

First Fleet

The Journey of the First Fleet to Australia

 teachstarter



Life in Britain During the 1700s

In the 1700s, Britain was the wealthiest country in the world. Rich people could provide their children with food, nice clothes, a warm house and an education.

While some people were rich, others were poor. Poor people had no money and no food. They had to work as servants for the rich. Poor children did not attend school. When machines were invented, many people lost their jobs because workers were no longer needed.

Health conditions during the 1700s were very poor. There was no clean water due to the pollution from factories. Manure from horses attracted flies, which spread diseases. A lack of medical care meant many people died from these diseases.



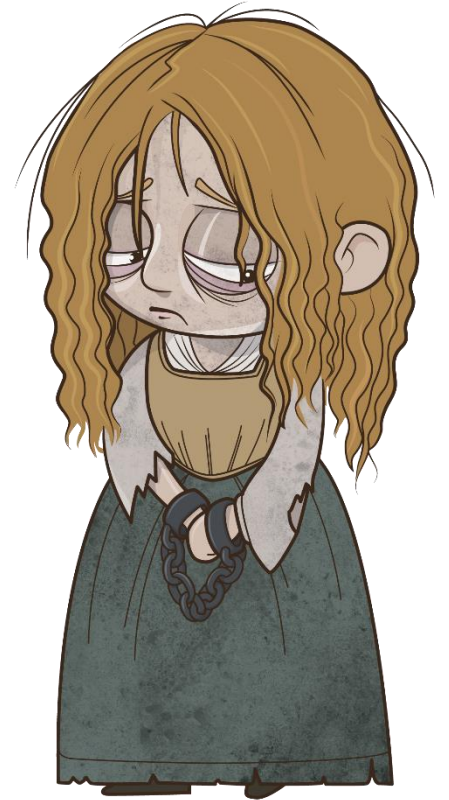
Life in Britain During the 1700s

- The overcrowded city streets were not a nice place to be during the 1700s. High levels of poverty resulted in a lot of crime.
- Harsh punishments were put in place to try to stop the crime. People were convicted for crimes as small as stealing bread. Soon, the prisons became overcrowded with convicts.
- One of the most common punishments was transportation to another country. Until 1782, Britain sent their convicts to America. After the War of Independence in 1783, America refused to take Britain's convicts. Britain began using old rotting ships, called hulks, to house their prisoners.



Life in Britain During the 1700s

- Conditions on the hulks were terrible. Each hulk was cramped and overcrowded, with more than 300 convicts on board.
- Convicts on the hulks were treated poorly and fed only a small amount of food. Each day, they were sent off to work for more than ten hours at a time.
- The hulks also carried diseases. Many convicts died from typhoid and cholera while they were on board.

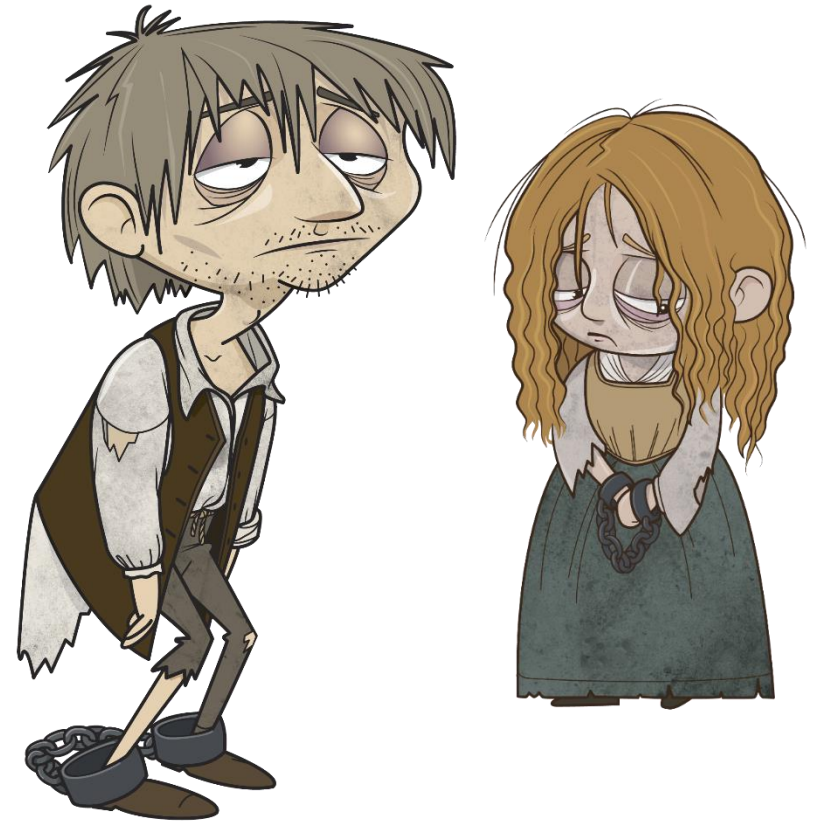


Life as a British Convict

As a class, discuss what life must have been like for a convict living on a hulk.

Use the five senses to brainstorm.

- What would you smell?
- What would you hear?
- What would you taste?
- What would you see?
- How would you feel?



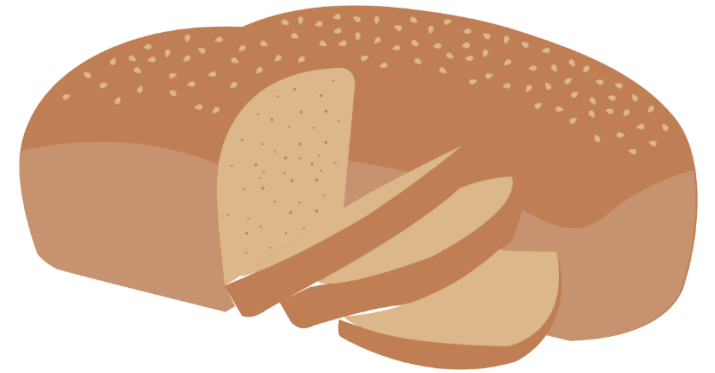
Life as a Convict – Independent Activity

Many British people were given harsh punishments for petty crimes.

Imagine you are a convict. You have been sentenced to seven years transportation for committing one of the following crimes:

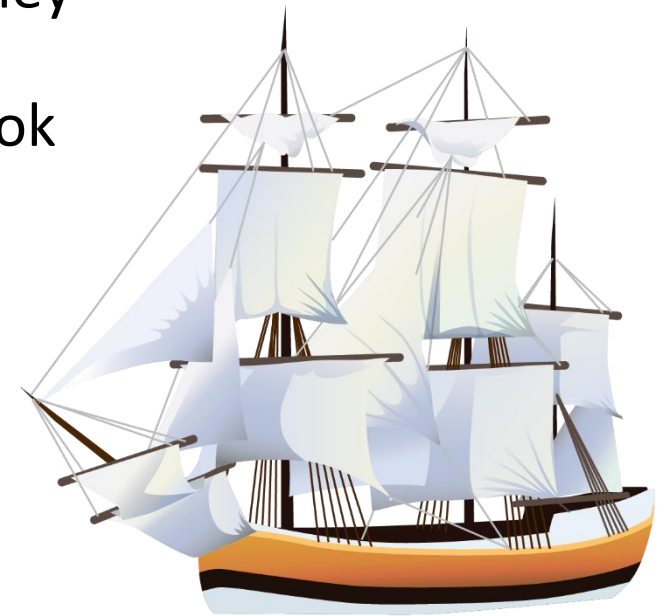
- stealing a loaf of bread
- stealing someone's clothes off the line
- stealing someone's horse
- sneaking on board a ship to another country.

Use the [*Life as a Convict – Journal Writing Task*](#) to write a journal entry that explains your reasons for committing the crime.



Why Were Convicts Transported to Australia?

- Gaols and hulks in Britain were becoming overcrowded with convicts. America was no longer an option for transportation.
- On James Cook's return from Australia in 1771, Lord Sydney agreed that it would be a suitable place to create a penal colony. It was isolated from the rest of the world, and Cook incorrectly labelled it as '*terra nullius*' (nobody's land).
- On 13 May 1787, eleven convict ships journeyed from Portsmouth, England, to Australia. This fleet of convict ships became known as the First Fleet and arrived at Botany Bay from 18 January 1788.



The Ships of The First Fleet

Two Royal Navy vessels

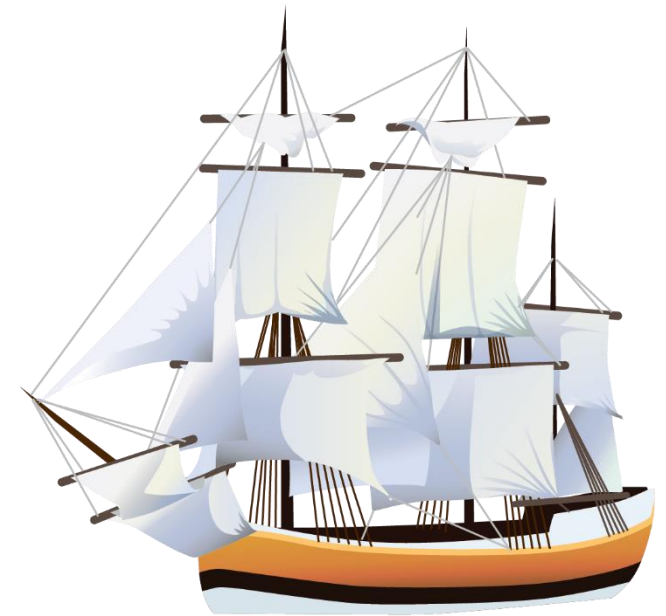
- HMS *Sirius* and HMS *Supply*

Three store ships

- *Golden Grove*, *Fishburn* and *Borrowdale*

Six convict transport vessels

- *Alexander*, *Charlotte*, *Friendship*, *Lady Penrhyn*, *Prince of Wales* and *Scarborough*



People and Equipment – The First Fleet

1500 people

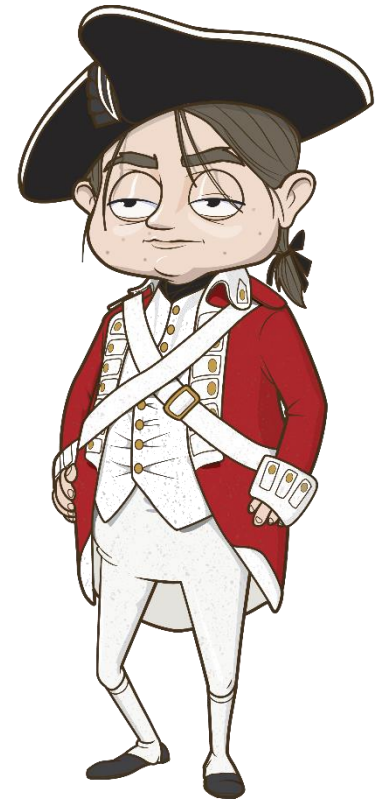
Convicts, marines, sailors, civil officers and free people

Animals

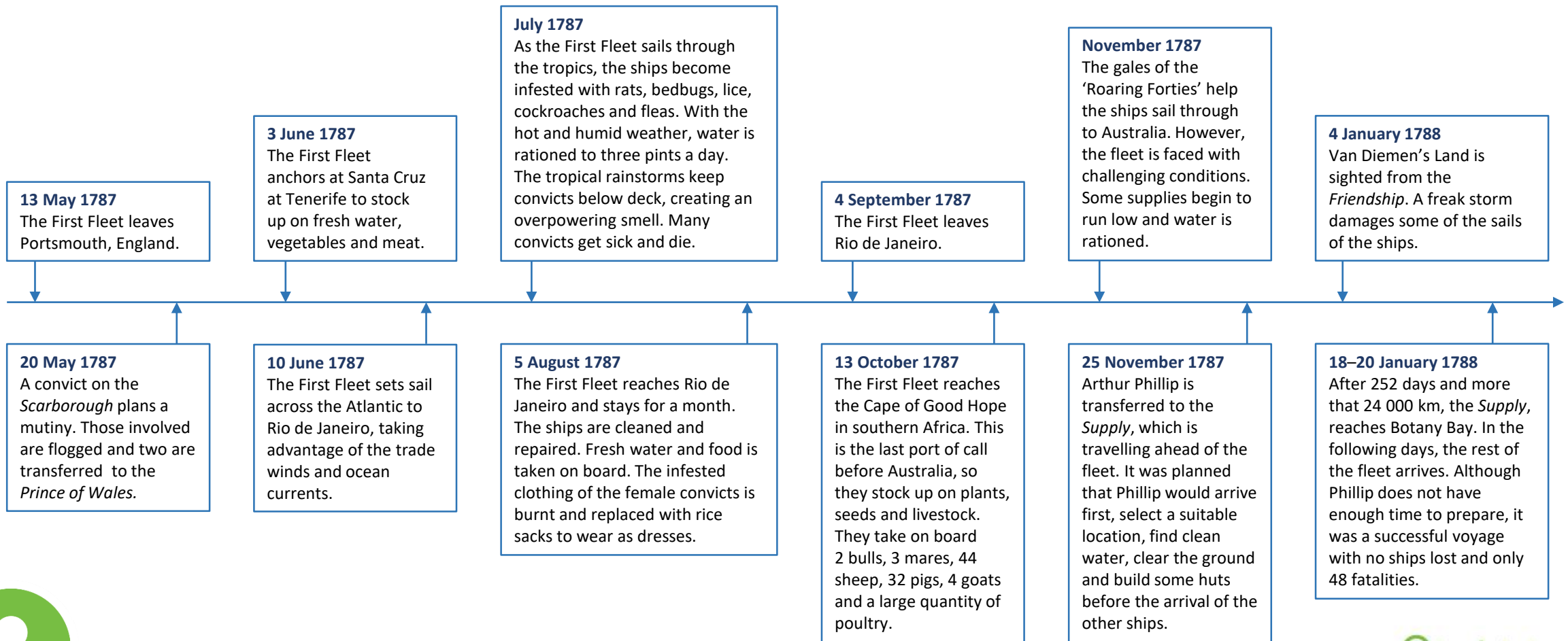
7 horses, 29 sheep, 74 swine, 6 rabbits and 7 cattle

Food and supplies

Ropes, crockery, agricultural equipment, tools, seeds, spirits, medical supplies, surgical instruments, handcuffs, leg irons and other miscellaneous items

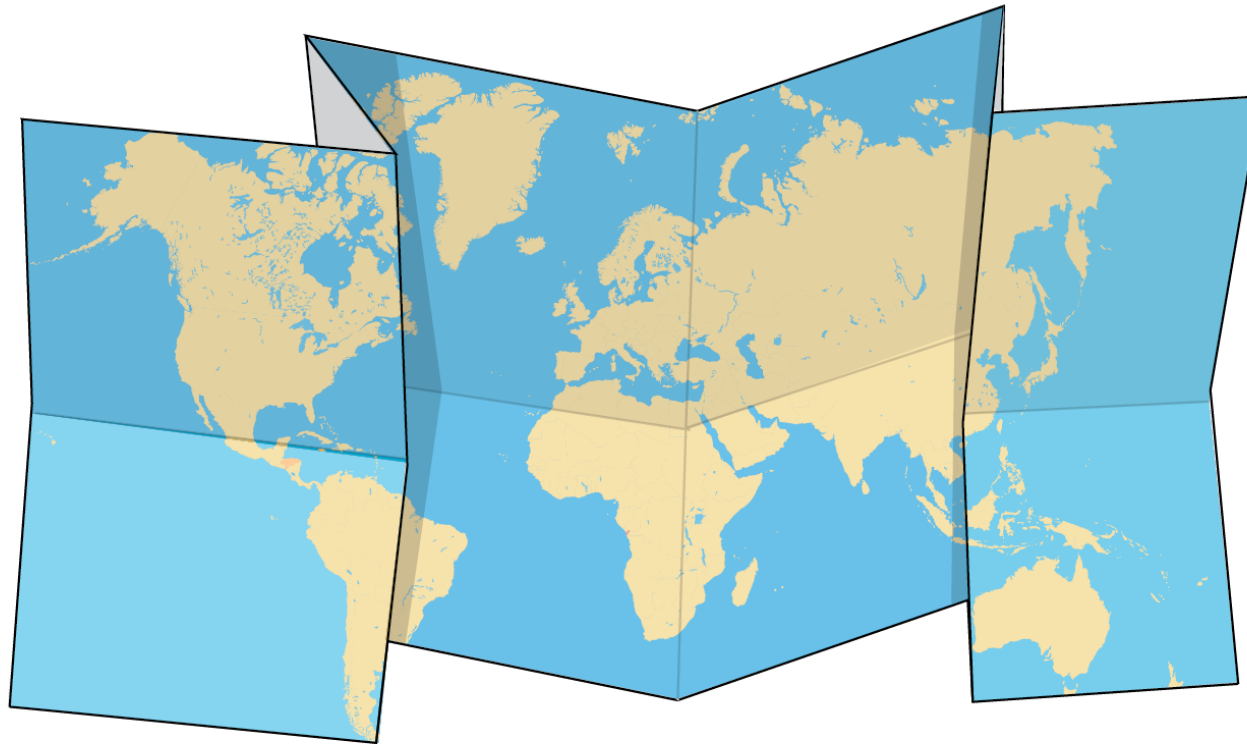


The First Fleet Timeline



Plotting the Route of the First Fleet

Use a world map and a timeline to plot the route of the First Fleet.



Ships of the First Fleet – Independent Activity

In small groups, research one of the eleven ships from the First Fleet.

Present your information on one of the [Ships of the First Fleet – Writing Templates.](#)

Use the ships to create an informative class display of the First Fleet.

