one person linked to wool, mattered to a colony.

Step 1 — Follow the chain. Figure F5 shows wool moving from grass to bales to ships, and money moving back to the colony. Step 6 is the payoff: towns, roads, bridges and schools built with wool money.

Step 2 — Find the person. Elizabeth Macarthur managed big sheep runs and the wool work from the early 1800s. Fine merino wool from flocks like hers is what British cloth mills wanted to buy.

Step 3 — Name the roles. Economic: wool was the colonies' biggest export by the 1840s (Figure F4). Social: wool money paid for schools and hospitals. The wool chain also pulled farmers west after 1813 (Figure F3), which is a social and economic change at once.

Step 4 — Say it in one breath. Wool turned grass into money, and Elizabeth Macarthur's work helped make that wool good enough for Britain to buy — so one industry, and one manager of it, helped build the colonies' towns and roads.

(Source: Australian Dictionary of Biography, entry on Elizabeth Macarthur; colonial trade figures as reported by the National Museum of Australia. Retrieved 24 August 2026.)

Practice tasks (guided)

Q1. Use Figure F1. (a) Which group arrived in 1860? (b) Which woman opened her first school in 1866? (c) How many years are there between the finding of gold (1851) and Edith Cowan's election (1921)?

Q2. Without looking, write your own meaning for **migrant** and **consequence**. Then check the word watch and fix anything you missed.

Q3. Use Figure F2. (a) Which group worked in the shell industry in the Torres Strait? (b) What did the cameleers carry, and where? (c) Name one thing the Germans built in South Australia.

Q4. Use Figure F3. (a) What was the cause in 1813? (b) Name two consequences of the crossing. (c) Why did Sydney want more land?

Q5. Use Figure F5. (a) What happens at step 2? (b) What does **export** mean? (c) Which step shows money coming back to the colony?

Q6. Use Figure F4. (a) Which industry gave oil for lamps? (b) Name two colonies where wheat grew. (c) Which industry began in Victoria from 1851?

Q7. Use Figure F6. (a) Who became the first woman elected to an Australian parliament? (b) Which woman escaped in a small boat? (c) Who opened free schools for poor children?

Q8. Use the sorting frame in Figure F9. Sort these two new cards, and give a reason for each choice: "Chinese diggers grew vegetables that gave food to the gold towns" and "In 1899, women in Western Australia won the vote".

Practice tasks (independent)

Q9. Figures F7 and F8 are both about the gold rush. What does each chart add to the story that the other one does not show? Write two sentences.

Q10. Choose one card from Figure F10. Change that one thing, and give two possible consequences. For each consequence, add a reason why it is likely.

Q11. Choose one person or group from this section that the worked examples did **not** use. Explain their role in the colony in three or four sentences, using at least one of the three role kinds in Figure F9.

Q12. Look again at Figure F1. Name one **change** between 1797 and 1921, and one **continuity** — something that stayed the same the whole way through.

Writing task (evidence-based)

Choose one person or group from this section. Write one paragraph of five to seven sentences that answers this question: *How did this person or group help develop the colony?*

Rules: begin with a topic sentence; give at least two checkable facts from a figure or table in this section; include at least one consequence sentence; end with a wrap-up sentence that answers the question. Use the paragraph shape in

Figure F11 and the role kinds in Figure F9. If you finish early, test your claim with a what-if from Figure F10: would the colony's story really be different without your person or group? Say why.

Answers

A1. (a) Camels and cameleers (the Afghan cameleers). (b) Mary MacKillop. (c) 70 years.

A2. Sample: a migrant is a person who moves to a new country to make a life; a consequence is what happens because of a cause.

A3. (a) Pacific Islanders. (b) Food and goods, across the dry inland where carts could not go. (c) Any one of farms, churches, towns.

A4. (a) The 1813 crossing of the Blue Mountains (with Sydney's need for more farm land as the reason behind it). (b) Any two of: Cox's Road built in 1814; Bathurst started in 1815; farmers moved west with sheep, cattle and crops; the colony grew far beyond Sydney. (c) For sheep and cattle — the colony needed more farm land.

A5. (a) The wool is washed, then pressed into bales. (b) A product made in one place and sold to another country. (c) Step 5.

A6. (a) Whaling. (b) Any two of South Australia, Victoria, New South Wales. (c) Gold mining.

A7. (a) Edith Cowan. (b) Mary Bryant. (c) Mary MacKillop.

A8. "Vegetables that gave food to the gold towns" fits social (daily life, feeding people) and also economic (selling produce) — either column is right if your reason names food or selling. "Women won the vote" is political: it is about laws, votes and power.

A9. Sample: Figure F7 shows the size of the rush — the whole colony growing seven times in ten years. Figure F8 shows one group inside that rush, and how the 1855 £10 charge changed the way Chinese miners arrived.

A10–A12. See the full solutions below.

Full solutions

Solution to Q10 (model using the Macquarie card). Real past: Governor Macquarie built roads, towns, schools and hospitals, but his enemies in Britain had him recalled in 1821. I change that one thing: Macquarie stays. Consequence 1: more roads and towns get built in the 1820s, because the governor who pushed for them is still in charge — likely, since those works were his own projects. Consequence 2: ex-convicts keep a bigger place in public life, because Macquarie backed them — likely, since that backing was one reason his enemies recalled him. A what-if test only works when each consequence carries a reason like these.

Solution to Q11 (model using the Afghan cameleers). The Afghan cameleers arrived from 1860 with camels that could carry heavy loads across dry country where carts bogged and horses tired. Their main role was economic: they moved food, wool and goods to and from the far inland, so inland towns could grow. Without them, supply to the dry inland would have been slower and dearer. So a small group with a rare skill helped the colony's inland develop.

Solution to Q12 (model). One change: in 1797 no woman could vote or sit in a parliament, but by 1921 women in Western Australia had the vote (1899) and Edith Cowan had taken a seat in parliament. One continuity: right across the period, most of the colonies' wealth still came from primary industries — from the land and the sea — with wool first and gold later.

Sample writing paragraph (model using the Germans in South Australia, F11 shape). [Topic sentence] German migrants helped build South Australia's farming life. [Evidence] German families began settling in South Australia from 1838. [Evidence] They cleared farms and built churches and towns in places like the Barossa valley. [Consequence] Their farms gave food to the growing colony and its towns, and their villages gave South Australia a new look and sound. [Wrap-up] South Australia's development owes a real debt to its German settlers.

Different interpretations of a colonial development: Eureka, the gold rushes, Ned Kelly

Chapter 1 · Australia 1800–1900: the British colonies · Section 1F

The same event can be told in more than one way. In 1854, diggers at the Ballarat goldfield fought against the government. Was this a brave stand for fairness, or a small riot that got out of hand? In 1880, Ned Kelly died for his crimes. Was he a criminal, a hero, or both at once? People have argued about these questions for more than 150 years — and they still do.

This section is about **interpretations**: the different answers people give to questions about the past. You will look at three famous events — the Eureka Stockade, the Victorian gold rushes and the story of Ned Kelly — and learn how to compare what different people say about them, and to explain *why* they disagree.

Curriculum link. This section delivers content description VC2HH6K06 (differing readings of a significant colonial event).

It draws on three elaborations of that content description:

- VC2HH6K06.E02 (Eureka interpretations compared)
- VC2HH6K06.E03 (gold-rush interpretations compared)
- VC2HH6K06.E04 (the Ned Kelly debate)

Elaboration VC2HH6K06.E01 is not taught in this book. See the notice at the front of the book.

Teacher note — suggested teaching sequence

1. **What is an interpretation?** Use the fact/opinion sort (Figure 1) and the four reasons people disagree about the past (Figure 2). Keep the terms *source*, *evidence*, *perspective* and *interpretation* on the wall.
2. **Worked examples.** Model the reasoning twice: two views of Eureka (Worked example 1), then two views of the gold rushes (Worked example 2), always pointing back to the evidence named on the page.
3. **The three debates.** Teach in order: Eureka, the gold rushes, Ned Kelly. Each debate gives both sides in their strongest form; students must meet each side's best evidence before they are asked to judge.
4. **Practice.** Questions with support (Q1–Q8), then questions on your own (Q9–Q12).
5. **Debate task.** The evidence-based debate closes the section and is marked on the quality of the reasoning, not on which side a student takes (see marking guide).

The marking guide awards reasoning steps: terms defined, evidence named, both sides heard, limits admitted. Two students who reach opposite conclusions can both do well.

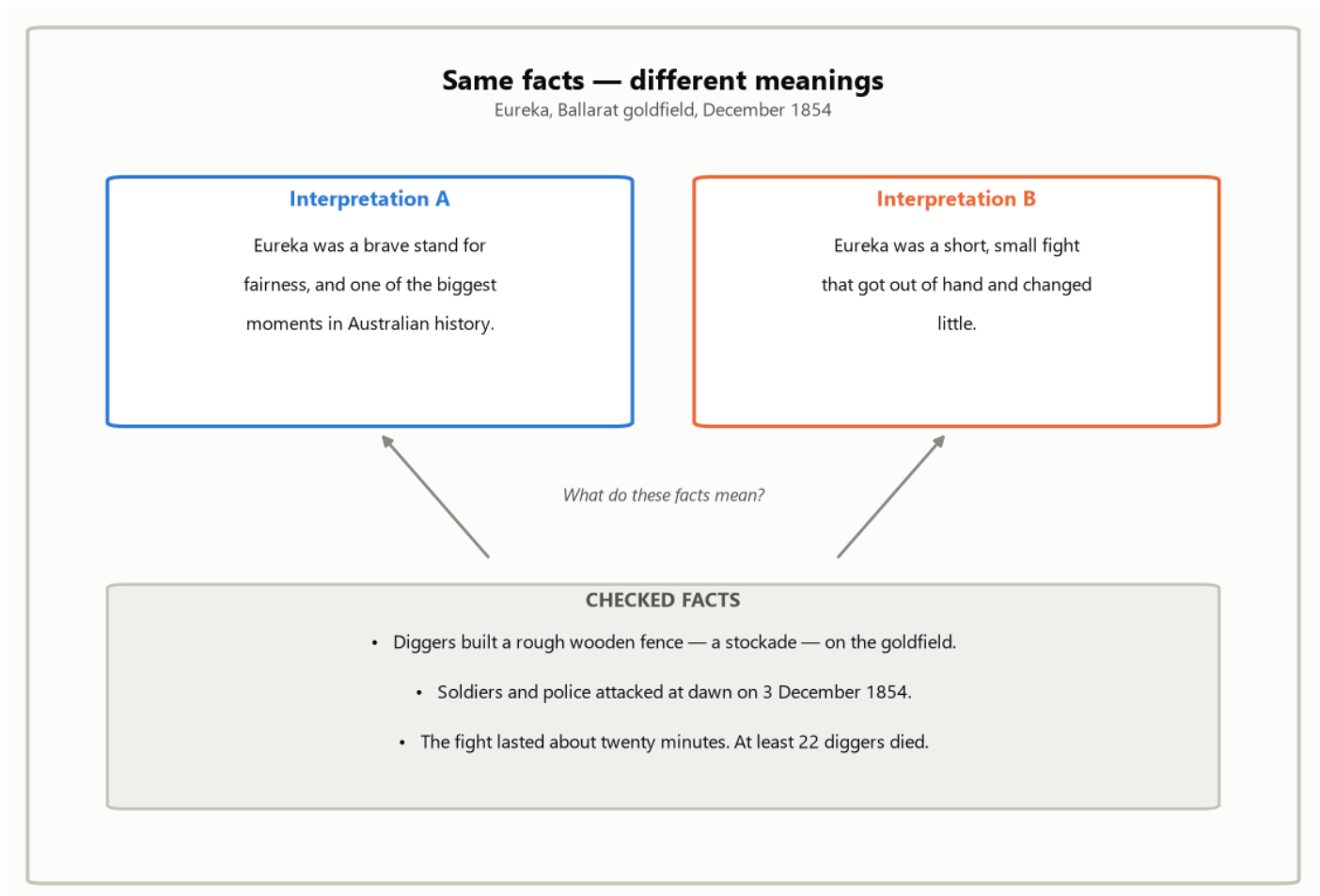
1. What is a historical interpretation?

Before we can compare views of the past, we need four words. Each is defined here the way historians use it.

- A **source** is anything left over from the past that we can study: a letter, a diary, a photograph, a flag, a suit of armour, a building, a newspaper article.
- **Evidence** is the information inside a source that helps answer a question. A source becomes evidence when we use it to support or test an idea about the past.
- A **perspective** is the point of view of a person *at the time* — what they saw, believed and felt while events were happening.
- An **interpretation** is an attempt to explain what the past *means*, made *after* the events — by a historian, a film-maker, a painter, a museum, or a politician making a speech.
- A **primary source** is a source made at the time — a letter, a diary, a sketch, a flag, a suit of armour. A **secondary source** is made later, using primary sources — most history books and films are secondary sources.

- **Contested** means argued about. When sources disagree, or when historians reach different conclusions, we say the point is contested.

Fact or interpretation? A **fact** is something we can check against the record of the past: *Ned Kelly was hanged at Melbourne Gaol on 11 November 1880*. An **interpretation** is a claim about what the facts *mean*: *Ned Kelly died a hero*. The first can be checked. The second must be argued with evidence — and other people may argue back.



A labelled model separating checked facts about Eureka from two different interpretations of what Eureka means

Figure 1. Facts sit at the bottom. Different people build different meanings on top of the same facts. Both interpretations shown here use the same checked facts — they just weigh them in different ways.

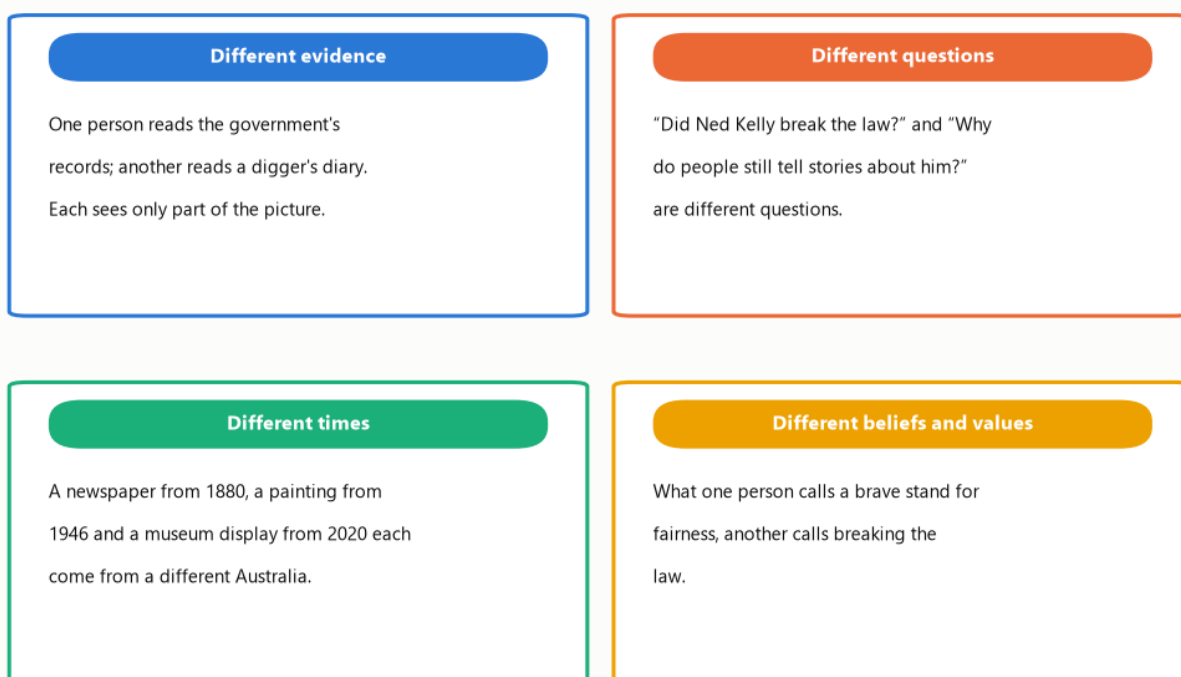
Why do interpretations differ?

People looking at the same past often reach different conclusions. There are four common reasons, and they will come up in every debate in this section.

1. **Different evidence.** One person reads the government’s records; another reads a digger’s diary. Each sees only part of the picture.
2. **Different questions.** Asking “Was Ned Kelly a murderer?” and asking “Why do people still tell stories about Ned Kelly?” are different questions, and they get different answers.
3. **Different times.** A newspaper written in 1880, a painting made in 1946 and a museum display built in 2020 each come from a different Australia. Each asks different things of the past.
4. **Different beliefs and values.** What one person calls a brave stand for fairness, another person calls breaking the law. Their values shape what they notice and what they praise.

Why do interpretations differ?

Four things to look for in every debate



A concept map showing the four reasons interpretations differ: different evidence, different questions, different times, different beliefs and values

Figure 2. The four reasons interpretations differ. As you read each debate below, see if you can spot which reasons are at work.

2. Worked examples

Worked example 1 — with support

Question. Two people describe the Eureka Stockade. Person A says it was one of the most important moments in Australian history. Person B says it was a short, small fight that made little difference. How can we compare these two views?

Here is the source material we will use. Raffaello Carboni was a digger at Ballarat in 1854. A year later he published a book, *The Eureka Stockade* (Melbourne, 1855). It is the only full account of the event written by someone who was there. Carboni wrote that the diggers' flag, the Southern Cross, stood as a place of safety and hope for the badly treated of every country, of every religion and colour.

Step	What we do	Why it matters
1. Sort fact from meaning	Fact: the fight happened on 3 December 1854 and lasted about 20 minutes. "Most important moment" is not a fact — it is a judgement.	Interpretations are built on facts but are not facts themselves.
2. Find each person's evidence	Person A points to the diggers' demands and to the voting changes that followed. Person B points to the short fight and to the fact that some changes were already being talked	A view is only as strong as the evidence behind it.

Step	What we do	Why it matters
	about.	
3. Ask who is speaking, and when	Carboni wrote in 1855, one year after the event, as a man who had been there and who cared a great deal about the diggers' cause.	A witness close to an event sees much — but also takes a side.
4. Ask what each view leaves out	Person A says little about the diggers who used guns that day. Person B says little about how the diggers' meeting and flag inspired people later.	Every interpretation is a choice about what to look at.
5. Say why they differ	The two people ask different questions and give different weight to the same facts.	This is the skill: explaining the difference, not just finding it.

Modelled answer. Both views use real facts, but they answer different questions. Person A asks what Eureka *came to mean*; Person B asks what it *changed at once*. Carboni's own book helps Person A — he wanted readers to see the diggers as lovers of fairness. Person B can answer that the book was written by a supporter, one year after the fight, and is therefore one side's view, not the whole story. Both answers are reasonable — the difference is in the question each person asked and the weight each gives to one eager witness.

Worked example 2 — with support

Question. “The gold rushes were the best thing that ever happened to Victoria.” “Victoria would have been better off without them.” How do we weigh these two claims?

Step	What we do	Why it matters
1. Look for numbers	Victoria's counted population grew from 77,345 in 1851 to 538,628 in 1861 (Figure 6). In the best year, 1856, diggers won 3,053,744 ounces of gold (Figure 7).	Numbers are facts we can check.
2. Look for lived experience	Eugene von Guérard, an artist, drew life on the diggings in the 1850s. His sketchbooks, held at the State Library of New South Wales, show tents, holes and hard daily work — not riches.	Art from the time is a primary source too.
3. Ask: good for whom?	Gold built railways and grand buildings in Melbourne. But the same gold brought gold-fee hunts, unfair laws against Chinese diggers, and armed anger at Eureka.	“Good for Victoria” can hide “bad for some Victorians”.
4. Weigh both sides	For: population, wealth, cities, voting change. Against: unfair rules, broken ground, lives lost at Eureka.	A good answer keeps both columns open.

Modelled answer. The gold rushes changed Victoria hugely — in ten years the colony's counted people grew more than six times. That supports the first claim. But “the best thing that ever happened” is a value judgement, and the evidence is mixed: the wealth was real, yet so were the unfair gold-fee hunts, the racist laws aimed at Chinese diggers and the deaths at Eureka. A careful historian would say: the gold rushes made Victoria rich *and* brought serious harms, and which side a person stresses tells us about their values.

3. Debate 1 — Eureka: birthplace of freedom, or a small riot?

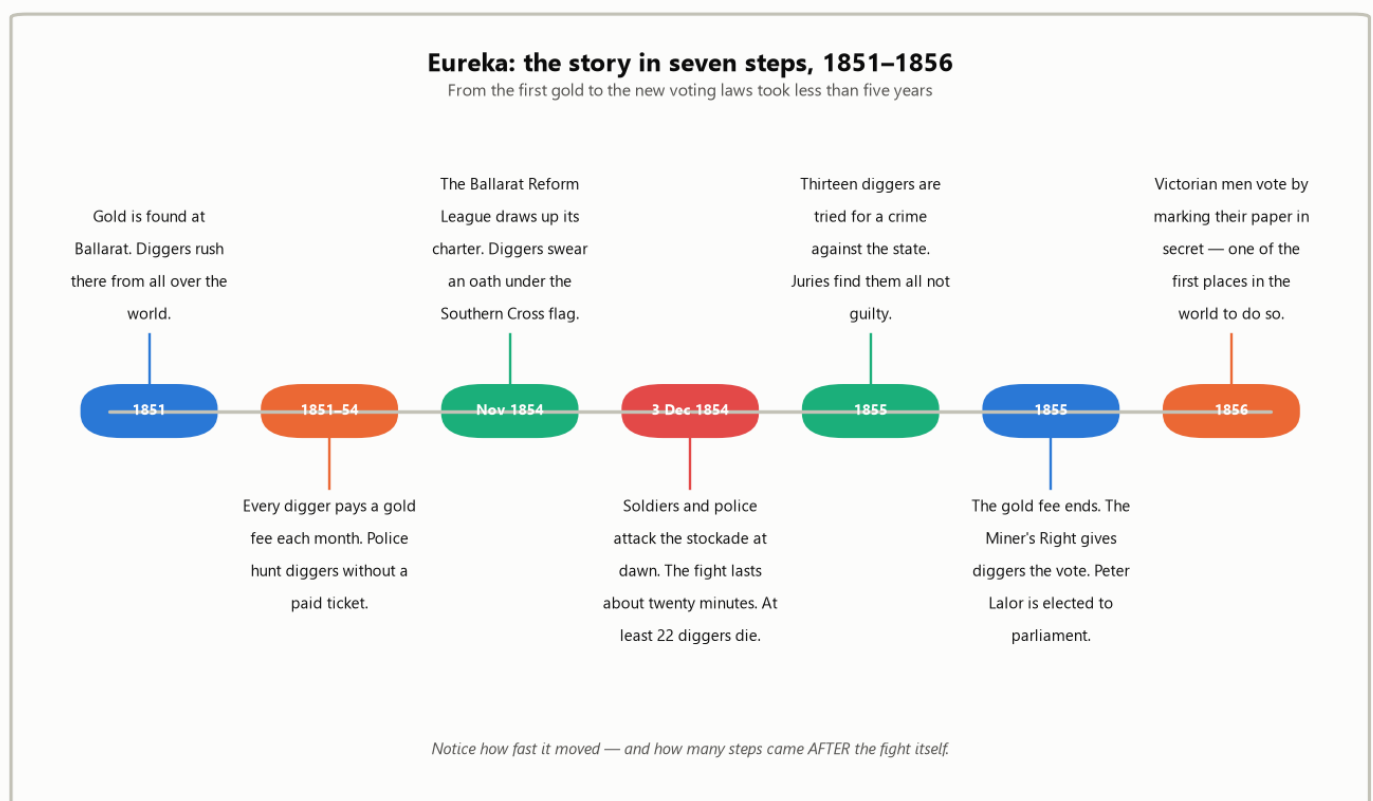
What happened

In August 1851 gold was found at Ballarat, in the colony of Victoria. Tens of thousands of people rushed there to dig. The government made every digger pay a gold fee every month — whether or not they found any gold — and the police, under officials called **commissioners**, held hunts to catch diggers without a paid ticket. Diggers were angry. They could not vote and had no say in the laws that taxed them.

In November 1854 the diggers formed the **Ballarat Reform League** and wrote a list of demands — a **charter**. They swore an oath — a serious promise — under a new flag of white stars on a blue cross, the Southern Cross. The diggers' leader, **Peter Lalor**, was an Irish-born miner. On 3 December 1854, at dawn, soldiers and police attacked the diggers' stockade — a rough wooden fence the diggers had built on the goldfield. The fight lasted about twenty minutes. At least 22 diggers were killed, perhaps more, and several soldiers died too. Historians still argue about the exact count — even the number of dead is contested.

Lalor was shot in the arm, and the arm had to be removed. He escaped and hid, and in 1855 the people of Ballarat voted him into parliament. He later became Speaker of the Victorian parliament's lower house, and he died in 1889. Thirteen diggers were charged with **treason** — the crime of turning against your own government — and tried in Melbourne; juries found them all not guilty. The judge at those trials was **Redmond Barry**. (Remember that name. It comes back in Debate 3.)

After Eureka, the government gave in to most of the diggers' demands. The hated monthly fee was ended in 1855 and replaced by the **Miner's Right**, a cheap ticket paid once a year that also gave its holder the right to vote. In 1856 Victoria let men vote by marking their paper in secret — one of the first places in the world to do so.

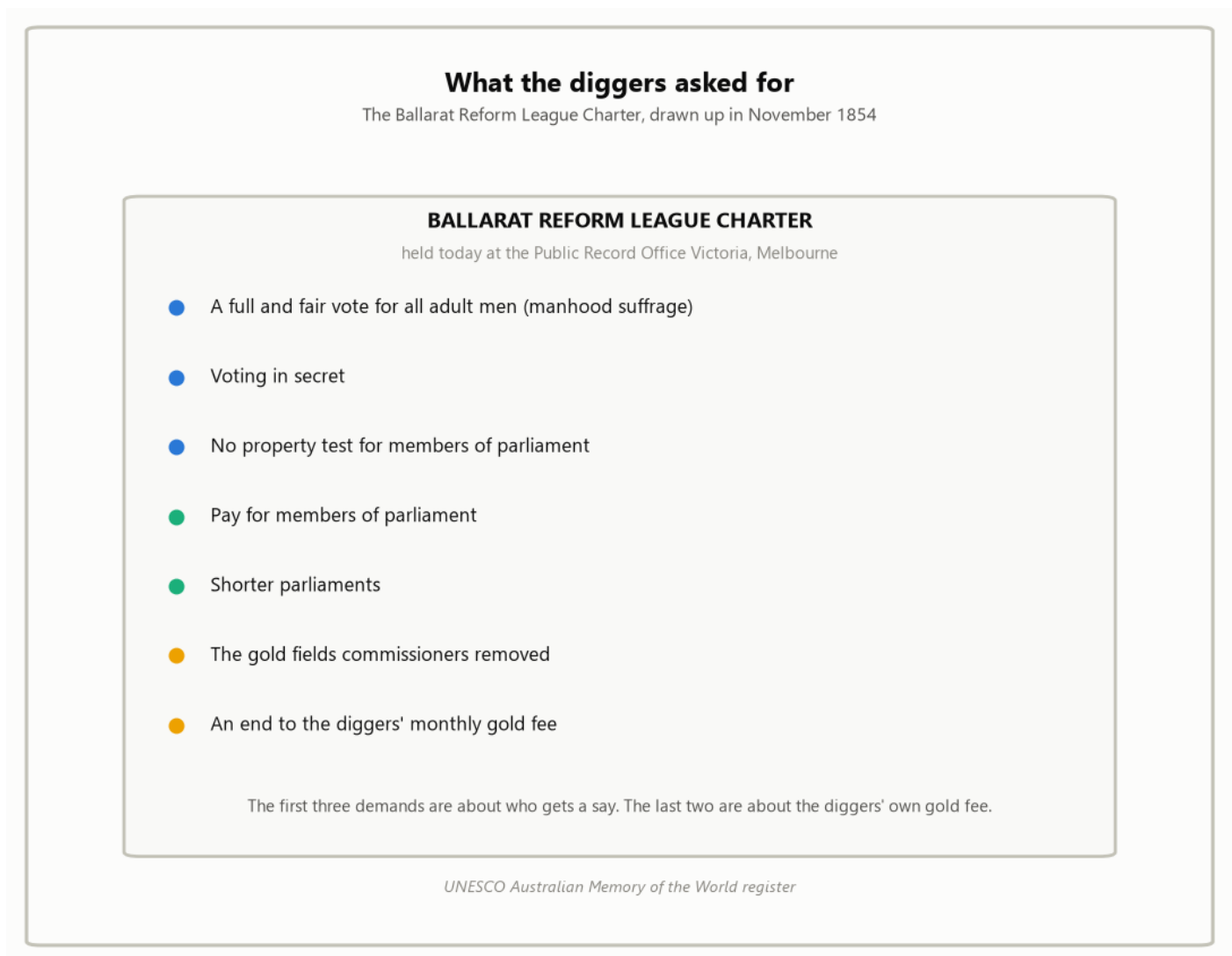


A timeline of Eureka from 1851 to 1856 showing the finding of gold, the Reform League charter, the oath, the attack, the trials and the new voting laws

Figure 3. The Eureka story, 1851–1856. Notice how fast it moved: from the first demand to the new voting laws took less than two years.

The source: the Ballarat Reform League Charter

The charter is a real document, drawn up in November 1854. It is held today at the Public Record Office Victoria in Melbourne, and it is listed on UNESCO's Australian Memory of the World register. Its demands, in plain words:



The demands of the Ballarat Reform League charter of 1854 shown as a labelled list, with the original document held at the Public Record Office Victoria

Figure 4. What the diggers asked for, from the Ballarat Reform League Charter, 1854 (held at the Public Record Office Victoria; image and wording put in short form from the original). The first three demands are about **democracy** — in this book we use that word to mean a system of government in which the people have a say, usually by voting for the people who make the laws. The word **suffrage** means the right to vote; **manhood suffrage** means every adult man can vote. Both words come from the Victorian Curriculum's own term list, so learn them here, where you first need them.

Two interpretations

Interpretation A — Eureka was a great stand for freedom. The diggers were not criminals; they were people taxed without any voice in the law. They met, they signed a charter, they swore an oath, and they stood up to armed force. Their demands — votes for all men, secret voting, fair parliaments — became the law within two years. That is why many people call Eureka the birthplace of Australian democracy. The Southern Cross flag is still carried at meetings and marches today as a sign of standing up for what is right.

Interpretation B — Eureka was a small riot that changed little. The fight lasted twenty minutes. Most diggers at Ballarat never joined the stockade. Some of the voting changes were already being talked about before December 1854, and the gold fee was ending in most places because it was a bad system, not because of one fight. On this view, Eureka is a good story that later Australians made bigger than it was.

Two views of Eureka

Same facts — two ways of weighing them

A — a great stand for freedom	B — a small riot that changed little
• The diggers were taxed without any voice in the law. • They met, signed a charter and swore an oath together. • Their demands — votes for all men, secret voting — became law within two years. • The Southern Cross flag is still carried at meetings and marches as a sign of standing up for what is right.	• The fight lasted only twenty minutes. • Most diggers at Ballarat never joined the stockade. • Some voting changes were already being talked about before December 1854. • The gold fee was ending because it was a bad system — not because of one fight.

Both views use real facts. The difference is what each one puts in the middle of the picture.

A asks what Eureka inspired. B asks what it changed on its own.

Two interpretations of the Eureka Stockade shown side by side with the evidence each one uses

Figure 5. Both views use real evidence. The difference is what each one puts in the middle of the picture.

Why do the interpretations differ?

- **Different questions.** Interpretation A asks, “What did Eureka inspire?” Interpretation B asks, “What did Eureka change on its own?”
- **Different evidence.** A leans on the charter, the oath and the laws of 1855–1856. B leans on the short fight, the small share of diggers involved, and the plans already on the table.
- **Different times and values.** Writers in the 1850s, like Carboni, wanted freedom to win. Later historians, with the distance of a hundred years, ask harder questions about how much one fight really achieved.

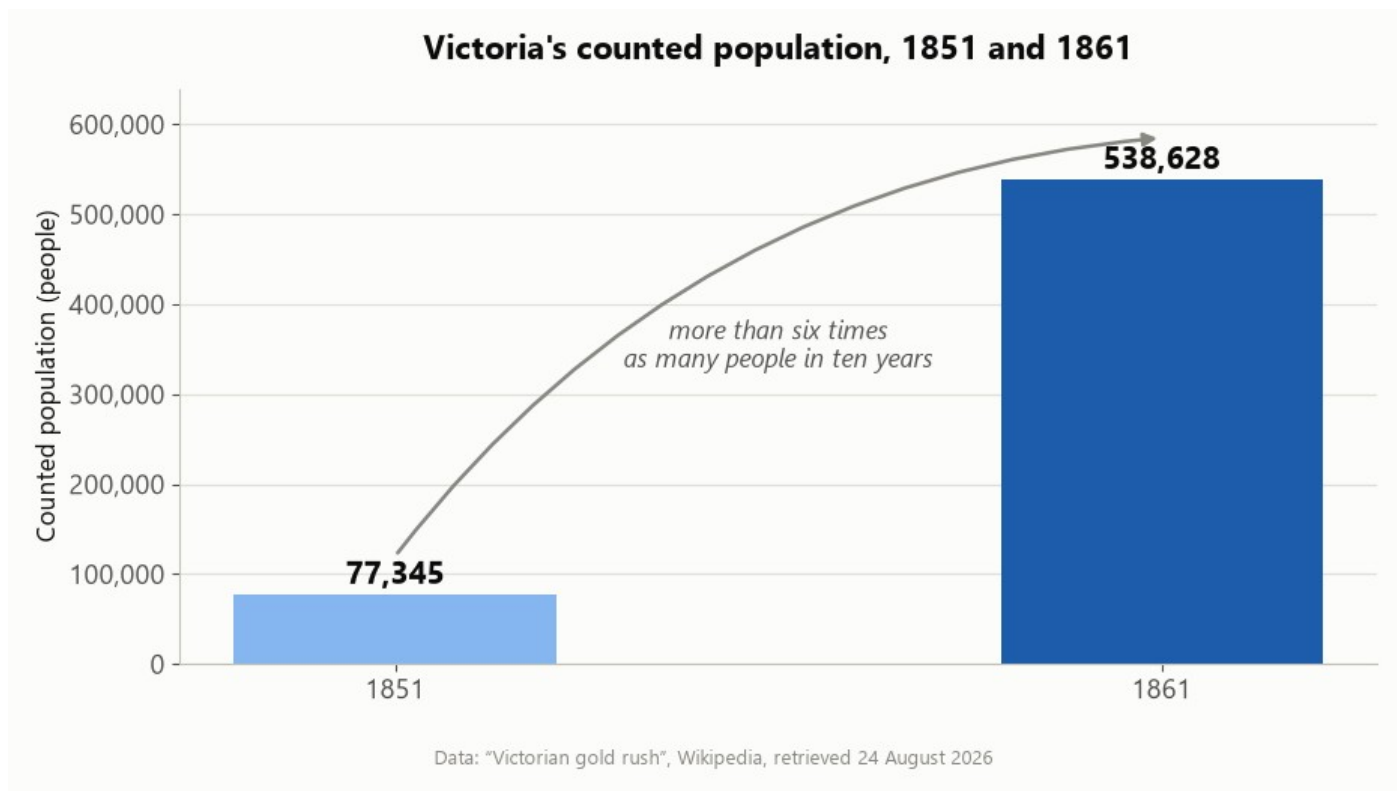
Both sides have a case. A strong answer says so — and then says which evidence *you* find more telling, and why.

4. Debate 2 — the gold rushes: a lucky break, or a hard life?

What happened

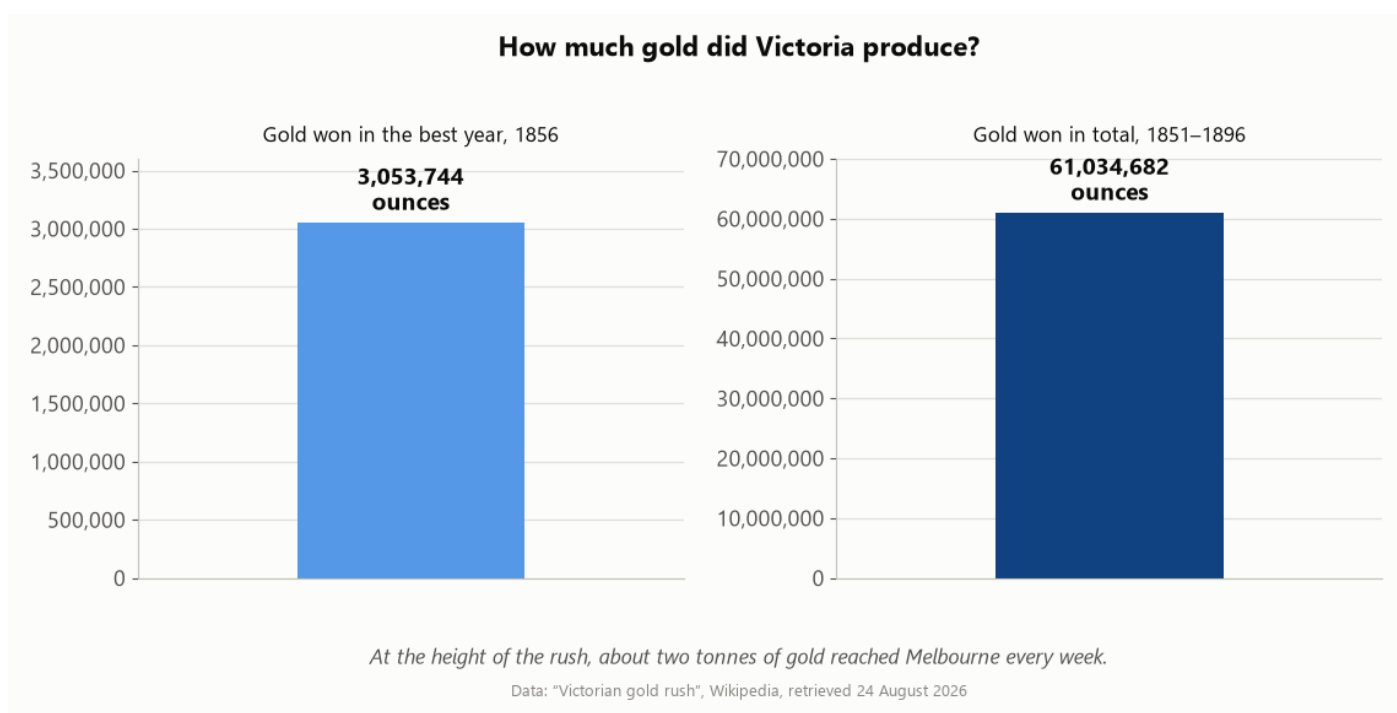
Victoria’s gold rushes began in 1851. In July 1851 James Esmond brought the first gold worth digging for from Clunes. In August gold was found at Ballarat, and soon after at Castlemaine and Bendigo. News spread around the world. Ships’ crews walked off their ships in Melbourne harbour to go digging.

The change was enormous. In 1851 the colony’s counted population was 77,345. By 1861 it was 538,628. In the best year, 1856, Victorian diggers won 3,053,744 ounces of gold. Between 1851 and 1896 the colony’s mines produced more than 61 million ounces. At the height of the rush, two tonnes of gold a week reached Melbourne.



A bar chart comparing the counted population of Victoria in 1851 and 1861, showing growth from 77,345 to 538,628 during the gold rushes

Figure 6. Victoria's counted population, 1851 and 1861. In ten years it grew more than six times. (Data: "Victorian gold rush", Wikipedia, retrieved 24 August 2026.)



A chart showing Victoria's gold output in the best year, 1856, and the colony's total output from 1851 to 1896

Figure 7. How much gold Victoria produced. The best single year was 1856; the total for 1851–1896 filled more than 1,898,000 kilograms. (Data: "Victorian gold rush", Wikipedia, retrieved 24 August 2026.)

Not everyone came from Britain. By the end of 1855 more than 19,000 Chinese diggers had come to Victoria; by 1858 there were about 33,000 — about one in five of all diggers. Many faced unfair treatment. In 1855 the Victorian parliament passed a law aimed only at Chinese arrivals: a tax of ten pounds on each one, and a limit on how many

could sail on each ship. The gold rushes were also a story of people moving to Victoria from Asia — and of how badly some new arrivals were treated.

The artist Eugene von Guérard lived on the diggings in the 1850s. His sketchbooks, held at the State Library of New South Wales, show the diggers' daily life: tents, mud, holes, and men washing dirt in wooden cradles, hoping for a few specks of gold. In 1855 the English visitor William Howitt published a book about the colonies' gold fields, *Land, Labour, and Gold*. He described a colony changed completely by gold — everyone on the move, everything changing fast.

Two interpretations

Interpretation A — the gold rushes were Victoria's lucky break. Gold made a poor colony rich and famous. The population grew six times over. Gold money built railways, hospitals and the grand buildings of Melbourne. The rushes pulled in people from all over the world, and the colony's new parliament became one of the first in the world where all adult men could vote. On this view, the gold rushes made modern Victoria.

Interpretation B — the gold rushes were a hard and unfair time. Most diggers never got rich. Life on the diggings was rough, dirty and dangerous, as von Guérard's sketches show. The government taxed the diggers and hunted them for their tickets. Chinese diggers were treated with suspicion and hit with laws aimed only at them. And the anger over the gold fee ended in armed men dying at Eureka. On this view, the gold rushes made some people rich and made many others pay.

Two views of the gold rushes

Same gold — two stories

A — Victoria's lucky break

- Victoria's counted population grew more than six times in ten years.
- Gold money built railways, hospitals and the grand buildings of Melbourne.
- The colony became rich and famous around the world.
- The new parliament was one of the first in the world where all adult men could vote.

B — a hard and unfair time

- Most diggers never got rich — life on the diggings was rough, dirty and hard.
- The government taxed the diggers and hunted them for their tickets.
- Chinese diggers were treated unfairly and hit with laws aimed only at them.
- Anger over the gold fee ended in armed men dying at Eureka.

One view stresses the wealth; the other stresses the cost. Both are backed by real evidence.

"Good for Victoria" can hide "bad for some Victorians".

Two interpretations of the Victorian gold rushes shown side by side with the evidence each one uses

Figure 8. Same gold, two stories. One stresses the wealth; the other stresses the cost.

Why do the interpretations differ?

- **Different questions.** “Did Victoria grow rich?” and “Was life fair for a digger?” are different questions with different answers.

- **Different evidence.** A uses population counts and gold totals. B uses sketches of diggers' camps, the unfair 1855 law, and the deaths at Eureka.
- **Different values.** A values growth and wealth. B values fairness. Both values are real, and they pull the story in different directions.

A good historian does not choose one column and forget the other. The gold rushes were both at once — and saying *how* they were both is the real answer.

5. Debate 3 — Ned Kelly: “just an outlaw like any other”?

Key words first

A **bushranger** was an armed robber who lived in the bush and hid from the police. Several bushranger gangs worked in the Australian colonies in the 1800s.

Outlaw needs care, because it is a legal word with a strict meaning. In 1878 the Victorian parliament passed a special law that declared Ned Kelly and his gang outlaws. In this section, *outlaw* is used in that law's sense: a person put outside the law's protection, who could be seized — or shot — without the usual arrest and trial first. Other meanings of the word exist, and they are not the same as this one. Keep the legal meaning in view, because the debate's key word turns out to be “just”.

What happened

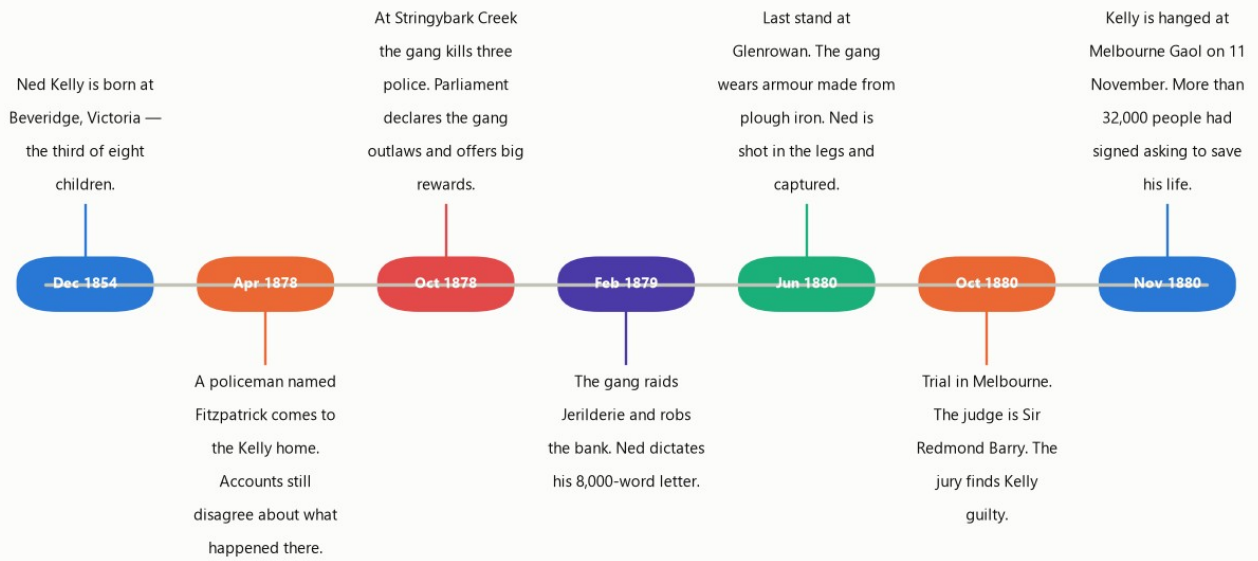
Ned Kelly was born in December 1854 at Beveridge, Victoria, the third of eight children. His father, John Kelly, had come from Ireland as a convict; his mother was Ellen Quinn. When Ned's father died in 1866, Ned became the oldest man in a poor farming family.

In April 1878 a policeman named Fitzpatrick came to the Kelly home. What happened there is still argued about: the police said Ned shot Fitzpatrick; the Kelly family said the policeman had behaved badly and the fight started there. Ned and his brother Dan fled to the ranges with two friends, Joe Byrne and Steve Hart. In October 1878, at Stringybark Creek, the gang killed three policemen — Sergeant Kennedy and Constables Lonigan and Scanlan. One policeman, McIntyre, escaped. A year later the parliament declared the four men outlaws, and big rewards were offered for them.

In February 1879 the gang rode into the town of Jerilderie in New South Wales. They locked the police in their own cells and robbed the bank of £2,141. There, Ned Kelly dictated a letter of about 8,000 words to Joe Byrne: the **Jerilderie Letter**. In it Kelly claimed that the police had chased and lied about his family, that the law was unfair to poor selectors — farming families who had taken up small blocks of land — and that he was fighting back against police who broke their own rules. The letter's original is held at the State Library of Victoria (a copy made at the time is at the Public Record Office Victoria). It is listed on UNESCO's Australian Memory of the World Register.

Ned Kelly's story in seven steps, 1854–1880

From birth to death he lived only 25 years

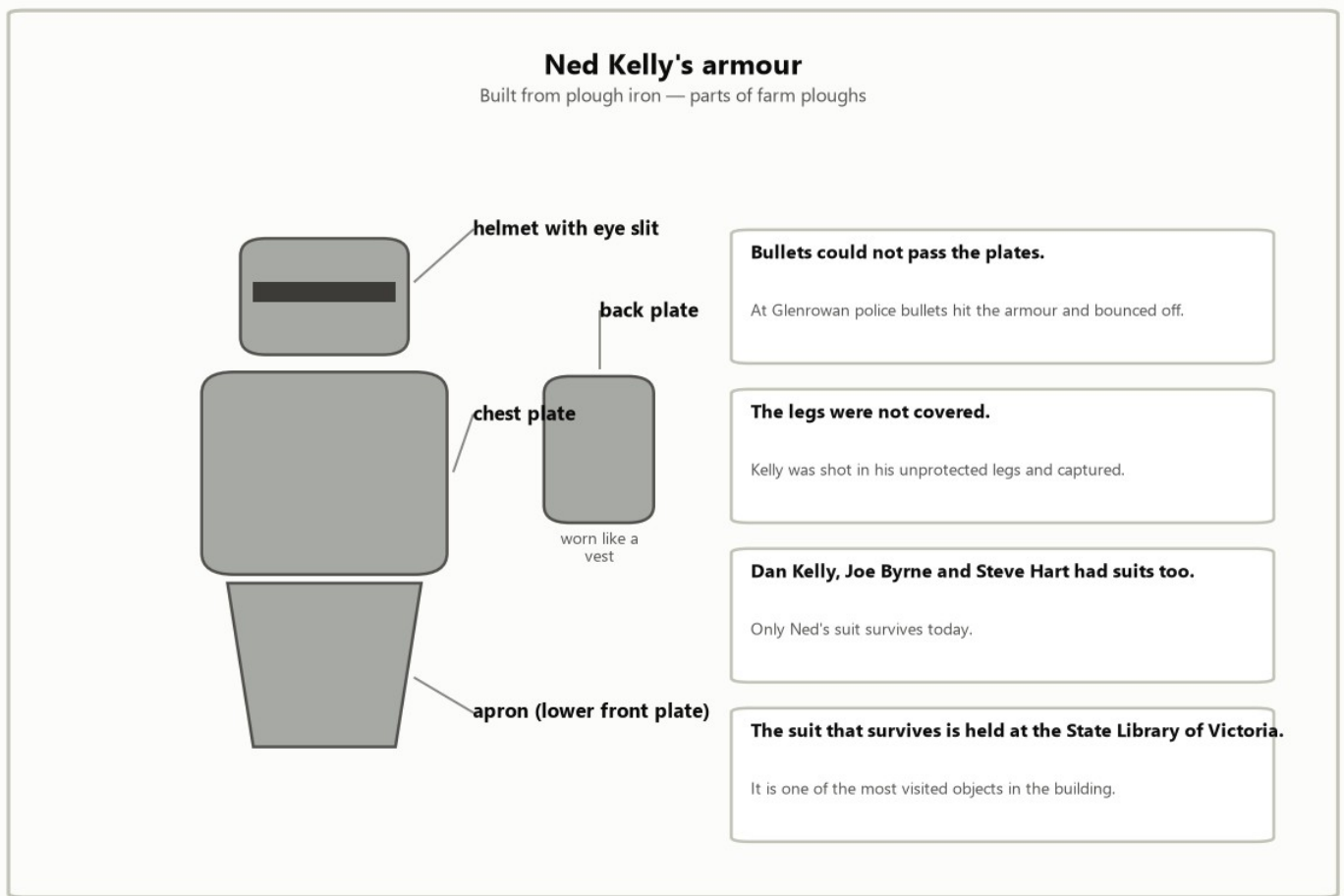


Even his last words are argued about — one account says "Such is life."

A timeline of Ned Kelly's life from 1854 to 1880

Figure 9. Ned Kelly's story, 1854–1880. From his birth to his death he lived only 25 years.

In June 1880 the gang made its last stand at Glenrowan. They held the town's hotel, and they had built suits of armour from plough iron — helmets, chest plates and aprons that bullets could not pass. Police closed in on the hotel. In the attack and the fire that followed, Joe Byrne, Dan Kelly and Steve Hart died, and some of the people held at the hotel were also killed. Ned Kelly walked out towards the police in his armour. He was shot in his unprotected legs and captured.



A labelled diagram of Ned Kelly's armour made from plough iron, showing the helmet, chest plate, back plate and apron

Figure 10. Ned Kelly's armour, built from plough iron. The suit that survives is held at the State Library of Victoria.

Kelly's trial began in October 1880 in Melbourne. The judge was Sir **Redmond Barry** — the same man who had judged the Eureka diggers' trials 25 years earlier. The jury found Kelly guilty of killing Constable Lonigan, and Barry sentenced him to death. More than 32,000 people signed a petition — a mass letter asking the government to show mercy. It did not. Ned Kelly was hanged at Melbourne Gaol on 11 November 1880. Even his last words are argued about: one account says he said, "Such is life." Another says, "Ah, well, I suppose it has come to this."

The debate: was he just an outlaw like any other?

Side 1 — yes, he was just an outlaw like any other. Bushrangers were not new. Gangs like Ben Hall's in New South Wales had robbed and killed years before Kelly. Kelly's own record fits the pattern: guns, robberies, and dead policemen. He changed no laws and built nothing. After the Jerilderie raid, even the newspapers that liked his letters called him a criminal. His fame came later — from a film made in 1906, *The Story of the Kelly Gang* (the world's first full-length story film; about 17 minutes of it survives, and it was added to UNESCO's Memory of the World Register in 2007), and from Sidney Nolan's famous paintings of 1946–47, most of which hang in the National Gallery of Australia. On this view, the myth is bigger than the man.

Side 2 — no, he was not just an outlaw like any other. No other bushranger left a book-length statement in his own words. The Jerilderie Letter gives Kelly a voice the others never had, and thousands of ordinary people heard it: more than 32,000 signed for his life, while he was still alive, not after he became famous. No other bushranger wore armour or made a last stand like Glenrowan. And no other bushranger is still painted, filmed and argued about more than 140 years later. On this view, Kelly stands out — not because his crimes were greater, but because he spoke, fought and was remembered in ways the others never were.

The debate: was Ned Kelly “just an outlaw like any other”?

Both sides use real evidence — sort it, then judge

YES — he was just an outlaw like any other	NO — he was not just an outlaw like any other
- Gangs like Ben Hall's robbed and killed years before Kelly. - His record fits the bushranger pattern: guns, robberies, dead police. - He changed no laws and built nothing. - His fame came later — from film and paintings, not from what he did.	- He left the Jerilderie Letter — no other bushranger wrote his own story. - More than 32,000 people signed to save his life while he was still alive. - No other bushranger wore armour or made a stand like Glenrowan. 140+ years on, he is still painted, filmed and argued about.
Your evidence: ...	Your evidence: ...

The word doing the most work is “just”. Try the sentence without it: “Ned Kelly was another outlaw.”

Marks go to the strength of your reasons and evidence — not to the side you pick.

Two sides of the Ned Kelly debate shown side by side with the evidence each one uses

Figure 11. Both sides use the same life. They disagree about what counts: the crimes, or the voice and the memory.

Testing the claim — a fair way

Before you take a side, test the words of the claim itself: “Ned Kelly was **just** an outlaw like any other.”

- Cross out “just” and read it again.** “Ned Kelly was an outlaw like any other.” Does the sentence feel different? The little word “just” does a lot of quiet work — it tells you to think small before you have looked at the evidence.
- Swap the name.** Try: “Ben Hall was just an outlaw like any other.” Does the claim still make sense? If it does, ask: what makes Kelly’s case different from Hall’s? If you can name the difference with evidence, you have found why Kelly is not “like any other”.
- Ask what the claim assumes.** It assumes we agree on what an *outlaw* is (see the legal meaning above). It assumes there is a fair group — the other outlaws — to compare him with. It assumes fame does not matter. Each of those assumptions can be tested.

Then look at both sides again. Which one meets the evidence best? Which one leaves something out? A good answer can say: Kelly broke the law and people died — and he was still not “like any other”, because his voice and his memory changed how Australians see their past. Both things can be true at once.

Why do the interpretations differ?

- Different questions.** “What did Kelly do?” gets one answer; “What has Kelly come to mean?” gets another.
- Different evidence.** Police files and court records show crimes. The Jerilderie Letter, the mercy letter with 32,000 names, Nolan’s paintings and the 1906 film show a man who became a story.
- Different times.** Newspapers in 1880 wrote while the fear was fresh. Nolan painted in 1946, when Australians were looking for home-grown stories. Museums today try to hear every voice of the story, including the police who died and the families left behind.

- **Different values.** Some people value law and order above all. Some value fairness for the poor and the hunted. Which value sits first in a person's heart shapes which Kelly they see.

6. Practice questions — with support

Q1. Put a tick in the right column. (Use the definitions on page 1 of this section.)

Statement	Fact	Interpretation
(a) The fight at the Eureka Stockade happened on 3 December 1854.		
(b) Eureka was the birthplace of Australian democracy.		
(c) Ned Kelly was hanged on 11 November 1880.		
(d) Ned Kelly died a hero.		
(e) Victoria's counted population in 1861 was 538,628.		
(f) The gold rushes were the best thing that ever happened to Victoria.		

Q2. Look at Figure 4 (the diggers' charter). (a) List two of the charter's demands in your own words. (b) Which demand is about suffrage? What does that word mean? (c) Where is the real charter kept today?

Q3. The diggers swore this oath at the end of November 1854: "*We swear by the Southern Cross to stand truly by each other and fight to defend our rights and liberties.*" (a) What two things do the diggers promise each other? (b) Give one reason a historian would treat this oath carefully as evidence (hint: who wanted it remembered?).

Q4. Read the two views in Figure 5. (a) Give one piece of evidence Interpretation A uses. (b) Give one piece of evidence Interpretation B uses. (c) Which question is each interpretation really answering?

Q5. Look at Figure 6 (population). By how many people did Victoria's counted population grow between 1851 and 1861? Show your working.

Q6. Look at Figure 7 (gold). In the best year, 1856, how many ounces did diggers win? Why might a historian also want to know *who owned* that gold, not just how much there was?

Q7. Read about the Chinese diggers in Section 4. (a) How many Chinese diggers were in Victoria by 1858? (b) What did the 1855 law do? (c) Why does this evidence matter to someone arguing that the gold rushes were an unfair time?

Q8. Use Section 5 and Figures 9–11. (a) What does *outlaw* mean in its legal sense, as used in this section? (b) Give two things the Kelly gang did at Jerilderie in February 1879. (c) Give one reason some people still did not see Kelly as "just" a criminal, even while he was alive.

7. Practice questions — on your own

Q9. Raffaello Carboni wrote the only full account of Eureka by someone who was there, one year after the fight. Explain one strength and one weakness of using his book as evidence.

Q10. "Even the number of people who died at Eureka is argued about." Explain why disagreement over a simple number is useful to a historian studying interpretations.

Q11. Choose one of the four reasons interpretations differ (Section 1). Show how it works in the gold rush debate, using named evidence from Section 4.

Q12. Redmond Barry judged the Eureka diggers’ trials in 1855 and Ned Kelly’s trial in 1880. Suggest one question a historian could ask about Barry that might change how we see either trial. (Remember: a good historical question can be tested against evidence.)

8. Evidence-based writing and speaking task

The claim to debate: “*Ned Kelly was just an outlaw like any other.*”

Hold a class debate. Two teams prepare; every speaker must:

1. state clearly what *outlaw* means in this section (use the legal meaning);
2. give at least **three** pieces of evidence from Section 5 (for example: the Jerilderie Letter, the mercy letter with its 32,000 names, the Stringybark Creek deaths, the 1906 film, Nolan’s paintings, the 1880 newspapers);
3. answer the strongest point on the other side — do not pretend it is not there;
4. end by saying what their own view leaves out, honestly.

After the debate, write your own answered question of 8–12 sentences: “*Was Ned Kelly just an outlaw like any other? Use evidence from at least two sources named in this section.*”

Marking guide (the marking rewards the reasoning, not the side you take). Two students can reach opposite conclusions and both do well. Marks are awarded for:

Reasoning step	What it looks like
Terms defined	<i>Outlaw</i> is defined in its legal sense before it is used.
Evidence named	Real sources are named (Jerilderie Letter, mercy letter, film, paintings, court records) — not “some people say”.
Both sides heard	The other side’s strongest point is stated in full and answered.
Assumptions checked	The student notices what the word “just” is doing, or what the claim assumes.
Limits admitted	The student says what their own view cannot explain or leaves out.

9. Answers and marking pointers

Q1. (a) Fact. (b) Interpretation. (c) Fact. (d) Interpretation. (e) Fact. (f) Interpretation.

Q2. (a) Any two, in the student's own words, from Figure 4 — for example: votes for all men; voting in secret; no property test for members of parliament; pay for members; shorter parliaments; an end to the diggers' monthly gold fee. (b) "A full and fair vote for all men" (manhood suffrage); suffrage means the right to vote. (c) The Public Record Office Victoria, Melbourne.

Q3. (a) To stand truly by each other, and to fight to defend their rights and liberties. (b) The oath is remembered by people who supported the diggers' cause (and written down afterwards, in books like Carboni's), so it shows the diggers' side of the story most strongly; a careful historian checks it against other records.

Q4. (a) Any named evidence from Interpretation A in Figure 5 — for example the charter, the oath, or the voting laws of 1855–1856. (b) Any from Interpretation B — the twenty-minute fight, the small share of diggers at the stockade, or the changes already being talked about. (c) A asks what Eureka came to mean (or inspired); B asks what it changed on its own.

Q5. $538,628 - 77,345 = 461,283$ people.

Q6. 3,053,744 ounces. A historian would ask who owned the gold because the total does not show how the wealth was shared — most diggers won little, while some storekeepers, bankers and mine owners grew rich.

Q7. (a) About 33,000. (b) It set a tax of ten pounds on each Chinese arrival and limited how many could sail on each ship. (c) It shows the government itself treated one group of diggers unfairly, so the gold rushes were not only hard work but also unfair for some people.

Q8. (a) A person put outside the law's protection by the 1878 law, who could be seized or shot without the usual arrest and trial. (b) Any two: they locked the police in their own cells; they held the town; they robbed the bank of £2,141; Kelly dictated the Jerilderie Letter. (c) More than 32,000 people signed asking for mercy — or his own words in the Jerilderie Letter won him support.

Q9. Strength: Carboni was there, so he can tell us what the diggings felt and looked like, and what was said; his is the only full account by a witness. Weakness: he wrote as a supporter of the diggers' cause, only a year after the event, so his book takes one side and may leave out what hurts that side. (Accept other reasonable strengths/weaknesses with reasoning.)

Q10. It shows that even "simple" facts reach us through sources made by people with sides to take; if historians cannot agree on a number, they must show *how* each number was worked out — which is exactly the work of comparing interpretations. It also keeps us honest: when sources disagree, we say so instead of picking a number and calling it certain.

Q11. Award the mark for a clear example of one reason, with named evidence. Example: *different questions* — asking "Did Victoria grow rich?" (answered by the population and gold figures in Figures 6 and 7) is not the same as asking "Was life fair for a digger?" (answered by von Guérard's sketches of camp life and the unfair 1855 law). Other reasons with named Section 4 evidence are equally good.

Q12. Award any testable question tied to Barry. Examples: "Did Barry's 1855 not-guilty juries make him more or less harsh in 1880?" or "What did Barry himself say about the two trials in his own letters and notes?" The question must be one that records could answer — a question about feelings alone ("Did Barry like Kelly?") is weaker unless the student names evidence that could test it.

Debate task. Mark on the five reasoning steps in the Section 8 table, not on the side taken. A response that defines *outlaw*, names three real sources, answers the other side's best point, and admits its own limits does well no matter which way it concludes.

Source notes

Every source named in this section is a real object or a real publication.

- **Ballarat Reform League Charter, 1854** — held at the Public Record Office Victoria, Melbourne; listed on UNESCO’s Australian Memory of the World Register. Demands put in plain words from the document as described in “Ballarat Reform League”, Wikipedia, retrieved 24 August 2026.
- **Diggers’ oath and the Eureka (Southern Cross) flag** — oath wording and flag history as described in “Eureka Flag”, Wikipedia, retrieved 24 August 2026. Flag held at the Art Gallery of Ballarat.
- **Raffaello Carboni, *The Eureka Stockade*** — Melbourne, 1855; the only full first-hand account of the event (author and work described in “Raffaello Carboni”, Wikipedia, retrieved 24 August 2026).
- **1855 Victorian treason trials** — as described in “1855 Victorian high treason trials”, Wikipedia, retrieved 24 August 2026.
- **Eureka battle and aftermath** — as described in “Eureka Stockade” (Simple English Wikipedia), “Ballarat” and “Charles Hotham” (Wikipedia), all retrieved 24 August 2026.
- **Gold rush population and output figures** — as described in “Victorian gold rush”, Wikipedia, retrieved 24 August 2026 (population 77,345 in 1851 and 538,628 in 1861; 3,053,744 ounces in 1856; 61,034,682 ounces for 1851–1896; about two tonnes of gold a week at the rush’s height; Chinese diggers more than 19,000 by end-1855 and about 33,000 by 1858; the 1855 law’s ten-pound tax and ship limits).
- **Eugene von Guérard’s diggings sketchbooks** — State Library of New South Wales, as described in “Eugene von Guérard”, Wikipedia, retrieved 24 August 2026.
- **William Howitt, *Land, Labour, and Gold*** — London, 1855; a visitor’s account of the gold colonies.
- **Ned Kelly’s life, trial and death** — as described in “Ned Kelly”, Wikipedia, retrieved 24 August 2026 (born December 1854; Fitzpatrick, 15 April 1878; Stringybark Creek, 26 October 1878; Jerilderie, 9–10 February 1879; Glenrowan, 27–28 June 1880; trial from 19 October 1880 before Sir Redmond Barry; hanged 11 November 1880; mercy petition of more than 32,000 names; contested last words).
- **The Jerilderie Letter** — dictated by Ned Kelly to Joe Byrne in 1879, about 8,000 words; original held at the State Library of Victoria; a clerk’s copy at the Public Record Office Victoria; listed on UNESCO’s Australian Memory of the World Register (as described in “Jerilderie Letter”, Wikipedia, retrieved 24 August 2026).
- **Ned Kelly’s armour** — State Library of Victoria; built from plough iron, as described in “Ned Kelly”, Wikipedia, retrieved 24 August 2026.
- ***The Story of the Kelly Gang* (1906)** — the world’s first full-length story film; about 17 minutes survive; listed on UNESCO’s Memory of the World Register in 2007 (as described in “The Story of the Kelly Gang”, Wikipedia, retrieved 24 August 2026).
- **Sidney Nolan’s Ned Kelly paintings** — 27 paintings, 1946–47; most held by the National Gallery of Australia (as described in “Sidney Nolan”, Wikipedia, retrieved 24 August 2026).