

# Ancient Explorers – Ice Age travellers

## - the settlement of Australia, Asia and the Americas

### A unit for Year 6 year students, covering History and Geography

#### Introduction and Overview

This unit introduces students to the Ice Age environment and how it differed from today. Changes in climate as well as animals and sea level are discussed. The movement of modern humans out of Africa early in the Ice Age and their spread around the world is explained. Students are encouraged to envisage the Ice Age environment in Australia and to understand how Ice Age conditions both helped and hindered people in reaching Australia. At the same time movements of people into Asia, the Americas and Europe are introduced, which provides background for understanding later explorations covered in later units. A few case studies are given of Indigenous Peoples of Australia and Asia. Students examine the Origins of Agriculture. The Trade and Barter Activity covers curriculum strands from History, Geography, as well as Economics and Business.

Students are introduced to Landmarks in Australia and around the world with the Aunt Madge's Suitcase Activity and finally they are introduced to basic concepts of democracy by comparing Ancient Greek democracy with modern Australian democracy. This also provides an introduction to a more in-depth examination of these issues a later unit. Basic information from the Civics and Citizenship Curriculum is introduced.

This unit requires a minimum time allocation of one hour per week. Extensions are provided for up to 3 hours a week (the EQ suggested curriculum allocation).

Students may require assistance with some of the vocabulary in the resources. Students should be encouraged to look up any words with which they are unfamiliar in a dictionary or similar. It should also be a policy that every country is located on the world map. The map sections with named countries and the accompanying index should be made available as a resource for consultation by the students, who should be encouraged to find each country as they encounter it. If the country is unnamed on the blackline world map, the name of the country should be added (from the list provided in the Names of Countries resource) to the map. Preferably the correct name should be cut out and glued onto the map. Students may also wish to draw routes onto the world map, such as the route of modern humans out of Africa, or the routes into Australia or the Americas.

A student workbook is provided for the students to fill in during this unit. This workbook, as well as their discussions in class and participation in the activities, forms the assessment for



this unit. The student workbook can either be printed and stapled together, with a copy given to each student; or printed out and given to students as loose pages as each lesson proceeds. These pages could be glued into an exercise book. Finally, the student workbook could be displayed digitally and students could copy down their answers into their exercise books. There is no specific homework, other than to complete anything in the student workbook for that week that was not completed in class. If the students are working in the pages provided, they may turn the pages to landscape orientation in order to draw pictures where indicated.

This Teacher handbook is divided into several sections: Resources are listed; Multi-Year Level Integration is discussed; Lesson Plans are provided on a week by week basis. The Lesson Plans are numbered by term week and are divided into 3 parts (a,b and c). The first part (a) is the essential material, which should be covered in order to meet curricular objectives. The second part (b) is additional material, which should be covered if time can be made available within the weekly schedule. The third part (c) is in depth material which can be covered if time is available or for those students with particular interests or needing some extension. The more material is covered the better the flow between units and into higher year levels.

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## Resources

**Teacher PDFs** – these resources are referred to in bold in the lesson plan

- Timeline (Activity)
- The Last Ice Age
- Modern Humans Leave Africa
- Ice Age Animals
- People Reach the Americas
- People Reach Australia
- The Wallace Line
- Sunda and Sahul
- Early Australian Sites
- Australia After the Ice Age
- Country/Place
- Indigenous Groups of Australia and Asia
- Origins of Agriculture
- Origins of Domestic Animals
- Origins of Domestic Plants
- Technology of Early Agriculture
- Ice Ages and Mud Bricks (Activity)
- Trade and Barter (Activity)
- Aunt Madge's Suitcase (Activity)
- Eratosthenes, the Father of Geography
- Planets of the Solar System
- Shadows and Light
- Ancient Greek Democracy
- Modern Australian Democracy

### Student PDFs

- Student Workbook

### OpenSTEM physical resources

- OpenSTEM “Our World” Blackline World Map

### Other classroom resources

- scissors
- glue
- colouring pencils/crayons
- empty boxes
- different sized balls, e.g. basketball, tennis ball, pingpong ball
- torches
- envelopes (about 30)
- tape measure
- string (~500m) (a ball of string from Officeworks is 80m, so about 6 or 7 balls of string)



## Multi-Year Level Integration

In a multi-year level class, this unit can be integrated with the unit for Year 5: ***Ancient explorers – peopling of Australia and the Americas***. It is also broadly compatible with the units for Year 4: ***Ancient Explorers – Ice Age travellers, the settlement of Australia*** and Year 3: ***Australia, Then and Now***.

In a multi-year class, the first 4 weeks cover the same material and can be taught together. The student workbooks for each year level guide the students through the material appropriate to their year-level. In Week 5 the students work on year level specific material. In a multi-year class, the teacher could either present all the material from the resources and then allow each year level to work on the appropriate section in their workbooks, or the teacher may wish to present some material and then allow students to read the resources while they work on the appropriate section in their workbooks. For Year 6 students this task is on an Indigenous Group of Australia or Asia and is addressed in that section of the student workbook.

In Weeks 7-9 the students cover the same material across these year levels, again with the primary differences being in the student workbooks.



## Lesson Plans

**Required: 1 hour per week, optimal 3 hours per week.**

**Week 1.a.** Introduce students to the unit “**Ancient Explorers – Ice Age Travellers; the settlement of Australia, Asia and the Americas**”. **Timeline Activity.** Students record this activity in the student workbook. Teachers should ensure that each student is able to add at least one event to the timeline given the scale of the space available for the timeline (for example, if only 100m is available, teachers should ensure that each student has one event within the last 10,000 years). Events that will fall outside the likely time range should still be allocated as well, so that there can be a discussion about scale and where those events would be placed both at the timeline itself and back in the classroom. Many of the events will be encountered by students in later terms, so this activity can be seen as an overview of the year.

Teachers should guide the class to calculate the average year of birth for students in the class. Average year of birth for teachers can either be calculated or estimated by the teacher, or the teacher can ask colleagues if the class can collect this data from them, or the teacher can use their own birth year.

**1.b.** Discuss the problems of **scale** encountered when doing the timeline activity. Look at where some of the later events would fall if one continued to use the same scale. Allow the class to brainstorm ideas for dealing with problems of scale – examine the impact of changing scales; introduce logarithmic scales. Digital option: use Google Earth or Google Maps to check distances for later events and also to check the impact of different scales.

**1.c. Ice Age coastlines.** Students colour in the Ice Age coastline on the blackline world map and compare it to the modern coastline. Discuss possible impacts for the Ice Age coastline on people and animals.



**Week 2.a.** Anatomically modern humans leave Africa. Students consult resources on **The Last Ice Age, Modern Humans Leave Africa, Ice Age Animals, People Reach the Americas** and **People Reach Australia** and mark significant places and the possible routes of modern humans out of Africa on the blackline world map. It is recommended that the teacher divide the students into groups. Each group has 15 minutes to study one resource and then presents the information to the class, referring to the blackline world map as needed to explain the locations mentioned. It is important that the Ice Age landbridges are identified. Students start the Ice Age Australia section of the student workbook.

**2.b.** Discuss the impact of the Ice Age coastline on the possible **routes** for modern humans leaving Africa and spreading across the world. (Routes into Australia and Routes into the Americas sections of the student workbook).

**2.c.** Discuss human effects on **Ice Age animals** and **environments**, particularly in the context of the end of the Ice Age and changing climate.

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**Week 3.a.** Humans reach Australia. Students consult resources on the **People Reach Australia**, the **Wallace Line** and **Sunda and Sahul**, as well as **Early Australian sites**. It is recommended that students are divided into groups and each given one of these resources and 15 minutes to study it. Each group should then present the information in their resource back to the class, referring to the world map for reference. The **People Reach Australia** resource could be given to a different group to the previous week, to allow a slightly different interpretation and ensure a broader understanding. Students mark the Early Australian sites on the blackline world map and complete the Ice Age Australia, Routes into Australia and Routes into the Americas sections of the student workbook.

**3.b.** Compare fauna on either side of the **Wallace Line**. Discuss the differences and why they might have arisen. Class discussion on possible accuracy of the Wallace Line.

**3.c.** Discuss how Australia might have been settled, take into account what is known about the **Ice Age environment** (land areas, climate, weather, plant life etc.)

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**Week 4.a.** The changing environment in **Australia After the Ice Age**. Management of the environment by indigenous groups. The concept of **Country/Place**. Students complete Australia After the Ice Age section of the student workbook.

**4.b.** Immediate neighbours to Australia – indigenous groups of the surrounding region.

**4.c.** Changes in the management of the Australian environment over time – at the end of the Ice Age vs the last 5,000 years.

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**Week 5.a. Indigenous Groups of Australia and Asia.** Three case studies are provided on Indigenous groups of Australia and Asia. Students should find the places where they live on the blackline world map and add a picture of the group and then compare and contrast their ways of life and environments. Students complete Indigenous Groups section of student workbook.

**5.b.** Compare how indigenous people have managed **natural environments** with modern environmental management and how sustainability is reflected in the laws and social structures of Aboriginal groups.

**5.c.** Discuss the concept of '**indigenous**' – how long to people have to live in a place to be regarded as “indigenous”. What and where are the indigenous origins of all of Australia's different groups of people?

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**Week 6.a. Origins of Agriculture. Origins of Domestic Animals. Origins of Domestic Plants. Technology of Early Agriculture.** Over weeks 6 and 7 students should work through the resources on the origins of agriculture and domestication and should also undertake the Trade and Barter Activity. It is recommended that half the class undertake the Trade and Barter Activity each week, whilst the other half work through the resources. The Trade and Barter Activity will need teacher supervision and assistance at first. Those who are working through the pdf resources will examine how people came to domesticate plants and animals in different places around the world. The accompanying changes in environment, climate, population, technology. Students start Agriculture and Trade section of student workbook.

**6.b. Science extension: Ice Ages and Mud Bricks.** Students create a mini Ice Age in a bowl and examine the effects of melting and freezing the ice. Students mix earth and water to create mud and then try to make simple mud bricks. Effects of baking or firing the bricks. Compare with modern construction. Assess environmental impacts.

**6.c. Class discussion comparing environmental managements strategies** in different places and by different groups. Students can consider the interactions between the environment and social structures, starting with trade and economy.



**Week 7.a. Trade and Barter Activity.** Students complete Agriculture and Trade section of student workbook.

**7.b.** Use the Trade and Barter Activity to discuss the invention of **writing** and **counting**.

**7.c.** Use the Trade and Barter Activity to discuss the need for **trade**, particularly in a farming environment. Discuss local versus long-distance trade.

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**Week 8.a. “Aunt Madge’s Suitcase” activity.** Ensure that the students retain the notes and information sheets from the activity until they have completed the Landmarks section of the student workbook. Introduce **Eratosthenes, the “Father of Geography”**.

**8.b.** Science extension: as a natural extension from the discussion of Eratosthenes, students can examine the resources on **Planets of the Solar System** and **Shadows and Light**.

**8.c.** Compare modern and ancient landmarks. World Heritage Sites. What makes something a landmark? Ancient ideas of geography versus modern ideas of geography. Why is geography important?

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**Week 9.a. Ancient Greek Democracy** compared with **Modern Australian democracy**. The concept of global citizens. Students complete Democracy section of student workbook.

**9.b.** Class discussion on the **advantages** and **disadvantages** of Ancient Greek and Modern Australian democracy. Stage a debate on which system is better.

**9.c.** The Ancient Greeks believed that one had a duty to be a good citizen and to be interested in the affairs of society. What are our own ideas on the duties of citizens? What would the responsibilities of a **global citizen** be?

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