



# AUSTRALIA DAY CELEBRATIONS

## Years 5 to 7

National Australia Day Council  
Teaching and learning resources





# Australia Day celebrations

**Years: 5–7**

**Inquiry Focus: National identity**

## At a glance

What do Australia Day celebrations, Citizenship Ceremonies and pledges and the Australian of the Year Awards tell us about our sense of ourselves as Australians?

### Inquiry overview

- Students explore various Australia Day celebrations, including local events and Citizenship Ceremonies, the Australian of the Year Awards and the Australian Citizenship Affirmation. They consider the meaning behind these celebrations and how they reflect Australia's civic identity.
- Small groups are organised to ascertain different perspectives on why we celebrate Australia Day. Using mobile technology, one group of students conducts a vox pop of the school community to collect and record a one-word or one-sentence response to '*Why do we celebrate Australia Day?*' They use this information to make a school statement about what they have found. Another group links with local government or online recordings of Citizenship Ceremonies to describe the ceremony and associated pledges. Another group is responsible for describing the features of the Australian of the Year Awards and why they are important.
- Students create 1–3 minute videos that illustrate each group's findings:  
*Why do we celebrate Australia Day?*  
*What is our pledge?*

## Links to the Australian Curriculum

### Years 6–7 Civics and Citizenship

	Australian Curriculum version 7.5	Australian Curriculum version 8
<b>Knowledge and understanding</b>	<p><b>Year 6</b> Who can be an Australian citizen, the formal rights and responsibilities, and shared values of Australian citizenship (ACHCK038)</p> <p><b>Year 7</b> How values, including freedom, respect, inclusion, civility, responsibility, compassion, equality and a 'fair go', can promote cohesion within Australian society (ACHCK052)</p>	<p><b>Year 6</b> The shared values of Australian citizenship and the formal rights and responsibilities of Australian citizens (ACHASSK147)</p> <p><b>Year 7</b> How values, including freedom, respect, inclusion, civility, responsibility, compassion, equality and a 'fair go', can promote cohesion within Australian society (ACHASSK197)</p>
<b>Inquiry and skills</b>	<p><b>Year 5</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work in groups to identify issues and develop possible solutions and a plan for action using decision making processes (ACHCS032)</li> <li>• Present civics and citizenship ideas and viewpoints for a particular purpose using civics and citizenship terms and concepts (ACHCS033)</li> <li>• Reflect on personal roles and actions as a citizen in the school and community (ACHCS034)</li> </ul> <p><b>Year 6</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work in groups to identify issues and develop possible solutions and a plan for action using decision making processes (ACHCS044)</li> <li>• Present civics and citizenship ideas and viewpoints for a particular purpose using civics and citizenship terms and concepts (ACHCS045)</li> <li>• Reflect on personal roles and actions as a citizen in the school and community (ACHCS046)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Year 5</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work in groups to generate responses to issues and challenges (ACHASSI102)</li> <li>• Present ideas, findings, viewpoints and conclusions in a range of texts and modes that incorporate source materials, digital and non-digital representations and discipline-specific terms and conventions (ACHASSI105)</li> <li>• Reflect on learning to propose personal and/or collective action in response to an issue or challenge, and predict the probable effects (ACHASSI104)</li> </ul> <p><b>Year 6</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work in groups to generate responses to issues and challenges (ACHASSI130)</li> <li>• Present ideas, findings, viewpoints and conclusions in a range of texts and modes that incorporate source materials, digital and non-digital representations and discipline-specific terms and conventions (ACHASSI133)</li> <li>• Reflect on learning to propose personal and/or collective action in response to an issue or challenge, and predict the probable effects (ACHASSI132)</li> </ul>

## Links to the Australian Curriculum

### Years 6–7 Civics and citizenship

	Australian Curriculum version 7.5	Australian Curriculum version 8
<b>Inquiry and skills</b>	<p><b>Year 7</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Critically analyse information and ideas from a range of sources in relation to civics and citizenship topics and issues (ACHCS056)</li> <li>• Use democratic processes to reach consensus on a course of action relating to a civics or citizenship issue and plan for that action (ACHCS058)</li> <li>• Present evidence-based civics and citizenship arguments using subject-specific language (ACHCS059)</li> <li>• Reflect on their role as a citizen in Australia's democracy (ACHCS060)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Year 7</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analyse primary and secondary sources to identify values and perspectives on people, actions, events, issues and phenomena, past and present (ACHASSI157)</li> <li>• Collaborate to generate alternatives in response to an issue or challenge, and compare the potential costs and benefits of each (ACHASSI160)</li> <li>• Present ideas, findings, viewpoints, explanations and conclusions in a range of texts and modes that incorporate source materials, citations, graphic representations and discipline-specific terms, conventions and concepts (ACHASSI163)</li> <li>• Reflect on learning to propose personal and/or collective action in response to an issue or challenge, taking into account different perspectives, and describe the expected effects (ACHASSI162)</li> </ul>
<b>General capabilities</b>	Critical and creative thinking, Ethical understanding, Information and communication technology capability, Literacy, Personal and social capability	



## Getting started

The following 'getting started' activities encourage students to reflect on the different ways in which Australia Day is recognised across Australia. It is important that students understand the diverse nature of the celebrations and, more importantly, what the celebrations can tell us about ourselves and what we value.

Equally, it is important that students recognise that for many First Australians, Australia Day is not celebrated as a marker of the foundation of European settlement in Australia but as a commemoration of invasion and also of survival.


### How is Australia Day celebrated?

1. After sharing experiences, have a whole-class discussion about celebrating Australia Day.
  - What were some common experiences (eg attending a large event such as fireworks, hosting a barbecue for family and friends or ... doing things the same as every other day)?
  - How do people in your household talk about Australia Day?
  - Make a summary of common and different experiences about celebrating Australia Day.
2. It is important that students understand that there are different ways that Australia Day might be celebrated, or not celebrated.

Point out that many First Australians mark 26 January in different ways, some commemorating it as the Day of Mourning or Invasion Day, others recognising it as Survival Day, celebrating the continuance of their culture. Share the information sheet provided by Reconciliation Australia ([www.reconciliation.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Lets-Talk-26-January.pdf](http://www.reconciliation.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Lets-Talk-26-January.pdf)). Invite students to research local and national Survival Day events such as the Saltwater Freshwater Festival, Belgrave Survival Day and Tandanya Survival Day, and ensure that these contributions and activities of these the celebrations are added to the summary created in Step 1.

**Note:** students may have explored this topic in Year 4 as part of their humanities curriculum. However, there are many opportunities to extend this unit by exploring some of the history around the Day of Mourning commemoration and the emergence of Survival Day celebrations in more recent times. Further sources of information can be found at the following sites:

- [www.australiaday.org.au/australia-day/reconciliation](http://www.australiaday.org.au/australia-day/reconciliation)
- [www.australiaday.com.au/about/indigenous-australians](http://www.australiaday.com.au/about/indigenous-australians)

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3. Display #AustraliaDay Your Way ([www.your.australiaday.org.au](http://www.your.australiaday.org.au)) for a selection of tweets on what Australians did on Australia Day last year. Consider a selection of up to 20 tweets and images. Make a list of what people are doing and saying. Also watch a video on ABC Splash highlighting the diversity of Australia Day activities (<http://splash.abc.net.au/home#!/media/598837/full-on-aussies>).
    - What do these tweets, images and video tell us about how people celebrate Australia Day?
    - How do these tweet, images and video compare with our class's experiences of celebrating Australia Day?

**Note:** #AustraliaDay Your Way is a curated collection of tweets drawn from Twitter on Australia Day. Access to Twitter is not required to view the images. Links to the original posts are active.

4. As a class use students' experiences and the tweets to discuss:
  - What do you think we are actually celebrating on Australia Day?
  - To what extent are the reasons for celebrating Australia Day the same for all of us?
  - How do others in our school, our community and Australia as a whole understand what we are celebrating?  
How might we find out?


## Process

### How does the school, community and Australia celebrate Australia Day?


1. Reflect on the previous activity about how and what we celebrate on Australia Day.
2. Discuss as a class:
  - How will we find out what others understand about what we are celebrating about Australia on Australia Day?
  - Who might we ask to investigate (eg people in the school, family and friends or others)?
  - How will we use this information?
3. Divide the class into three groups, each focusing on Australia Day ideas and activities for different people:
  - Group 1: The school community
  - Group 2: The local community
  - Group 3: Australia as a whole

Each group conducts an investigation using the suggested guidelines below and reports their findings back to the class.

**Note:** Students' participation and output from the group task may form the basis of their assessment in this investigation. See the relevant section at the end of this investigation.




Group	Responsibility
<b>Group 1: School community – what are we celebrating about Australia on Australia Day?</b>	<p>This group conducts a vox pop of a sample of opinions from people in the school community.</p> <p>a) Ensure that students understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the purpose of the vox pop, including a statement to be shown to participants that explains the activity and how results will be used</li> <li>ethical issues (eg asking permission to use interviewees' answers and to photograph them, and being respectful of people's responses and any relevant school policies)</li> <li>organisation of who will be asked to participate, when this will occur and which students will ask the questions and film the responses.</li> </ul> <p>b) Run a practice session with peers to ensure that all students have access to and are familiar with using digital technologies to record responses and to take photos of participants.</p> <p>c) Students conduct the vox pop interviews. They ask: What do we celebrate about Australia on Australia Day?</p> <p>They discourage responses such as 'being Australian', and instead probe for further understandings about what this means.</p> <p>d) Students edit the vox pop interviews and create a 1–3 minute summary video of the highlights. They show the video to the class.</p> <p><b>Extension:</b> To what extent were there differences in responses between certain groups (eg males and females; children, young people, older people; First Australians and other Australians; people from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds; people newly arrived in Australia and those who have lived in Australia all their lives)?</p>



Group	Responsibility
<p><b>Group 2: Citizenship Ceremonies and the Australian Citizenship Affirmation – what are we celebrating about Australia on Australia Day?</b></p>	<p>This group explores the local Citizenship Ceremony and the Australian Citizenship Affirmation to consider what we are celebrating about Australia on Australia Day.</p> <p>a) Explore a range of recent Citizenship Ceremonies and school-based ceremonies from the Australian Affirmation website (<a href="http://www.australianaffirmation.org.au/case-studies">www.australianaffirmation.org.au/case-studies</a>).</p> <p>Students could view examples of full Citizenship Ceremonies such as the National Flag Raising and Citizenship Ceremony from the ABC website (<a href="http://www.abc.net.au/australiaday/ceremony.htm">www.abc.net.au/australiaday/ceremony.htm</a>).</p> <p>This is an extended broadcast (more than one hour), so you may want students to view only a portion of the broadcast, which typically breaks into three major sections:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Welcome to Country</li> <li>• The Prime Minister’s welcome</li> <li>• Citizenship Ceremony.</li> </ul> <p>Recordings of local Citizenship Ceremonies are also available on YouTube.</p> <p>b) All students in this group investigate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• where the most recent ceremony was held, the numbers of people who attended and if possible where they were from</li> <li>• what people need to do to become an Australian citizen (<a href="http://www.australia.gov.au/information-and-services/immigration-and-visas/australian-citizenship">www.australia.gov.au/information-and-services/immigration-and-visas/australian-citizenship</a>)</li> <li>• what mementoes they are given after the ceremony</li> <li>• what people pledge when they become an Australian citizen and why there are two pledges (<a href="http://www.border.gov.au/Trav/Citi/Citi/Australian-citizenship-pledge">www.border.gov.au/Trav/Citi/Citi/Australian-citizenship-pledge</a>).</li> </ul> <p>c) People who were born in Australia can also say the Australian Citizenship Affirmation (<a href="http://www.australianaffirmation.org.au">www.australianaffirmation.org.au</a>). What do you think the Citizenship Affirmation means? Why might Australian people want to say this? Do you think there is anything missing from this statement?</p> <p><b>Note:</b> Encourage students to consider commitments to other values (eg respect for different cultural groups, social justice and help for those in need). Are there particular school values that could be incorporated? An example of pledges or verbal commitments in the medical fraternity can be found at <a href="http://changeday.com.au">http://changeday.com.au</a>. Examples of schools holding an Australian Citizenship Affirmation Ceremony can be found at <a href="http://www.australianaffirmation.org.au/case-studies">www.australianaffirmation.org.au/case-studies</a>.</p> <p>d) Prepare a 1–3 minute video that summarises this part of the investigation: What do the Ceremonies and the Australian Citizenship Affirmation tell us about what we celebrate about Australia on Australia Day?</p>





Group	Responsibility
<b>Group 3: Australian of the Year Awards – what are we celebrating about Australia on Australia Day?</b>	<p>a) All students in this group investigate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How many categories of the Australian of the Year Awards are there? What are they?</li> <li>• What criteria are used to decide who wins the Australian of the Year Awards?</li> <li>• Who currently holds the Award for each category? Why?</li> </ul> <p>Refer to the following links:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="http://www.australianoftheyear.org.au/the-awards">www.australianoftheyear.org.au/the-awards</a></li> </ul> <p>b) Nominate pairs in this group to read the entries for each category finalist in one of each of the states and territories (eg Australian of the Year, Senior Australian of the Year). Refer to: <a href="http://www.australianoftheyear.org.au/honour-roll">www.australianoftheyear.org.au/honour-roll</a></p> <p>c) Who would they have chosen? Why?</p> <p>d) To what extent do you think each of the award winners deserved the award? Give reasons for your opinion.</p> <p>e) Students prepare a 1–3 minute video of the Australian of the Year Awards and how this indicates what we celebrate about Australia on Australia Day.</p>

4. As a class synthesise the ideas by using a graphic organiser such as a Venn diagram or a concept map. Compare the findings of each group's video, noting similarities and differences in views expressed by others.
5. Why do we celebrate Australia Day? Think about what we have learned. What does this tell us about ourselves? What is important to us?

## Action options

What can we do with what we have found out?

1. Students can prepare their own 'class citizenship' ceremony, writing words and pledges that reflect their understanding of citizenship, identity and belonging. Use of symbols and meaningful and 'authentic' certificates should be encouraged.
2. Students create their own videos using mobile devices as they make their pledge. Alternatively, have them add their pledge to a display board (perhaps in an assembly area) or a class webpage that they can revisit during the year.
3. Timely reconnections with these pledges can be featured throughout the year.

## Looking back, looking forward: looking out and looking in

After engaging with this inquiry sequence, students consider:

- What does being Australian mean to others?
- What does being Australian mean to me?

## Assessment

### Assessment task: Video

Small groups prepare a 1–3 minute video of what we celebrate about Australia on Australia Day.

### Suggested assessment criteria

Extent to which the group ...	Low	Medium	High
was able to use evidence from their investigation to what articulate what we celebrate about Australia on Australia Day			
was able to synthesise a range of views into a coherent video			
completed all questions and requirements			
provided information that was clearly organised			
used appropriate research strategies for their group project (eg internet searches, use of NADC website, contact with local councils, interviewing) to find information			
cooperated with others to complete all set tasks			
completed all tasks on time			
other (teacher or students to insert)			

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