Australia activity answers

Activity 1 Understand the colonisation of

Australia [individual]

LB p. 94

1 Aborigines have been living in Australia for about 70 000 years. Up to the time when colonisation occurred, they lived a hunter–gatherer lifestyle. Because of the dry climate, they needed to benomadic. They knew the landscape very well and had a deep spiritual connection with the land. Much of their cultural and religious beliefs are linked to the spirits who are still contained in the land. This is reflected in both Sources A and B. (5)

2 It started because they wanted a place to send criminals – it was first a penal colony. (2)

3 The Aboriginals did not farm the land as they believed it contained spirits. The land was sacred and should not be altered. The Europeans believed that you should make the land productive. They therefore cut trees and cleared land so that they could plant crops and farm sheep to supply wool for export. After 1850 they started to mine gold and extracted more wealth from the land. 2 + 4 = (6)

4 Most of the settlements are on the eastern and southern coastline. This is where the first towns were set up. Sydney was the earliest settlement and other towns grew when the trade in wool expanded. Most large towns are at the sea because ports were set up to promote the export trade. Melbourne grew because of the discovery of gold just north of it. Other settlements like Van Diemen’s Land (now called Tasmania) and Perth grew because of the establishment of penal colonies. (5)

**Answers Activity 2 p.97**

1 The way it is written is fairly neutral (there is not much emotive language), but the information gives only one side of the story. It therefore has a bias because of the selection of facts. (3)

2 Often people see textbooks as “the truth” and forget that they are written by people who write with a particular perspective on life. Although they might try to be objective and neutral, their value system will be reflected in the book. It is always important to be aware of people’s points of view – no matter what you are reading or who the person is who has written it. (4)

3 a) Windschuttle says that historians do not work with objective analysis of the evidence. He says often there is a lack of evidence and they then make sweeping generalisations which are taken up as truth. He says when analysing evidence, you need to look at who made the source and what motives they had when writing their account. It is important not to take what they say as truth because they might be trying to manipulate people’s thinking or covering their own mistakes. As he said with all the examples he gives, “All these people have particular reasons for exaggerating this story.” (6)

b) Reynolds says that Windschuttle always tries to undermine anyone who talks about the use of violence against Aborigines. He accuses him of always supporting the idea that there were no massacres, but denies it when anyone suggests that there were. (4)

c) Debate is unavoidable because people have different areas of interest and ways of understanding and all people will bring to the evidence their own assumptions and norms. When other people read their analyses, they will question the version written and add a new emphasis to the debate. This disagreement is a constructive thing as it helps us understand the past in a more nuanced way. Also, as more evidence is found, new interpretations will emerge. (5)

**Activity 3 Examine the impact of Social Darwinism [pairs] LB p. 100**

Answers

1 When Europeans arrived, there were between half a million and a million Aboriginal people. By the early 20th century there were only about 60 000. This decline was caused by disease and conflict. Most settlers believed that it was because the Aborigines were a relic of the Stone Age and had only lived this long because they were so isolated. They supported Social Darwinist thinking that the Aborigines would die out because they were not able to compete in the modern world. They saw unemployment, dependence on alcohol and a refusal to settle in one place as signs of “racial decay”. They said that their inability or refusal to adapt was a form of “racial suicide”. (6)

2 Source F shows the brutal way that Social Darwinists thought that they should not try to stop the decline or extinction of the Aborigines. This is summed up in the first line: “It seems a law of nature that where two races whose stages of progression differ greatly are brought into contact, the inferior race is doomed to wither and disappear.” It says the Aborigines were stuck in the Stone Age and their decline and extinction is nothing to worry about and no real loss.

Source G shows how other Social Darwinists believed that they should help the Aborigines because they were going to die out. It says that “if we cannot prevent this, the least we should do … is to make their declining years as comfortable as their habits will allow”. 3 + 3 = (6)

3 No – they destroyed the social fabric and the way of life of Aboriginal society. They took away their land and culture and languages. They violated their rights and disrespected them as adults. They were very patriarchal and patronising. (5)

4 The” White Australia” policy was introduced to promote white or European immigration into Australia. They particularly wanted women and people who were prepared to do manual labour and domestic work. Few immigrants came from Britain to Australia because other places (Canada and the USA) were more appealing. They wanted white immigrants rather then Asian and Chinese, because, as is stated in Source H, they wanted to promote “racial purity” and to develop Australia as “an enlightened and self-reliant community”. (6)

5 This fitted with the “White Australia” policy in that it was thought that the orphans from Britain would promote the “good white stock” in the colonies. It was also felt that this link with Britain and the colonies would “consolidate” the Empire. 2 + 2 = (4)

6 Many of these stories are traumatic but will give the learners insight into the difficulties these children faced. They could later compare them to the experiences of the “Stolen Generation” children, about whom they are going to learn shortly.