



The First Fleet

Name: _____ Date: _____

Who was in the first fleet?



We know that there were convicts on board the first fleet, but who else came to Australia? Records from the time of the First Fleet are very unreliable and many people recorded different numbers. These are the numbers believed to be the most accurate. The convicts were prisoners, so someone needed to stop them from escaping. To do this, the British government sent 247 navy soldiers to keep the prisoners in line. Many of these soldiers would not be returning to England for many years, so they brought their families as well. 46 family members came along with them. Each Ship had a Captain and each regiment of soldiers had it's officers. A total of 15 officers embarked from Portsmouth. There were 11 ships in total, and with the convicts in shackles and the navy soldiers busy looking after the convicts, who was sailing the ships? This was the job of 323 sailors and navy seamen. There were a lot of convicts, 582 men and 193 women. Some of the women were pregnant when they embarked, 20 babies were born on the way to Australia. Life at sea was hard and dangerous. With limited supplies of food and fresh water, people often got sick and sometimes died, people also died from accidents. Some people didn't travel all the way to Australia and instead disembarked in Tenerife, Rio De Janeiro or Cape Town. In total, 103 passengers either died on the journey or disembarked before Australia.

How many people left Britain? _____

How many people arrived in Australia? _____

How do you think the navy soldiers and their families felt about being away from home for such a long time? _____

What kind of illnesses might people have got during long sea voyages? _____

