

Geography

1 Look at the photos and answer the questions.

- 1 Do you recognise the Australian landmarks in photos A and B? What are they?
- 2 Photos C–E show some extreme weather conditions in Australia. What is happening in the photos and what do you think causes these conditions?

2 Read the text. What are the main geographical features in Australia and how do they affect the country's climate?

AUSTRALIA: GEOGRAPHY SOS – EXTREME WEATHER

Australia is an island in the southern hemisphere – the smallest continent in the world, but the sixth largest country. It is a land of extremes, with temperatures ranging from about 40°C in the inland desert regions to below freezing in the southeast of the country. At the same time, the north of Australia – where there are tropical rainforests – can be very wet, although it is the second driest country in the world.

In recent years, the impact of global climate change seems to be causing more extreme weather conditions in Australia than ever before. For example, 2000 saw the country's highest ever rainfall recorded and the summer of 2013 was hotter than any other on record.

What is worrying for Australia is that this extreme weather could get worse in the future. If temperatures continue to increase, there will be more droughts in the country. The worst drought on record lasted from 1995 to 2009, with less rainfall than ever in some regions. An overall rise in temperature will definitely result in more bushfires too, due to very dry weather conditions. One of Australia's worst bushfires was in Victoria in 2009 and the devastation destroyed 2000 homes and killed 173 people.

According to the World Meteorological Organisation, tropical cyclone rainfall will increase by 20–30% in the future if global warming continues. Australia experiences a lot of cyclones in its northern tropical zone and Cyclone Yasi in 2011 was the most destructive to hit the country in nearly 100 years. An increase in precipitation during a cyclone is often severe enough to cause large-scale floods in the affected areas, and even a rise in sea level in extreme cases.

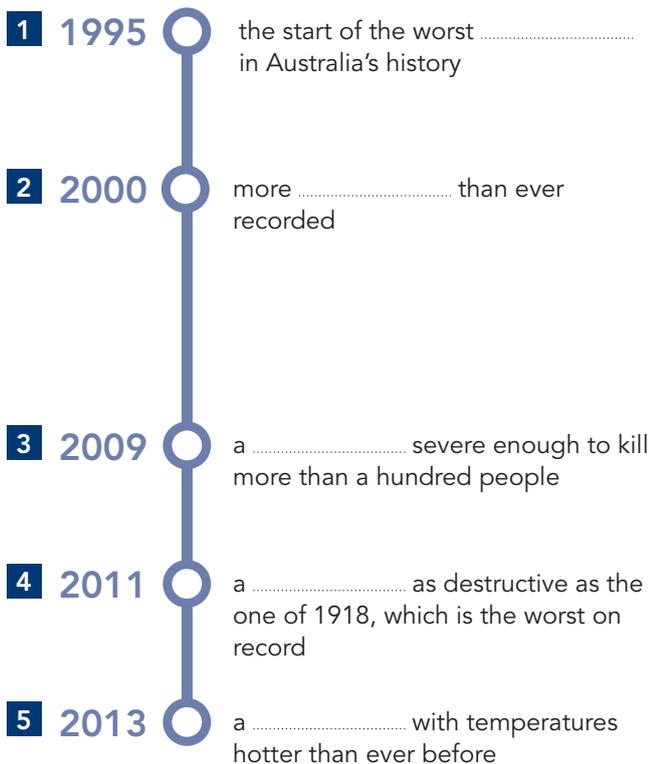
These recent climatic changes are causing concern and the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation thinks that extreme weather events are going to become more common than ever in Australia as they predict more bushfires, droughts, heatwaves, rainfall and floods in the next decade.



3 Read the text again. Circle the correct alternative.

- 1 Australia experiences both a dry and *an island/a tropical* climate.
- 2 The country has had the highest *temperatures/precipitation* on record in the last decade.
- 3 Hotter weather conditions will result in more bushfires and *droughts/floods*.
- 4 A cyclone is a tropical storm with a lot of rainfall and a *heatwave/high winds*.
- 5 These tropical storms can also lead to changes in *global warming/sea level*.

4 Look at the timeline and write the correct weather events.



5 Work with a partner and discuss the questions.

- 1 Are there extreme weather conditions in your country? If so, what kind of weather does your country experience? Is the climate influenced by geographical features?
- 2 What do you think Australians can do to lessen the impact of climate change on their country in the future?

?? DID YOU KNOW?

Because it is in the southern hemisphere, summer in Australia is from November to February, and winter is from May to August. Bushfires and tropical cyclones have been the worst natural disasters in Australia over the years, causing the highest number of deaths in the country.

PROJECT

- 1 Work in groups. Choose a region of Australia to find out about.

New South Wales • Northern Territory • Queensland
 South Australia • Victoria and Tasmania
 Western Australia

- 2 In your group, find out the following information about your region.

the main city • the population
 the geographical features • the climate
 examples of extreme weather
 the worst natural disasters as a result of extreme weather

- 3 In your group, prepare a presentation of your region for the class.

VOCABULARY FOCUS

- cyclone [n]:** a very bad storm that builds up over the sea and can be dangerous when it hits land.
- decade [n]:** a period of ten years.
- destructive [adj]:** causing a lot of damage or harm.
- devastation [n]:** damage affecting a large area or a lot of people.
- extreme [adj]:** a lot more unusual or serious than is normal.
- heatwave [n]:** a period of very hot weather.
- hemisphere [n]:** one half of the earth, divided into north and south by the equator.
- large-scale [adj]:** happening over a large area or involving a large number of things.
- on record [phr]:** ever known or recorded.
- overall [adj]:** including everything.
- precipitation [n]:** rainfall.
- predict [v]:** to say what you think will happen in the future.
- record [v]:** to keep information of something that has happened by writing it down.
- severe [adj]:** serious or dangerous and likely to cause harm or damage.
- temperature [n]:** a measurement of how hot or cold a place or object is.
- tropical [adj]:** used about regions where the weather is very hot and humid.