The original migrants to Australia were mainly unwilling to come here. They were mostly convicts, convicted of crimes in Britain and sentenced to transportation to a penal colony in a land they had probably never heard of.

**Some interesting statistics**
- Some 150,000 convicts were transported to Australia, most of whom could not read or write and were very poor.
- The majority of crimes for which they were convicted related to theft — often of food.
- Some 16 per cent of convicts were women. Some brought their children with them; other children were transported in their own right as punishment. Other convicts were elderly — in their 70s and 80s.
- On average, convicts were aged about 26. Until the late 1820s, sentences ranged from a usual minimum of seven years up to life.

Complete the following research activity to find out more about this fascinating part of our nation's history. (See References at the end of this worksheet for some sources.)

**IT IS IMPORTANT TO HAVE A FOCUS FOR YOUR RESEARCH SO THAT YOU CAN MAKE THE BEST USE OF YOUR TIME.**

**Step 1**
1. Choose an aspect of convict life that really interests you. Here are some topics to choose from:
   - Women convicts
   - Male convicts
   - Child convicts
   - A convict facing secondary punishment
     (a) at Port Arthur
     (b) at Port Macquarie
   - Punishments for convicts
   - Famous convicts
     (a) Mary Reiby
     (b) Francis Greenway
     (c) Simeon Lord
     (d) Margaret Catchpole
   - Governor Macquarie and his treatment of convicts
   - Convict bushrangers
     (a) John (Black) Caesar
     (b) Mathew Brady
     (c) Martin Cash
   - Cannibal convicts — Alexander Pearce
Step 2
Keep a bibliography as you do your research. This means keeping an accurate record of the references you have used for your topic. In the case of books, record the title, author/s, publisher, place and date of publication and the page numbers of any quotations you plan to use. In the case of web sites, record the web address.

To help you, some typical references have been listed below, (as you should display them in your bibliography).

**Typical bibliography** (an example)
Jones, Jack 1990, ‘Convict punishments’, *Australia’s Colonial History*, vol. 6, no. 2, p. 27.
www.convicthistory.com.au

Step 3
As you take notes from your various sources:

- Use headings and subheadings.
- Under each of these, record your findings as key points.
- Try to find examples of primary sources connected to your topic. A primary source of evidence is evidence that was produced, or comes from, the period of history being studied. Such items could be:
  - an old painting or photograph
  - an old map
  - an old document (ticket of leave, pardon, ship list, extract from a letter)
  - an old sketch or diagram.

Photocopy your sources as you do your research, noting where you found each. Most modern history textbooks are filled with examples of primary sources so you should not have much trouble finding them.

Step 4
When you have finished your research, plan how you will present your research report and organise your information. Think about:

- How will you explain the information you have researched in your own words. If you include direct quotations from your sources, you must list clearly where each came from.
  - For example, after a particular quotation you would include, say (Smith 1992, p. 26). In your bibliography, you would include full details of the source (see example above).
- How to express your ideas clearly, logically and accurately. It is best to produce a draft first, and then recheck it.
- What headings and subheadings you will use in your report
- How best to connect any primary sources you include to your information
- How best to incorporate statistics about convicts in your report. For example, will you include tables, or will you convert data to bar graphs, pie graphs etc.?
- What visuals and presentation style you will use to make your report as eye-catching as possible.

References:  