

# Captain arthur phillip assignment



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Evaluate the career of Captain Arthur Phillip in his role as the first Governor.

Captain Arthur Phillip's role as first Governor of the colony of New South Wales proved to be efficient and successful despite the difficulties.

Difficulties included, limited supplies and the soils around Sydney were of poor quality making cultivation difficult. Tools were scarce and the Marines were unsupportive and not at all interested in instilling the discipline the convicts required. Along with these chaotic circumstances Captain Phillip, who was under strict instructions to "form an intercourse with the natives", met with instances of extreme resistance.

Phillip's success was due to his forward thinking and his optimism. Phillip proved to be an effective, just and humane administrator. Settlement was to prove difficult but a challenge Captain Arthur Phillip would ultimately succeed in. Captain Arthur Phillip and the First Fleet arrived in Botany Bay on the 18 January 1788. This site was chosen by Sir Joseph Banks and James Cook in 1770. Phillip soon realized this site was not suitable, the waters were too shallow, the soil was of poor quality and there was no reliable water source.

Phillip was aware from Banks and Cook's journey that further north there was a cove which could prove suitable. On the 26 January 1788 Phillip and the First Fleet arrived in Sydney Cove. The early days were a struggle; some of the supplies had spoiled during the journey and cultivation of food, which by now was imperative, was proving difficult due to the unfamiliar soils and climate. Very few of the convicts had any knowledge of agriculture and tools were scarce. The Europeans has also lost many animals both on the journey and upon arrival.

The colony was on the verge of starvation. Phillip faced further difficulties when the Marines, who at times had problems with their own discipline, were not interested in disciplining the convicts. Along with sitting in a court of law this was seen as a lowly role. With few options open to him Phillip appointed overseers from amongst the best behaved convicts. This proved to be an excellent initiative by Phillip as it gave the chosen convicts responsibility and respect towards Phillip, which was vital for him to succeed as Governor.

Phillip eventually succeeded in his recommendation to remove the Marines. The amount being sent back to England proved to the Government that they were unsatisfactory and were replaced by the New South Wales Corps. This was a positive outcome for Phillip. Phillip was instructed by the Government to “adopt a policy” towards the Aboriginal people. This policy was to open an “intercourse with the natives”. Phillip ordered all Europeans that arrived in Sydney that the Aboriginal people must be treated well, and any person who killed would be hanged.

As crops wilted in the soil and food shortages were becoming apparent, Phillip grew anxious and decided to kidnap several of the natives in order to engage a better understanding of their culture and the country's resources. This showed that Phillip understood the colony was in danger of starvation and took the initiative to find out how the Aboriginal people could help rectify this. Arabanoo was kidnapped first and then Bennelong. Arabanoo later died from small pox, and Bennelong escaped. Months later Phillip approached Bennelong in Manly offering friendship; Phillip was speared – almost fatally – by another native.

Phillip held no grudge towards the Aboriginal people. Phillip's reaction is an indication of his character, which shows he was a humanitarian with empathy and understanding. Alan Frost wrote " The Aboriginals there had a better friend in Phillip than they could have possibly have known". Phillip succeeded in making contact with the natives and wrote of the Aboriginal people " being as much as home in Sydney as they were in their woods". By 1789 the threat of starvation was imminent, the Pitt administration organized to send various supplies including convicts with agriculture and building supplies, which Phillip had asked for originally.

The ship carrying these supplies hit and iceberg, and later the ship was wrecked. Phillip commented " it had been a fatal one for this colony for it has thrown us back almost to where we were a few months after landing". Phillip announced that the colony's supplies were to be rationed, with each individual receiving the same ration. This is another reflection of Phillip's character, he ordered that the convicts and free settlers be treated the same. The only flaw with the rationing supplies was that the rations were so small it encouraged theft.

By 1790 agriculture were starting to progress. Phillip assigned groups of colonists and individuals to be responsible for meeting their own needs. This proved to be a successful experiment as it was only two years before farmers became self sufficient. Phillip's career as New South Wales first Governor began to succeed. Soon more than 20000 bricks were made out of local clay. Brick walls and timber shingles kept the colony's precious stores protected. Hospitals, huts for the officers, barracks for the troops and Government House were well on the way.

Phillip took around 100 convicts to an area that was later to be named Parramatta. This became a wise choice because of the excellent soil. Phillip considered this area “ as fine as any I have seen in England”. Phillip also sent a group to Norfolk Island, another excellent decision as by the first spring they had grown many vegetables and grain was looking promising. There was enough food to last at least six months. Phillip introduced the “ assignment” in 1789. This was a positive step for the convicts and colonists.

They could now be transferred from Government employment into private sector for the officers and settlers. As the first Governor of New South Wales, Phillip was putting his policies and procedures in place. Phillip also ruled that once convicts had completed their sentence they were to be granted small farms. By 1792 it was clear the colony’s difficulties were diminishing. There were more than 4000 colonists in Sydney, Parramatta and on Norfolk Island. Phillip’s success can be attributed to his attitude which even under pressure remained positive and also his forward thinking.

His estimate time to get to New South Wales was quite accurate, he understood that he and his party would find no necessities upon arrival therefore they would need to be well equipped. Although in hindsight further knowledge of the land for cultivation would have been useful and may have prompted further supplies to be carried. He also suspected that the number of natives would be larger than what Cook and Bank’s first reported, and he was correct. Phillip implemented procedures and policies. He showed in his ways that he recognized that New South Wales could not simply run as a prison camp.

Along with the prison he provided civil administration with courts of law, which proved effective. Due to illness Phillip left New South Wales and returned to England in 1792 where he eventually resumed his navel career. For five years with unflinching optimism he struggled to create a viable colony. Phillip faced many challenges as the first Governor of New South Wales. He overcame many obstacles such as potential starvation. Phillip found excellent soils in Parramatta and Norfolk Island which produced vegetables and grain.

The Marines were replaced by the New South Wales Corps and due to his fairness and humane ways he had the respect of many convicts. Phillip built a good rapport with the Aboriginal people and stayed friends with many of the natives during his term. Bennelong even referred to him as “ father”. By the time Phillip left New South Wales the European population had grown substantially. The early years of the colony were indeed years of hardship. Phillip came across many obstacles but ultimately succeeded in what he set out to achieve and for this he is certainly to be applauded.