Decade Summary	1918
The early 20th century was a time of relative calm and global peace. European nations politically and economically expanded into new territories in Asia, the Indies and the South Pacific. France, Germany and Britain arose as pre-eminent superpowers. This European imperial development and expansion came to a dramatic and catastrophic end with the First World War (1914–18). At the beginning of the First World War, both sides of Australian politics competed to give enthusiastic endorsement for Britain's war effort. In 1914, the Australian Labor Party (ALP) leader and soon to be prime minister, Andrew Fisher, declared Australia would back Britain 'to the last man and the last shilling'. This war tested Australia's national pride and newly established independence. It was a time when both the Anzac legend and a 'national identity' developed. But this unity was to be short lived. The 1916 and 1917 conscription referendums split the country and left a bitterness that lasted for more than a generation. Australian politics saw factional confrontation between Irish and British Australians, between Catholics and Protestants, inside the ALP government's own ranks, and between pacifist and militarist patriots.	**January** • The Australia Corps formed out of five separate Australian divisions fighting in France during the First World War. Lieutenant general John Monash, the first Australian commander, was appointed and took command in France. **April** • A factory opened in Caulfield, Victoria, to manufacture artificial limbs for returned soldiers. **September** • The first direct wireless message was transmitted from Britain to Australia. **November** • On the '11th day of the 11th month at the 11th hour', the Armistice between the Allies and Germany flagged the cessation of fighting on the Western Front. • Preferential voting was introduced for the first time in elections for the House of Representatives. • Two significant children's books were published: *The Magic Pudding* by Norman Lindsay and *Tales of Snugglepot and Cuddlepie: Their Wonderful Adventures* by May Gibbs.

History and Politics	
Currency and banking	In October, the *Australian Notes Act 1910* (Cth) vested control of the note issue from independent trading banks to the Commonwealth Treasury. By 1 May 1913, the first Australian currency, a ten-shilling denomination, was produced by the Royal Mint in Melbourne. The Commonwealth Bank of Australia was founded under the *Commonwealth Bank Act 1911* (Cth). It was established to conduct both savings and general (trading) bank business, and was backed by a federal government guarantee. The bank was termed by the federal government as 'the people's bank' and in July 1912 opened its first branch on Collins Street, Melbourne. During the First World War, the Commonwealth Bank assisted other federal authorities to organise war loans, primary production pools and a merchant shipping fleet.
The war effort	On 13 April 1910, the Australian Labor Party (ALP) won the federal election with a clear majority in both the House of Representatives and the Senate. Scottish-born Andrew Fisher, son of a coal miner, became prime minister while Welsh-born Billy Hughes became attorney-general. On 5 September 1914, due to a dissolution of parliament, all 75 House of Representatives seats were up for re-election. The ALP won a stunning election victory, taking 42 of the 75 seats and an overwhelming 31 of 36 Senate seats. In Europe on 4 August 1914, Britain declared war on Germany and the Austro-Hungarian empire. As Britain was at war, so was Australia. The Australian war effort was dominated by recruiting and equipping a force to fight overseas. Australia's early involvement in the First World War included the Australian Naval and Military Expeditionary Force taking possession of German New Guinea and the neighbouring islands of the Bismarck Archipelago in October 1914. In November 1914, the Royal Australian Navy made a significant contribution when HMAS *Sydney* destroyed the German raider SMS *Emden*. On 25 April 1915, members of the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) landed at Gallipoli together with troops from New Zealand, Britain and France. This began a campaign that ended with the evacuation of troops on 19 and 20 December 1915. Following the battles at Gallipoli, Australian forces fought campaigns on the Western Front and in the Middle East.
The conscription debate	In August 1916, Billy Hughes, now prime minister, returned from Britain convinced that conscription should be introduced to ensure reinforcements for the AIF. He received strong support from the newly formed Returned Services League (RSL), but caused great dissension within his own party and especially among the Irish-Australians, who made up the party's electoral base. On 28 October 1916, the first conscription referendum was held and rejected. Two weeks later, the ALP split and Hughes led 23 supporters in a walkout. Subsequently, he formed a party and managed to retain office with Liberal support. In December 1917, a second conscription referendum was defeated. The Nationalist Party of Australia was formed on 17 February 1917 from a merger between the conservative Commonwealth Liberal Party and the National Labor Party, the name given to the pro-conscription defectors from the ALP led by prime minister Billy Hughes.
Postwar international politics	After the Allies' victory in 1918, the Paris Peace Conference was held in 1919 with prime minister Billy Hughes representing Australia. This was the first time Australia had represented itself at an international conference and Hughes was determined to be heard. Australia had suffered considerable losses in the First World War that were proportionately higher than the majority of nations taking part in the conference. Hughes returned to a hero's

	welcome, hailed as the 'little digger' who had stood up to the other world powers. In 1919, the League of Nations was part of the Treaty of Versailles, the peace treaty to conclude First World War. The aims of the League of Nations were to promote international cooperation, peace, security and the 'rights of man'. It was the first international political treaty signed by Australia and the first in which Australia was directly involved in negotiations. Australia was among 32 signatories to the treaty and a founding member. The Australian representative at the League of Nations Assembly was FL McDougall.

Society and Culture	
The First World War	Australia's involvement in the First World War (August 1914 – November 1918) resulted in 61,720 combatants killed and some 150,000 wounded. Overall 421,809 served in the military, including 331,781 serving overseas. More than 2,000 Australian nurses served with the Australian Army Nursing Service, 130 with the British nursing service and 423 in hospitals in Australia. Between 400 and 500 Indigenous soldiers fought in the First World War. From April 1915, Australian soldiers fought at Gallipoli, Turkey, as part of an attempt to secure a sea route for the British ally Russia. The campaign was an attempt to find a way around the massive entrenchments already established in central Europe. The strategy did not work but the attempt produced many heroes including 'Simpson and his donkey'. In December 1915, all Allied troops were evacuated from the Gallipoli peninsula. After Gallipoli, the majority of Australian Imperial Force soldiers were shifted to the Western Front in France and Belgium to fight against Germany. During this campaign Australian and Allied losses escalated further, reaching a peak in September–November 1917. After 15 weeks of fighting in the Battle of Passchendaele (Third Battle of Ypres), Australian casualties totalled 38,000.
Irish in Australia	The First World War coincided with the Easter Rising in 1916 against British rule in Ireland. This meant that many Irish-Australians who had previously pledged loyalty to the cause of Empire and allegiance to Australia began to have significant doubts. In May 1917, Les Darcy, an Australian-born boxer, died in Tennessee, USA. Darcy had secretly left the country in breach of wartime regulations to fight in the USA to further his career. Seen as having been unfairly maligned due to his Irish-Catholic heritage and his apparent unwillingness to fight in the war, his funeral in Maitland, New South Wales, became an occasion for anti-government protest. In November 1919, a rally was held in Melbourne following the Australasian Irish race convention with Australian Labor Party (ALP) politician Thomas Joseph Ryan in the chair. A massive crowd voted to affirm Ireland's right to self-government. The prime minister, Billy Hughes, used these events to heavily damage the ALP, linking it with the Irish cause and accusing it of disloyalty to Britain and the British Empire.
Drinking laws	In 1915, pubs and hotels had to close at 6 pm as part of a war austerity measure. The change to this law was partly a response to popular feeling that pastimes and amusements (sport, cinema, theatre, circuses, and music halls among others) should be curtailed while so many Australians were fighting overseas. The early closing time for hotels and pubs was also a response to a long-running temperance movement, which had been campaigning since the mid-19th century for the elimination of alcohol from public life.
Women's fashions	The First World War marked the end of the fashion trend known as the Gibson Girl look. The Gibson Girl was the personification of a feminine ideal during a 20-year period spanning the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The Gibson Girl was tall and slender, with an S-curve torso shape that accentuated the bust and hips. This shape was achieved by wearing a swan-bill corset. The 'ideal' woman was statuesque, with a thin neck and her hair piled high on her head in bouffant, pompadour, or chignon ('waterfall of curls') fashions. During the war, women were working outside the home and needed a new fashion that was ready-to-wear. As women worked in factories, it was dangerous to have long hair and long dresses. For daytime wear, women favoured a practical, more masculine suit, compatible with war work, over the elegant dresses, bustle gowns, shirtwaists, and terraced, shorter skirts.

	Magazines such as *Vogue* and *Harper's Bazaar* were popular and enticed women to spend their newly earned wages on what they wore. Rayon was the first synthetic fabric produced at a low cost and was called 'artificial silk'. Women wore clothes made from it and white linen with embroidery. The straw boater hat was worn with long hair that was pinned up underneath the hat. Undergarments, including corsets, cinched the waist to confine the figure.

Science and Technology	
The wireless revolution	On 22 September 1918, Sydney received the first direct wireless message from Britain. The messages were sent between the prime minister and the navy minister (who was in Britain at the time for an Imperial Conference). On 13 August 1919, a recording of 'God save the King' was transmitted by the Amalgamated Wireless Company, Sydney. Instantaneous voice transmissions from the other side of the world deepened Australian's sense of connection and patriotism with Britain as relations had come under a strain during the war.
Early flights	On 30 June 1910, a prize of £5,000 was offered by the Australian Government to the inventor of a 'flying machine'. In July 1910, the first Australian-built aircraft was launched and flown at Mia Mia by designer and builder John Duigan. In 1910, Harry Houdini, the US escapologist, made the first flight in Australia in his plane at Diggers Rest, north of Melbourne. In July 1914, a Frenchman, Maurice Guillaux, left Melbourne for Sydney in a Bleriot monoplane carrying Australia's first airmail. He arrived in Sydney two days later, after a total flying time of 9 hours and 15 minutes. He carried 1,785 specially printed postcards, letters of greeting to various officials and some private parcels. In 1920, the air flight company Queensland and Northern Territory Aerial Services (Qantas) was founded in Winton, Queensland. It began operation as a government-subsidised airmail service linking railheads in western Queensland.
The national capital	On 1 January 1911, an area of 2,360 square kilometres was transferred from New South Wales to the Australian Government to establish the Australian Capital Territory. In May 1912, architect Walter Burley Griffin and his wife architect and illustrator Marion Mahony Griffin won the worldwide competition to design the national capital of Australia. It was to be a thoroughly planned and self-contained city divided into sections with a lake (later named Lake Burley Griffin) as the dividing point. In March 1913, the governor-general Lord Denham laid the foundation stone of the new capital and told the assembled press that people should not complain about the expenses involved in creating another city because Melbourne and Sydney were already overcrowded. Lady Denham officially named the city 'Canberra'. The area in which Canberra would eventually be constructed was on Ngunnawal and Walgalu peoples' traditional country. The word 'Canberra' is derived from the word 'Kanbarra', meaning 'meeting place' in the Ngunnawal language of the local Ngabri people.
Making a railway national	In 1917, the Trans-Australian railway opened between Kalgoorlie in Western Australia and the South Australian town of Port Augusta. It had been built across the Nullarbor Plain, with one stretch featuring 478 kilometres without a single curve. The railway finally fulfilled an agreement between the states at the time of Federation to link the western coast of Australia to the eastern coast. It was

| | now possible to travel on land from Perth to Brisbane (via Sydney), thus reducing the 'tyranny of distance'. |