

# At Home Guide

## LESSON 3: FLOWERS, GEMSTONES, COLOURS AND THE ARMS

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

#### Golden Wattle

Australia's national floral emblem is the Golden Wattle. The Golden Wattle is a symbol of unity. It is able to withstand Australia's droughts, winds and bushfires. Like the Australian people, wattle flourishes in the face of adversity.

#### Opal

Australia's national gemstone is the opal, and is famous for its brilliant colours. Opal, also known to Indigenous people as the *fire of the desert*, is a powerful symbol of Australia's arid interior.

#### Green and Gold

The national colours are green and gold. Gold represents Australia's beaches, mineral wealth, grain harvests and the fleece of Australian wool. Green evokes forests, eucalyptus trees and green pastures.



#### Commonwealth Coat of Arms

The Commonwealth Coat of Arms is the formal legal symbol of the Commonwealth of Australia.

In the centre is a shield with symbols of Australia's six states. The border of the shield symbolises Federation.

The kangaroo and the emu 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.

Australia's floral emblem, the Golden Wattle, frames the shield.

### 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.<sup>1</sup> One in two Australians have parents who were born overseas.<sup>2</sup>

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.

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

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



**READ THE STORY AT HOME**

Read Chapter 3 of *The Case of the Missing Emu*. In this chapter, the characters discover the meaning and symbolism of the floral emblem, national gemstone, national colours and the Commonwealth Coat of Arms.

**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. Have you ever seen the Golden Wattle?
2. Does anyone in your family own an opal?
3. Do you have a piece of clothing with green and gold colours? When do you wear it?
4. Does your family have a crest, a colour, a coat of arms, a tartan or another special symbol?

**PROTOCOLS**

**There are no restrictions on the correct use of the Golden Wattle, the national colours or the opal.**

**However, given its significance as the formal legal symbol of Australia, it is important that the Commonwealth Coat of Arms only be used as permitted.**

**The following guidelines apply to the use of the Arms.**

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*.



## PRACTISE



## Interactive Lesson

Complete the online lesson on the website. Work together to continue the story while learning about the national symbols.



## Printable Activity Sheets

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

## LINKS TO RESOURCES

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

[Information about the Golden Wattle](#)

[Information about the national colours](#)

[Information about the national gemstone](#)

## GO FURTHER



## Coats of Arms

- Talk about the elements of the Commonwealth Coat of Arms and what they represent.
- Find out about the history of your family. Find out if there is a family coat of arms, crest, colour or other symbol to represent your ancestors. Investigate the elements and what they symbolise.
- Create your own family coat of arms to represent everyone in your family.



## Resilient Wattle

- Investigate which species of wattle (*Acacia*) grow in your local area.
- Find a wattle plant and use all your senses to describe it.
- Look closely at the seeds. Talk about how wattles can survive in bushfires even if the plant is destroyed. The wattle's secret for survival is that its seeds have tough coats that open after the heat of fires.
- Talk about what it means to be resilient. How does wattle symbolise the resilience of Australian people?



## Read and Play

Find out how the story ends. Read the Epilogue of *The Case of the Missing Emu*.

Play the game. Using the knowledge learnt through this unit of work, answer questions to unlock each part of the Commonwealth Coat of Arms. Rebuild the Coat of Arms and return it to Old Parliament House before the Prime Minister arrives.

