

Oceania/Australia

Oceania is the smallest continent of our planet considering the landmass. Australia which is part of Oceania is often referred to as the continent, but we use Oceania/Australia to include also the islands surrounding Australia as they otherwise would not be included in the traditional 7-Continent model.

1. Oceania is in a continental group consisting of numerous countries and includes Pacific islands and Australia. Oceania is mostly ocean and spans a vast area as you can see below.



Oceania/Australia

2. The largest island of Oceania is Australia.

3. Oceania includes 14 countries: Australia, Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, New Zealand, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu.

4. Oceania spreads over a vast area from 28 degrees North in the northern hemisphere to 55 degrees South in the southern hemisphere.

5. Oceania's biggest and most populous city is Sydney. More than 4.5 million people live in this Australian city.



Sydney Skyline

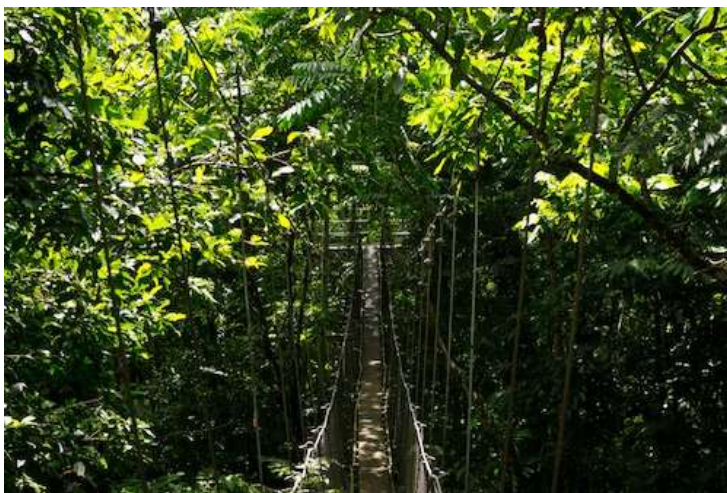
6. Australia is the biggest and leading economy on the continent. New Zealand is the only other large economy on the continent.

7. Highest mountain in Oceania: The highest mountain on land is Mount Cook in New Zealand. The mountain which is referred to also as Aoraki is 3,754 metres/12,316 ft high.



Aoraki also called Mount Cook

8. Oceania Facts - Flora: The most diverse landscape is in Australia and New Zealand due to its varied climatic regions. In Australia, there are rainforests and deserts as well as dry forests whereas in New Zealand there are alpine regions with only sparse vegetation, such as the Southern Alps with the glaciers. The Pacific Ocean islands have a tropical vegetation with tropical rainforests and palm trees.



Rainforest canopy walk in Samoa

9. Oceania Facts - Fauna/Wildlife: There are many species living in Oceania. In Australia, the largest country of the continent, there are many marsupials. Marsupials are mammals that carry their young in their pouch. Among them are kangaroos, possums, wombats and koalas.



Koala bear with baby

A large variety of birds also live in Oceania such as the Australian kookaburra or the colourful kingfishers and birds-of-paradise.



Bird of Paradise in Papua

10. Oceania/Australia Climate: The climate of the Oceania region is varied. The highest temperatures in Oceania are reached in the Australian outback with extremes of 50 °C (123 °F) and the lowest temperatures are measured in New Zealand with -25 °C (-14 °F).



Fox Glacier in New Zealand

Australia has a mainly tropical climate in the northeast and arid climate in the desert centre of the country, called outback. The south eastern coastline has a mild Mediterranean climate. In New Zealand, however, the climate ranges from subtropical in the north to temperate in the south, with snowfall in the higher regions of the southern island. The Pacific Ocean islands have mainly a tropical climate, so it is warm and humid all year round. In some regions in Micronesia rainfall exceeds 7,600 mm per year. These are some of the wettest places in the world where there is six times more rainfall than in England.

11. Oceania Facts - Famous explorers:

- Seafarers were exploring the region in the 16th century; however, the Polynesians were the first explorers.
- Many Pacific Ocean islands such as the Marshall islands and Palau, Tuvalu and the Marquesas islands in French Polynesia were discovered by European explorers
- Spanish explorer Alonso de Salazar discovered the Marshall islands in 1529.
- British explorer James Cook was the first to reach Australia in 1770.



Statue of Captain Cook

12. Religion: Most people (73%) in Oceania describe themselves as Christians. Other religions practised are Islam, Buddhism, Judaism, Hinduism, Jainism and Baha'i. Traditional tribes often also believe in spirits and natural forces.

13. Rugby is the most popular sport in the region. It is the national sport in New Zealand, Samoa, Tonga and Fiji. In Australia, the national sport is cricket. Vanuatu is the only country in Oceania that names soccer/football as their national sport.

14. Australian Indigenous rock art has the longest tradition in the world. Aboriginal paintings date back more than 60,000 years and this art form is still practised by indigenous people in Australia. As writing forms were not explored, their artistic expression was mainly consisting of paintings and carvings.



Aboriginal rock painting in Kakadu National Park/Australia

15. Popular Tourist attractions in Oceania are:

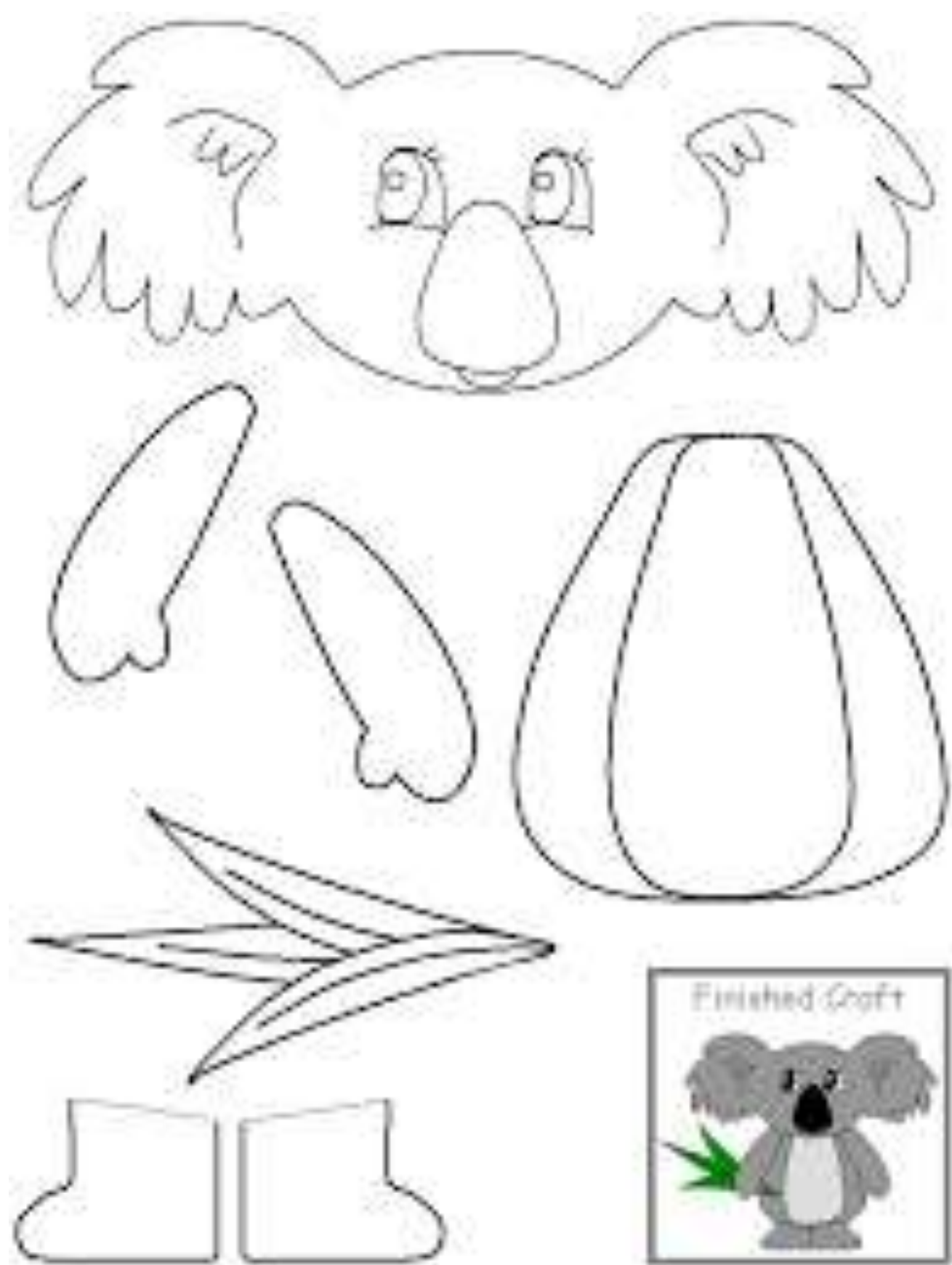
- Australia: Great Barrier Reef, Kakadu National Park, Sydney Opera House, Uluru and the outback. Read more about Australian tourist attractions and landmarks [here](#).
- New Zealand for its glaciers and geysers
- Fiji and Vanuatu are popular with tourists because of their coral reefs and unspoilt beaches.





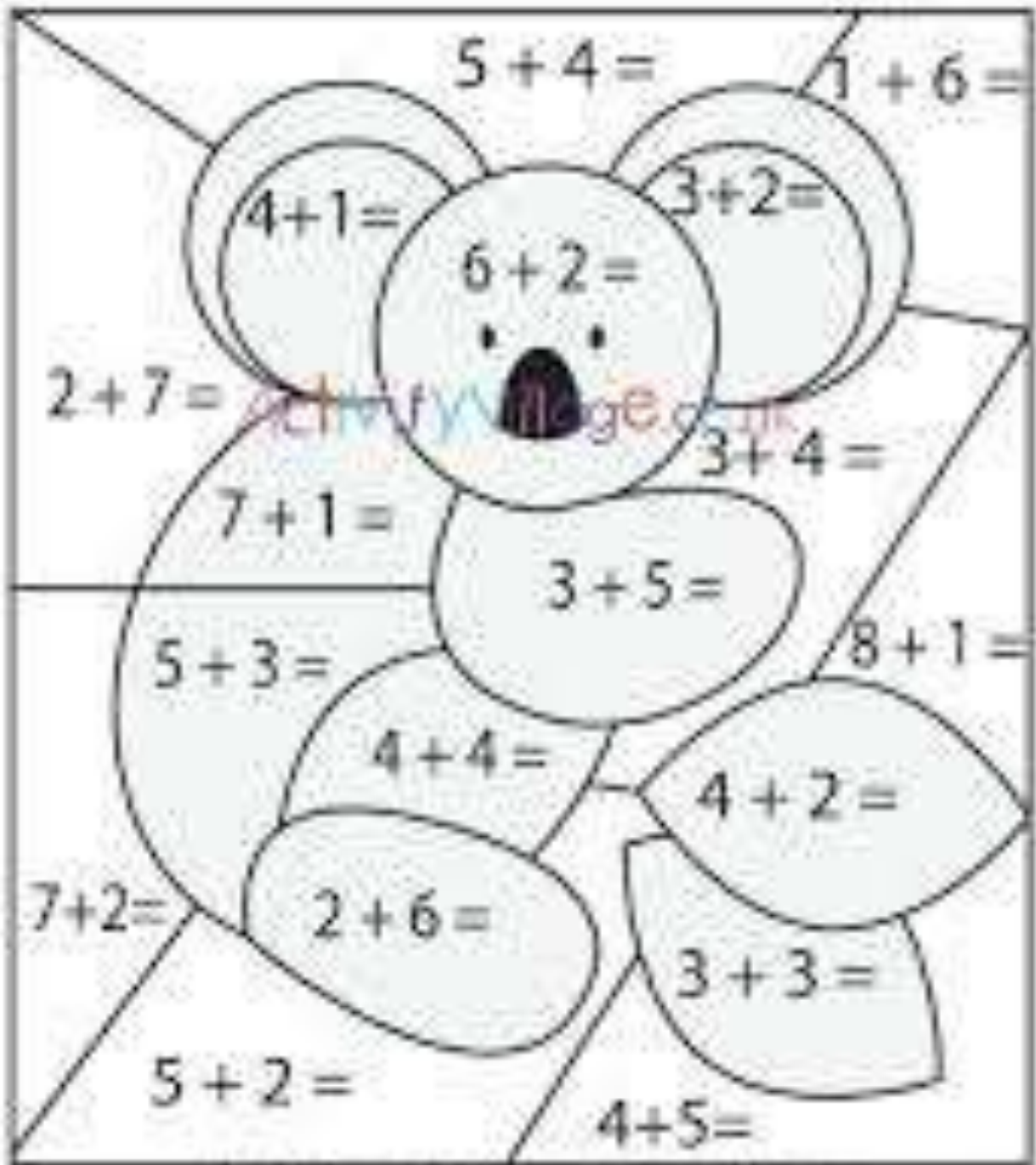
Koala

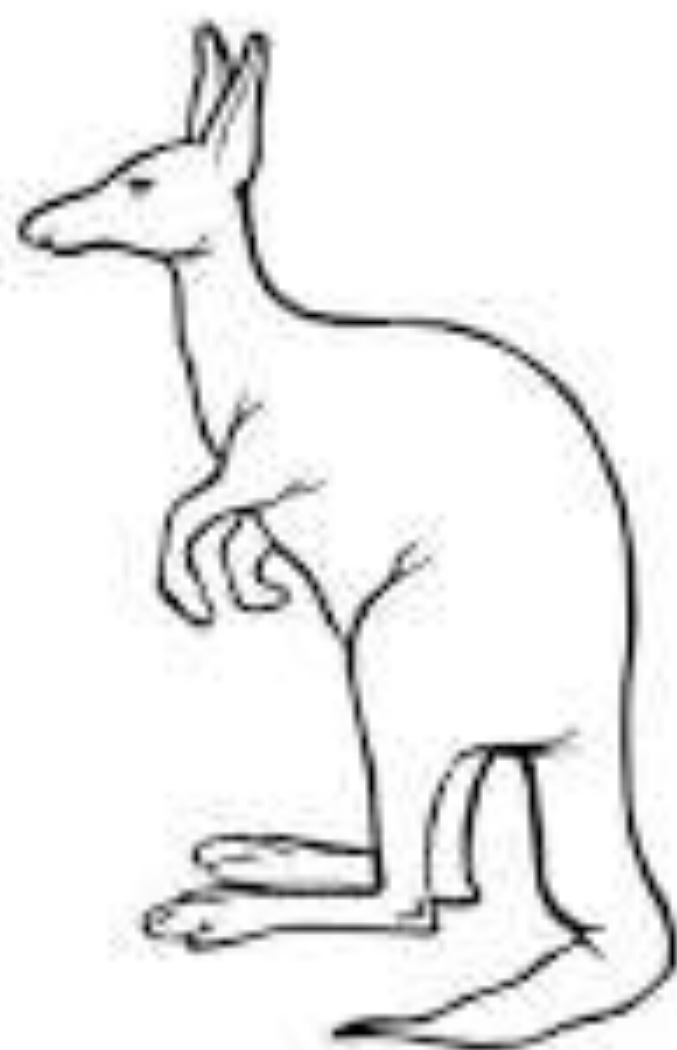






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**Help the Mother
Kangaroo find
her Baby!**

