

History of the First Australians 94

Digging Up the Past in Ancient Australia

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First Nations peoples have lived in Australia for a very long time. They have been in Australia for more than 50,000 years. Australia has the oldest surviving culture in the world.

How did they survive in such a hard place? Why did their culture keep going for so long? How can we learn from them to keep our culture going for another 50,000 years? We must make sure all people work together to have the water, air, and food they need to live safely.





3

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How do we find out about the past?
Only hard bones and teeth are left.
If bones are left on the surface, they
break down quickly from the sun,
wind, and rain.

Sometimes the bones of ancient
animals turn into rock. Scientists
call these fossils. It takes over
10,000 years for a bone to turn into
a fossil. The fossil becomes part of
the rock.





Large animals lived in Australia a long time ago. Some have been found as fossils. How do you think a fossil is formed?

To form a fossil, you need to replace the bones. Water with minerals moves into the shapes left by the bones. This dries slowly and turns to hard rock. This can be seen where water has been running over rocks. Caves with fantastic rock shapes are also made this way.

