



Australian Government

Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet



Teacher Guide

Year 7-8: 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 Nation Anthem, the flags of Australia and other national symbols.

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Introduction to Lesson 3

LESSON OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this lesson are for students to:

- **Understand** how national identity can shape a sense of belonging in Australia's multicultural society
- **v** the significance of each of the symbols
- **Evaluate** the alignment of the symbols with different perspectives of Australian 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.

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)

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](#)

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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.

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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 national symbols of Australia.

In the first chapter, the focus was on the Australian National Anthem. In Chapter 2 the characters explored the flags of Australia. In this chapter the characters investigate 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 are the national symbols of Australia?
- What do you already know about the national symbols?
- What has happened in the story so far?
- Who is The Hacker?
- Who are the other members of 'your' team?

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. Why couldn't you see Ruby when you walked into the room?
2. What is Ruby doing in her room?
3. What did The Hacker do to the website?
4. What did Ruby do when The Hacker appeared?

Inferential

1. Why was Ruby frightened when you touched her on the shoulder?
2. How can you tell Ruby is comfortable with technology?
3. Is Ruby put off by The Hacker? How do you know?
4. How is an avatar like a national symbol?

Evaluative

1. Do you agree that our national symbols are a way for us to say that we belong to Australia without having to say it with words. Why?
2. How effective are the national symbols in encouraging a sense of belonging for all Australians?



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 national identity can shape a sense of belonging in Australia's multicultural society.

- View Australian population statistics to demonstrate the multicultural richness and diversity of Australia.
- Discuss personal and reported experiences of moving to Australia from another country and any barriers to developing a sense of belonging.
- How do national symbols contribute to our national identity?
- Can a strong connection with the national symbols help develop a sense of belonging?
- What else contributes to a sense of belonging?

ANALYSE

Analyse the significance of each of the symbols.

- Explore the meaning and significance of the Commonwealth Coat of Arms, the floral emblem, the national colours, and the national gemstone.
- Consider the historical and cultural significance of the symbols.
- View the guidelines for use of the Commonwealth Coat of Arms and how they protect its integrity and authority.
- Discuss the pride Australian athletes feel about wearing the green and gold. Why is this so important for them?
- Ask the students to articulate which symbol they connect with most strongly and why.

EVALUATE

Evaluate the alignment of the symbols with different perspectives of Australian identity.

- Consider the cultural diversity of the Australian population.
- Are the symbols relevant and relatable to all Australians?
- Consider the role of our national symbols in building national identity and shaping a sense of belonging. How do the symbols unite Australians?
- How does a migrant hold two sets of symbols and identities?
- Are the national symbols more relevant to certain cultural groups?

Step 3 – Practise

INTERACTIVE LESSON

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

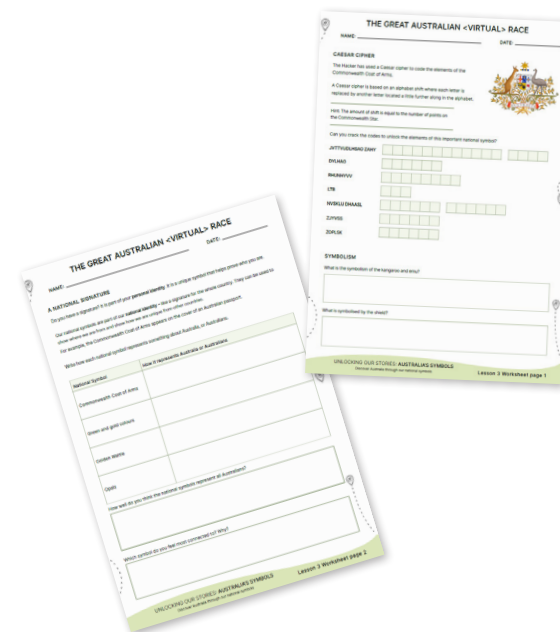
- The interactive lesson reinforces the learning from the story.
- Students learn facts and answer the interactive questions.
- The questions are self-correcting.
- No login details are required.
- Students can complete the lesson multiple times.

STUDENT WORKSHEET

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

The worksheet explores:

- The elements of the Commonwealth Coat of Arms.
- The symbolism of the Commonwealth Coat of Arms.
- A comparison of personal and national identity.



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Go Further: *English*



MIND'S EYE 1

How familiar are the students with the Commonwealth Coat of Arms? Can they picture the Arms in their mind?

Without looking at it, write a detailed description of each symbol of the Arms and how they are positioned.

Compare the description with a displayed image of the Arms.



WATTLE POEM

Find and read the poem *The Wattle* by Henry Lawson.

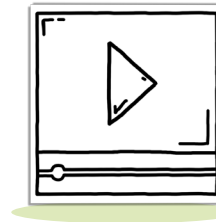
Analyse the rhythm and rhyming pattern of the lyrics.

Is there any figurative language or imagery used?

What is Lawson's view of wattle?

How does it make you feel?

Learn the poem and recite it from memory.



READ AND RETELL

Find and read an Indigenous story of how opals were created.

Have students retell the story in their own words, either in writing or as an oral presentation.



BIOGRAPHY

Students research an Australian whose life was changed when they represented Australia wearing the green and gold.

Write the main events of their life as a biographical story using the language features of a narrative.

Publish in an ebook creation tool and record the narration.

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Go Further: *Maths and Science*



SYMBOL SYMMETRY

Explore the symmetry of the Commonwealth Coat of Arms.

How symmetrical is the Arms?

Analyse the elements and create a scale of symmetry based on the number of symmetrical parts.



WATTLE SEED

Wattle seed can be used in various forms – whole, raw, cooked, ground.

Find out how wattle seed is grown, harvested and processed.

Create a flowchart diagram to illustrate the process.

Discuss the promotion of products as 'superfoods'.



GEMSTONE SCORES

How does the value of opal compare to other precious gemstones?

What determines their value?

How are they scored?

Create a list of gemstones from most valuable to least.

Make sure you include opals.



TESSELLATION NATION

Revise the definition of a tessellating pattern.

Create a tessellating pattern using arrow heads with one arrow pointing right for the direction of the kangaroo and the other arrow points left for the emu.

Colour the alternating pattern in green and gold.

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Go Further: *The Arts*



MIND'S EYE 2

How familiar are the students with the Commonwealth Coat of Arms?

Can they picture the Arms in their mind?

Without looking at it, have students draw it from memory.

Compare the drawing with a displayed image of the Arms and check for accuracy.



CREST TEST

The official crest of the Governor-General features the Golden Wattle as well as a symbol of His Majesty The King.

Without researching the crest, have students design their own version.

Compare it to the official crest.

Were they similar?



OPAL ARTWORK

Create an opal-inspired artwork that is very scientific and a little bit magical.

You will need:

- a bowl of water
- clear nail polish
- small pieces of black cardstock.

Add a single drop of clear nail polish to a bowl of water then dip the cardstock into the bowl.

Like opals, every artwork is unique.



TEAM AUSTRALIA

Use the green and gold colours to design the official uniform of the next Australian Olympic team.

Research previous designs for inspiration.

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Go Further: *Research Tasks*



WHAT'S IN A NAME?

The word 'Australia' appears on the scroll of the Arms.

Where does the name Australia come from?

What is its origin and etymology?

What does it mean?

Where else is its root word used?



WORLDWIDE WATTLE

Wattle is native to Australia but where else in the world does wattle grow?

Make a list or colour a map to show other countries where wattle is found.

Is it a native or introduced species?

What environments suit wattle?

Is wattle esteemed in other countries?

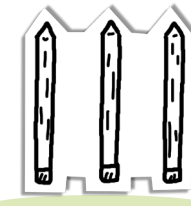


MINING IMPACT

Research the mining techniques used to extract opals from the ground.

What is the impact on the environment?

What rules are in place to protect the environment?



EXACT COLOURS

The green and gold of Australia have specified colour codes.

However, over the years, some sporting teams have modified the colours to suit trends and preferences.

Research the evolution of the Australian Rugby Union jersey and how a final, enduring colour was selected.

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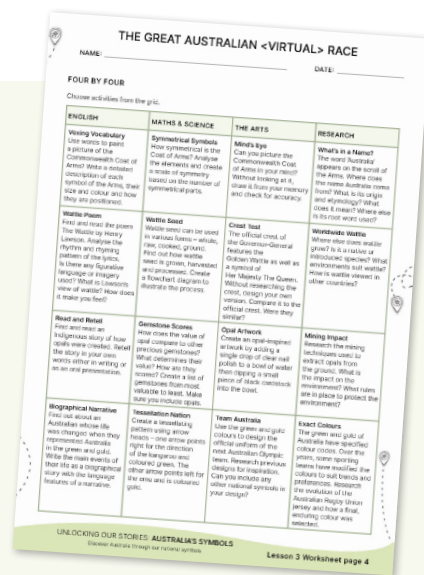
Go Further: *Independent Tasks*

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

CAESAR CIPHER

Commonwealth Star, wreath, kangaroo, emu, Golden Wattle, scroll, shield

Symbolism

1. The kangaroo and emu are iconic Australian animals who share an important physical feature – both animals find it difficult to walk backwards. This symbolises the fact that Australia is moving forwards and making progress.

2. The shield represents six states of Australia united under Federation.

A National Signature

This is our most formal symbol and represents Australians united as a nation. It also represents the authority and legal ownership of the Commonwealth. Green represents the forests, eucalyptus trees and pastures of the Australian landscape. Gold represents beaches, mineral wealth, grain harvests and the fleece of Australian wool.

The Golden Wattle is our national floral emblem. It represents the unity of all Australians and acknowledges our resilience. It is also a symbol of remembrance and reflection and our national colours of green and gold.

Opals represent Australia's arid interior and are also valuable and rare.

Personal and National Identity

Answers will vary.

In the next lesson ...

Your team has made it through all three rounds. You and Ruby have an idea that The Hacker might be part of the game. Read the Epilogue then start your engines for the final challenge – The Great Australian <Virtual> Race. Test out your new knowledge and see if your team can make it to the winners' podium.

