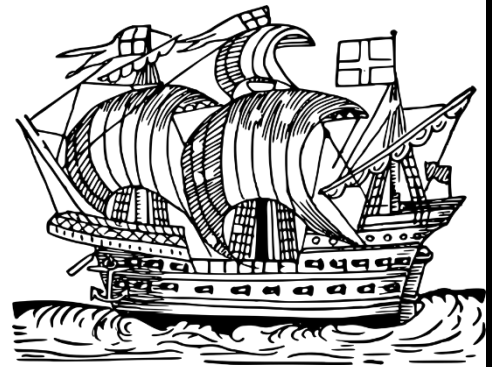


Level 4

The First Fleet

Many changes occurred 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. 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 and the lack of fresh water. The bay also provided limited protection and the waters were too shallow for the ships to anchor close to the shore.

The Fleet travelled north to Port Jackson and arrived on 26 January. 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. 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 as the new colony began to grow.

Task A: Comprehension

1. On which date did the First Fleet leave England?

2. What caused prisons to become overcrowded?

3. Why did the First Fleet make stops along the way?

4. Which word from the text means 'satisfactory'?

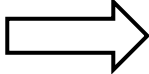
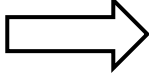
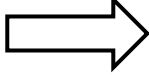
5. Give 4 reasons the First Fleet left Botany Bay.

6. Explain how life in the new colony would have been difficult.

7. How do we know so much about the First Fleet today? Make a list of sources that historians might use to get information.

Task B: Language and Grammar

1. This text mentions a number of **cause and effect** relationships. Show 3 of them below.

Cause		Effect
Cause		Effect
Cause		Effect

2. **Edit** the following passage for full stops, capital letters, commas and spelling. Rewrite it correctly.

convicts who missbehaved in the new colony were punished reasons for punishments included turning up late for work being disrespectful to guards attempting to escape or drunkenness

Task C: Challenge

Draw a picture showing the conditions on board one of the ships of the First Fleet.