



Exploring the topic Anzacs 6: researching Aboriginal servicemen



Sixth 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.

Many Aboriginal servicemen make sacrifices on behalf of a country in which they felt/feel marginalised.

RESOURCES

Medium	Author, producer, developer etc.	Title	Source
website	Australian War Memorial	<i>Captain Reg Saunders</i>	www.awm.gov.au/korea/faces/saunders/saunders.htm Captain Reg Saunders, MBE, is the first indigenous Australian commissioned as an officer into the Australian Army. This site tells about his background, his career and difficulties he faced returning to Australia after the war ended.
website	Australian War Memorial	<i>Memorial Box</i>	www.awm.gov.au/education/box/3.asp This site explores the contribution made by Indigenous Australians during the First and Second World Wars. It traces evolving attitudes towards Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander servicemen and women, from official discouragement at first to gradual acceptance in recent times. It also looks at the equal, at times specialized, role played by Indigenous people in today's armed forces, and contains a case study of Captain Reginald Saunders.
website	Australian War Memorial		www.awm.gov.au/units/people_302.asp Table of information about Captain Reginald Walter Saunders MBE. Useful for reading information from a table and comparing facts from different sources.
website	Australian war Memorial	<i>Captain Reginald Saunders</i>	www.amw.gov.au/collections/stories/saunders.asp More background material on Captain Reginald Saunders
website	Australian War Memorial	<i>Harry Thorpe</i>	www.awm.gov.au/fiftyaustralians/46.asp Stories of past and current servicemen including Aboriginal serviceman Harry Thorpe.
book	Mandy Tunica	<i>For the love of poetry</i>	Business Manager PETA Laura Street Newtown 2042 025651277 FAX 565 1070 A book focusing on the pleasure of poetry. It contains suggestions for creating a positive poetry environment, teaching strategies designed to enhance understanding and enjoyment, and a long book list to assist in selecting texts.
CDROM	DUIT Multimedia	<i>Moorditj</i>	Copy available in all schools, or from DUIT Multimedia, UWA.
DVD or video	Glen Stasiuk, produced by Black Russian Productions.	<i>The Forgotten</i>	Video distributed to schools. DVD available from Glen Stasiuk: send an email to g.stasiuk@murdoch.edu.au . He will forward a DVD, teacher's resource kit and invoice for \$44 (includes GST).



TEACHING AND LEARNING STRATEGIES

TEACHING RESOURCES

- highlighter pens and other writing materials
- computers with internet access
- list of websites on board or chart (students may add to these)
- copy of CDROM *Moorditj*
- student copies of **Learning Guide 1: Research questions**
- copy of video: *The Forgotten*
- video player and TV

LESSON STEPS

Preparation

Please note that depending on your students' levels of achievement and interests, this lesson may be spread over a number of sessions. You may also choose to do follow up lessons like those suggested at the end of this section.

- **Ensure** students know how to take notes from reference materials, particularly websites.
- **Discuss** with students, computer skills necessary for research, how to look up and use websites ...
- **Ensure** students can use a search engine to find information.
- **Prepare**, on board or chart, list of websites for students to refer to.
- **View** the CDROM, *Moorditj*, to check relevant key words for students to use to research information.

Implementation

Whole class

- **Explain** the purpose of this activity is to find out what they can about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander servicemen and women from the video *The Forgotten*, the CDROM *Moorditj*, the Australian War Memorial website, and other relevant sites, and resources.
- **Distribute** two copies of **Learning Guide 1: Research questions**, per student, making extras available for additional research.
- **Discuss** the questions on it, ways of researching service records, and recording relevant findings.
- **Discuss** how to use *Moorditj*, using the menus provided and relevant keywords.
- **Show** the video, *The Forgotten*.
- **Ask** students to record relevant points.
- **Discuss** points students have recorded.
- **Model** note-taking using information from the video and focus questions on **Learning Guide 1: Research questions**.
- **Discuss** how to find and select names of Indigenous service people.

Working individually or in pairs

Students:

- **locate** websites, adding names of useful sites to class lists, and other research resources;
- **select** an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander serviceman or woman to research;
- **record answers** to questions on **Learning Guide 1: Research questions** about your subject.
- **select** another Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander serviceman or woman to research.
- **research** the war service and life of this subject.
- **record answers** on second copy of **Learning Guide 1: Research questions** about this serviceman or woman.
- **write** answer: Are there any similarities between the service personnel you researched?
- **write** answer: Are there any differences?





Whole Class

- **Report** back to whole class on research topics.
- **Discuss** similarities and differences in findings.
- **Discuss:** Is it easier to read data if it is presented in a table or a report?

Follow up lessons may include planning ways to write up and present research findings and illustrations, diagrams and maps as a class reference book, and taking this through to producing the book.

ASSESSMENT

Evaluate the way in which students complete their task. You may wish to create a rubric using categories like the following: finding suitable research sources, recording appropriate information, presenting research findings ...

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LEARNING GUIDE 1: Research questions

Student's name: _____

Date _____

Name of research subject: _____

When and where was he born?

What was his family background?

How old was he when he enlisted?

What conflict(s) did he fight in?

In which country/countries did he serve?

Why did he enlist?

Was he injured? Give details about your answer, describing details of his service

What happened when he left the service?

