

## Australia's experience at war

CS

### A unit for Stage 3 in HSIE

This unit outline has been written both as a model for using an excursion as a central resource and as a model unit on Canberra, with an emphasis on Australia's identity and the place of war in Australia.

This is only a framework for a unit, and teachers will need to adapt it to suit the needs of their students and the school's scope and sequence for HSIE. It does not necessarily need to be presented to students as a block. It may be split into sections to line up with Anzac Day or Remembrance Day activities in the school as well as the timing of an excursion.

*Australia's experience at war* focuses on two Stage 3 outcomes from *Change and continuity* and *Environments*.

The excursion to Canberra for this unit can be combined with a further unit of work focusing on democracy and government.



## 1. Pre-excursion activities

These are ONLY suggested activities in a very skeletal form.

Teaching and learning activities	Outcomes and indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a timeline for the 20th century of Australia’s involvement in war including the dedicated days.</li> <li>• Research Anzac Day through a variety of texts focusing on the characteristics of Australian identity e.g. mateship, courage, determination and ingenuity.</li> <li>• Explore the concepts of war through literature and video.</li> <li>• Interview family members or friends who lived during wartime, to gather information about their experiences and the impact of war on their lives.</li> <li>• Listen to an oral account by an invited member of the RSL community about war experiences and make notes to build a class data bank.</li> <li>• Research accounts of war from a variety of sources: photographs, stimulus pictures, books, software, videos.</li> <li>• Find and locate local and national memorials or monuments that honour those who played a significant part in war (e.g. Australian War Memorial).</li> <li>• Brainstorm information about memorials. Does the community understand and value them? How do we know if they are not valued or understood?</li> <li>• Suggest ways in which the profile of a site can be raised, and become involved in an action plan.</li> </ul>	<p><b>CCS3.1</b>  <b>Explains the significance of particular people, places, groups, actions and events in the past in developing Australian identities and heritage.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>identifies nationally significant events and people related to the wars in Australia’s history</i></li> <li>• <i>sequences on a timeline the wars in which Australia has been involved</i></li> <li>• <i>outlines the facts about these wars</i></li> <li>• <i>describes the origins of Anzac Day and Remembrance Day</i></li> <li>• <i>describes wartime experiences using primary and secondary sources</i></li> <li>• <i>explains the role of war memorials and understands their importance to the community</i></li> <li>• <i>explains the significance of the Australian War Memorial</i></li> <li>• <i>locates local memorials or monuments on a map</i></li> <li>• <i>lists memorials and whom they honour</i></li> <li>• <i>explains the value of war memorials</i></li> <li>• <i>outlines an action plan for memorial use</i></li> <li>• <i>describes some ways of caring for a local memorial or monument.</i></li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Map the location of significant battles, places and events on a world map.</li> <li>• Gather information about the people and the environment in the places where war took place.</li> <li>• Establish the purpose of the excursion to Canberra, to follow up on the concepts and understandings of war.</li> <li>• Use maps to locate places that relate to the excursion to Canberra.</li> </ul>	<p><b>ENS3.5</b>  <b>Demonstrates an understanding of the interconnectedness between Australia and global environments and how individuals and groups can act in an ecologically responsible manner.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>accurately places locations on a map</i></li> <li>• <i>describes the different environments of countries involved in the wars in Australia’s history</i></li> <li>• <i>plots on a map the places that will be visited in Canberra.</i></li> </ul>

## 2. Excursion

Typically an excursion to Canberra would include visits to a number of educational sites, but the number of sites should be limited, allowing sufficient time to be spent in each location for students to absorb the knowledge and understandings through the many displays.

During the excursion students could keep a diary or reflective journal as part of the excursion, take photos or sketch some of the features which are significant to them.

When booking, it is recommended that the education officer at each site is contacted to arrange a visit that is specifically constructed to meet the needs of your unit of work.

## 3. Contact details

### **Australian War Memorial**

Bookings are essential for school groups. Contact the Australian War Memorial bookings officer.

Telephone (02) 6243 4268 or

Fax (02) 6243 4541

E-mail: [jenny.harris@awm.gov.au](mailto:jenny.harris@awm.gov.au)

For information about the Memorial's full range of education services, visit the award-winning web site at <http://www.awm.gov.au>

### **National Archives of Australia**

Bookings are essential for school groups. Contact the National Archives of Australia bookings officer.

Telephone (02) 6212 3691 or

Fax (02) 6212 3914

E-mail: [education@naa.gov.au](mailto:education@naa.gov.au)

For information about the National Archives of Australia, visit the web site at <http://www.naa.gov.au>

### **Australian War Memorial**



The Australian War Memorial commemorates the sacrifice of Australian men and women who have served in war, through its ceremonial areas, extensive exhibitions and outstanding research facilities.

Some of the activities for students at the Australian War Memorial are:

- exploring the virtual galleries and grounds
- learning about Australia's military history
- gaining an understanding of the impact of war on Australian society

- researching their family's war history
- learning about the memorial itself
- remembering the Australians who served and died.

The Memorial is internationally recognised for its exhibitions, which present stories of Australians in war, armed conflict and peacekeeping. Its rich and diverse collections of war records bring the events of the past to life in displays using the finest contemporary museum technology. The exhibitions show the relevance of these stories today and help to define Australia and Australians for visitors of all ages.

Check with the education officer, on booking, to ensure your visit is designed to suit your unit of work.

### **National Archives of Australia**



Although the proposal for the archives had been around since Federation, it was Australia's involvement in the two world wars which finally led to the birth of the Australian Archives.

As a fledgling nation in the 1920s and 1930s, Australia was not overly concerned with its own history, and records were often retained or destroyed on the whim of those who looked after them. By 1940, it was realised that the loss of WW1 records had been a mistake. Vital records were gone forever, simply because there had been no systematic attempt to safeguard and preserve them.

After the war, the War Memorial and the National Library shared archival responsibilities. Many years later an independent archival entity emerged, known first as the Commonwealth Archives, then the Australian Archives, and now the National Archives of Australia.

Some of the activities for students at the National Archives are:

- exploring the galleries and special exhibitions
- learning about the role of archives in our history
- learning about Australia's military history.

The National Archives are the nation's memory and enable us to hold on to our history.

#### 4. Post-excursion activities

These are ONLY suggested activities in a very skeletal form.

Teaching and learning activities	Outcomes and indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participate in a series of debates, drawing on the experiences of the excursion, e.g. “War is just about men fighting”.</li> <li>Writes a letter to a loved one from the perspective of one who is at the war front to one who is at home during the war. Use the journal entries and images collected during the excursion.</li> <li>Use a table to record the different places seen in the galleries at the AWM and briefly describe what you learned about their environment.</li> </ul>	<p><b>CCS3.1</b>  <b>Explains the significance of particular people, places, groups, actions and events in the past in developing Australian identities and heritage.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>recognises viewpoints of men, women and Aboriginal people about the wars in Australia’s history</i></li> <li><i>responds to the emotions generated by the excursion.</i></li> </ul> <p><b>ENS3.5</b>  <b>Demonstrates an understanding of the interconnectedness between Australia and global environments and how individuals and groups can act in an ecologically responsible manner.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>describes the environment of the different countries where war has taken place and considers the impact of these environments on the men at war.</i></li> </ul>

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 Senior Curriculum Adviser, HSIE K-12

#### ESL approaches to a unit of work

### Stage 3 HSIE: Australia’s experience at war

#### Preparing to teach the unit

For ESL students, this is a particularly challenging unit, both linguistically and from a conceptual perspective. Teachers will need to modify activities to meet the language learning needs of ESL students and to support their progress towards achieving the HSIE outcomes. In presenting this unit, teachers may need to take special care with the experiences of students or their families coming from areas of past or current conflict. For some ESL students from countries such as Somalia, Iran, Bosnia, Sri Lanka and Vietnam, wartime experiences encountered in this unit may rekindle distressing recollections of traumatising episodes and prolong the time needed for social adjustment in Australia.

This unit also makes particular demands on the ESL students’ developing English language skills in the areas of **describing, personal recounting, historical**

**recounting, explaining and persuading.** It is therefore important to plan to meet these language learning needs of ESL students while guiding their progress towards the achievement of HSIE outcomes. Where possible, mainstream teachers and ESL teachers should cooperatively plan to work toward this goal by:

- targeting language learning needs** by assessing the levels of proficiency in the English language of the ESL students and comparing these to the language demands of the proposed activities. The *ESL Scales* are a useful tool to use in this planning step. ESL students need to be operating at Levels 6-8 (Oral Interaction) and Levels 5-7 (Reading and Writing) to cope with the content of this unit.
- breaking down activities** into smaller, more manageable chunks of both language learning and content learning. For example, the suggested activity, *Research accounts of war from a variety of sources...*, will need a series of lessons to build the skills to locate and record the necessary content.
- sequencing activities** to achieve both language and content outcomes, focusing initially on building

contextual understanding of the concepts and vocabulary involved. Underlying cultural knowledge also needs to be made explicit, e.g. mateship, ANZAC, memorials.

4. **modifying activities** by scaffolding language learning through controlled, guided and independent support levels.

**Providing support for ESL learning**

With an ESL teacher (where possible), teaching may take place in a number of organisational arrangements, including joint teaching, group teaching, withdrawal groups and focused support, and may involve targeted ESL students or all students in the class, as deemed appropriate by the teaching team.

ESL students should be encouraged to use dictionaries, bilingual as well as English-only, to enhance understanding.

**Suggested activities**

Complementary activities which will support ESL learning in this unit include:

- introducing the concept of war through drama
- using illustrations of various war-related events to place on a timeline
- creating a cline of conflict nouns brainstormed by

the class, e.g. insult, brawl, disagreement, battle. Role-play some of these

- creating classified word banks, e.g. excursion words, emotive words
- matching descriptions of war-related events to illustrations
- building a matrix to record information about the significant events in Australia’s experience at war
- sequencing events from a text related to Anzac Day
- modelling and deconstructing texts before requiring students to produce their own
- using partly completed proformas for text construction
- using communicative activities, e.g. barrier games, to consolidate vocabulary and concepts introduced
- using “hot seat” activities to rehearse or review interview situations.

Additional guidance and support for planning to meet the English language learning needs of ESL students can be obtained from the Multicultural/ESL Consultant for your district.

ESL Team  
Multicultural Programs Unit  
Student Services and Equity Programs

## Anzac Day: 25 April

**What is it?**

Anzac Day is the most important occasion on which Australians and New Zealanders remember those who lost their lives fighting for their country. ANZAC stands for Australian and New Zealand Army Corps.

**25 April 1915**

Just before dawn on 25 April 1915, Australian and New Zealand troops landed around what is now known as Anzac Cove on the Gallipoli Peninsula in Turkey. Over 20,000 men took part in the landing.

As part of the British Empire force, Australian and New Zealand troops joined those from Britain, India and France in an attempt to defeat Turkey, an ally of Germany, so that military assistance could be sent through the Dardanelles and the Black Sea to Russia. Anzac Day has been remembered each year by Australians and New Zealanders since the first anniversary of that landing.

The attack on the Gallipoli Peninsula was not successful. Nearly eight months after the landing, the last troops left early on

the morning of 20 December 1915, leaving ingenious self-firing rifles to deceive the Turkish soldiers into thinking they were still there. The evacuation was accomplished without loss of life.

The Anzacs were reluctant to leave behind their dead mates, who numbered over 8,000, but it was clear that they could not win the campaign. Although bitter about being forced to evacuate, the Anzacs were proud of the endurance and courage they had displayed.

This information has been extracted from an Australian War Memorial Information Sheet.



## Remembrance Day: 11 November

### What is it?

The armistice which ended the First World War was signed at 11am on 11 November, 1918. An armistice is a truce or cease-fire. In the previous four years, nearly 10 million service personnel all over the world, both men and women, had died. Armistice Day was observed until 1946, when the British and Australian Governments changed the name of the occasion to Remembrance Day. In the United States and Canada it is known as Veterans Day.

### How do we remember the war dead?

At 11am on Remembrance Day, following a tradition initiated in 1920 by King George V at the suggestion of an Australian journalist, people around the world stop what they are doing and observe two minutes' silence in commemoration of those who have died in war. Many Remembrance Day ceremonies also include the laying of wreaths, the playing of *The last post* on a bugle and the recitation of a verse from Laurence Binyon's poem "For the fallen".

They shall not grow old, as we that are  
left grow old:

Age shall not weary them, nor the years  
condemn.

At the going down of the sun and in the  
morning

We will remember them.

### Why do people wear red poppies?

Red poppies are common over the former battlefields of northern France and Belgium and in some other theatres of war. An American YMCA worker began the tradition of wearing a red poppy in remembrance of the war dead in 1918. The red poppy is reminiscent of the blood of the slain and it has thus come to symbolise their sacrifice.

Over 102,000 Australian men and women have died as a result of war. Their names are recorded on the Roll of Honour at the Australian War Memorial. Today, families place red poppies beside the names of relatives they find on the Roll of Honour and thus keep alive the spirit of grateful remembrance.

This information has been extracted from an  
Australian War Memorial Information Sheet.