Abbreviated words
Some Australian expressions are created by making words shorter (by dropping the final part of the word) and then sometimes adding ‘o’ or ‘ie’ to the end of the word. These are used in an informal context. The spelling tends to reflect the pronunciation of the created word, rather than the original word. Examples are:

- Aggro = aggravated, aggravation
- Arvo = afternoon
- Servo = service station (where you buy petrol)
- Smoko = smoke break (a break during work to have a cigarette)
- Ambo = an ambulance or an ambulance driver
- Barbie = barbeque
- Chewie = chewing gum
- Kindie = kindergarten
- Mozzie = mosquito
- Sickie = a day off work through (claimed) sickness
- Sunnies = sunglasses

Word differences
Some items have a different name in Australian English compared with other forms of English (e.g. American or Singaporean English). Examples are:

- Bathers = swimming costume
- Bottle shop = shop which sells alcohol
- Bush = the countryside, any place outside the metropolitan area
- Crook = sick
- Esky = an insulated, transportable container for cold foods and drink
- Lamington = a popular sponge cake covered in chocolate icing and dusted with coconut
- Lay-by = a method of buying goods in a shop where you pay in installments

Take care when using Australian expressions
There are some ‘traditional’ Australian expressions which are rarely heard these days among young people. They tend to be used more by non-Australians who believe that they are demonstrating familiarity with Australian terms! So be careful when you try to use Australian expressions yourself. Some examples of outdated expressions are ‘cobber’, ‘sheila’, or ‘don’t come the raw prawn’.

Activity: Fill in the gaps in the sentences below with one of the Australian words or expressions on this page.

1. He didn’t go to work because he felt ……………………..
2. I’ll see you later this …………………….., maybe around 3 o’clock?
3. The sun’s a bit bright, you’ll need …………………….. if you go outside.
4. Many Australian children go to …………………….. before they are old enough to start school.
5. We took the beers to the party in an …………………….. so that we could keep the cans cool.
6. I was feeling …………………….. because work was very frustrating.
7. Bring your …………………….. and we’ll go for a swim.
8. I can’t help scratching these …………………….. bites.