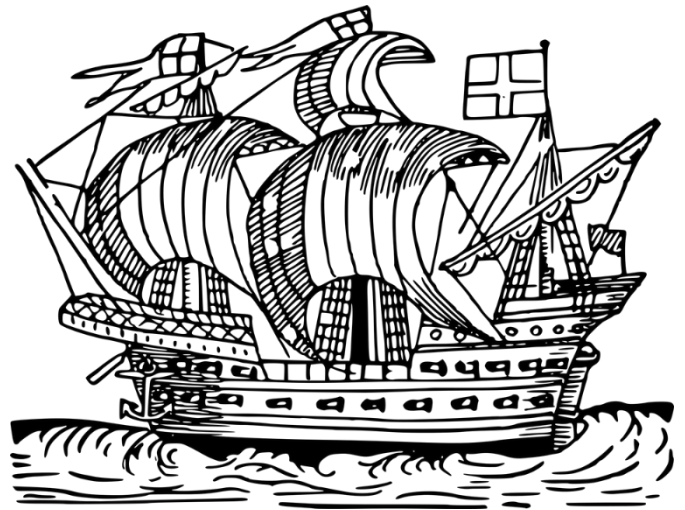


The First Fleet

The Industrial Revolution brought about many changes in England in the late 1700s. The population of cities and towns increased quickly as people moved from farmlands to find work. A shortage of jobs meant that many people were poor and had to steal to survive. Prisons soon became overcrowded. So crowded in fact, that older ships were moored along the river and used as prisons. These were called 'hulks'. As a solution to this overcrowding of the prisons, the British government decided to create a penal colony in Australia.

The First Fleet departed Portsmouth, England, on 13 May 1787 with more than 700 convicts on board. The Fleet sailed southwest and reached Rio de Janeiro on 5 August where they stayed for a month. They then sailed east and arrived in Cape Town on 13 October. During these stops they made repairs to the ships and stocked up on supplies. Cape Town would be the final stop before reaching Australia. The journey was long and dangerous, with many convicts dying before reaching the new colony. Rats, lice and fleas tormented those on board. In January 1788, the First Fleet arrived in Botany Bay.



The new arrivals made contact with the local Indigenous people, the Eora. It was decided that Botany Bay was not a suitable place for the settlement due to the poor soil for crop growing, lack of fresh water and the limited protection the bay would provide. The Fleet travelled north to Port Jackson and arrived on 26 January.

Find the Words

U S E I L P P U S E T L C
 S U O N E G I D N I Z Y R
 A T E E L F T Q S E Q E K
 L N R R Y L S Q E J Z N G
 T C L K T N G C A I C R N
 E C O N V I C T S D L U I
 G N I D W O R C R E V O N
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 M G U O K T C S S O W P I
 A S E T T L E M E N T T T
 X S B R I T I S H H U H A
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settlement	fleet	convicts
rationing	Indigenous	British
supplies	hulks	journey
overcrowding		

Life in the new colony was tough. Convicts lacked farming skills and the poor soil made growing crops difficult. Consequently, food was rationed. Building materials were limited and were of poor quality. This meant that shelter was a problem for those in the new colony. There was also a shortage of clothing. Life in the new colony wasn't easy.

Over the course of the following years, more convicts, settlers and supplies were sent from Britain, and the new colony grew.