

At Home Guide

LESSON 2: THE AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL FLAG

This At Home Guide is designed to spark conversations and activities that you can conduct at home.

Unlocking Our Stories is an engaging resource for learning about Australia's national symbols. Developed by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, this resource will help you explore the meaning and history of the Australian National Anthem, the Australian National Flag and other national symbols.



Years
3-4

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR FAMILIES

The Australian National Flag was first flown in 1901. It is Australia's foremost national symbol and has become an expression of Australian identity and pride.

The flag is paraded by our defence forces and displayed around the country at sporting events and by service organisations, schools, community groups and private citizens.



Union Jack

The Australian National Flag has the Union Jack in the upper left-hand quarter nearest the flagpole (the canton) to acknowledge the history of British settlement in Australia. The rest of the background (the field) is coloured dark blue. The Union Jack, is the flag of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Commonwealth Star

The Commonwealth Star is a white seven-pointed star. Six of the points represent the six states and the seventh point represents the Commonwealth territories. It is sometimes referred to as the Federation Star.

Southern Cross

Four seven-pointed stars arranged in a cross, together with a smaller five-pointed star appear on the right-hand side of the flag to represent the Southern Cross.

CULTURAL DIVERSITY

Australia is a vibrant, multicultural country. We are home to the world's oldest continuous cultures. In 2020, there were over 7.6 million migrants living in Australia with almost 30% of Australia's population born overseas.¹ One in two Australians have parents who were born overseas.²

This rich, cultural diversity is one of our greatest strengths and is part of our national identity.

Unlocking Our Stories encourages all Australians to be culturally inclusive.

¹ ABS (Australian Bureau of Statistics) (2020) [Migration, Australia](#), ABS website, accessed 17 March 2022.

² ABS (2017) [Cultural Diversity in Australia](#), ABS website, accessed 17 March 2022.



READ THE STORY AT HOME

Read Chapter 2 of *The Case of the Missing Emu*. In this chapter, the characters discover the meaning of the Australian National Flag and learn about other official flags of Australia.

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!

Discussion Questions

Use the questions to help relate the story to personal experiences.

1. Where was the last place you remember seeing the Australian National Flag?
2. Do you understand the meaning of all of the symbols on the Australian National Flag?
3. Can you describe the Australian Aboriginal Flag, the Torres Strait Islander Flag or any other flags?

PROTOCOLS

The Australian National Flag may be flown on every day of the year.

Any person may fly the Australian National Flag. However, the flag should be treated with the respect and dignity it deserves as the nation's most important national symbol.

The following guidelines apply to the use of the Australian National Flag and to flags generally.

1. The flag should not be allowed to fall or lie on the ground.
2. The flag should not be used to cover a statue, monument or plaque for an unveiling ceremony; to cover a table or seat; or to mask boxes, barriers or the space between a stage and the ground.
3. The flag should never be flown when in damaged, faded or dilapidated condition. When the material of the flag is no longer suitable for use, it should be destroyed privately, in a dignified way.
4. When flown in Australia the Australian National Flag takes precedence over all other flags.
5. The flag should not be flown in a position inferior to that of any other flag or ensign.
6. The flag should not be smaller than that of any other flag or ensign.
7. The flag should be raised briskly and lowered with dignity.
8. The flag should always be flown aloft and free as close as possible to the top of the flag mast.
9. Unless all the flags can be raised and lowered simultaneously, the Australian National Flag should be raised first and lowered last.
10. When the flag is raised or lowered, or when it is carried in a parade or review, all present should face the flag and remain silent. Those in uniform should salute.
11. The flag should be raised no earlier than first light and should be lowered no later than dusk.
12. The flag may only be flown at night when illuminated.
13. Two flags should not be flown from the same flagpole.
14. The flag should not be flown upside down, even as a signal of distress.



PRACTISE



Interactive Lesson

Complete the online lesson on the website. Work together to continue the story while learning about the Australian National Flag.



Printable Activity Sheets

Choose some fun activities from the worksheet and complete them together.

LINKS TO RESOURCES

[Information about the Australian National Flag](#)

[Australian Flags Booklet](#)

[Protocols for the Australian National Flag](#)

[Flag images and downloads](#)

GO FURTHER



Know Your Flag

- Print an [outline of the flag](#) to label and colour.
- Talk about the symbols on the Australian National Flag and what they represent.
- Talk about the history of British settlement and why the Union Jack is part of our flag.
- Look at a map of Australia and identify the states and territories. Talk about how they are represented on the Commonwealth Star.
- Look for the Southern Cross in the night sky.



Many Flags

- Read about and view the Australian Aboriginal Flag and the Torres Strait Islander Flag in the [Australian Flags Booklet](#).
- Talk about the history of Australian Indigenous peoples and the symbolism of their flags.
- If your family has ties with another country, find an image of the flag of that country. Talk about how it compares to the Australian National Flag.
- Find out about our state and territory flags and other national flags of the world.



Flag Rules

- Where have you see the Australian National Flag in the community?
- Talk about why the flags should be treated with respect and dignity.
- Read the [protocols for the Australian National Flag](#).
- Talk about the protocols and why you think they are needed.
- Keep an eye out for the Australian National Flag in the community and talk about whether it is being used correctly.

