



Australian Government

endeavour250
Reflecting on Australia's History

A picture tells a thousand words

Analyse and compare images of Cook over time including artworks of First Australians.



Year Level: 7–8



The Arts



Critical and Creative Thinking



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures





A picture tells a thousand words

OVERVIEW

This Visual Arts learning sequence is inquiry-based, enabling teachers and their students to investigate how, over time, multiple artists have interpreted the visage of Captain James Cook.

On this first voyage, Cook was directed to record the transit of Venus, chart the eastern coast of New Holland, cultivate a friendship and alliance with its inhabitants, and annex any convenient trading posts in the King's name. To take on this mission, Cook, the man, required several attributes of leadership, courage, and determination. Portrait artists typically interpret the qualities of their sitters in different ways, and in various styles.

Over time, Cook has been represented as both hero and villain. This learning sequence asks students to investigate who Captain James Cook was, how he contributed to Australia's history, and how he is remembered. The sequence examines various historical and cultural interpretations by artists of not only his visage, but of his deeds and legacy. Students create their own portrait of Captain James Cook as a response to the initial inquiry question.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

The learning sequence encourages students to enhance their understanding of the historical significance of Captain James Cook through examining his various portraits.

Portraiture memorialises people, and through historical, cultural and social viewpoints/perspectives, the interpretation of the person and their deeds can change. Therefore, the Visual Arts learning outcomes for this sequence are:

- Explore concepts, ideas and themes expressed by artists in their artworks and visual arts practices as inspiration to develop their own artworks.

- Experiment with forms of visual representation, materials, techniques, technologies and processes to express their own interpretation of portraiture.
- Plan, create and present art works that communicate ideas and viewpoints to an audience.
- Analyse how artists interpret portraiture from historical, cultural and social perspectives, including exploration of the views of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists and their use of visual conventions in their artworks.

LEARNING AREAS



The Arts



Critical & Creative Thinking



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures

DURATION OF LESSONS



4–8 lessons





Australian Curriculum

VISUAL ARTS – YEARS 7 AND 8

CROSS-CURRICULUM PRIORITIES



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures

GENERAL CAPABILITIES



Critical and Creative Thinking



Intercultural Understanding

- Experiment with visual arts conventions and techniques, including exploration of techniques used by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists, to represent a theme, concept or idea in their artwork ([ACAVAM118](#))
- Develop ways to enhance their intentions as artists through exploration of how artists use materials, techniques, technologies and processes ([ACAVAM119](#))
- Develop planning skills for art-making by exploring techniques and processes used by different artists ([ACAVAM120](#))
- Practise techniques and processes to enhance representation of ideas in their art-making ([ACAVAM121](#))
- Present artwork demonstrating consideration of how the artwork is displayed to enhance the artist's intention to an audience ([ACAVAM122](#))
- Analyse how artists use visual conventions in artworks ([ACAVAR123](#))
- Identify and connect specific features and purposes of visual artworks from contemporary and past times to explore viewpoints and enrich their art-making, starting with Australian artworks including those of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples ([ACAVAR124](#))





Engage

Refer to the portrait of Lieutenant James Cook (ca 1770/71) by an unknown artist and through questioning have students identify the subject of the portrait, and provide reasons for their suggestions.

Initial questioning may be directed to how the sitter is dressed, if the image were created in the present or the past, the expression of the sitter, and why this sitter is important, etc.

Once correctly identified, explain that this portrait is a painting of Cook, possibly after his return to England in 1771 when he was bestowed with the rank of Captain.

Discuss how the artist has represented Cook: his expression, his costume, the use of light, the atmosphere created in the painting. Have students suggest what the artist might have wanted to represent about him through this portrait, and if this is a true likeness of Captain Cook.

Discuss how portraiture at this time was not accurate to physical likeness, as it aimed to capture the character of the sitter, in the prevalent style of painting or sculpture of the day. In this era, Neoclassicism was the dominant style (refer to the resource sheet under 'Engage' for a description of the Neoclassical period and a list of Neoclassical portraits and artists). In small groups, ask students to research another Neoclassical-style portrait from this time, and compare it with how Captain Cook was represented. Have each group report back to the class about the portrait they found, and how it is similar or different to the Captain Cook portrait.

Working in small groups, provide 'Student worksheet 1: Examining portraits of Captain Cook', which lists ten portraits of Cook completed over time, along with a URL for each that links to the National Library of Australia's records of portraits. Ask students to examine the ten listed two-dimensional and three-dimensional historical portraits of Cook from 1770 to 1839. Have students determine the order of the portraits (oldest to youngest), and justify their selection by noting which peculiarities of the images give clues to the age of the portrait. These peculiarities could be: Cook's physical characteristics (eg aging), the purpose of the portrait (eg celebrating or commemorating his various voyages and explorations), the art style used for portraiture, the nationality of the artist or the status of Captain Cook in the portrait.





Explore

Present students with the inquiry question—who is the real Captain Cook?

As a class, ask students to identify their prior knowledge about Captain Cook. Prompt students with questions, such as the era in which he lived, his nationality, his age when he explored the east coast of Australia, his naval achievements, his naval rank, where he lived, his family life, his cultural connections. Organise students into pairs or small groups to investigate 5–10 significant facts about Cook as a short biography (1–2 paragraphs) about him.

As a class, listen to the section of the recorded [interview with Peter FitzSimons](#) (00:11:00 – 00:18:16) who describes Captain Cook – the person – based on his research. Ask students to imagine they are going to interview Captain Cook. Have them develop a list of questions they would ask him about his explorations and his life. These questions can be used as the basis for exploring the students' personal perspectives in their own portrait, 'Who is the real Captain Cook?'

Introduce students to [Captain Cook's journals: Daily entries](#) where they can read his account on 29 April 1770.

Alternatively, have students read the [modern English version](#), which includes extracts from entries from Joseph Banks (the ship's botanist). Ask students to compare the similarities and differences in the entries. Understanding the same incident from two different perspectives may give students a better insight into how Cook perceived the events of the first landing.

Examine the five historical artworks listed in the resource sheet under 'Explore', in which various artists and printmakers have illustrated Captain Cook's explorations. For each of the artworks, discuss what each scene was commemorating, and how Captain Cook is portrayed. Direct students to consider alternative cultural perspectives about his explorations; for example, how the Indigenous peoples of the lands he explored viewed Cook and his party. Encourage students to evaluate how cultural perspective influences the intended meaning in artworks.

Introduce students to the nine artworks by Indigenous artists listed in the resource sheet under 'Explore'. These artworks portray Captain Cook from different cultural perspectives and were selected because of their relationship to the previous historical artworks illustrating Captain Cook's explorations, and other commemorative sculptures.

Using the visual thinking strategy (VTS), 'I see, I think, I wonder', discuss with students what the artist wanted the audience to understand by these artworks (refer to [Art detectives: Let's investigate](#) for the VTS framework). Request students select one of the nine artworks and analyse how the artist has used the conventions of artmaking to construct the image/object. Students could also reflect on the choice of materials and processes to enhance the meaning of the artwork.

Many of the historical images of Captain Cook were produced through printmaking techniques (eg engraving, etching, or lithography). Have students consider why printmaking was the main technique used to record the portraits of Cook. Encourage students to consider how the deeds of Cook were communicated to the world. Printmaking was a means of mass-producing images in bulletins and books. Ask students to investigate what printmaking techniques were used at this time, and explain that they were an important way of conveying information about people and events in the 18th century (refer to the resource sheet under 'Explore' for links to information on printmaking techniques).





Explain

Provide students with 'Student worksheet 2: Comparing traditional and contemporary perspectives', and ask them to select one of the following pairs of artworks to compare:

- Samuel Calvert's '[Captain Cook taking possession of the Australian continent on behalf of the British Crown, AD 1770, under the name of New South Wales](#)' with '[Possession Island 1991](#)' by G Bennett
- '[Landing of Captain Cook at Botany Bay, 1770](#)' (ca 1902) painted by E Phillips-Fox with '[We call them pirates out here](#)' (ca 2006) by D Boyd
- the Captain James Cook memorial sculpture (ca 1878) in Hyde Park, Sydney by Thomas Woolner ([with](#) or [without](#) graffiti), with '[Captain James Cook/40](#)' (ca 2013) bronze sculpture by Jason Wing.

Students work in pairs to respond to the questions in worksheet 2. They identify and analyse:

- how and why elements of the historical artworks were appropriated by the contemporary artwork
- how the association between the two artworks changes the meaning of each artwork for the audience.

Consider how the audience may be unfamiliar with the original work, and that the referencing of the original image may need some further identification for the audience to understand.) Define the term 'appropriation' (refer to the [Tate's definition](#)) in visual arts. Discuss with the class the narrative within each artwork and how it positions Captain Cook as a cultural icon. Have students consider whether the audience reaction to each work will be either dissent or support.

Invite students to consider how they would represent Captain Cook – hero or villain, common man or extraordinary man. Using a mind map, students develop an identity for Cook from what they now know about him and how they perceive him. Some of their knowledge and perceptions could be used as text within their final artwork. Invite students to develop a short artist's statement that expresses and communicates their perception of Captain Cook as depicted in their portrait.





Elaborate

Present students with a task to design and/or construct a portrait of Captain James Cook.

Students can appropriate images from the historical artworks listed in the Engage and Explore sections, particularly Cook's image in one of the historical portraits. Students can choose to present their portraits as either digital or non-digital. Encourage students to experiment with various techniques and materials in developing 2D, 3D or digital image options.

Using a visual diary or iPad, students select materials and/or techniques to use in their artwork. Students commit to constructing the image or object, with iterative reflection and problem-solving to adjust and revise the image/object to reflect their meaning.

Suggested ideas for the presentation of the portrait include:

- a graphic design portrait
- a design for an Australian medal, coin or bank note
- an intaglio or relief print of Captain Cook
- a portrait made of fabric scraps, or an appliqued image
- a 3D mask – papier-mâché or clay
- a digital image using multiple images of Captain Cook superimposed to generate a dramatic effect.

Exhibition/display options can enhance the meaning of an artwork. Discuss options where students consider concepts of exhibition and display, such as scale, light, repetition, balance, space, etc.

In groups of six, have students design an exhibition incorporating their six artworks together. The class should decide which of the artworks correspond – in meaning, use of techniques, or concepts of design – with other artworks, and assemble a cohesive group of six artworks. Each group decides on a theme/title for their exhibition, and how to display the artworks within a designated physical or virtual space. The group should prepare an exhibition catalogue outlining how each artist addressed the exhibition theme, and include each artist's statement about their individual artwork. Share the exhibition catalogues with the other student groups.





Evaluate

Provide students with a set of focus questions based on the 'cultural framework'.

Instruct each of the student groups to assess the exhibition of two other groups. Their assessment of the exhibition should be based on relevant questions, such as:

- How is Captain Cook represented by the exhibition?
- Does the artwork take a political stance (dissent or support, propaganda or protest)?
- What ideas and concepts are expressed by the artworks?
- What symbols are used to communicate meaning?
- How are cultural and social meanings represented by each artist's practice?
- How does each portrait of Captain Cook add to our knowledge about the person?

The group should post a review/blog/vlog about the exhibition, including images of the artworks. The review should highlight how the individual artists approached the exhibition theme and how the six artworks developed a cohesive exhibition.

Individually, in their visual diary, students should critique their own work and reflect on how they communicated meaning through their use of materials, techniques, art concepts and references to other artists' works.

Evaluate student knowledge by using Quizlet to generate multiple-choice questions about Captain Cook, the artists and their artworks, and the key concepts covered in this unit. Direct students to further resources on this topic.



Examining portraits of Captain Cook

Use the URLs listed below to examine the portraits of Captain James Cook. Number the portraits from earliest to latest. Justify your choices by listing how the image of Captain Cook changes overtime (eg, his apparent aging, commemorating his various voyages and explorations, the art style used for portraiture, the nationality of the artist, the status of Captain Cook, the purpose of the portrait – celebration or commemoration).

| ▼ Artist | ▼ Title of work | ▼ URL | ▼ Numbered list 1–10 | ▼ Justification |
|------------------------------|---|---|----------------------|-----------------|
| J Chapman | Captain Cook, coloured engraving | https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-240952710/view | | |
| unknown | Captain Cook, medal | https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-152238713/view | | |
| W Holl | Captain Cook | https://catalogue.nla.gov.au/Record/2102720 | | |
| Wedgwood & Bentley | Captain Cook medallion | https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-137362825/view | | |
| Desmarest | Captain Cook | https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-135954843/view | | |
| JK Sherwin, J Keyes, N Dance | Captain Cook, engraving | https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-135953709/view | | |
| J Basire | Captain Cook, engraving | https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-135706401/view | | |
| unknown | Captain Cook, copy of N Dance's portrait | https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-138419710/view | | |
| unknown | Captain Cook, picture | https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-135953277/view | | |
| Ducarme | Captain Cook, coloured lithograph | https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-135960127/view | | |

Comparing traditional and contemporary perspectives

Artwork 1: A traditional perspective

1. What do you see?

2. What do you think is happening?

3. What materials do you think the artist has used to make this artwork?

4. What is the title of this artwork? When was it made?

5. Who made this artwork?

6. What art technique was used to make the artwork? What is involved in using this technique to make an artwork?

7. What questions do you have about this artwork?

8. How does this artwork make you feel?

9. What was the artist's purpose for making this artwork?

10. How does the artist portray Captain Cook in this artwork? Do you think the artist's perspective is valid? Why?

Make a quick sketch of Artwork 1. Label and identify how relevant concepts of artmaking are used.

Artwork 2: A contemporary perspective

11. What do you see?

12. What do you think is happening?

13. What materials do you think the artist has used to make this artwork?

14. What is the title of this artwork? When was it made?

15. Who made this artwork?

16. What art technique was used to make the artwork? What is involved in using this technique to make an artwork?

17. What questions do you have about this artwork?

18. How does this artwork make you feel?

19. What was the artist's purpose for making this artwork?

20. How does the artist portray Captain Cook in this artwork? Do you think the artist's perspective is valid?

Make a quick sketch of Artwork 2. Label and identify how relevant concepts of artmaking are used.

Resources

General

- National Library of Australia (TROVE): Catalogues – [Portraits of Captain Cook](#)
- [The Endeavour journal of Sir Joseph Banks](#)
- [Quizlet](#)
- [National Museum Australia – Cook claims Australia](#)
- [Through my own eyes: A self-portrait – teacher resource](#)
- [Making a mask](#)
- [Sketchbook](#)
- [Brushes redux – iTunes app](#)
- [Indigenous Australian collection – QAGOMA](#)
- [InsideArt: Portraiture](#)
- Art Gallery of NSW:
 - Michael Parekowhai, [The English Channel](#) (ca 2015)
 - Francesco Bartolozzi, William Byrne, after John Webber, [The death of Captain Cook](#) (ca 1784):
 - (after) Philippe Jacques de Loucherbourg, after John Webber, [The apotheosis of Captain Cook](#) (ca 1794)
 - John Webber, Plates to Cook's voyage, from the book, [James Cook and James King, A voyage to the Pacific Ocean performed under the direction of Captains](#)

[Cook, Clerke and Gore, in His Majesty's ships the resolutions and discovery ... 1776–1780 \(Cook's fatal third voyage\)](#), London, 1785

- John Keyse Sherwin (after Nathaniel Dance-Holland), [Portrait of Captain James Cook](#) (ca 1784)
- Joseph Dufour & Jean-Gabriel Charvet, [Les Sauvages de la Mer Pacifique: 1. \(Native hut\), 2. \(3 dancers\), 3. \(Sailing boat\), 4. \(Natives & goat\)](#), (ca 1805-05)

Engage

Historical portraits of Captain Cook

- [J Basire \(engraving, ca 1777\)](#)
- [Wedgwood & Bentley \(medallion, ca 1777\)](#)
- [JK Sherwin, J Keyes, N Dance \(engraving, ca 1779\)](#)
- [Unknown \(ca 1780, medal\)](#)
- [Hogg, J \(ca 1784 medal\) Captain Cook \(ca 179?, etching\)](#)
- [Desmarest \(ca 179?, engraving\)](#)
- [J Chapman \(ca 1800, coloured engraving\)](#)
- [J Webber \(ca 180?, mezzotint\) Captn. James Cook, FRS \[picture\]/ painted at the Cape of Good Hope](#)
- [Unknown \(ca 183?, engraving\)](#)

- [Unknown \(copy of N. Dance's portrait, ca 18??, painting\)](#)
- [W Holl \(ca 1837, engraving\)](#)
- [Ducarme \(ca 183?, coloured lithograph\)](#)

Neoclassicism (18th century – Age of Enlightenment)

- [Metropolitan Museum of Art](#)
- [The Art Story](#)

Neoclassicist artists and portraits

- Sir Joshua Reynolds, '[Samuel Johnson](#)', (English, ca 1756–57)
- Henry Pelham, '[Stephen Hooper](#)', (USA, ca 1773)
- Jean-Baptiste Perronneau, '[Olivier Journu](#)' (ca 1756)
- Anton Raphael Mengs, '[Don Luis Jaime Antonio de Borbon y Farnesio, Infante of Spain](#)' (ca 1774–78)
- Thomas Gainsborough, '[Richard St George Mansergh-St George](#)', (ca 1776–80)
- Samuel Neele, ('[Benelong, a native of New Holland](#)'), engraving (English, ca 179?)
- James Neagle, '[\[Ben-nil-long\]](#)', engraving (English, ca 1798)
- Jean Antoine Houdon, '[Robert Fulton](#)' (French, ca 1803–04)



Resources (cont'd)

Explore

- [Audio interview](#) with Peter FitzSimons, author and journalist (00:11:00 – 00:18:16) who describes Captain Cook as a person
- [Cook's journals](#): Daily entries, where students can read Cook's descriptions of the new worlds, particularly his account on 29 April 1770
- [Art detectives. Let's investigate](#)

Artworks related to Captain Cook's explorations:

- ['Captain James Cook, Sir Joseph Banks, Lord Sandwich, Dr Daniel Solander and Dr John Hawkesworth \(ca 1771\)'](#) by John Mortimer
- ['An offering before Capt. Cook in the Sandwich Islands'](#) by S Middiman, J Webber and Hall (ca 1784)
- ['Captain Cook taking possession of the Australian continent on behalf of the British Crown'](#) (ca 1889) painted by John Alexander Gilfillan (Royal Society of Victoria)
- ['Captain Cook taking possession of the Australian continent on behalf of the British crown, AD 1770, under the name of New South Wales'](#) drawn and engraved by Samuel Calvert
- ['Landing of Captain Cook at Botany Bay, 1770'](#), (ca 1902) painted by E Phillips-Fox

Artworks related to Captain Cook by Indigenous artists:

- ['Possession Island 1991'](#) by G Bennett
- ['We call them pirates out here'](#) (ca 2006) by D Boyd
- ['Broken dreams'](#) (ca 2012) Inkjet prints on paper, by Michael Cook
- ['Civilised'](#) (ca 2012) Inkjet prints on paper, series by Michael Cook
- 'Close contact' (ca 2019) installation by Vincent Namatjira: ['Colourful optimism'](#) and ['Close contact'](#)
- 'Captain James Cook/40' (ca 2013) bronze sculpture by Jason Wing: ['Captain Cook'](#); ['Captain James Cook'](#) and ['Jason Wing: artist file'](#)
- ['The landing'](#) (ca 2018) painting by Marlene Gilson
- 'Othering the explorer, James Cook' (ca 2015) c-type print on metallic paper, by Christian Thompson: ['Othering the explorer'](#) and ['CIAF teacher handbook'](#)
- ['In pursuit of Venus \(infected\)'](#) (ca 2015–17) by Lisa Reihana or ['Lisa Reihana: in Pursuit of Venus'](#) (YouTube) and ['Lisa Reihana: a monumental, immersive new artwork reanimates the story of Captain Cook and first contact'](#)

Explain

- ['Captain Cook taking possession of the Australian continent on behalf of the British crown, AD 1770, under the name of New South Wales'](#) by Samuel Calvert
- ['Possession Island 1991'](#) by G Bennett
- ['Landing of Captain Cook at Botany Bay, 1770'](#), (ca 1902) painted by E Phillips-Fox
- ['We call them pirates out here'](#) (ca 2006) by D Boyd
- [Captain James Cook memorial sculpture \(ca 1878\) in Hyde Park, Sydney by Thomas Woolner, \(with Aboriginal graffiti\)](#)
- ['Captain James Cook/40'](#) (ca 2013) bronze sculpture by Jason Wing
- [Appropriation](#)

Elaborate

- [Cultural framework](#)





Australian Government

Department of Education, Skills and Employment

**Department of Infrastructure, Transport,
Regional Development and Communications**

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