

The First Fleet & British Settlement — Knowledge Organiser

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Key facts

- In 1788, eleven ships known as the First Fleet arrived at Sydney Cove, led by Captain Arthur Phillip.
- Many on board were convicts — prisoners sent from Britain, often for minor crimes.
- Britain set up a penal colony (a settlement for convicts) at what became Sydney.
- 26 January, the day the British flag was raised, is now marked as Australia Day.

Key vocabulary

- Convict — a person found guilty of a crime and sent to the colony as punishment.
- Penal colony — a settlement used to hold convicts.
- Colony — land settled and controlled by another country.
- Frontier — the edge of the settled area, where settlers and First Nations peoples met.

Impact on First Nations peoples

For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, who had lived on the land for tens of thousands of years, British settlement brought great harm: loss of land, new diseases, and conflict. For this reason, many First Nations people regard 26 January as a day of mourning, sometimes called Invasion Day or Survival Day.

Two perspectives

The same event can look very different depending on who you are. Understanding history means considering the viewpoints of both the settlers and the First Nations peoples whose lives were changed forever.