

# Capital Cities of Australia

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## Overview

This activity uses a map of Australia and the populations of Capital cities as a source of large numbers for students to practise ordering, verbalising, and approximating, whilst raising their awareness about Australia.

It is an ideal activity for integrating with literacy or language learning.



## Skills and Knowledge

- Ordering large numbers
- Verbalising large numbers
- Rounding large numbers
- Knowledge of Australia

## Preparation and Materials

Photocopy *Activity Sheet 1* and cut out the names of the states, cities and populations. Sort these small sets separately (i.e. 8 of each) with paper clips or rubber bands so that they can be distributed set by set to students.

Photocopy *Activity Sheet 2* (1 per pair or small group of students).

## Suggested Procedure

### Introducing the activity

As a preliminary warm-up ask:

- *What is the capital city of the country where you were born?*

Discuss this until you have heard from each student and established the meaning of 'capital' city.

### Naming the states

Arrange students in pairs or small groups. Give each group a Map and the cards of state and territory names; ask them to try and place the names of the states in the correct position on the map. Ask:

- *Which were easy?*
- *Which were difficult?*
- *Were there any clues to help you?*

[**Western** Australia, **South** Australia, **Northern** Territory all provide clues to location.]

This can be a good time to discuss directions and compare students' methods of locating North, South, East and West. It is also an opportunity to explain that maps and street directories normally have North to the top of the page.



## Placing of the Capital Cities

When the discussion of states is completed collect the state cards and distribute the cards of city names. Ask students to try to place them in approximately the right place.

Compare results and correct any significant misplacement. Leave these cards on the map.

*You may like to ask the students which is further north, Adelaide or Canberra? They (and you) might be surprised to know that Adelaide is further north than Canberra.*

## The meaning of 'population'

Ask:

- *Do you know the approximate population of our city?*
- *What do I mean by the word 'population'?*

Discuss their guesses and clarify the term 'population'. You could ask about relative sizes of local towns compared with the capital city, for example:

- *Is this city/town bigger than .....?*
- *Do you think of this city/town as a big/small city?*

You could use these questions about the population of Australia (approx 23 million in 2012) instead of a local city/town.

## Ordering the populations

Explain:

- *We will now see how much you know about the size of the cities.*

Distribute the sets of population cards.

- *I am giving you cards of the populations.*
- *First I want you to arrange them in order from largest to smallest.*

If they are having difficulty arranging the numbers these pointers might help:

- There are 3 numbers less than one million and they must be the smallest.
- For the 6 figure numbers, arrange them in order by looking at the left hand side of the number (the thousands end).
- For the 7 figure numbers (millions), arrange them in order by looking at the millions number on the left hand side.

## Matching the populations to the cities

Explain:

- *Now I want you to try and put the populations with the correct city.*
- *It may help you to remove the cards of city names from the map and order them from largest to smallest.*

[Students who have been to other cities could talk about their knowledge, which will help make decisions about relative sizes.]



After the students have made their guesses discuss the actual order of city sizes.  
[Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Perth, Adelaide, Canberra, Hobart, Darwin]

Emphasise terms such as largest/smallest, highest/lowest, second highest ...

Answer (population taken from the 2011 census)

Sydney	4,610,000
Melbourne	4,170,000
Brisbane	2,150,000
Perth	1,830,000
Adelaide	1,260,000
Canberra	367,100
Hobart	214,700
Darwin	129,100

*Note: the emphasis is on pronunciation of the numbers. You could write the actual number they say on the board.*

To give students practice at reading these numbers aloud, ask questions such as:

- *What did you have for the population of..?*
- *Which is the biggest/smallest population?*
- *Which is the second highest/lowest population?*

Allow plenty of time for students to practise saying these numbers with focus on the place value of millions and hundreds of thousands.

### Approximate numbers

Ask:

- *Do you think these are exact or approximate numbers?*

Discuss the meaning of the terms 'exact' and 'approximate'. Also introduce the term 'rounding off'.

For example:

- *Melbourne's population could be "rounded off" to 4 million to make it easier to remember.*
- *We could say it has:*
  - *Approximately 4 million people*
  - *About 4 million*
  - *Just over 4 million*
  - *A bit more than 4 million*

Ask:

- Can you make up similar statements for:
  - *Brisbane?*
  - *Adelaide?*
- *What about Perth?*

[Perth has:

- **A bit under** 2 million
- **Approximately** 2 million
- **Almost** 2 million.]

*Practice Sheet 1* contains individual practice to reinforce the language of order and approximation.



## Population on Census night 2011

✂ Copy onto card and cut.

New South Wales	Sydney	4,610,000
Victoria	Melbourne	4,170,000
Queensland	Brisbane	2,150,000
Western Australia	Perth	1,830,000
South Australia	Adelaide	1,260,000
Tasmania	Hobart	214,700
Australian Capital Territory	Canberra	367,100
Northern Territory	Darwin	129,100





Population of Australian Capital Cities 2011			
Sydney	4,610,000	Adelaide	1,260,000
Melbourne	4,170,000	Hobart	214,700
Brisbane	2,150,000	Canberra	367,000
Perth	1,830,000	Darwin	129,100

Use words from the box below to make each sentence true. Each word can only be used once.

1. Sydney's population is the ..... in Australia.
2. Darwin's population is the ..... in Australia.
3. Melbourne's population is ..... than Sydney's.
4. Adelaide's population is ..... 1 million.
5. Brisbane's population is ..... 2 million.
6. Melbourne has the second .....population.
7. Perth has a .....population than Brisbane
8. Canberra's population is the ..... smallest.

second	smaller	
a bit less than	fifth	third
largest	lowest	equal to
just over	approximately	highest

