



Australian Government

Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet



Teacher Guide

Year 7-8: Lesson 2

THE AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL FLAG



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 Nation Anthem, the flags of Australia and other national symbols.

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Introduction to Lesson 2

LESSON OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this lesson are for students to:

- **Understand** the historic and political influences on the design and selection of a national flag.
- **Analyse** the protocols for flying and using the Australian National Flag.
- **Evaluate** the role of the flag as a symbol of national identity.



AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM LINKS

CIVICS AND CITIZENSHIP

Year 7

- How Australia is a secular nation and a multi-faith society with a Christian heritage (**ACHCK051**)
- How values, including freedom, respect, inclusion, civility, responsibility, compassion, equality and a 'fair go', can promote cohesion within Australian society (**ACHCK052**)
- How groups, such as religious and cultural groups, express their particular identities; and how this influences their perceptions of others and vice versa (**ACHCK053**)

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 8

- The values and beliefs of religions practised in contemporary Australia, including Christianity (**ACHCK065**)
- Different perspectives about Australia's national identity, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives, and what it means to be Australian (**ACHCK066**)
- How national identity can shape a sense of belonging in Australia's multicultural society (**ACHCK067**)

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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 worksheet 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)

The Australian National Flag

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

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.

The first Union Flag, created in 1606, combined the red cross of St George (England) on a white background and the white diagonal cross of St Andrew (Scotland) on a dark blue background. When Ireland became part of the United Kingdom in 1801, the red diagonal cross of St Patrick was added to the Union Jack.

Commonwealth Star

The Commonwealth Star on the Australian National Flag created in 1901 had six points representing the states (formerly colonies). The seventh point was added in 1908 to represent Commonwealth territories. Another reason for this change was for the star to match the crest of the Commonwealth Coat of Arms, the first version of which was created in 1908. The Commonwealth Star 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 (the fly) of the flag to represent the Southern Cross. The Southern Cross is a constellation that can be easily seen in the night skies of the Southern Hemisphere. It was a common feature of many of the early unofficial Australian flags. The formal name of the Southern Cross is *Crux Australis* and the individual stars are known by the first five letters of the Greek alphabet in order of brightness: (clockwise from the bottom star) Alpha, Beta, Gamma, Delta and Epsilon.

History

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

1801

The Union Jack was flown in Australia as the national flag for the first time.

1 January, 1901

At Federation, the Australian colonies joined to form the Commonwealth of Australia.

3 September, 1901

Prime Minister the Right Hon Edmund Barton announced the winning design of a public flag competition. This was the first time the Australian National Flag was flown.

20 February, 1903

King Edward VII approved a design for the flag of Australia (Commonwealth blue ensign) with the Southern Cross stars simplified to four seven-pointed stars and one five-pointed star.

23 February, 1908

The Australian National Flag was modified to the current form, with a seven-pointed Federation Star.

4 December, 1950

The Australian Cabinet adopted the Commonwealth blue ensign as the Australian National Flag.

3 December, 1953

Flags Act 1953 bill passed by the Australian Parliament.

14 April, 1954

Flags Act 1953 takes effect and declares the Commonwealth blue ensign as the Australian National Flag.

9 July, 1971

Australian Aboriginal Flag was first raised.

29 May, 1992

Torres Strait Islander Flag adopted during Torres Strait Islands Cultural Festival.

14 July, 1995

Australian Aboriginal Flag and Torres Strait Islander Flag were proclaimed as flags of Australia in the *Flags Act 1953*.

3 September, 1996

Australian National Flag Day was proclaimed.

24 March, 1998

The Flags Amendment Bill became law and ensured that the Australian National Flag can only be changed with the agreement of the Australian people. If a poll is required, the existing design of the Australian National Flag must be one of the designs in any selection put to the people.

Australian National Flag Protocols

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

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 Australian National Flag and to flags generally.

RESOURCES AND LINKS

[Information about the Australian National Flag](#)

[Australian Flags Booklet](#)

[Protocols for the Australian National Flag](#)

[Flag images and downloads](#)

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 when flown with other flags.
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.

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Step 1 – Read the Story

THE GREAT AUSTRALIAN <VIRTUAL> RACE

The story is the catalyst for each lesson in this series. It is important to read Chapter 2 of **The Great Australian <Virtual> Race** before commencing the lesson.

Story overview

Students play in the first person as they compete to be part of a reality program – The Great Australian <Virtual> Race. If they complete all three challenge rounds they will make it through to the final race. Can they complete all the challenges or will The Hacker's tricks defeat them? Students are tested in this round to show what they know about the flags of Australia.

In the first chapter, the focus was on the Australian National Anthem. In this chapter the characters explore the flags of Australia. Chapter 3 investigates other national symbols.

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

BEFORE READING – Prepare for Understanding

Check for prior knowledge:

- What is the purpose of a national flag?
- What do you already know about the Australian National Flag?
- Is it possible to change the design of the flag?

DURING READING – Support Understanding

Discuss and explain:

- Review the use and effect of second-person narrative voice. Why would the author choose this approach?
- What is national identity and how does this compare with personal identity?

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Step 1 – Read the Story

AFTER READING – Check for Understanding

Use questioning to check for understanding.

Literal

1. What is a stereotype?
2. What is the difference between a crayon and an oil pastel?
3. What did The Hacker do to the website?

Inferential

1. Why did the characters meet at the library?
2. What does owning oil pastels tell us about Amari?
3. Why is Amari not bothered by The Hacker's attack?
4. Why does Amari change his mind about wanting to be a flag designer?

Evaluative

1. Do you agree with Amari's description of the importance of flags? Why?
2. How effective is the Australian National Flag at giving meaning, carrying centuries of history, telling a story of people and pride, and encouraging belonging and belief?
3. Do you think all Australians value and respect the Australian National Flag?



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 historic and political influences on the design of a national flag.

- Examine the key events in the history of the Australian National Flag and how they reflect the democratic process.
- Display or distribute copies of the [history of the Flag](#) or [watch the animated video](#).
- How did a competition contribute to the process? What was the outcome?
- Discuss the purpose of the *Flags Act 1953* and why it was required. Explore the process followed to enact the Bill.
- Discuss the 1998 amendment to the *Flags Act 1953*. What is the process for changing the national flag? Why was this added? Do you think the flag will ever change?

ANALYSE

Analyse the protocols for flying and using the Australian National Flag.

- Explore the [protocols](#) guiding the use of the Australian National Flag.
- Revise the meaning of a protocol and how it differs from a rule or law.
- Discuss the rights and responsibilities of Australian citizenship and how this is reflected in our respect of the flag.
- How does respect for the flag promote cohesion within Australian society?
- Discuss times when students might need to follow the protocols for flag raising and handling.
- How knowledgeable would most Australians be about the protocols?

EVALUATE

Evaluate the role of the flag as a symbol of national identity.

- The Australian National Flag 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.
- Discuss how successful the Australian National Flag is in representing all Australians.
- What role does the flag have in building national identity and shaping a sense of belonging in Australia's multicultural society?
- How does the existence of the Flags of Australia's Indigenous Peoples impact national identity?

Step 3 – Practise

INTERACTIVE LESSON

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

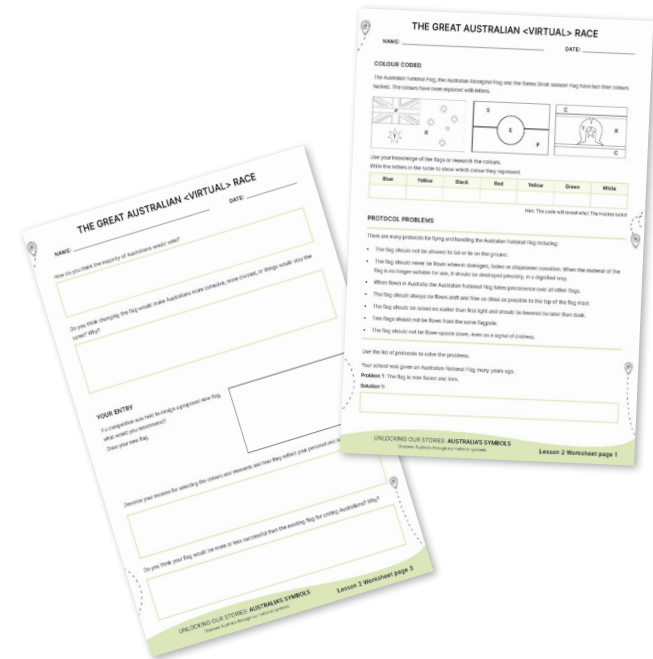
- The interactive lesson reinforces the learning from the story.
- Students learn facts and answer the interactive questions.
- The questions are self-correcting.
- No login details are required.
- Students can complete the lesson multiple times.

STUDENT WORKSHEET

The student worksheet can be used to further reinforce the students' understanding of the Australian National Flag and other flags of Australia.

The worksheet explores:

- Knowledge of the colours of the Australian National Flag, the Australian Aboriginal Flag and the Torres Strait Islander Flag.
- The application of the protocols for flying and handling the Australian National Flag.
- The *Flag Act 1953* and the 1998 amendment.
- A personal flag design to represent personal and national identity.



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Go Further: *English*



VEXING VOCABULARY

Find the meanings of the words:

- vexillology
- vexillologist
- vexillography
- vexillographer
- vexillophile.

Explore the word origins and how they give hints to the meanings. Learn about other -ology, -ologist, -ography, -ographer and -ophile words.



PROTOCOL CHECKLIST

The protocols for using the Australian National Flag are written in a careful and formal way to make sure they are completely clear.

Rewrite the flag flying protocols in the form of a checklist that could be used by schools.

Only use the protocols that would be most relevant. Run the checklist at your school and see how you score.



FREEMAN'S FLAG

Research the controversial flag story of Australian athletics star Cathy Freeman.

After winning gold at the 1994 Commonwealth Games, Cathy carried the Australian National Flag and the Australian Aboriginal Flag on her lap of honour.

Retell her story as a written report, a podcast or a digital presentation.

Discuss the outcomes and consequences of this event.



DEBATE

Hold a class debate.

The topic is:
that the Australian National Flag should never be changed.

Provide scaffolded support and scripts as required.

Remind students of the need to be culturally and personally respectful when debating and give examples of how this is achieved.

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Go Further: *Maths and Science*



RECONSTRUCT IT

Examine the guidelines on this [template](#) for accurately creating the Australian National Flag.

Using geometry tools, create an accurate image of the flag.

Challenge: there are lots of fractions!



DIGITISE IT

Use the [template](#) and a suitable digital program to create an accurate version of the Australian National Flag.



SCALE IT UP

Use the guidelines on this [template](#) to calculate the size of the Commonwealth Star on the original Australian National Flag which was 5.5 metres by 11 metres.

Can the students calculate the size of the other stars?

Extension: Recreate the original flag as a chalk drawing on a suitable area of concrete.



FLAG POLL

Who would change the flag?

Conduct a survey to compare the views of different groups of Australians on whether the flag should be changed.

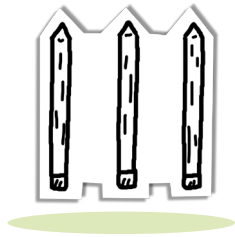
Gather opinions from younger and older Australians, and from a range of different backgrounds.

Report the findings in appropriate graphs and interpret the potential implications.

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Go Further: *The Arts*



CROSSES ON CROSSES 1

The Union Jack is made up of three crosses laid over each other.

Research the design of the three crosses.

Design each of the crosses using digital tools and arrange the layers to recreate the Union Jack.

Observe how different the Union Jack appears when layered in a different order. Discuss the significance of the order.



COLOUR CODES

Did you know that each colour on our flags has a code?

There are a number of different systems used to create digital colours. Explain these to the class and select the coding system that is easiest to understand or implement with your digital software.

Use a digital program to create the exact colour tone for the Australian National Flag and other official flags.



MAKE IT MEMORABLE

Flag designers believe that a good flag should be easy to memorise.

Test out the memorability of the official flags of Australia.

How many can the students sketch from memory?

If they get stuck, provide images so students can have a quick look.



DIGITAL DESIGN

Provide access to a suitable digital program for students to recreate the new flag they designed on the worksheet for this lesson.

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Go Further: *Research Tasks*



CROSSES ON CROSSES 2

The Union Jack is made up of three crosses.

Research the religious beliefs represented in the crosses.

Explore what symbols are used on other flags to represent religious beliefs.

Discuss whether national flags should carry religious symbols and what impact this has on national identity.

THE FLAGS ACT 1953

Locate a copy of the *Flags Act 1953* and make it available to the class.

Have students read and research to find ten facts they find interesting, unknown or unexpected.

Share the facts with the class and discuss why they were selected.

FIVE-WAY TIE

The prize for designing a new flag was shared by five people with very similar designs.

Research the five winners. What was their background?

Did winning the competition change their life in any significant way?

FLAG FACT FILE

Research interesting flags of the world.

Create a fact file for each flag identifying the significance of colours and symbols.

Alternatively, create a digital presentation or an online quiz to share with the class.

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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

Colour Coded

RESPECT

Protocol Problems

Solution 1: The Australian National Flag should be disposed of in a dignified way and replaced with a new flag.

Solution 2: Only one flag may be flown on the flagpole at a time. The school should make sure the Australian National Flag is flying on significant days.

Solution 3: The Australian National Flag should not be flown until the flagpole is repaired. Flying the flag lower than full height is not permitted.

Solution 4: The flags can be hung on a wall in the school hall or other suitable building. The school should make sure the flags are flown in the correct order with the Australian National Flag given precedence over the other flags.

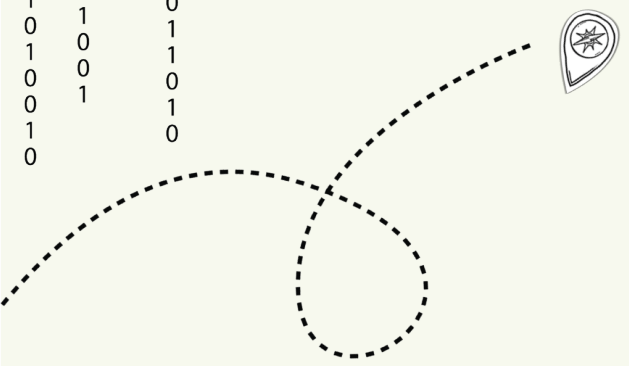
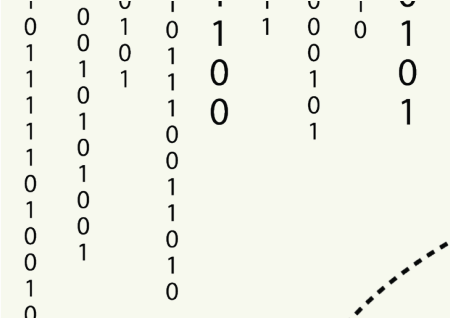
Time to Vote

(Answers will vary).

Your Entry

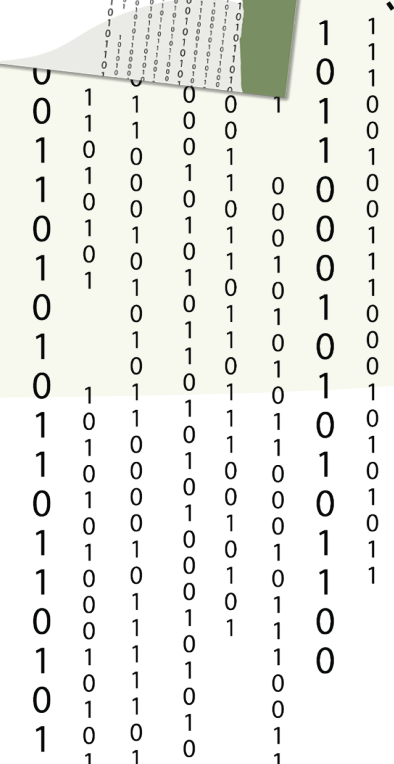
(Answers will vary).





In the next lesson ...

It seems that someone does not want your team to succeed. Who is The Hacker and why are they targeting your team? You and Ruby will need to draw on all of your research skills to unravel The Hacker's damage and get through this round on other symbols of Australia.




LESSON 1
Australian National Anthem



LESSON 2
Flags of Australia



LESSON 3
Other National Symbols



LESSON 4
Game Time

