Overview

First Contacts introduces world history and the movements of peoples. Beginning with the history of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Peoples, students examine European exploration and colonisation in Australia and the world to the early 1800s.

The following are teaching ideas for this stage that incorporate skills and concepts, with links to the State Library of NSW's teaching and learning collection. The teaching ideas are not in any sequence. Teachers should choose those that are suitable for their class and integrate them into their program where relevant.

Syllabus links

- Key Inquiry Questions
- Outcomes
- Skills and Concepts

Key Inquiry Questions

- Why did the great journeys of exploration occur?
- What was life like for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples before the arrival of the Europeans?
- Why did Europeans settle in Australia?
- What was the nature and consequences of contact between Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples and early traders, explorers and settlers?

Outcomes

HT-2-3: describes people, events and actions related to world exploration and its effects.

HT-2-4: describes and explains effects of British colonization in Australia.

HT-2-5: applies skills of historical inquiry and communication.

Skills and Concepts

Throughout the content, the relevant historical skills and concepts should be taught. The skills and concepts of Perspectives and Empathetic Understanding have been integrated.
History Skills: How Can We Integrate Them?

Comprehension: chronology, terms & concepts

- Respond, read and write to show understanding of historical matters
- Sequence familiar people and events
- Use historical terms.

Students:

- are provided with a timeline of Aboriginal occupation of Australia in comparison to the European settlement period & discuss the difference.
- create an illustrated timeline of the European ‘discovery’ of Australia.
- use historical terms such as exploration, discovery, invasion, settlement.

Links to Library Learning Sequences:

- Captain James Cook [4]
- Female Convicts [5]
- Aboriginal Women - Sydney [6]

Analysis and Use of Sources

- Locate relevant information from sources provided

Students:

- compare maps/early illustrations of early Aboriginal sites/ early land grant maps in the local area.
- create an illustrated time-line of settlement in the local area based on the sources.
- research the archaeological, historical & oral sources for Aboriginal occupation of the local area.

Links to Library Learning Sequences:

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Perspectives and Interpretations (Skill and concept)

People from the past (or present) will have different views and experiences.

- Identify different points of view within an historical context.

Students:

- examine a map of Australia showing the Aboriginal clans throughout Australia. If compared to an empty map of Australia, what impression of Australia does this provide?
- create a diary account of a convict on the First Fleet telling of his/her fears or describe an Aboriginal person’s reaction to witnessing the arrival of the First Fleet in his/her harbor.
Empathetic Understanding (Skill and concept)

Students develop an understanding of another’s views, life and decisions made.

- Explain how and why people in the past may have lived and behaved differently from today.

Students:

- examine a range of sources about child convicts. Students choose one child convict and write a diary account of their first few days in Botany Bay or choose a character from an early drawing/painting of early colonial life and explain why you are there.
- read an appropriate historical novel in class; listen to colonial ballads. What do they tell us of early colonial life?

Links to Library Learning Sequences:

- Female Convicts [5]
- Aboriginal Women - Sydney [6]
Historical Concepts: How Can We Integrate Them?

Continuity and Change

This concept refers to either change over time or how developments remained much the same.

- Changes and continuities due to British colonisation of Australia.

Students:

- through a range of sources, identify changes to Aboriginal life due to the arrival of Europeans

Links to Library Learning Sequences:

- Aboriginal Women - Sydney

Cause and effect

Students can develop an understanding of reasons why events or developments in the past produced later actions, results or effects.

- Reasons for a particular historical development, eg journey of the First Fleet.

Students:

- examine sources such as paintings of conditions in Britain in the C18th and C19th and discuss why convicts were sent to Australia.
- discuss the impact on the land of early inland exploration of NSW and its aftermath.

Links to Library Learning Sequences:

- Captain James Cook
- Female Convicts

Significance

- The importance of an event, development or individual/group.
- The importance and meaning of national commemorations and celebrations and the importance of a person or event.

Students:

- Discuss in groups the most significant early colonist in Sydney and justify their choice. Why were they
chosen? What impact did they make?

Links to Library Learning Sequences:

- Captain James Cook [4]

State Library of NSW Learning Sequences and Resources

Captain Cook [4]

Students explore the story of Captain James cook through source analysis and learn about European exploration and colonization.

Female Convicts in the First Fleet [5]

Students learn about European exploration and colonisation of Australia and throughout the world up to the early 1800s.

Aboriginal Women of Sydney [6]

Students learn about European exploration and colonisation of Australia and throughout the world up to the early 1800s.


Links