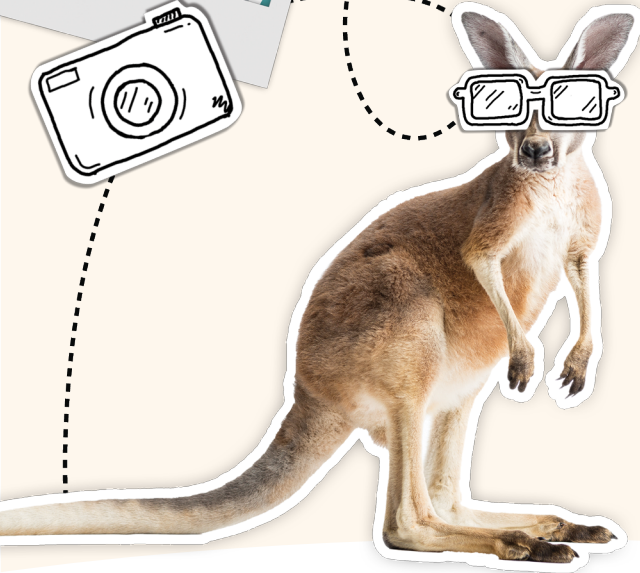




Australian Government

Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet



Teacher Guide

Year 3-4: 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 National Anthem, the flags of Australia and other national symbols.

Introduction to Lesson 2

LESSON OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this lesson are for students to:

- **Remember** the symbolic elements of the Australian National Flag
- **Understand** the origins, use and significance of a national flag and the role of the other flags of Australia
- **Analyse** the roles, rights and responsibilities the community has when observing protocols around flag flying.

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 lessons 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 Australian National Flag](#)

[Australian Flags Booklet](#)

[Protocols for the Australian National Flag](#)

[Flag images and downloads](#)

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.

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.

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 2 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 this chapter, the characters explore the Australian National Flag and other 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

Explore the meaning of key vocabulary.

Vocabulary words	Definitions in this context
monarch	a ruler of a country who inherits the position, such as a king or queen
observatory	a building with powerful telescopes for looking at the stars and planets
constellation	a group of stars
federation	a nation formed by joining a number of states
ochre	a yellowish-red clay used in paints and dyes
navigating	finding a course to travel or explore
mural	a picture painted on a wall or ceiling

DURING READING - Support Understanding

Discuss and explain:

- What is the history of British settlement in Australia?
- What is a symbol?

Step 1 - Read the Story

AFTER READING - Check for Understanding

Use questioning to check for understanding.

Literal

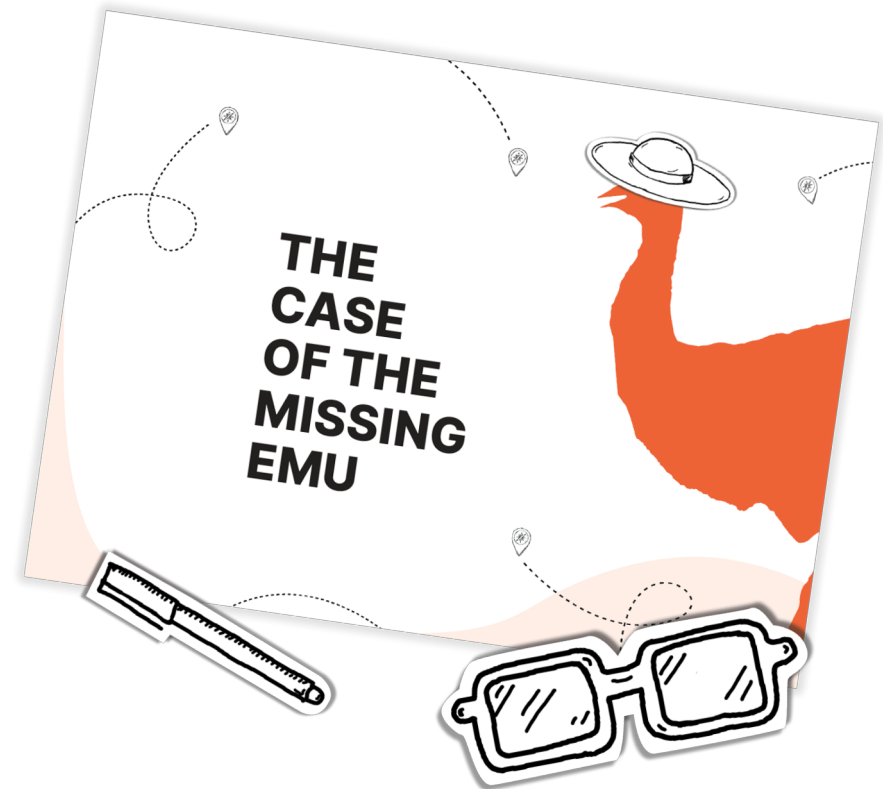
1. Who is the King of Australia?
2. What are the main symbols on the Australian National Flag?
3. Where did the children in the story go to learn about the stars on the flag?
4. What is a Dhari?

Inferential

1. Why was Kai so interested in the 50-cent coin?
2. How do the Australian Aboriginal Flag and the Torres Strait Islander Flag represent Indigenous peoples and land?
3. Why were there two sticky notes at the Observatory?

Evaluative

1. What do you think the blue background colour on the Australian National Flag symbolises?
2. Which symbol on the Australian National Flag, the Australian Aboriginal Flag or the Torres Strait Islander Flag do you find the most interesting? Why?
3. What is the purpose of a 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.

REMEMBER

Remember the symbolic elements of the Australian National Flag.

- Name and explain the symbolic elements of the Australian National Flag.
- Print an [outline of the flag](#) for students to label and colour.
- Explore the significance of the Union Jack and its acknowledgement of British settlement.
- Give a brief explanation of Federation and the symbolism of the Commonwealth Star.
- Discover the structure and significance of the Southern Cross and how it was used to navigate.
- Encourage students to accurately recreate the flag using a ruler.

UNDERSTAND

Understand the origins, use and significance of a national flag and the role of the other flags of Australia.

- Explain the purpose of a national flag.
The Australian National Flag is our most important national symbol and has become an expression of Australian identity and pride.
- Ask students where they have seen the Australian National Flag and discuss the reason it was on display.
- Explore the symbolism and purpose of the flags of Indigenous Australians.
- Research other flags listed in the *Flags Act 1953*.
- Discuss how well the Australian National Flag represents all Australians.

ANALYSE

Analyse the roles, rights and responsibilities the community has when observing protocols around flag flying.

- Explain the [protocols](#) guiding the flying and handling of the Australian National Flag.
- Discuss how these protocols ensure the flag is treated with dignity and respect.
- Discuss why some changes have been made to the Australian National Flag.
- Ask students to share any existing knowledge of flags from other countries and any rules that surround their use.
- Invite a local member of parliament, a member of the armed forces or a member of the local Indigenous community to speak to the class about their connection to the Australian National Flag.

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 Australia National Flag.

The worksheet explores:

- The symbolism of the Australian National Flag.
- The symbolism of the flags of Australia's Indigenous Peoples.
- Designing a school flag using personally significant symbols.
- The protocols for using the Australian National Flag.

Before students complete the worksheet, explain the pigpen code and demonstrate how it is used.

This is a pigpen code cracker.

Look at the shape of the borders around each letter. The letter **A** has a border on the bottom and on the right side.

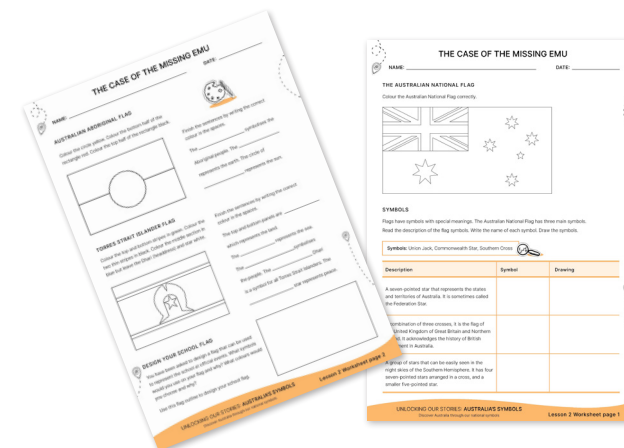
The letter **A** in pigpen code is: .

Some letters have a dot. The letter **J** is in the same position as an **A** but has a dot in it.

The letter **J** in pigpen code is: .

A	B	C	J	K	L
D	E	F	M	N	O
G	H	I	P	Q	R

T	S	U	W	X	Y
V			Z		



Go Further: *English*

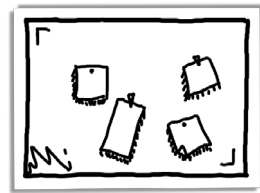


VAST VOCABULARY

Explore the difference between flags, ensigns and pennants.

Create a Frayer Model card for the words **flag**, **ensign** and **pennant**.

The word is written in the middle of the card. In the four quadrants, write or draw a definition, characteristics, examples and non-examples.



MIND'S EYE

Before this activity, ensure that there are no Australian National Flags on display in the classroom.

Ask students to picture the flag in their mind.

Ask students to describe the flag to a partner.

Independently or with a partner, write a detailed description of each symbol and its location and colour. Compare with classmates.



PIGPEN PROTOCOLS

Read about the protocols for using the Australian National Flag.

Demonstrate how to write secret messages using the pigpen code.

Allow students to choose a flag protocol and rewrite it using pigpen code.

Students swap codes with a partner and see if they can decipher it.



FLY THE FLAG

Research how to make a mini book (or zigzag book) using an A4 or A3 piece of paper folded into eighths.

Read the rules for flying and handling the Australian National Flag.

Make a mini flag instruction book with text and illustrations explaining how to treat the flag with respect and dignity.

Go Further: *Maths and Science*



STAR GEOMETRY

Explore the geometry of the stars on the Australian National Flag.

One of the stars in the Southern Cross symbol has five points.

Invite students to try to draw a five-pointed star.

Challenge them to draw a five-pointed star without taking the pencil off the page.

Discuss how this could be done more accurately using computer software.



FLAGPOLE PULLEYS

Find out how a simple pulley works.

If possible, examine the function of the pulley on the school flagpole. Alternatively, find a suitable video to show a flagpole pulley in action.

Ask students to plan a design for a homemade flagpole pulley and present it to the rest of the class.

Allow the students to choose the best design. Provide everyday materials for students to make their flagpole pulley.



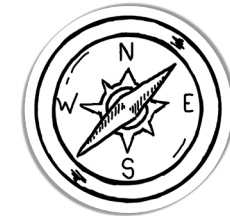
MAKING A POINT

Closely examine the stars on the Australian National Flag.

How many points are there on each star? How many points altogether?

Can the students write a number sentence to show how you could calculate the total number of points?

How many different number sentences can the class create to calculate the points?



NAVIGATION STARS

Explain that Indigenous peoples and ocean explorers used the stars to navigate at night.

Find out how they used the Southern Cross to find the direction of south.

Create a diagram and instructions to explain how to find south using the Southern Cross.

Test it out at home using a compass. Tip – most phones have a compass app.

Go Further: *The Arts*



OCHRE

On the Australian Aboriginal Flag, red symbolises the land and the colour ochre which is used in Indigenous art and ceremonies.

Explore the rocks in the playground or the local area. Look for soft sedimentary rocks that will crush easily.

Make your own ochre paint by crushing the rocks and mixing them with water or PVA glue.

Use the ochre to paint a picture.



SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

The national flags of Brazil, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, and Samoa also include the Southern Cross.

All of these countries are in the Southern Hemisphere.

Each flag has a slightly different version of the Southern Cross.

Have students research and re-draw each version and label the differences.



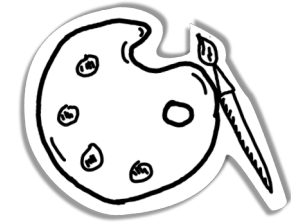
GREEK ALPHABET

The stars in the Southern Cross are named after letters in the Greek alphabet: Alpha, Beta, Gamma, Delta and Epsilon.

Greek letters are used to name other things such as viruses, hurricanes and maths symbols.

The letters of the Greek alphabet have similarities to some letters in the English alphabet.

Find out how the letters are written and practise writing each one.



MAKING MURALS

In the story, the school has a mural. Explain that 'mural' comes from the Latin word *murus*, meaning 'wall'. Today, a mural is a painting on a wall or ceiling.

Using the Australian National Flag and other flags as the centrepiece, design a mural that could be painted on a school wall.

If permitted, create a chalk mural on a school wall or pathway.

Go Further: *Research Tasks*



AUSTRALIAN ENSIGNS

What is the Australian blue ensign?

How does it compare to the red ensign and the white ensign?

Find out about the history of the ensigns and how each one is used today.



FLAG DESIGNERS

Research the designers of the Australian Aboriginal Flag and the Torres Strait Islander Flag.

Write a short biography for each artist or create a timeline of their lives.

Note: Teachers and students should discuss and consider the cultural protocols when speaking about deceased Indigenous peoples.

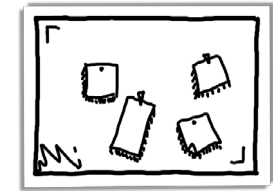


THE UNION JACK

The Union Jack is part of the Australian National Flag.

It is made up of three crosses representing the United Kingdom of England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Find out about each cross and how they have been combined.



STATE FLAGS

Each state and territory of Australia has its own flag with important symbols.

Research the flags of the states and territories of Australia.

What are the symbols and what do they represent?

Create a physical or digital set of cards with a picture of each flag and information about its symbols.

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

Symbols

Commonwealth Star, Union Jack, Southern Cross

Flags of Australia's Indigenous Peoples

black, red, yellow

green, blue, black, white, white

Design Your School Flag

(Designs and answers vary.)

Flag Protocols

The flag should not touch the ground at any time.

I think this is a rule because the ground is not a respected place. To show respect to the flag, it should only be put in respectful places. (Answers vary.)



In the next lesson ...

The Case of the Missing Emu continues. Emu is still trying to send a message to all Australians. Your pile of sticky notes is growing but you still haven't solved the case. Help Kai, Mila and Kangaroo collect clues while Emu discovers the facts about other national symbols of Australia. But time is running out.

