



Australian Government

endeavour250
Reflecting on Australia's History

Visual snapshots

Students explore images of Cook as well of those of Aboriginal artists (then and now) to appreciate the ways in which images convey important ideas over time.



Year Level: 9-10



History



English

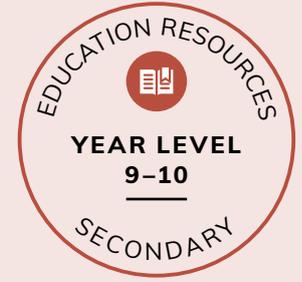


Visual Arts



Critical and Creative Thinking





Visual snapshots

OVERVIEW

In this learning sequence, students will explore the achievements of Cook, as well as ideas reflected in artworks containing European and Australian perspectives.

Students will consider the historical and cultural context of artworks and how artists shape content and style. They will look at the perspectives of artists and some of the ways that artworks have been, and continue to be, viewed and interpreted.

They will consider views of Cook that have been expressed over time, and think about how he could be represented in contemporary Australia during the commemoration of the 250th anniversary of his landing in Australia.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this unit students will:

- understand the achievements of Cook as an explorer, surveyor, navigator and cartographer
- analyse and evaluate historical and contemporary representations of Cook in artworks
- understand the ways that artists shape the content and style of artworks to present ideas and perspectives of people and events
- analyse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and contemporary perspectives of James Cook
- develop and justify a viewpoint of Captain Cook for the 250th commemoration of his landing in Australia.

LEARNING AREAS

- History
- English
- Visual Arts
- Critical & Creative Thinking

DURATION OF LESSONS

- 6–8 lessons



Australian Curriculum

CROSS-CURRICULUM PRIORITIES



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures

GENERAL CAPABILITIES



Critical and Creative Thinking

HISTORY – YEAR 9

- The extent of European imperial expansion and different responses, including in the Asian region ([ACOKFH017](#))

HISTORY – YEAR 10

- Background to the struggle of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples for rights and freedoms before 1965, including the 1938 Day of Mourning ... ([ACDSEH104](#))
- The significance of the following for the civil rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples: ... 1967 Referendum; ... Mabo decision; ... ([ACDSEH106](#))
- Identify the origin, purpose and context of primary and secondary sources ([ACHHS187](#))
- Identify and analyse the perspectives of people from the past ([ACHHS190](#))
- Identify and analyse different historical interpretations (including their own) ([ACHHS191](#))
- Select and use a range of communication forms (oral, graphic, written) and digital technologies ([ACHHS193](#))



Australian Curriculum

ENGLISH – YEAR 9

- Analyse how the construction and interpretation of texts, including media texts, can be influenced by cultural perspectives and other texts ([ACELY1739](#))
- Interpret, analyse and evaluate how different perspectives of issue, event, situation, individuals or groups are constructed to serve specific purposes in texts ([ACELY1742](#))
- Use comprehension strategies to interpret and analyse texts, comparing and evaluating representations of an event, issue, situation or character in different texts ([ACELY1744](#))

ENGLISH – YEAR 10

- Analyse and evaluate how people, cultures, places, events, objects and concepts are represented in texts, including media texts, through language, structural and/or visual choices ([ACELY1749](#))
- Identify and analyse implicit or explicit values, beliefs and assumptions in texts and how these are influenced by purposes and likely audiences ([ACELY1752](#))
- Use comprehension strategies to compare and contrast information within and between texts, identifying and analysing embedded perspectives, and evaluating supporting evidence ([ACELY1754](#))

THE ARTS: VISUAL ARTS – YEARS 9 AND 10

- Evaluate how representations communicate artistic intentions in artworks they make and view to inform their future art making ([ACAVAR130](#))
- Analyse a range of visual artworks from contemporary and past times to explore differing viewpoints and enrich their visual art-making, starting with Australian artworks, including those of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, and consider international artworks ([ACAVAR131](#))



Engage

Inquiry questions:

- **How do we remember Captain Cook?**
- **What did Captain Cook achieve?**

Students will discuss their current understandings of Captain Cook. They will develop an understanding of the context for artworks by exploring his three 'voyages of discovery'.

Student understandings

Discuss with students their understandings of James Cook:

- What do we know about him?
- Why do we remember him?
- What were his achievements?
- How do we remember him in Australia?
- Do all Australians remember him the same way?
- How do we memorialise and commemorate famous people?

Cook's voyages

Have students in small groups explore one of Cook's voyages:

- Endeavour voyage (1768–71)
- Resolution voyage (1772–75)
- Resolution voyage (1776–80).

For each voyage, students should explain:

- the purpose
- the route taken
- the lands encountered
- relationships with the First Peoples of the Pacific
- immediate outcomes of the voyages; for example maps of seas and lands, botanical finds, knowledge of other lands, opportunities for trade.

Students should also identify an image/artwork associated with the voyage; for example one of people, plants, animals or landscape.

Provide students with a copy of Worksheet 1 to record their responses, and a copy of the Resources sheet for a list of resource examples. Find both at the end of this PDF.

Feedback

Have student groups report back on the immediate outcomes of Cook's voyages. Compile a class list of achievements.

Discuss with students the impact of items in this list on subsequent movements of people; for example, in encouraging people to travel into/settle explored lands.

Have students explain the various responses of First Peoples of the Pacific to encounters with James Cook. Were their responses consistent?

Have students show and explain the images they have chosen to the class. Discuss these questions with students:

- Who produced these images and when?
- What sources might artists use in their representations of Cook and his voyages?
- Whose perspectives are these artworks created from?
- What was the artistic intention of each artwork?



Explore

Inquiry questions:

- How was Captain Cook portrayed in Britain in the years after his death?
- How is Cook portrayed in artworks at three points of time in Australia?
- How have subsequent portrayals challenged traditional views of James Cook?

Students will explore artworks about Cook's time in Australia, from the period immediately after Cook's death and from three points in time (colonial period, Federation at the turn of the 20th century, and the 1930s). They will also explore the perspectives of contemporary Aboriginal artists. Students will consider the artists' interpretations of Cook, ways that artworks reflect the point of view of the artist and the period in which they were produced, and views that challenge the idea of Cook as 'founder' and 'discoverer' of Australia.

The apotheosis of Captain Cook

Show students the image, [*The apotheosis of Captain Cook*](#), 1794. (Display this image on a screen so that you can zoom in on the detail, including the conflict shown in the lower part of the image.)

Remind students that James Cook was killed on 14 February 1779 on Kealakekua Bay in Hawaii during a conflict with the local indigenous people. The image depicts the aftermath of Captain Cook's death.

Captain Cook's death was met with shock and horror in England, where news of his death and tributes to his achievements were published in *The London Gazette*. Tributes poured in from the rulers of European nations and from the Empress of Russia, Catherine the Great. King George III was distraught and eventually awarded Cook the honour of a coat of arms in 1785.

The apotheosis of Captain Cook was created by Philippe-Jacques de Loucherbourg from a drawing by John Webber, the artist on Cook's final voyage, and was then engraved by a Franco-British artist, Francesco Bartolozzi. The image was originally used in a play in 1785.

Explain to students that apotheosis means the elevation or exaltation of a person to the rank of a god.



Have students discuss the following questions and refer them to this National Library of Australia [resource](#).

- What can you infer from the artist's portrayal of Captain Cook in this image? Consider how Cook is posed, his facial expression and his clothing, and what he is carrying.
- Cook is accompanied by the figures of Britannia (a figure used in the 18th century to personify the might of Britain's maritime power) and PHEME (the ancient Greek goddess of fame and rumour, who spread news both good and bad). Why has the artist chosen these figures?
- What atmosphere is created by the artist through the depiction of the landscape, the clouds of smoke, the people in the boats and on the shore?
- What opinion do you think de Louthembourg has of James Cook? What evidence can you see in the work that supports your contention?
- How might this image have influenced perceptions of Cook at the time? What can you infer about the British public's view of British exploration and maritime power at the time?

- What does *The apotheosis of Captain Cook* tell you about the values and beliefs of the time?
- Can you formulate a theory about why Cook was seen as a godlike figure in Britain?

It has been suggested that the landscape was based on the work of John Webber, the artist for Cook's third voyage. View his engraving [The Death of Captain Cook, 1784](#) from the National Portrait Gallery.

- What atmosphere is created in Webber's artwork?
- What seems to be his view of Cook?

Images of Cook in New Holland/Australia

Students explore three different artworks about Cook in Australia from three different times: colonial Australia, Federation at the turn of the 19th century and the 1930s. In their viewing of images, students should consider the:

- context of the artwork
- people in the image
- portrayal of Cook: his stance, clothing, facial expressions and the sense of leadership
- portrayal of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples (if represented)

- landscape
- impact that the work might have on the viewer
- ideas about Cook presented in the image
- perspective of the artist
- sources used by the artist.

Students in small groups should look closely at the images under 'Artworks' on the Resources document at the end of this PDF, and use Worksheet 2 to record their observations. Teachers could work through the first artwork with students as an example.

Other perspectives

Students explore the following works by contemporary artists. These artists rework significant historical artworks as a tool to challenge and comment on the representation of Captain Cook and his legacy.

Have students view the following artworks and complete the questions below.

Artworks

[We call them pirates out here](#), Daniel Boyd, 2006, Museum of Contemporary Art

This work is a parody of the E Phillips Fox painting *Landing of Captain Cook at Botany Bay, 1770* (1902), which was commissioned in 1900 as one of a group of Australian history artworks. Boyd intentionally copied the format and style of the Fox painting in order to make a point.

Compare the Fox painting with the Boyd painting:

- Make a list of elements of the Fox painting that have been changed. What do you think is the purpose of these changes?
- How do these changes alter the meaning of the painting?

View the Daniel [Boyd](#) video on the website of the Museum of Contemporary Art:

- What changes and what choices has the artist made in this artwork? How do these illustrate his point of view?
- What ideas does Daniel Boyd present about the landing of James Cook in Kamoy (now known as Botany Bay)?
- The E Phillips Fox painting was commissioned in 1900 to illustrate Australia's history. How might Australian nationalist feelings at the time of Federation influence his artwork?

- What impact might Daniel Boyd's painting have on the viewer? In what ways might it challenge conventional views about James [Cook](#)?

[Captain James](#) Crook, 2013, Jason Wing (Biripi people). Purchased 2013 in recognition of the 50th Anniversary of the 1967 Referendum, National Gallery of Australia.

This artwork parodies the Hyde Park, Sydney statue of Captain Cook, which was installed in the park in 1879.

Have students view [the Cook statue: Hyde Park 1879](#) and read the description given and the inscription on the statue:

- What ideas about Cook are represented in this sculpture and its inscription?
- What significance might this sculpture have had for the people of Sydney in the late 19th century? (Consider the size of the sculpture, the stance of Cook, the telescope in his hand, the inscription and the importance of Cook to colonists at the time.)
- View Jason Wing's artwork and read his views about the Hyde Park sculpture.
- What is Jason Wing's view of the Hyde Park sculpture? What feelings does the statue provoke in this Aboriginal artist?

- How does Jason Wing's artwork challenge the view of Cook presented in the Hyde Park sculpture?
- Why does he use a head covering?
- What modern associations do we have with head coverings of this sort?
- What does this head covering signify? What impact does this have on the viewer?
- Research the 1967 Referendum and explain its significance for Aboriginal Australians.

[Untitled](#) [Captain Cook statue and Journal], Micky Allan, National Gallery of Australia.

The artist includes black-and-white images of a silver statuette of Cook and an extract from Cook's journal in a single frame.

- Why do you think these elements were chosen by the artist?
- What do you think is the purpose of this artwork?
- Why might the artist choose that particular extract from Cook's journal?
- What appears to be the artist's view of Cook?
- What impact do the elements of the work have on the viewer?

Explain

Inquiry question:

- **How have ideas about Captain Cook changed over time?**

Have students discuss the following in relation to the artworks:

- What ideas about Captain Cook are contained in the artworks from various periods of history? (Consider the artworks from the three periods of Australian history and the contemporary artworks.)
- Have there been changes over time? What are these? What evidence from the paintings viewed supports your views?
- How does the work of contemporary artists challenge ideas about James Cook contained in earlier artworks?

- What can you infer from the works of contemporary Australian artists about the standpoint of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists in regard to Cook and colonisation?
- What do we need to know in order to determine how well each artwork reflects the period in which it was produced?

Have students complete a concept map with James Cook at the centre and various ideas about him that emerge from the artworks.



Elaborate

Inquiry questions:

- **How was historical and cultural context reflected in artworks about Captain Cook?**
- **Why should we consider all perspectives on our shared history?**

Students will deepen their knowledge of the context for artworks about the exploration and settlement of Australia and the contested debates about the legacy of Captain James Cook.

Using Worksheet 3, have students read and discuss the meanings of the term 'terra nullius'.

- How did this doctrine and the attitudes to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples justify the exploration and colonisation of Australia?
- How were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples viewed in colonial times, at Federation, during the 1930s?

Have students read the [Mabo Case](#) from the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies.

- How did the Mabo doctrine overturn the notion of terra nullius?

Have students read the following two articles and discuss and answer the questions below:

- [Commemoration and contestation at Kurnell](#), Dr Stephen Gapps, Australian National Maritime Museum
- [‘I’m Captain Cooked’: Aboriginal perspectives on James Cook, 1770–2020](#), John Maynard, National Library of Australia.

Questions

- Why has the commemoration of Captain Cook been important to many Australians?
- What role did Aboriginal peoples play in the various commemorations of Captain Cook?
- How has commemoration changed over time?
- What is the significance of the 2003 renaming in Kurnell as ‘The meeting of two cultures’?
- What perspectives do Aboriginal peoples have about James Cook?
- Why is it important to explore Aboriginal perspectives in Australia’s shared history?

Evaluate

Inquiry question:

- **How should we commemorate Captain Cook in 2020?**

Provide students with instructions for the following assessment task. Students should look for information about the artist, the art and the context of the artwork from gallery websites and other historical websites.

Student task

See Worksheet 4. Choose two artworks that you feel best reflect and represent Captain Cook for the 250th anniversary. Alternatively, you could design or describe a design for appropriate artworks.

Complete a 350-word evaluation in which you:

- name the artist and the artwork
- explain:
 - the period of time in which the artwork was produced and how this may have influenced the artwork
 - the purpose of the artwork
 - how the artist shaped the content and style of the artwork
 - the point of view of the artist
 - the perspective on Cook taken by the artist
 - the portrayal of Aboriginal Australians
 - the landscape and flora/fauna
 - the impact of artworks on viewers – then and now.

Justify your choice of artworks for inclusion in an exhibition as part of the 2020 commemoration that includes a discussion of the contested nature of the British colonisation of Australia and Captain Cook's legacy.



Cook's voyages

Name/date of voyage	
Purpose of voyage	
Route taken	
Lands encountered	
Relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples	
Achievements of the voyages	
Art image from voyage	

Images of Cook over time

	▼ Samuel Calvert (1853–1864)	▼ E Phillips Fox (1902)	▼ Australian National Travel Association (1938)
Context of the artwork			
People in the image			
Portrayal of Cook			
Portrayal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait			
Portrayal of landscape			
Impact on the viewer			
Ideas about Cook in the image			
Perspective of the artist			

Contexts

Terra nullius and Mabo

'In Latin, the term "terra nullius" means "land belonging to nobody" ...

'Starting in the 17th century, terra nullius denoted a legal concept allowing a European colonial power to take control of 'empty' territory that none of the other European colonial powers had claimed.

'Of course, most of these 'empty' territories were inhabited, so the meaning of terra nullius grew to include territories considered 'devoid of civilized society'. The most celebrated example is that of Australia, where the concept of terra nullius still features in lawsuits pressed by Aboriginal peoples ...

'Although Australia was clearly not empty land, the presence of scattered and nomadic Aboriginal groups would have been widely perceived, through European eyes at the time, as evidence of a barbarous country and thus no legal impediment to settlement.'

Source: [Gustavus Adolphus College, Terra nullius](#)

'... from the time of Captain Cook's arrival the British Government acted as if Australia were uninhabited. So, instead of admitting that it was invading land that belonged to Aboriginal people, Britain acted as if were settling an empty land. This is what is meant by the myth of terra nullius.'

Source: [Racism No way](#)

'The High Court's Mabo judgment in 1992 overturned the terra nullius fiction. In the same judgment, however, the High Court accepted the British assertion of sovereignty in 1788, and held that from that time there was only one sovereign power and one system of law in Australia.'

Source: [Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation, Documents of Reconciliation](#)

Colonial Australia

'In 1788, Captain Arthur Phillip and 1,500 convicts, crew, marines and civilians arrived at Sydney Cove. In the 10 years that followed, it's estimated that the Indigenous population of Australia was reduced by 90 per cent. Three main reasons for this dramatic population decline were:

- the introduction of new diseases
- settler acquisition of Indigenous lands
- direct and violent conflict with the colonisers.'

Source: [Australians together, Colonisation](#)

Colonial period, 1788–1901

'... until 1870, 25 British infantry regiments and several smaller artillery and engineer units were stationed in the colonies. One role of the troops was to guard Australia against external attack, but their main job was to maintain civil order, particularly against the threat of convict uprisings, and to suppress the resistance of the Aboriginal population to British settlement.'

Source: [Australian War Memorial](#)

'The near absence of Indigenous people in mid-nineteenth-century colonial painting has been one of the most potent assertions of continued settler presence in Australia. This invisibility reinforced the myth of terra nullius and rendered further colonial expansionism picturesque. Many colonial artists were reluctant to insinuate the original owners into the landscape, thereby avoiding complicated issues of dispossession, resistance and guilt ...

In the mid nineteenth century ... many believed Aboriginal people and their culture would simply disappear, replaced by the advancing British Empire.'

Source: [Depictions of Aboriginal People in Colonial Australian Art: Settler and unsettling narratives in the works of Robert Dowling, Humphrey Clegg and Stephen Gilchrist, Art journal 48, 29 Jan 2014 National Gallery of Victoria](#)

Aboriginal people at Federation

'All states enforced special laws and protection policies for Aboriginal people. In practice, protection laws were shaped by prevailing attitudes of racial superiority and paternalism. This meant Aboriginal people lived under six different state laws and regulations.

'State governments severely controlled every aspect of Aboriginal people's lives, moving them from their homelands to live on reserves managed by Aborigine Protection Boards,

protection officers or native welfare officers, children forcibly removed from their families, peoples' movements and associations controlled; and they were classified according to descent.

'Across Australia, Aboriginal people suffered poor living conditions and poor health on many reserves and missions with sub-standard shelter or housing, meagre rations, and poor education; employment was controlled, often with rations for payment or wages withheld, and speaking language and other cultural practices were prohibited.'

Source: [The Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies \(AIATSIS\)](#)

Aboriginal peoples in the 1930s

'In 1931, the federal government declared Arnhem Land an Aboriginal reserve as part of a new policy emphasis to try to segregate traditional Indigenous people and make decisions governing their lives.

'The Aborigines Act Amendment Act, 1936 (WA) gave the Minister for Native Affairs the power to take Aboriginal people into custody without trial or appeal, and prevented them from entering specified towns without a permit.

'In the 1930s, Aboriginal people formed protection associations led by inspirational men and women such as William Ferguson, Jack Patten, William Cooper, Douglas Nicholls, Margaret Tucker and Pearl Gibbs to use political action in campaigns to assert Aboriginal self-determination.

'January 1938

'The first national conference of Aboriginal Australians was held at the Australian Hall, Sydney, to mark a 'Day of Mourning' and protest during the 150th Australia Day anniversary of colonial settlement. The conference was initiated by William Cooper, founder of the Australian Aborigines League (AAL), and The Aborigines Progressive Association (APA), led by William Ferguson and Jack Patten. Participants called for Aboriginal land and citizenship rights.'

Source: [My Place](#)

Student task

Choose two artworks that you feel best reflect and represent Captain Cook for the 250th anniversary. These may be artworks that you have encountered in this unit or in research for this unit. Alternatively, you could design or describe a design for appropriate artworks. Complete a 350-word evaluation in which you:

- name the artist and the artwork
- explain:
 - the period of time in which the artwork was produced and how this may have influenced the artwork
 - the purpose of the artwork
- how the artist shaped the content and style of the artwork
- the point of view of the artist
- the perspective on Cook taken by the artist
- the portrayal of Aboriginal Australians
- the landscape and flora/fauna
- the impact of artworks on viewers – then and now.

Justify your choice of artworks for a commemoration in 2020 that includes discussion of the contested nature of the British colonisation of Australia and Captain Cook's achievements.

Resources

Cook's voyages

[Captain Cook's voyages of discovery](#), State Library NSW

[The voyages of Captain James Cook](#), British Library

[Cook and the Pacific](#), National Library of Australia:

[Defining moments, Cook claims Australia](#), National Museum of Australia

[James Cook and his voyages](#), National Library of Australia

[Royal Museums, Greenwich](#) (see Collections/James Cook)

[Cooks' three voyages of exploration](#), Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences

Artworks

[Captain Cook taking possession of the Australian continent on behalf of the British Crown, AD 1770](#)

[Samuel Calvert](#) (c 1853–1864) wood engraving, hand-coloured sheet, National Gallery of Victoria

Samuel Calvert was born in London in 1828 and died in 1913. He settled in Melbourne in the 1850s where he worked as a painter, wood engraver and lithographer. His works included illustrations for books and newspapers, stamps, advertisements and maps including a map of the goldfields. He exhibited his work widely and produced many works on life in the colonies. The Victorian population increased enormously during the 1850s after the discovery of gold, and diggers from all parts of the world brought new ideas about rights and democracy, as well as great wealth to the colony. See this National Gallery of Victoria [resource](#) for further examples of Calvert's work.

[Landing of Captain Cook at Botany Bay, 1770](#), E Phillips Fox, 1902, National Gallery of Victoria

E Phillips Fox was an Impressionist painter who was commissioned to paint historical paintings on Australian themes in 1900. The rising nationalist sentiment in the Australian colonies was reflected in the art, newspapers and literature of the time, and ultimately led to Federation in 1901. See this National Museum of Australia [resource](#), for further information on this period.

[Australia's 150th anniversary, Sydney 1938: Pageantry and carnival](#), Australian National Travel Association, Smith and Julius Studios, Sydney, chromolithograph, National Library of Australia

In 1938, Australia was nearing the end of the period of economic downturn known as the Great Depression. On 26 January 1938, Aboriginal leaders organised a Day of Mourning. At Australia Hall in Sydney they passed a resolution protesting the callous treatment of Aboriginal people over the previous 150 years since the landing of the First Fleet and calling for laws and policies to advance equal citizenship. See the AIATSIS [resource](#).





Australian Government

Department of Education, Skills and Employment

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

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