

Reviews

by using simple home-made equipment. For example, one project shows how to build an explorer's "boat" by using a laundry basket, plastic sheets and rope. Other projects include: making a compass, a water filter, a perambulator (no – not a pram but a trundle wheel to measure distances!) and how to make your own tent.

Each chapter has "Did You Know?" and "A Closer Look" boxes designed to lure readers into reading about a more complex issue or finding extra quirky facts. Did you know, for example, that Captain Cook's original name for Botany Bay was Stingray Harbour?

I would recommend this book as a student resource to teachers of upper primary classes to support research tasks on Australia and its history. It also could be used at higher levels to complement VELS level 6 (Year 9) units on how our geography and climate have shaped Australia's history.

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OXFORD BIG IDEAS HUMANITIES 2 **Written by Maggie Saldaris and Mark Easton**

Published by Oxford University Press, 2009

Cost: \$54.95

ISBN: 9780195563153

Paperback: 310 pages with CD ROM

This textbook addresses the History, Geography, Economics and Civics and Citizenship strands of VELS level 5. It is part of a series for Humanities based on a "big ideas" framework that aims to develop deep learning through understanding, connecting and transferring knowledge. The content incorporates the VELS domains of thinking processes, communication, ICT, interpersonal development and personal learning.

The Geography section has the theme of sustainability and diversity. It begins with a chapter on geospatial concepts including distribution, regions, spatial association, spatial interaction and change over time. The second chapter



examines natural and man-made disasters. The Asia-Pacific region and Antarctica are covered in the next two chapters.

Information is provided by a large range of geographic resources including topographic and choropleth maps, aerial photographs and satellite images. There is detailed written material and large, colourful diagrams and photographs. Questions at the end of each section are organised in a hierarchy from "remember" and "understand" to higher order skills such as evaluation.

The student text is accompanied by a CD ROM with an e-book and question sheets. Online teacher support materials include a teaching program that relates the knowledge and skills to VELS, along with interactive white board resources, worksheets and assessment rubrics.

This is a resource-rich book that incorporates a wide variety of geospatial skills. While the written text demands relatively strong literacy skills, the colourful layout is appealing, particularly for visual learners. The book aims to cater for different abilities and some of the higher order thinking skills would be suitable for extension activities. In respect of the section on Geography, I would certainly recommend this text, particularly for use at Year 8.

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