

## Australian English

### The origin of Australian English

The English-speaking Australia and New Zealand are two of the youngest nations in the world. The first Europeans who took their residence in Australia came 205 years ago. They did not come because they wanted to. Australia was founded as a penal colony.

They were eventually followed by voluntary immigrants. So far, Australians with British ancestors have made up the predominant part of the population. Among them, the area where a modern-day Australian can most probably find his ancestors is the region around London. The second important group of immigrants were Irish, mainly responsible for the huge number of Catholics in Australia compared with Britain (30.4% in 1851).

According to Hammarström (1980), Australian pronunciation is more or less the same as Cockney of the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. Since then, it has developed independently (it missed the Received Pronunciation contact arising in Britain in the 19<sup>th</sup> century), and, like most exported languages, it has developed conservatively. Indeed, Australian English is different from any accent existing in England.

### Australianisms

Most of the Australian specialties in vocabulary derive from English local dialects. "On the other hand, in recent years the influence of American English has been apparent... Thus we find American *truck*, *elevator*, and *freeway* alongside British *petrol*, *boot (of a car)* and *tap*." The number of Aboriginal words in Australian English is quite small and is confined to the namings of plants (like *bindiye* and *calombo*), trees (like *boree*, *banksia*, *quandong* and *mallee*), birds (like *currawong*, *galah* and *kookaburra*), animals (like *wallaby* and *wombat*) and fish (like *barramindi*). As in North America, when it comes to place-names the Aboriginal influence has been much greater: with a vast continent to name, about a third of all Australian place-names are Aboriginal.

### Comprehension

1. Why did the first Europeans come to Australia ?
2. Where do most Australians' ancestors come from ?
3. Which British accent is the Australian accent most similar to ?
4. True or false ? Most Australian vocabulary comes from American English.
5. True or false ? Aboriginal words in Australian English are mainly associated with nature.
6. True or false ? Most Australian place names come from Aboriginal words.

Adam Hills is an Australian stand-up comedian.

Here, he reminds Australians why they have “the most annoying accent in the world”.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KpBYnL5fAXE>

**In the first part, he identifies two main features of the Australian accent:**

**1. When Australians speak, the intonation goes up at the end of every sentence.**

What’s Adam’s explanation for this?

What examples does he give, and why are they particularly absurd?

**2. Australians seem to ask questions that don’t need answering.**

Give examples.

**In the second part, Adam points out that it is quite arbitrary what language Australians speak, as they were nearly colonized by both the Dutch and the French.**

1. Where did the Dutch land? What was their reaction and why?

2. Where did the French land? What was their reaction and why?

3. And the British?

### Glossary

**Insecure** = not confident about yourself or your relationships with other people

**Make a statement** = to express or reveal an opinion or characteristic in a very clear way

**Approval** = a positive opinion of somebody/something

**Blessed** = lucky

**Meek** = quiet, gentle, and always ready to do what other people want

**Swamp** = ground that is very wet or covered with water

# Aussie slang!

Look at the examples of Australian slang. Which expressions do you know already? Can you guess the others from the context?

1. The man started getting a bit agro when he had had too much to drink.
2. Our neighbours complained that their ankle-biters couldn't sleep because of the noise.
3. I'm going to watch the game tomorrow arvo.
4. We have so much business at the moment, I'm as busy as a one-legged man in an arse kicking contest.
5. I love the smell of snags on a barbie.
6. A bloke came up to me and asked for directions.
7. If you are going to the bottlo could you get us a slab of XXXX?
8. My house is just down the road.
9. I can't believe you didn't know the answer, you drongo.
10. I saw a great footy match last night
11. It was a terrible party – there was no grog and the grub/tucker was disgusting!
12. If you can't hack what he says, don't talk to him!
13. You've put in some hard yakka – Take a break.
14. After so long not seeing my mates it was great to have a have a chinwag
15. I'll meet you in the boozer after work and we'll sink a coldie or two.
16. We each kicked in 20 bucks to help with the expenses.
17. I think I'll knock off work early on Friday.
18. My brother likes KFC but I prefer Macca's.
19. How can you forget where you parked your car? What a mug!
20. The employee went outside to have a smoko.
21. After such a poor meal, the customer spat the dummy when he was overcharged.
22. He's such a tightarse – he'll never offer to pay for anything.

## An AUSSIE GENTLEMAN

G'day mate  
Pleased to make  
your acquaintance.  
He's bloke  
inebriated beyond the  
capacity to stand up.  
You little ripper!  
Words of praise  
fall me.  
Rack off  
Your presence is  
no longer  
required.  
Fair dinkum  
Of course I'm  
telling the truth.  
Pull ya head in  
You may be  
correct in your  
assertion  
but shut up.  
Wanna Rage?  
Would you like to  
drink vast amounts  
of alcohol with me  
until we both drop?  
You drongo  
You really are  
a rather dimwitted  
person.



Your shout  
If you value your  
well being you  
should buy the  
next drink.  
Go on  
I'm not entirely  
convinced you know  
what you're talking  
about.  
Whadayawant?  
Might I enquire  
about you're  
needs?  
Have a chunder  
The delicate act  
of regurgitation.  
You pong  
Dear me, we do  
smell don't we.  
Bloody oath!  
I'm in total  
agreement with you.  
Hawya going?  
May I enquire about  
your welfare?  
Give it a go ya mug!  
Are you perhaps  
incapable of  
performing this act?

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## An AUSSIE SHEILA

Wanna cuppa?  
Would you care  
for some tea?

Go and fart  
yourself up.  
Please dress  
in your best  
clothes.

Wanna come  
to our piss up?  
You are invited  
to our party

How ya goin'  
luv?  
I hope you are  
feeling well

Don't get your  
knickers in  
a knot  
Don't upset  
yourself

What's the latest goss?  
any juicy news

The old man's  
shot through  
My husband's  
left town

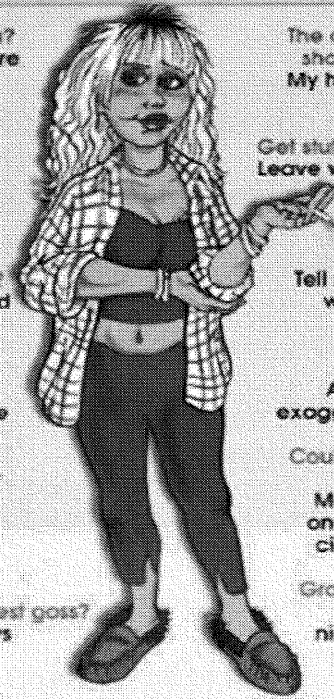
Get stuffed bitch  
Leave whenever  
you like

Shut  
ya gob!  
Tell someone  
who cares

Don't  
crap on  
Aren't you  
exaggerating?

Could I bol a  
fag?  
May I have  
one of your  
cigarettes?

Grouse lippy  
What a  
nice shade  
of lipstick



Read the text and translate it into "ordinary" English

Went to Macca's yesterday arvo with some mates after the footy. I'd been as busy as a one-legged man in an arse kicking contest all week so it was good to have a chinwag with the boys. After that we went to the boozer and sank a few coldies. I went out for a smoko and started talking to a bloke, but he got a bit agro when I told him his team had played like a bunch of drongos. Not my fault if he can't hack the truth! What a mug!

When we finished, we walked down the road to the nearest bottlo to get some more grog.

Picked up a slab and went back to Stevo's house. Once there, we started getting a bit hungry for some tucker so we fired up the barbie and threw a few snags on. We all kicked in a few bucks for the grub, except for Davo, who's a bit of a tightarse! Stevo spat the dummy about that but he had to keep the noise down though, 'cos of the ankle-biters! Anyway, I had to knock off fairly soon after 'cos I had a day of hard yakka ahead of me.