



Exploring the topic Anzacs 1: introduction



First in a series of six integrated English and Society and the Environment lessons that explore the topic 'Anzacs' through poetry, and from an Aboriginal perspective.

- **Exploring the topic Anzacs 1: introduction**
- Exploring the topic Anzacs 2: *In Flanders Fields*
- Exploring the topic Anzacs 3: *Black Anzac*
- Exploring the topic Anzacs 4: *The Coloured Digger*
- Exploring the topic Anzacs 5: *Black Anzac* and *The Coloured Digger*
- Exploring the topic Anzacs 6: researching Aboriginal servicemen

CURRICULUM INFORMATION

PHASE OF DEVELOPMENT

Early Childhood	Middle Childhood	Early Adolescence	Late Adolescence
		✓	✓

MAJOR LEARNING AREAS

The Arts	English	H & PE	LOTE	Mathematics	Science	S & E	T & E
	✓					✓ ✓	

VALUES

Pursuit of knowledge & commitment to achievement of potential	Self acceptance & respect of self	Respect & concern for others & their rights	Social & civic responsibility	Environmental responsibility
✓		✓	✓	

TOPIC INFORMATION

PURPOSE

- To provide students with opportunities to share and broaden what they know about Anzacs.
- To provide students with opportunities to read poetry about Anzacs.
- To provide students with opportunities to read poetry written about Anzacs from an Aboriginal perspective.
- To provide students with opportunities to research information and report on Aboriginal servicemen.

STUDENT OUTCOMES FROM THIS LESSON

- Students identify and discuss their knowledge and understandings of Anzacs.
- Students recognize and discuss their understandings and interpretations of Anzacs that shape their actions and values.
- Students identify stories of people and events that are woven into the history of Anzacs.
- Students identify print texts that people have constructed to represent real or imaginary experiences.
- Students gather and record, from more than one source, relevant information about Anzacs.
- Students identify language structure and conventions characteristic of poetry.
- Students make meaning using language structure and conventions characteristic of poetry.





KEY BACKGROUND POINTS

If you need to refresh your memory, information about Anzacs from a non-Aboriginal perspective is available from many sources: book, film and internet ...

What is not widely acknowledged is that Aboriginal servicemen have been part of the Australian armed forces since the Boer War in South Africa between 1899 and 1902. Subsequently, many enlisted to fight for this country in the First World War, 1914 – 1918, and in the Second World War, 1939 – 1945. This was at a time when Aboriginal people were not allowed to become Australian citizens. Many Aboriginal diggers also fought in later wars like the Korean and Vietnam Wars.

In this series of lessons we look at three poems: the well-known *In Flanders Fields*, and two lesser-known poems, *Black Anzac*, and *The Coloured Digger*.

In Flanders Fields was written by a Canadian officer, Lieutenant Colonel John McCrae (1872 – 1918), a serviceman who served in World War One. John McCrae was a professor of medicine before the war. He served as a gunner in the Boer War and in World War One he served as a medical officer with the First Canadian contingent. He wrote this poem in 1915 following the second battle of Ypres in France. John McCrae was wounded in May 1918 and died three days later.

The Coloured Digger was written after World War 2 by Bert Beros, a non-Aboriginal soldier, about an Aboriginal soldier named Private West. Sapper Beros wrote many poems about his experiences in WW2, a large percentage of these were about the Kokoda Trail in New Guinea.

Black Anzac was written by an Aboriginal soldier who joined the services when he was only 18. This poem is about his experiences in the Korean War.

In nineteenth century English literature, poppies symbolised rest or sleep. John McCrae used this symbolism in his poem *In Flanders Fields*, and over time poppies have come to symbolise remembrance, sacrifice and bravery. The red poppies he refers to are still found growing wild in much of Western Europe. Soldiers often said the poppies were red from the blood of soldiers killed in World War 1. These poppies were the first plants to grow amongst the bomb craters in the battle fields of Flanders, in France, during and after the war.

Key historical facts

The world's oldest known cremation was of an Australian Aboriginal woman and took place at Lake Mungo in New South Wales around thirty five thousand years ago.

1770 When Captain James Cook raised the Union Jack on Possession Island off Cape York in Queensland, he claimed the land for the United Kingdom under a notion of terra nullius (meaning, 'land belonging to no-one'). Although Captain Cook previously had seen Aboriginal people living in Australia, he believed they did not own the land as he could see no signs of European-style occupation.

1992 It wasn't until 1992 that the High Court of Australia ruled that Australia was never terra nullius before British settlement. This decision, now referred to as the Mabo Case, gave traditional land owners the opportunity to pursue claims to their traditional lands.

Some key dates in Aboriginal people's struggle to gain citizen's rights:

- 1960** Social service benefits were first paid to Australia's Aboriginal people.
- 1961** Aboriginal people became eligible to enroll and vote in Western Australia.
- 1963** It became compulsory for Aboriginal people to attend school.
- 1967** After a Commonwealth Referendum gave power to the Commonwealth over Aboriginal people's welfare, they were finally given the right to equal wages and working conditions, and to enter public places such as hotels.
- 1971** The first Australian Aboriginal senator, Neville Bonner, was elected for the Liberal Party to Federal Parliament.
- 1987** On December 17th, the Federal Government announced legislation to proclaim Australian Aboriginal people as the first owners of Australia.

Two days on which, annually, Australians remember fallen soldiers

11 November – Remembrance Day

World War one ended at 11.00 am on 11.11.1918 (eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month). We wear red poppies, the flower of remembrance, on this day and people lay wreaths during services in honour of those killed fighting for their country.

25 April – Anzac Day

The initials ANZAC stand for: Australian New Zealand Army Corps. On this day Australians hold commemorative marches and services to reflect and give thanks for our freedom.





CULTURAL & PROTOCOL CONSIDERATIONS

Consult local AIEOs or Aboriginal Education staff at your DEO to check protocols in your area about mentioning names of dead Aboriginal soldiers.

RESOURCES

Medium	Author, producer, developer etc	Title	Source
book	Rigby Heinemann	<i>First Steps Reading Resource Book, Second Edition, Addressing Current Literacy Challenges.</i>	educational booksellers

TEACHING AND LEARNING STRATEGIES

TEACHING RESOURCES

- teacher prepared 'Before and After' chart
- large felt-tipped marking pens, for teacher
- **Learning Guide 1: Before and After** photocopied onto A3 paper for each student

LESSON STEPS

Preparation

- **Read** 'Key Background Information' section above. You may also like to research further information, and the three poems and their writers, using the internet or other reference sources.
- **Ensure** students know how to record information using key words or phrases.
- **Prepare** poster-size 'Before and After' chart.

Implementation

Whole class

- Explain that in this activity students will record what they know about Anzacs and their history.

Working in pairs

- Use the 'Think Pair Share' strategy to share orally with partners, knowledge of Anzacs.
- Ask students to spend a few minutes silently thinking about what they know.
- Ask students to face each other and quietly share what they know. Each has a turn.

Working independently

- **Distribute Learning Guide 1: Before and After** chart. *This provides a way of organising brainstormed information and supporting students to make connections to what they know about a topic prior to reading (page 138, First Steps Reading Resource Book, Second edition).*
- **Ask** students to complete their 'Before' columns by entering information they discussed with partners.

Whole class

- **Take turns** for each student to report one item from their 'Before' column until all points have been raised and each student has had a turn.
- **Model** note-taking by recording shared information on class 'Before and After' chart, acknowledge, expand and record the shared knowledge as appropriate.
- **Retain** chart for use in a later lesson.

ASSESSMENT

Level of student participation in oral discussion and completion of 'Before' column of Learning guide 1.

Acknowledgements / Thanks to contributors.

Kerry Rowe (writer),
Alwyn Evans (editor)

Produced by DUIT Multimedia for the Aboriginal Perspectives across the Curriculum program.



