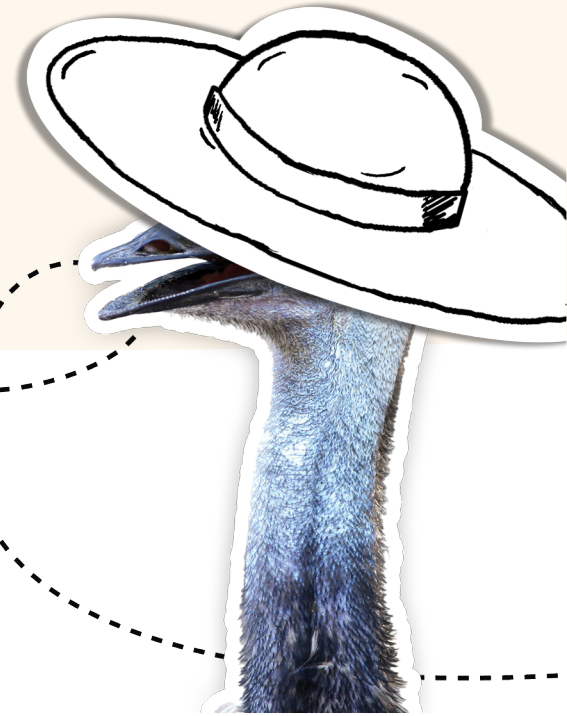


Teacher Guide

Year 3-4: Lesson 3

FLOWERS, GEMSTONES, COLOURS AND THE ARMS



UNLOCKING OUR STORIES: AUSTRALIA'S SYMBOLS

Unlocking Our Stories is an engaging resource for teaching about the national symbols in Australian classrooms. Developed by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, this curriculum-aligned resource for Years 3–8 will help you and your students discover the rich meaning and history of the Australian National Anthem, the flags of Australia and other national symbols.

Introduction to Lesson 3

LESSON OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this lesson are for students to:

- **Understand** the importance of Australia's national symbols
- **Analyse** the meaning and use of each symbol
- **Evaluate** and compare the national symbols with symbols used by groups.

AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM LINKS

HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

Year 3 - History

Days and weeks celebrated or commemorated in Australia (including Australia Day, Anzac Day, and National Sorry Day) and the importance of symbols and emblems (**ACHASSK064**)

Year 4 - Civics and Citizenship

The different cultural, religious and/or social groups to which they and others in the community belong (**ACHASSK093**)



INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE AND BEHAVIOURS

Some of the content in this lesson may generate diverse opinions and touch on culturally sensitive topics. To assist you in providing a safe and inclusive learning environment, please read through the following guidelines:

Creating a culturally inclusive classroom:

- Be aware of your own perspective on issues and any potential for bias
- Show that you are comfortable discussing different perspectives and opinions
- Demonstrate genuine interest in learning about different perspectives and opinions
- Avoid creating a 'correct' and 'incorrect' approach to culture
- Value the different experiences that each student brings to discussions
- Make connections to students' prior knowledge and experience
- Monitor the language you use when referring to people from diverse backgrounds
- Watch for attitudes that may promote discrimination and racist behaviour
- Encourage respectful discussion and debate when there are different points of view
- Use inclusive language (monitor the use of 'we', 'us', 'them', 'they')
- Encourage critical thinking and questioning
- Provide the opportunity for all students to identify as Australian

Adapted from [Cultural inclusion](#) (NSW Department of Education, 2020)

Teacher Notes

LESSON OVERVIEW

The recommended learning progression and timing is outlined below.

- Step 1** **Read** the story chapter and check for understanding (10-15 mins)
- Step 2** **Explore** the lesson objectives through activities and discussion (20-40 mins)
- Step 3** **Practise** through worksheets and interactive lesson (20-30 mins)
- Step 4** **Go further** with independent or whole class activities (varying duration)

CONNECTING HOME AND SCHOOL

Encourage students to deepen understanding of their own cultural background by utilising the resources provided for engagement at home. The *At Home* area, within the *Unlocking Our Stories* website, provides links and information to help families support the child's learning. The *At Home* Guides include background information and recommendations for conversations and activities that can be held at home.

DIFFERENTIATION

Teachers are encouraged to use discretion to present these materials based on their students' individual needs and existing knowledge and understanding. This includes presenting information orally to the whole class or small groups, providing screen reading technologies, giving support through peer partnering, and allowing students to work independently and self-paced.

Further differentiation options are presented in the student worksheet where 16 additional activities are provided. These are grouped according to subject area (English, Maths and Science, The Arts and additional research) and increase in complexity and demand. Tasks requiring more time are indicated with a star.



RESOURCES AND LINKS

[Information about the Commonwealth Coat of Arms](#)

[Information about the Golden Wattle](#)

[Information about the national colours: Green and gold](#)

[Information about the national gemstone: Opal](#)

Flowers, Gemstones, Colours and the Arms

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

Commonwealth Coat of Arms

The Commonwealth Coat of Arms is the formal symbol of the Commonwealth of Australia and signifies Commonwealth authority and ownership.

The centre of the shield includes symbols of Australia's six states and the border of the shield symbolises federation.

The shield is held up by the native Australian animals the kangaroo and the emu, which were chosen to symbolise a nation moving forward, based on the fact that neither animal can move backwards easily.

A seven-point gold Commonwealth Star sits above the shield. Six of the star's points represent the Australian states and the seventh point represents the territories.

A wreath of gold and blue sits under the Commonwealth Star.

Australia's floral emblem, the Golden Wattle, frames the shield. At the bottom is a scroll containing the word 'Australia'.

The Golden Wattle

Australia's national floral emblem is the Golden Wattle (*Acacia pycnantha*).

The Golden Wattle displays the national colours, green and gold.

As one species of a large genus of flora growing across Australia, the Golden Wattle is a symbol of unity.

Wattle is ideally suited to withstand Australia's droughts, winds and bushfires. The resilience of wattle represents the spirit of the Australian people.

In recent times, the Golden Wattle has been used as a symbol of remembrance and reflection. On national days of mourning, for example, Australians are invited to wear a sprig of wattle.

The Golden Wattle has been used in the design of Australian stamps and many awards in the Australian honours system. The emblem for the Order of Australia is a single wattle blossom made up of many small, individual flowers.

National Colours: Green & Gold

The national colours, green and gold, hold a treasured place in the Australian imagination.

The national colours have strong environmental connections. Gold conjures images of Australia's beaches, mineral wealth, grain harvests and the fleece of Australian wool. Green evokes forests, eucalyptus trees and green pastures.

Green and gold are also the colours of Australia's national floral emblem – the Golden Wattle.

National Gemstone: Opal

Australia's national gemstone is the opal, a stone famous across the world for its brilliant colours. In Indigenous stories, a rainbow created the colours of the opal when it touched the earth. Opal, also known to Indigenous people as the *fire of the desert*, is a powerful symbol of Australia's arid interior.

Australia is home to the world's highest quality, precious opal. The most famous is black opal from Lightning Ridge in New South Wales.

History

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

1908

Australia's first national Coat of Arms granted by King Edward VII. This showed the kangaroo and the emu supporting the shield, and standing on a grassy mound.

1912

Australia's second grant of Arms made by King George V. This changed the original national Coat of Arms to include the symbols of the states on the badge - and the Commonwealth (Federation) Star is shown with seven points. Six of the seven points symbolise the Australian states, the seventh its territories.

Prime Minister Andrew Fisher suggests Golden Wattle surround the Commonwealth Coat of Arms.

1975

Blue and gold chosen for the ribbon colours for the Order of Australia.

1984

The Governor-General proclaimed green and gold as Australia's national colours.

1988

The Golden Wattle proclaimed as Australia's floral emblem.

1992

National Wattle Day proclaimed.

1993

Opal proclaimed Australia's national gemstone.

Australian National Symbols Protocols

COMMONWEALTH COAT OF ARMS

Given its significance as the formal legal symbol of Australia, it is important that the Arms only be used as permitted.

The Arms:

- is not available for general use.
- should be used with dignity and respect.
- must not be used on commercial clothing, souvenirs, other day to day items or as a tattoo.

The Honours and Symbols Section of the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet has discretion to grant permission in limited circumstances.

- These circumstances include for Australian teams competing in international competitions or for educational publications.

Departments and government agencies can authorise third parties to use their logo, which incorporates the Arms.

- These circumstances include acknowledgement of Australian Government funding and support.

Federal Members of Parliament and Senators may use the Arms in the course of the duties.

The Arms, along with the Australian National Flag, is one of the most recognisable symbols of our nation. How and where it is displayed is of concern to most Australians.

It is therefore appropriate that its use is controlled and those who seek to apply it to a document or other item, understand that its use without permission may breach the *Competition and Consumer Act 2010*, the *Trade Marks Act 1995* and the *Criminal Code Act 1995*.

GOLDEN WATTLE

Permission is not required to reproduce the national floral emblem.

NATIONAL COLOURS

There are no restrictions on the use of the national colours.

Green and gold may be used in any design or arrangement of colour, emphasising the green or gold.

To use them correctly, the two colours are placed together, unbroken by another colour.

The colour references are:

Green: PANTONE®348C

Gold: PANTONE®116C

OPAL

Permission is not required to reproduce images or illustrations of the national gemstone.

Step 1 - Read the Story

THE CASE OF THE MISSING EMU

The story is the catalyst for each lesson in this series. It is important to read Chapter 3 of **The Case of the Missing Emu** before commencing the lesson.

Story overview

Emu has gone missing from the Commonwealth Coat of Arms on Old Parliament House. Emu is on a quest to bring all Australians together. Mila and Kai need to help Kangaroo by finding all of the sticky notes Emu has left around town. But will they solve the case before the Prime Minister leads the next school excursion to Old Parliament House? Time is ticking!

In the first chapter the focus was on the Australian National Anthem. In Chapter 2, the characters explored the Australian National Flag and other flags of Australia. This chapter investigates our other national symbols.

Use the guidance provided to support understanding before, during, and after reading.

BEFORE READING - Prepare for Understanding

Explore the meaning of key vocabulary.

Vocabulary words	Definitions in this context
emblem	a badge or something that serves as a symbol
floral	having to do with or made of flowers
conjure	to remember or bring to mind
fleece	the coat of wool that covers a sheep
mineral	a substance such as stone, ore or coal which is obtained by mining
gemstone	a stone used in jewellery, after it has been cut and polished
brooch	a piece of jewellery made to be fastened to clothes with a pin

DURING READING - Support Understanding

Discuss and explain:

- Discuss the meaning and significance of each symbol as it is found in the story. Have any students seen the symbols before? Where?

Step 1 - Read the Story

AFTER READING - Check for Understanding

Use questioning to check for understanding.

Literal

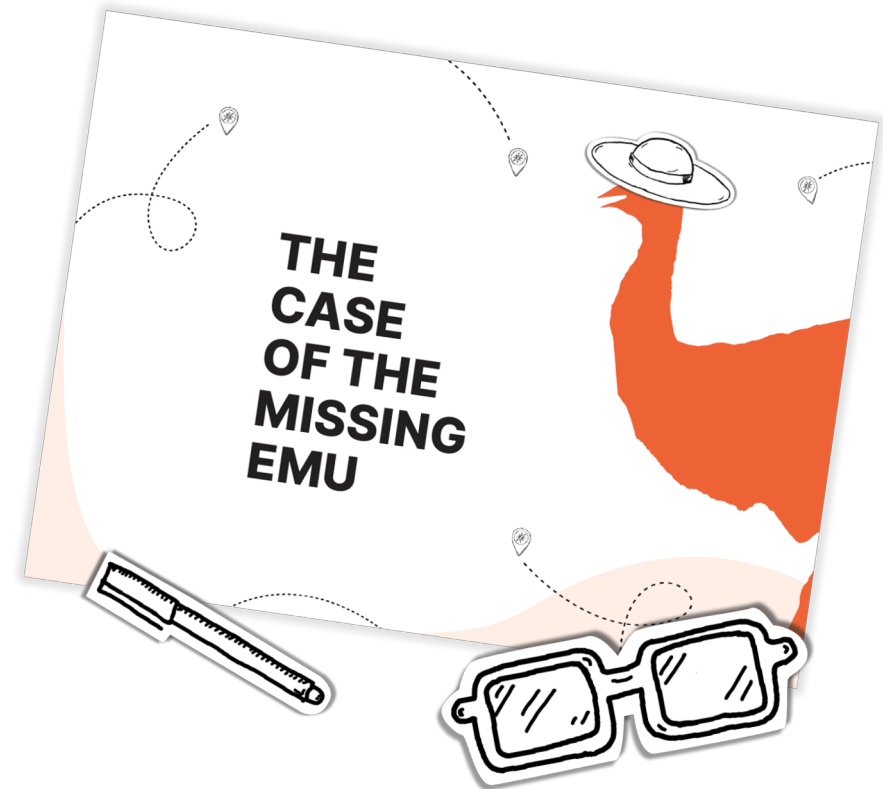
1. What is the Golden Wattle?
2. What does the Golden Wattle look like?
3. Where do the characters find the national colours in the story?
4. What is in Mila's grandma's brooch?

Inferential

1. How is the Golden Wattle part of our history?
2. How do the colours green and gold symbolise Australia?
3. How do Indigenous stories explain the creation of opals?

Evaluative

1. Which symbol do you think represents Australia best? Why?
2. Why do countries have national symbols?
3. How do you think the story will end?
4. Can you use the sticky note letters to solve Emu's hidden message?



Step 2 - Explore the Objectives

Help students successfully achieve the lesson objectives by providing explicit instruction, inclusive discussion and deeper explanation of the key concepts.

UNDERSTAND

Understand the importance of Australia's national symbols.

- Revise the concepts of symbolism and national symbols.
- Revise how the Australian National Anthem and the Australian National Flag are used and the important role they play in identifying Australia and Australians.
- Provide information about the other national symbols of the Commonwealth Coat of Arms; the floral emblem, the Golden Wattle; the national colours of green and gold; and the national gemstone, the opal.
- Discuss why these symbols exist.

ANALYSE

Analyse the meaning and use of each symbol.

- Allow students to complete the interactive lesson and worksheet to gather information about the meaning and use of the symbols.
- Discuss the symbolism and significance of each of the symbols.
- Ask students where they have seen the national symbols in use. Where were they? How were the symbols being used? Were the symbols treated with respect?
- Present the guidelines for the use of the Commonwealth Coat of Arms. Discuss why the use of this symbol is so limited? What does this tell us about the Coat of Arms?

EVALUATE

Evaluate and compare the national symbols with symbols used by groups.

- Ask students to think about groups they belong to and the symbols that represent those groups.
- Discuss the symbols that identify belonging to the school – school uniform, school logos, school motto, etc.
- Identify other groups students belong to – sporting teams, dance groups, scouts, multicultural groups, religious groups, etc. What symbols are used to represent those groups? What special significance is attached to the symbols?
- Compare the national symbols with the symbols used by other groups. How effective are they in representing each group?

Step 3 - Practise

INTERACTIVE LESSON

Complete the interactive lesson as a whole class, or on individual or shared devices.

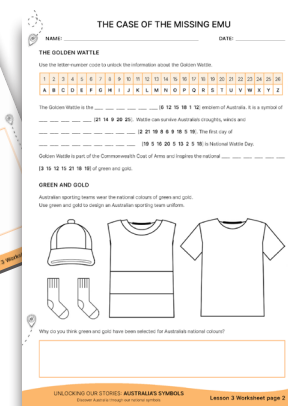
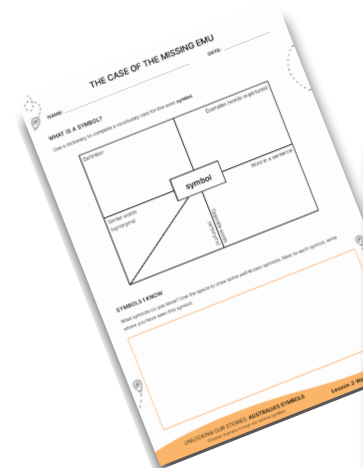
- The interactive lesson reinforces the learning from the story.
- Students learn facts and answer the interactive questions.
- The questions are self-correcting.
- No login details are required.
- Students can complete the lesson multiple times.

STUDENT WORKSHEET

The student worksheet can be used to further reinforce the students' understanding of the national symbols.

The worksheet explores:

- The meaning of the word *symbol*.
- The nature and symbolism of the Golden Wattle.
- Designing a green and gold team uniform and considering its purpose in identifying Australians in sporting and other events.
- The national gemstone and where it is mined.
- The Commonwealth Coat of Arms and designing a personal coat of arms.



Go Further: *English*

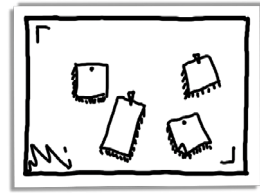


SYMBOL SYNONYMS

Explore the difference between symbol synonyms: emblem, icon, and logo.

Create a vocabulary card for the words **emblem**, **icon**, and **logo**.

Write the target word in the middle of the card. In the four quadrants, write or draw a definition, synonyms and antonyms and use the word in a sentence.



ACROSTIC POEMS

Explain that in an acrostic poem the first letters of each line spell out a word.

Display the names of the national symbols covered in this lesson: the Golden Wattle, green and gold, opals, and Coat of Arms (or Commonwealth Coat of Arms).

Students write an acrostic poem to describe the symbol and how it makes them feel or why they think it is important.



SYMBOL SPEECH

Support students to prepare a speech explaining which of Australia's symbols they like best.

Provide appropriate templates and scaffolds to support effective explanation of why they think the symbol is important and how well it represents all Australians.

Model effective public speaking techniques and provide a safe and supportive environment for students to present their speeches.



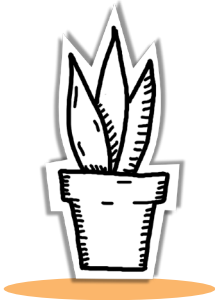
MUST INCLUDE

Explain the rules of the writing game: 'Must Include'.

Students write an original narrative but must include the following:

- two children
- a kookaburra and a wombat
- a line from the Australian National Anthem
- the Southern Cross
- wattle
- an opal
- and a sticky note.

Go Further: *Maths and Science*



PLANT TAG

Provide examples of plant tags that give facts about the plant and how to care for it.

Discuss the language features and content of the tags. How are they similar? What extra information do some provide?

Research the Golden Wattle (*Acacia pycnantha*) and record relevant information.

Create a tag for the Golden Wattle.



POPULARITY POLL

Conduct a statistical investigation to find out which national symbol is the most popular.

Provide opportunities for students to create and collect data through survey responses.

Record and display the survey data using digital tools.

Ask students to interpret the data and communicate the results.



WATTLE SEEDS

Source wattle seeds from a wattle plant or purchase a small amount from a nursery or health food shop.

Prepare observation questions to allow students to record their observations of the seeds including physical appearance (colour, size, shape), touch (texture, weight), and smell (may require grinding or wetting).

Focus on precise word choices rather than general terms.



OPAL MINING

Research the methods used for opal mining.

How hard is it? How many steps are there? Are there different techniques in different areas?

Explore and discuss the impact of opal mining on the environment. Discuss what rules should be in place to protect or restore the environment.

Go Further: *The Arts*



UNOFFICIAL SYMBOLS

As well as the official national symbols, there are also popular unofficial symbols of Australia.

Provide examples of unofficial symbols such as the boxing kangaroo, Vegemite, meat pies, boomerangs, koalas, the Opera House, Sydney Harbour Bridge, surf lifesavers, etc.

Create a collage of official and unofficial symbols.

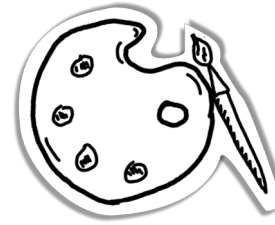


WATTLE SONGS

Many songs about wattle have been written and recorded by Australian musicians.

Listen to some of these songs and compare them. Do they have lyrics in common? Are they a similar music style or do they vary?

Which do the students like best and why?



FAMILY ARMS

Use the template on the student worksheet to allow students to design a family coat of arms.

Brainstorm the elements that should be included in the six sections of the shield and what other elements could be incorporated.

Discuss the need for students to represent their whole family.



WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN?

Set the scene for a short drama activity.

Mila and Kai arrive home after their adventure. Their parents ask where they have been.

Would the children tell the truth? How believable is their story? What might their parents ask them?

Have students work with a partner or group to act out the scene.

Go Further: *Research Tasks*



STATE ARMS

As well as different flags and symbols, many Australian states also have their own Coat of Arms.

Find out about the Arms of each state and what they represent.

Compare the Arms with the symbols on the state flags and the Commonwealth Coat of Arms.



STATE EMBLEMS

Each Australian state and territory has its own set of symbols such as animal, floral, and bird.

Find out the symbols for each state.

Assign each student one of the symbols and have them create a pair of matching memory game cards.

Combine the pairs of cards to create a class set. Allow students to play memory with a friend.



OCTOBER OPAL

Explain the concept of a birthstone and how it is a symbol of the month a person is born.

Opal is known as the birthstone for people born in October.

Find out which birthstone represents each student.

Create a table with a description of each stone and its features.



SYMBOL SPOTTO!

Instruct students to keep an eye out for the national symbols over a specified period of time, such as a week.

Each time a student has seen a symbol, they should record it on a class display stating where it was located.

Students score a point for each symbol they see. Who will be the spotto winner? Take it to the next level by competing with another class.

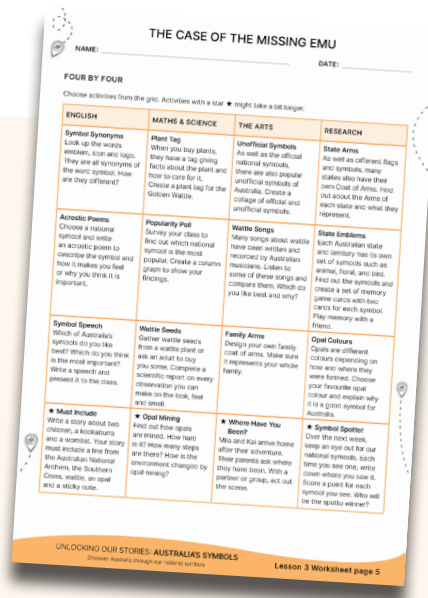
Go Further: *Independent Tasks*

FOUR BY FOUR GRID

The final page of the student worksheet provides student-focused instructions for all 16 activities so they can be completed independently, in small groups or as homework tasks.

DIFFERENTIATION

As students move down each column, the activities become more complex. The activities with a star ★ are most difficult or will take longer to complete. Teachers may wish to guide students to activities that are best suited to their individual needs.



WORKSHEET ANSWERS

What is a Symbol?

Definition: something that stands for or means something else.

Synonyms: emblem, logo, icon. Antonyms: literal

Golden Wattle

floral, unity, bushfires, September, colours

Green and Gold

Australians wear green and gold clothing to show their support for Australian teams. Wearing the national colours brings people together and shows that people feel proud of their team and country. (Answers will vary).

Opals

South Australia, Queensland, New South Wales

Commonwealth Coat of Arms

Clockwise from top-left: Commonwealth Star, wreath, emu, shield, scroll, Golden Wattle, kangaroo



In the next lesson ...

The Case of the Missing Emu reaches its exciting conclusion. Kai, Mila and Kangaroo have collected all the clues and it's time to solve the mystery. What is the message Emu wanted to give all Australians? Crack the code and then play the game to return Emu and Kangaroo to their positions on the Commonwealth Coat of Arms at Old Parliament House.

