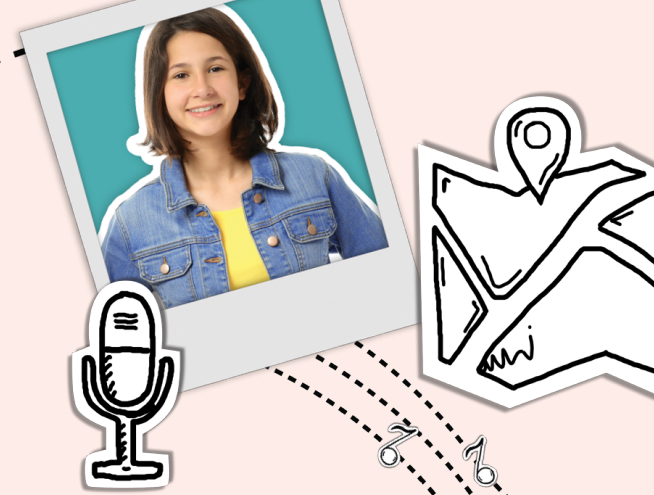




Teacher Guide

Year 5-6: 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 flag of Australia and other national symbols.

Introduction to Lesson 3

LESSON OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this lesson are for students to:

- **Understand** how symbols are used to represent groups and individuals
- **Analyse** how Australia's national symbols reflect our culture and history
- **Evaluate** personal connection with the official symbols of Australia.

AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM LINKS

HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

Year 5 - History

The reasons people migrated to Australia and the experiences and contributions of a particular migrant group within a colony
(ACHASSK109)

Year 5 - Civics and Citizenship

How people with shared beliefs and values work together to achieve a civic goal (ACHASSK118)

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.

Year 6 - History

Experiences of Australian democracy and citizenship, including the status and rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, migrants, women and children (ACHASSK135)

Stories of groups of people who migrated to Australia since Federation (including from ONE country of the Asia region) and reasons they migrated (ACHASSK136)

Year 6 - Civics and Citizenship

The shared values of Australian citizenship and the formal rights and responsibilities of Australian citizens (ACHASSK147)

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.

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)

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.

RESOURCES AND LINKS

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

[Information on the Golden Wattle](#)

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

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

Australian National Symbols Protocols

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

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 TALENT QUEST

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

Story overview

Laleh and Aidan have entered the local talent quest but their hopes of winning are threatened by a mischievous marsupial. Neville the Numbat wants to be famous but no one gives him any attention. Sabotaging national symbols all across the city in an effort to be noticed, Neville leaves poetic clues for Laleh and Aidan to solve. Can they save the symbols and get their shot at fame or will Neville steal the show?

In the first chapter, the focus was on the Australian National Anthem. In Chapter 2 the characters explored the protocols for respectful use of the Australian National Flag. This chapter investigates 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
tampered	interfered with or damaged in some way
posties	Australian slang for a postal worker
sabotage	damage done on purpose to stop someone else being successful
sandstone	a type of rock formed from sand
skyscraper	a very tall building, especially an office block
antics	odd or silly behaviour
regalia	a set of special clothes

DURING READING – Support Understanding

Discuss and explain:

- Why is Neville sabotaging the national symbols?
- Why are the children following Neville?
- What is the purpose of Neville's clues?

Step 1 – Read the Story

AFTER READING – Check for Understanding

Use questioning to check for understanding.

Literal

1. What does GPO stand for?
2. How did the GPO differ from other buildings in the city?
3. What damage has Neville done this time?

Inferential

1. Why are the postal workers so upset about Neville's sabotage?
2. Why does Neville want the media's attention?
3. Which does Aiden think is faster, walking or skateboarding? How do you know?
4. Can you solve any of the clues left by Neville?

Evaluative

1. Why do some people feel so strongly about protecting our national symbols?
2. Do you think all Australians are as passionate about our symbols?
3. Have you ever seen a Commonwealth Coat of Arms? Where?
- 4.



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 how symbols are used to represent groups and individuals.

- What is a symbol? What is symbolism?
- Brainstorm a list of symbols that are used to represent different groups of people.
- Explore the meaning and significance of the Commonwealth Coat of Arms, the floral emblem, the national colours, and the national gemstone.
- Compare these symbols with the symbols used to represent other groups and individuals.
- Discuss why people create symbols. How do symbols create a sense of belonging?
-

ANALYSE

Analyse how Australia's national symbols reflect our culture and history.

- Examine the key events in the history 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.
- Make connections between national events and the establishment of each symbol.
- Discuss the ways each symbol reflects Australian culture.
- Analyse the effectiveness of each symbol in representing all Australians.
- Why are the symbols protected through protocols and guidelines?
-

EVALUATE

Evaluate personal connection with the official symbols of Australia.

- Ask students to evaluate their personal connection with each national symbol.
- Hold a U-shaped debate for each symbol. Arrange the class in a U-shape. Display an image of a national symbol. Ask students who feel strongly connected or disconnected with the symbol to stand at opposite ends of the U. Students with mixed feelings or who are undecided stand in the rounded part of the U. As students give reasons for their opinion, students in the middle move along the U-shape if they have heard reasons that cause them to change their thinking.

Step 3 – Practise

INTERACTIVE LESSON

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

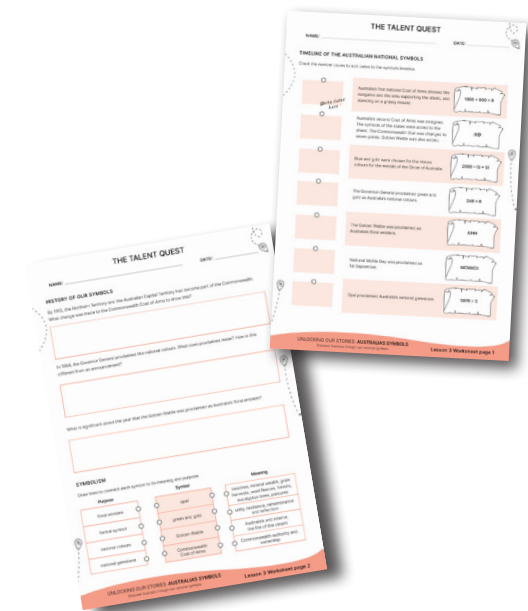
- The interactive lesson reinforces the learning from the story.
- Students learn facts and answer the interactive questions.
- The questions are self-correcting.
- No login details are required.
- Students can complete the lesson multiple times.

STUDENT WORKSHEET

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

The worksheet explores:

- Key events in the history of the national symbols.
- The purpose and meaning of each of the national symbols.
- Golden Wattle and its traditional uses.
- The national gemstone, opal.
-



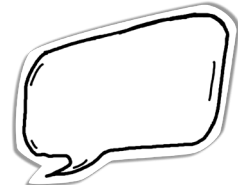
Go Further: *English*



OPAL WORDS

Mining opals requires unique techniques and equipment.

Find out what these opal mining terms mean: augers, puddlers, rumblers, noodling, and mullock heaps.



BUSH TUCKER

Invite a member of your local Indigenous community to come and speak to the class about local bush tucker.

Ask how wattle was used traditionally and how it can be used today.

Have students take notes during the visit and write a short report on the most interesting information.

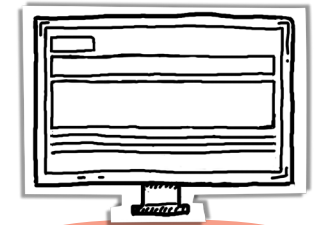


WATTLE AND DAUB 1

Acacias were given the common name *wattle* because they were so well suited to the 'wattle and daub' technique for building houses.

This was a common building technique used by settlers in the early colonies.

Have students research the technique and write a procedure to explain how it is done.



NUMBAT NEWS

Explain the structure and language of a newspaper report. Start with a lead that includes all the key details. Follow this with other information from most important to least important.

Write a newspaper report about the incident at the Post Office.

Encourage students to include eyewitness quotes and insights. Take the opportunity to explore direct and reported speech.

Go Further: *Maths and Science*



ANIMALS ON ARMS

Investigate the animals on the Commonwealth Coat of Arms.

What prevents them from easily walking backwards? Are there any other animals that cannot walk backwards easily?

Allow the students to make a hypothesis about why the animals find it difficult to walk backwards. Use reliable sources to test each hypothesis.



GENUS AND SPECIES

Plants are classified by genus and species.

The Golden Wattle's scientific name is *Acacia pycnantha*. It is part of a large group of plants in the *Acacia* genus.

Find out more about the scientific classification of plants.



COUNTING CARATS

Gemstones are measured in carats.

Find out what a carat is and how it is used.

Explore the origin of this unit of measure. Compare it with metric units.

How is a carat different from a karat?

Compare the value per carat of different gemstones.



WATTLE AND DAUB 2

Acacias were given the common name *wattle* because they were so well suited to the 'wattle and daub' technique for building houses.

This was a common building technique used by settlers in the early colonies.

Have students research the technique and create a miniature wattle and daub hut using sticks and leaves.

Go Further: *The Arts*



OLD AND NEW

Display copies of the original Commonwealth Coat of Arms and the revised current version.

Compare the artwork of the two versions. How are they similar? What are the differences?

Use a Venn Diagram to represent the similarities and differences.



SCHOOL ARMS

Display an image of the Commonwealth Coat of Arms.

Have students think about what they would include on a school coat of arms.

Either on a simple template, blank paper, or a digital publishing tool, allow students to design a school coat of arms.

Ask students to consider how to make sure the whole school community feels represented.



WATTLE SONGS

Find songs about wattle and play them to the class.

Discuss the style of music used and any similarities between songs.

Explore the lyrics and compare and contrast the images of wattle conjured by the words.

Encourage students to write their own wattle songs. Add instruments and perform the songs for the class or wider school.



IN THE HOT SEAT

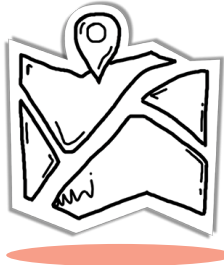
Explain that a hot seat is when a volunteer sits on the 'hot seat' and takes on the persona of a character from a story.

Set up the classroom for a hot seat activity and ask for volunteers to take on the characters of Neville, Aiden, Laleh or the postal worker.

The rest of the class writes a list of questions they would like to ask each character.

Hold a hot seat with one character at a time.

Go Further: *Research Tasks*



COOBER PEDY

Find out about the opal mining town of Coober Pedy.

Locate Coober Pedy on a map.

What is unusual about many of the houses built there? Why were they built this way?



AUSSIE TEAMS

All Australian teams wear green and gold.

Many also have interesting team names like the women's national basketball team who are known as the Opals.

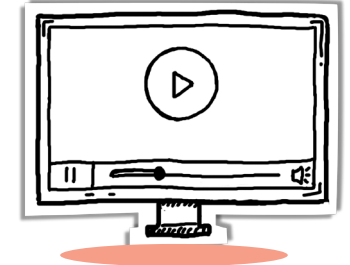
Find out the names of other Australian national teams.



SPECTRUM OF COLOUR

The colour of opals comes from the way light refracts (splits) as it passes through the spheres and gaps of silica in the opal.

Research the colours of the spectrum and where else we see them.



WHICH IS BETTER?

Research and discuss the differences between black and boulder opals.

Which is more valuable, black opal or boulder opal?

Find out how opals are valued and compare the value of black opals and boulder opals.

Students create a digital presentation of their findings.

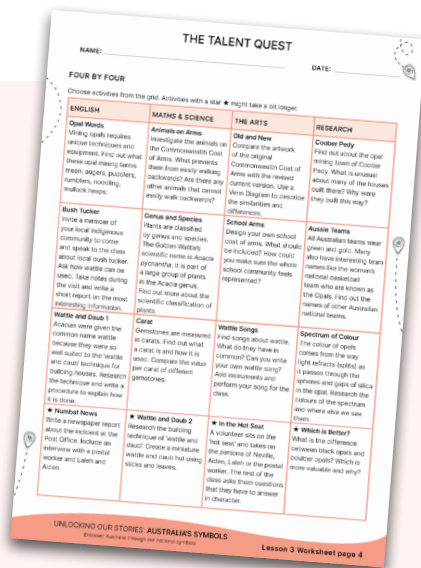
Go Further: *Independent Tasks*

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

Timeline of the Australian National Flag

1908, 1912, 1975, 1984, 1988, 1992, 1993

History of Our Symbols

1. The Commonwealth Star on the Coat of Arms was changed to include a seventh point to represent the territories of Australia.
2. Proclaimed means that something was announced publicly.
3. The Governor-General gives Royal Assent to a bill. They do not make the decisions or vote in parliament.
4. The bicentenary of Australia was celebrated in 1988. It marked 200 years since the arrival of the First Fleet in 1788.

Golden Wattle

Just like the Golden Wattle, Australian people have a great capacity to flourish in the face of adversity.

ATBASH Opals

gemstone, colours, rainbow, touched, fire, arid, highest, black



In the next lesson ...

Laleh and Aiden have saved the national symbols from Neville's sabotage. But will they get back to the talent quest in time to take the stage? Will Neville find another way to make mischief? Read the Epilogue and play the game to find out how the story ends.

