

**Grade 5 HASS**  
**Australian History**

# **Australian Explorers**

# **John McDouall Stuart**

**Comprehension  
Activities**



**Aussie  
Star**  
RESOURCES

Letter from John McDouall Stuart's sister to the Governor of South Australia,  
Sir Dominick Daly

March 1st, 1865

Your Excellency,

My name is Mary Turkull. I am the sister of John McDouall Stuart, the great Australian explorer and surveyor. I am writing to kindly request additional financial support to assist with John's care at this time. Since he has returned from Australia, beaten and battered, his health has continued to decline. When John returned, after a long voyage over the high seas on the Indus, I was taken aback when I saw him disembark. The wind was knocked right out of my lungs, like I had been kicked in the stomach by a horse. John resembled a dead tree, washed-out, leached of colour and vigour. When we embraced for the first time, he was shaking, weak and thin from months in the unforgiving 'Red Centre', a land with an insatiable desire to destroy any who even dare to cross its hellish paths.

John endured many hardships on his explorations to open up country to the north of Adelaide and be the first to cross the continent north to south, and return. He officially left for his successful expedition from North Adelaide on the 29th of October, 1861 with ten others, seventy-two horses, and supplies. He was delayed five months due to an accident that has had ongoing repercussions. From Marree to Chambers Creek, to traversing the rugged and treacherous MacDonnell Ranges, moving through Tennant Creek and Newcastle Waters, he reached Daly Waters on the 28th of May, 1862. He always talks about the wretched scrub land leading to Stuart's Plan. That scrub that had defeated him and brought him to his knees on a previous attempt. Not only that, his water bags were completely torn and trash worthy by the time he reached Daly Waters. Sapped of all energy and feeling desperately "on the ropes" from hunger and thirst, he and his party decided to set up camp for two weeks to recuperate. Leaving from Daly Waters, they surged north through seemingly impenetrable countryside to arrive at Van Diemen's Gulf on the 24th of July, 1862. He had made it! Crossing some 3400km in nine months!

The horrendous return journey awaited him like a brown snake crouched in stealthy anticipation below a rusty, shivering shed door. It would bring John McDouall Stuart, my brother, closer to

death. He was convinced the Australian outback would be his final resting place. He lost his eye and his leg, and the hope that remained with him. He suffered terribly with scurvy, pushing through pain and weakness to reach Adelaide. Eventually, he was so weak that he could not even hold himself upright to ride his horse.

I am, indeed, much indebted to his loyal comrades. The blacksmith, John McGorry. He patiently crafted a stretcher for him to be carried on between two horses for some 960km! I should also mention William Patrick Auld, a young man who continued to survey the land on John's behalf. John called all of his men, "companions". They helped him to make it to Adelaide on the 17th of December 1862. Here are their names. Be sure to offer them support and convey my highest respect and sincerest regards.

William Darton Kewick	Francis William Thring
William Patrick Auld	Stephen King-Jir
John William Bullitt	James Frew-Jir
Heath Nash	John McGorry
Frederick George Waterhouse	

Your excellency, John's achievements are no small feat. Being the first European to make this journey and successfully return is an amazing testament to his determination and strength of character, an achievement worthy of double honour. However, after the initial excitement had faded, his legacy has simply, and painfully, been forgotten.

John McDouall Stuart is a man renowned for his ferocious speed and appetite for adventure. An approach to life that saw him succeed, and survive, the venture that led to the demise of the heavily applauded and commemorated Burke and Wills. However, my little brother is now wasting away before my very eyes. Many of the afflictions from his arduous quests are still with him including the poor eyesight and the effects of scurvy.

I have been left with no choice but to kindly request of you some financial assistance to help with his care. After his tireless work for the improvement of your State and the prospects of the 'new country', it is only fair and proper that we care for his needs.

Yours sincerely,

Mary Turkull

Please note that this letter is fictional, however, it uses names, dates, places and events that are factual.

How does John's sister Mary describe John Stuart's physical condition on his arrival in England?

When did John Stuart's expedition leave Adelaide?

What were some of the difficulties faced by John Stuart and his men on their journey?

Name three of the locations the expedition party travelled through on their long journey north.

When did John Stuart and his party finally reach the Van Diemen's Gulf? How far had they travelled and how many months had they been travelling?

What health conditions made John Stuart's return trip difficult?

Look up the definition of 'companion' in the dictionary. Why do you think it is significant that John Stuart called the men in his party 'companions' instead of workers?

How does Mary compare the treatment of her brother to that of Burke and Wills?

**resemble**

To be in a very rough or terrible condition or to feel very unwell and miserable.

tough, strenuous, exhausting, grueling, laborious

**embrace**

To recover from an illness or a difficult time.

Minor, duplicate, replicate, simile, match.

**legacy**

To be like or similar something. For example to look like someone else.

wife, miserable, shabby, hopeless, despicable, awful

**arduous**

Something that is part of history and remembered from an earlier time.

recover, bounce back, heal, get well, convalesce

## Vocabulary Match Up

1. Trim each of the puzzle pieces and match the definitions and synonyms with the correct word.
2. Glue the 'Vocabulary Match Up' title above at the top of your page.
3. You will need to use a dictionary and thesaurus to make sure you have them matched correctly.
4. Once you have matched them glue the completed puzzles in to your book.
5. For an extra challenge choose four vocabulary words to write in morse code on the sheet provided. Write your vocabulary word in the small box on the left and translate it to morse code in the larger box on the right.

**wretched**

to hug or hold tightly,  
especially in kindness or  
affection.

to hug or hold tightly,  
especially in kindness or  
affection.

**recuperate**

to hug or hold tightly,  
especially in kindness or  
affection.

to hug or hold tightly,  
especially in kindness or  
affection.

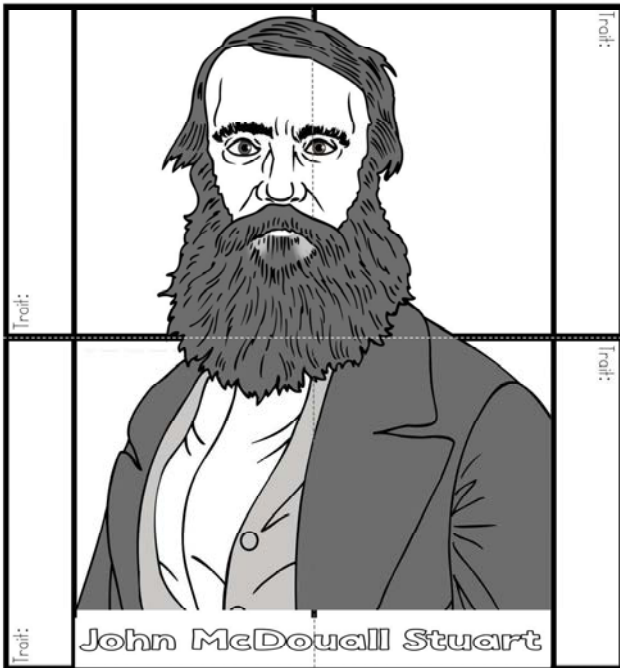
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## Morse Code

A	•—	N	—•
B	—•••	O	—•—
C	—••—	P	•—•—
D	—•—•	Q	—•—•
E	•—	R	•—•—
F	••—•	S	•••—
G	—•—•	T	—•••
H	••••	U	•—•—
I	••	V	••••
J	•—•—	W	•—•—
K	—•—•	X	—••—
L	•—••	Y	—•—•
M	—•—	Z	—•••




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John McDouall Stuart

## John McDouall Stuart Character Analysis

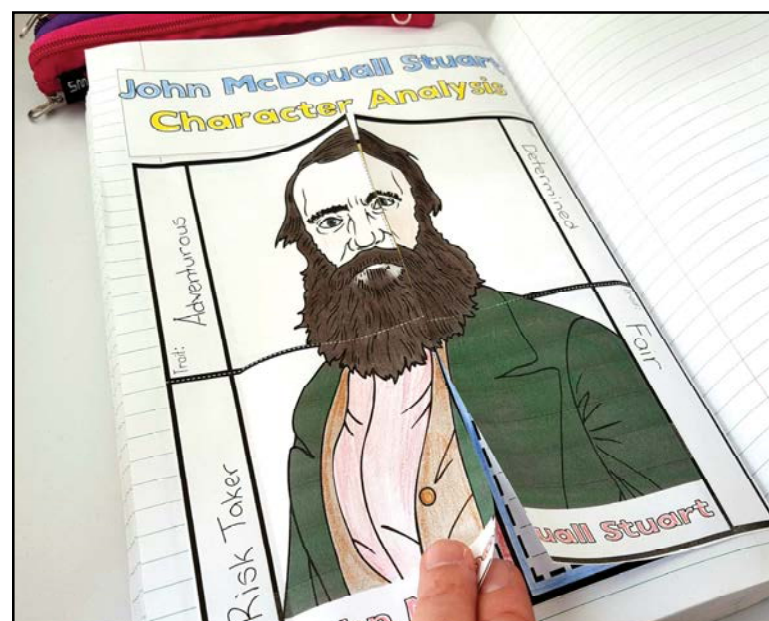
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John Stuart is: Because the text says:   	John Stuart is: Because the text says:   
John Stuart is: Because the text says:   	John Stuart is: Because the text says:   

1. Cut around the outside edge of this section.
2. Glue it in to your book entirely.
3. After reading the text choose four adjectives to describe the character of John Stuart and then explain your reason for choosing this word by providing evidence from the text.
4. Cut around the edge of the cover page and then in to four sections. Glue these on top, lining up the image of Stuart to create 4 mini-books. Please refer to the pictures.

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Answers are included