

Learning activities to support Race, Rights and Rivalries

These activities present three investigations aligned to the Humanities and Social Sciences Curriculum at years 5 and 6. The suggested activities adopt an inquiry approach; students are encouraged to explore the historical sources presented and draw their own conclusions. Teachers are advised to adapt activities to meet their learning objectives and student needs.

Investigation 1: What was the contribution and experiences of those who worked in the pearl shell industry?

Investigation 2: How did discriminatory laws and attitudes affect those living in the north west?

Investigation 3: How have the rights and freedoms of Indigenous Australians changed over time?

Year 5

- The nature of convict or colonial presence, including the factors that influenced patterns of development, aspects of the daily life of the inhabitants (including Aboriginal Peoples and Torres Strait Islander Peoples) and how the environment changed (ACHASSK107)
- The impact of a significant development or event on an Australian colony (ACHASSK108)
- The reasons people migrated to Australia and the experiences and contributions of a particular migrant group within a colony (ACHASSK109)
- The role that a significant individual or group played in shaping a colony (ACHASSK110)

Year 6

- Experiences of Australian democracy and citizenship, including the status and rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, migrants, women and children (ACHASSK135)
- Stories of groups of people who migrated to Australia since Federation (including from ONE country of the Asia region) and reasons they migrated (ACHASSK136)
- The contribution of individuals and groups to the development of Australian society since Federation (ACHASSK137)
- The shared values of Australian citizenship and the formal rights and responsibilities of Australian citizens (ACHASSK147)

The activities also have relevance to HASS inquiry and skills at these levels.

Learning activities to support Race, Rights and Rivalries

Introductory activities

If using this resource with students who are not based in the Broome region, teachers may like to introduce the area by conducting a class brainstorm to identify any prior knowledge that students have about Broome today or in the past. Record responses before inviting students to explore the first theme within the online resource, [Multicultural Broome](#).

Explain to students that this resource uses historical sources and that some of the words, terms, and attitudes presented are no longer considered appropriate. Note that some students could also be distressed by some aspects of the content explored.

Investigation 1: What was the contribution and experiences of those who worked in the pearl shell industry?

This investigation relates to three themes from Race, Rights and Rivalries: Aboriginal pearlers, Indentured labour, and White divers.

Ensure your students explore these themes before or during this investigation.

Activity 1

Introduce Broome's pearl shell industry and its workers by watching a 10-minute historical film. Produced in 1949, *The Pearlers* shows pearl divers at work. It is available through the National Film and Sound Archive: <https://www.youtube.com/ThePearlers>

Discuss the following questions:

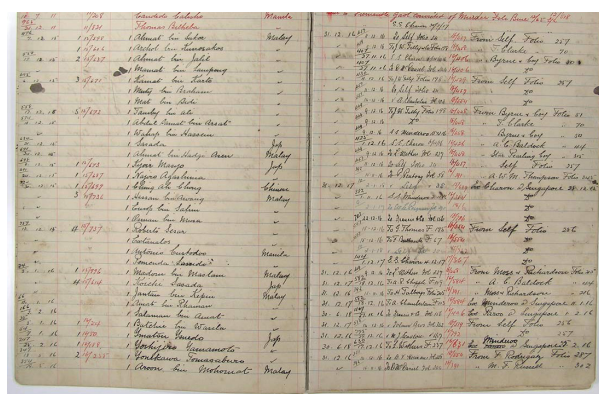
- How might it have felt to use the suit and breathing apparatus shown in the film?
- What different sort of jobs needed to be filled in the pearl shell industry?
- Why was the pearl shell industry an important Australian industry?

Activity 2

The experiences of pearl shell industry workers varied considerably, and this often depended on their race, nationality and position. The *Different perspectives worksheet* on page 5 asks students to consider the various perspectives that different workers in the industry may have held. Students should refer to the three relevant online themes to complete this activity.

Activity 3

Focus students on the following source in the Indentured labour theme.



<https://broomemuseum.org.au/race-rights-rivalries/indentured-labour/>

Students should use their historiography skills to select and decipher the name, nationality, and year of employment of one of Patrick Percy's workers. Challenge students to use their imagination and knowledge of the industry to take on the role of their selected labourer and write a letter to his family in their home country. The letter should provide details about their work but also express their hopes and fears.

Investigation 1: What was the contribution and experiences of those who worked in the pearl shell industry?

Activity 4

The contribution of Indigenous and Asian workers to the pearl shell industry is still recognised and celebrated in Broome today. Along with the Shinju Matsuri festival, the contribution is reflected in street names, shops signs, community art, memorials, architecture and tourist trails. Challenge students to consider the contribution of different cultural groups in their region, community and school. Celebrate diversity by creating a sign which says the same thing in many languages, like the one used in old Broome. Involve the community in its creation.



<https://broomemuseum.org.au/race-rights-rivalries/multicultural-broome>

Worksheet: Different perspectives

Working in the pearl shell industry was different for everyone, and the experience varied according to the worker's race, nationality, and role. Consider what working in the industry might have meant for the four people below.

For me the pearl shell industry...



Master pearler

For me the pearl shell industry...



Indentured worker

For me the pearl shell industry...



British diver

For me the pearl shell industry...



Aboriginal worker

Investigation 2: How did discriminatory laws and attitudes affect those living in the north west?

This investigation has relevance to all the online themes, but particularly White Australia.

Activity 1

Explore the following quote, which is from the Multicultural Broome theme, as a class.

“It comes as a surprise and a mild shock to the visitor from the south to find ‘a little bit of Asia’ in the midst of Australia. ...it would not be exaggeration to say that the whites are outnumbered by probably more than four to one.... *Half-castes* and *quarter-castes*, descendants of, a mixture of *black* and *yellow* and *white*—such children may be seen playing in the streets of the coastal towns of the Kimberleys”.

Rev. A. Muriel, Secretary of the British and Foreign Bible Society, 1931
(The West Australian, 22 Aug 1931)

Ask students what was meant by each of the terms that are italicised above and then discuss the following questions:

- What does the use of these terms tell us about the author’s attitudes to race in 1931?
- These terms were used to label people and groups. Why is it unhelpful and hurtful to label people? Why are labels like this no longer considered useful or appropriate?
- What terms can we use today to describe diversity in the Australian community? (eg Yawuru person, Italian/Irish heritage) How do you describe your own identity?

Activity 2

In this activity students use visual literacy skills to explore attitudes towards race found in historical images. *The What’s going on?* worksheet on pages 8-9 challenges students to draw inferences regarding the treatment and experiences of people from different racial and cultural groups. Encourage students, when making inferences, to consider the various subjects’ poses, positions, clothing, and expressions, as well as the context in which the photos were taken. You may like to consider the first image as a class.

All images are from the online resource, where larger formats and further details can be found.

Investigation 2: How did discriminatory laws and attitudes affect those living in the north west?

Activity 3

In this activity students take on the role of a traveller to Australia in the past, and complete a dictation test. Ask students to imagine that they have just arrived at the Broome port after a long sea voyage. They step off the boat and within minutes are asked to complete a dictation test to decide if they will be allowed to enter the country.

When students are ready with paper and pen, read the following text to the students, once, in a slow steady voice. This passage was used by Customs officers between 16–30th November in 1927.

Water as a liquid concerns us because our lives, like that of other living creatures, whether they be human, animal, or vegetable, from the biggest mammoth to the tiniest microbe, are dependent on water. Therefore, so far as we know, where there is no liquid, there can be no life.

Your students will likely fail the test just as nearly all those who were given it did. Remind them that the test could also be given in any European language, to ensure failure. Ask them to reflect on taking the test by writing three sentences using these starters:

- I think...
- I feel...
- I wonder...

As a class discuss why the government and general population might have supported the White Australia Policy in 1901?

Activity 4

As a concluding activity, use the Think Pair Share strategy to focus students on the following question: How have attitudes towards race changed in Australia over time and how have they stayed the same? Ask student to reflect silently on the question, before discussing their thoughts with a partner.

Worksheet: What's going on?

Each image below was taken in or around Broome at the start of the 1900s, your task is to:

- describe what each image shows, and
- explain what it tells you about the treatment and experiences of people from different racial groups.



What can you see?

What does it tell you?



What can you see?

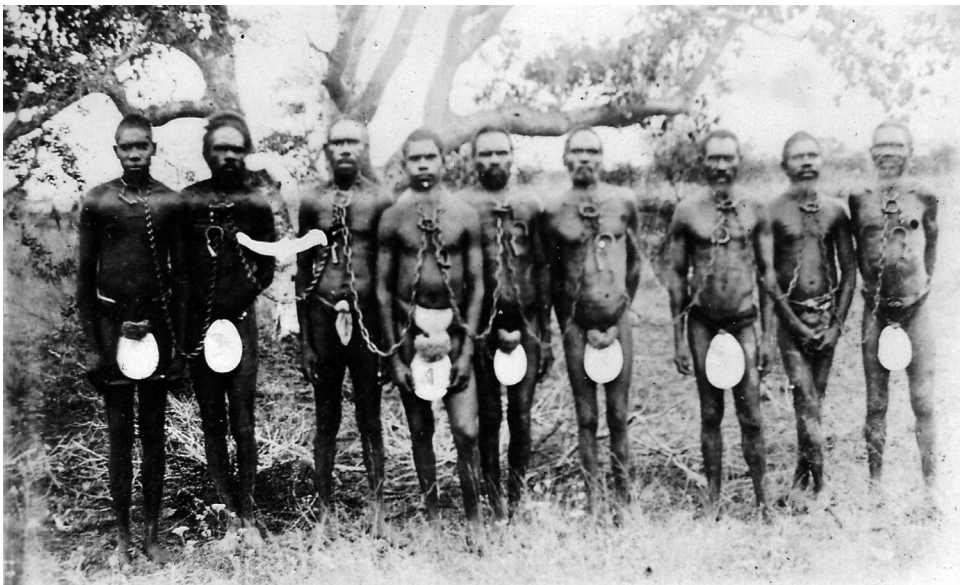
What does it tell you?

Worksheet: What's going on?



What can you see?

What does it tell you?



What can you see?

What does it tell you?

Investigation 3: How have the rights and freedoms of Indigenous Australians changed over time?

This investigation should be used with the online themes
Regulated lives and Stolen childhoods.

Activity 1

Conduct a class brainstorm to identify and record the rights, freedoms, and protections that Australians enjoy today. You may need to ask questions to fill out the list, for example: Do Australians today have freedom of speech? Discuss the meaning of each one, perhaps by asking students to think of an example of it in practice. Your list should include freedoms such as speech, religion, association and movement, and discrimination protections relating to race, age and sex.

The *Now and Then* worksheet on page 12 encourages students to compare the rights and freedoms enjoyed by Australians today with those of Aboriginal people who lived in the north west under the Native Administration Act. Students should use the sources presented in Regulated lives and Stolen childhoods to complete the worksheet.

Activity 2

Read and discuss Section 8 of the Native Administration Act, below, which is presented in Stolen Childhoods:

The Commissioner shall be the legal guardian of every native child notwithstanding that the child has a parent or other relative living, until such child attains the age of twenty-one years.

Ask the following questions:

- What was a Commissioner? What is a legal guardian? What did this law mean for Aboriginal children?
- Why do you think this law may have been made?
- How do you think Aboriginal parents might have felt about this law?

Focus students on the image of Annie, the nursemaid. Ask students to use their imagination to write a diary entry for Annie, which records events as well as thoughts and feelings that she may have had.



Investigation 3: How have the rights and freedoms of Indigenous Australians changed over time?

Activity 3

As a class listen to the oral history by Eric Cox, in Stolen childhoods, and then watch this short video from Screen Australia, which also highlights a woman who grew up at Beagle Bay Mission. <https://aso.gov.au/titles/documentaries/stolen-generations/clip3/>

Discuss some of the positive and negative experiences or outcomes identified by Eric and Daisy from their time at Beagle Bay Mission.

Now play footage, readily available online, of Prime Minister Rudd during the National Apology in 2008. Ask students to quietly reflect on what this event may have meant for people like Eric and Daisy.

Activity 4

The treatment and experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the past still causes distress for many Australians. The process of reconciliation, which includes acknowledging history and past wrongs, continues today. Ask students to work in pairs or small groups to consider the meaning and significance of reconciliation. They should do this by writing questions using the following visible thinking question starts:

Why...?

How would it be different if...?

What are the reasons...?

Suppose that...?

What if...?

What if we knew...?

What is the purpose of...?

What would change if...?

When they are finished, ask each group to select one question to share with the class, and discuss.

Worksheet: Now and then

The Native Administration Act set out the rules and regulations that shaped the lives of all Indigenous people living in Western Australia. Use the online sources to compare their lives to that of Australians today.

In Australia today citizens can:	Those living under the Native Administration Act:
live in the location of their choice	
travel freely within and beyond Australia	
apply and be considered for any job, regardless of race, gender, sexuality and religion	
receive at least the minimum wage for working	
spend time and associate with whoever they wish	
care for and have responsibility for their children	