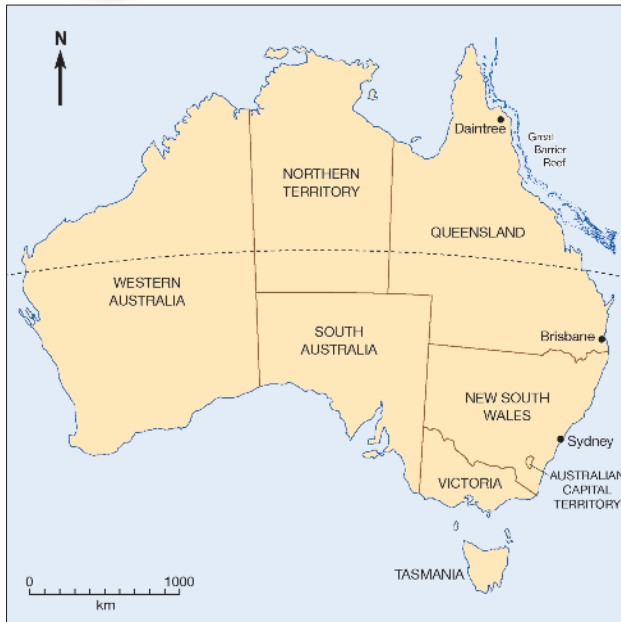


Geography Plus: Australia Here We Come!

These knowledge boxes provide background information for teachers to help develop knowledge for teaching **Australia Here We Come!**



Coral reef or rainforest?



The Great Barrier Reef

The Great Barrier Reef is one of the seven wonders of the natural world. The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park stretches over 3000km (1800 miles) almost parallel to the Queensland coast, from near the coastal town of Bundaberg, up past the tip of Cape York. The reef, between 15 and 150km off shore and around 65km wide in parts, is the only living thing on Earth visible from space. It is home to the world's largest collection of corals, over 400 different kinds, as well as coral sponges, molluscs, rays, dolphins, more than 1500 species of tropical fish, 200 types of birds, around 20 types of reptiles including sea turtles, and giant clams over 120 years old. For more information go to <http://australia.gov.au/about-australia/australian-story/great-barrier-reef>



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Coral reef or rainforest?

Shared writing

A poem written by pupils in response to images of the Great Barrier Reef.

Under the sea

Under the sea, we can see...
octopus squirting ink
jellyfish trying to sting
turtle swimming
squid changing to blue
rainbow fish swimming along

Under the sea, we can see...
clownfish, orange and black
dolphin splashing, orange crab nipping
waves crashing – tide's coming in

Under the sea, we can see...
pale coral moving from side to side, green
seaweeds
whales talking, splashing on top of the water
shark snapping – AAAAAAARGH!

Under the sea, we can see...
spotty manta ray, orange and red starfish
stingray like a carpet, swordfish hunting
shrimp getting sucked up by a whale
flying fish flying over the water
lobster slipping on the rocks
killer whale hunting
*Class 1TM, Watercliffe Meadow Community
Primary School in Sheffield, 30 June 2009.*

The Daintree Rainforest

The Daintree Rainforest stretches from Townsville to Cooktown in Northern Queensland and encompasses an area of approximately 1200 square kilometres. It is the single largest block of tropical rainforest in Australia.

Many millions of years ago Australia was warm and humid, rainfall was plentiful and rainforest covered large areas of the land. As the climate changed and Australia became more arid, there were fewer and fewer places where tropical



Photo: © Maedi

Knowledge box 8

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Coral reef or rainforest?

rainforests could survive. The Daintree region is the last remaining location for rainforest and is thought to be over 135,000,000 years old. It is home to many ancient species of animals and plants. It contains 30% of Australia's frog, marsupial and reptile species, 65% of its bat and butterfly species and 18% of its bird species. There are also over 12,000 species of insects.

The landscape is one of striking diversity including magnificent scenery, mountain ranges, fast-flowing streams and waterfalls, deep gorges and dense rainforest. There is outstanding coastal scenery, including the extremely rare combination of tropical rainforest, white sandy beaches and fringing reefs just offshore.

Where the Forest Meets the Sea by Jeannie Baker

Jeannie Baker is a collage artist/writer living and working in Australia. She is most famous for her wordless picture book, *Window*. This shows the changes in an area of Australian bush over a generation: as the new baby in the first image grows up, we see his parents' rural home gradually surrounded by an expanding city; when he becomes a father, we see him holding his first child in the window of a new house in newly-destroyed bush with a view of the still-expanding city in the distance.

Where the Forest Meets the Sea is set in the ancient Daintree Rainforest. Jeannie Baker comments in her author's note: 'By 2020, we can estimate that no wilderness will remain on our planet, outside that protected in national parks and reserves... [and] a quarter of our present plant and animal species will become extinct. Our planet is changing before our eyes. However, by understanding and changing the way we personally affect the environment we can make a difference'.

Sharing *Where the Forest Meets the Sea* evokes a sense of the powerful magic of ancient landscapes and how they are threatened by coastal developments. On Jeannie Baker's website (www.jeanniebaker.com) you can find interesting background material for teachers on her research visits and her collage techniques.

Drama: Our walk through the rainforest

Collect ideas from the book about the boy's walk in the rainforest.

Use a space in which the pupils can spread out. As you read each page, commenting on those details in the pictures that aren't expressed in the text, the pupils perform the boy's actions to get the feel of how he moves, what he feels on his skin, etc:

Text: I follow a creek into the rainforest.

Teacher commentary: Your legs are in deep water as you walk – nearly up to your shorts. Can you feel small fish nibbling your skin gently and sliding past your knees?

Pupils: enact creek-walking.

Text: On the bank of the creek, vines and creepers try to hold me back.

Teacher commentary: Watch out! There are twisty vines and roots stretching across your path. Lift your feet high over them, and push the vines aside to make yourself a space to crawl through.

Pupils: imagine and move.

The walk takes the boy into a forest clearing, where he stops, sits and looks up and up, watching (What can you see?), listening (What can you hear?), imagining how long the trees took to grow so massive and tall. He then finds an ancient tree which is hollow and climbs inside into darkness. When he emerges, he thinks of his father and follows the sound of the sea back through the forest, reversing his actions.

To accompany this drama you may like to use sounds of the rainforest from www.kendavis.com/html/rainforest_sounds_big.html; more sounds and images are available at www.youtube.com/watch?v=wLB-RsJoOkY