

Year 4 General Studies

# Early Prime Ministers

## Edmund Barton

Federation was Edmund Barton's 'one great thing'. One of the key architects of Australia's Constitution, Barton became the new nation's first Prime Minister at a grand ceremony in Centennial Park, Sydney, on 1 January 1901. He retained this role after the first federal election in March 1901, where he was elected the member for Hunter.

Admired for his intellect and calm temper, Barton's glowing eyes revealed a keen sense of humour, while his ample girth was evidence of a love of good food, fine wine and stimulating conversation. With a rich and engrossing voice, he commanded authority wherever he spoke.

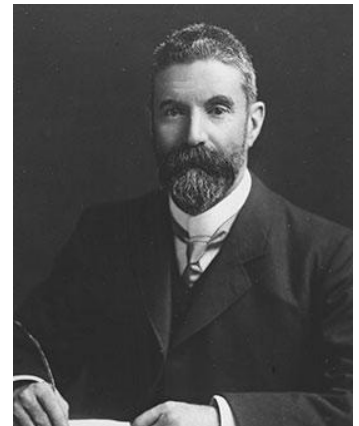
In 1903, Barton resigned to become one of the 3 founding Justices of the High Court of Australia.



## Alfred Deakin

Alfred Deakin, Australia's 2nd Prime Minister, was in office 3 times in the first 10 years of Federation. Often referred to as 'the constructor', his work in building soundly on the nation's constitutional foundations is evident over 100 years later.

Perhaps the finest speaker in the Australian parliament's first century, Deakin's love of learning informed his political life. Handsome and intelligent, his courteous manner earned him the nickname 'Affable Alfred'.



## Chris Watson

Chris Watson was Australia's 3rd Prime Minister (and first Labor Prime Minister). He held office for only 4 months in 1904, but his imprint on legislation extended through the first 10 years of the Australian Parliament.

Watson was a founder and one of the principal architects of the early Australian Labor Party.



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### Questions

1. Who was Australia's first Prime Minister?

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2. How many times was Alfred Deakin Prime Minister? (Circle the answer)

2 / 3 / 5

3. Edmund Barton was one of the founding Justices of the High Court of Australia.

True / False

4. Barton became the new nation's first Prime Minister at a grand ceremony on 1 January 1901. Where was the ceremony held?

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5. Why was Alfred Deakin known as 'the constructor'?

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6. Chris Watson was Australia's first Labor Prime Minister.

True / False

7. Who of the three Prime Ministers mentioned in the text, served the shortest time in total time as Prime Minister?

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