

Australians at War

Applicable for use in New South Wales Curriculum Year 9 Stage 5, and Australian Curriculum: History WWI – Year 9

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This Unit has twenty-four lessons taught over an eight-week period.



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Aims and Objectives

The Second World War had a major impact on the generation who fought and lived through it. Australia's relationship with Britain and the United States was fundamentally altered. In this topic, students will explore the experiences of Australians on both the war front and the home front. Internal choice offers opportunities to study issues and events of particular interest or local significance in more depth.

Knowledge and Understanding

- Students will develop an understanding of some of events, groups and experiences of World War II and engage with historical concepts.
 - Why was Australia involved in World War II?
 - What were some of the experiences of Australians as a result of their involvement in the war?
 - What was the impact of the war on the Australian home front?
 - How did Australia's relationship with Britain and the USA change during World War II?
- Cause and effect
 - Events, decisions and developments in the past that produce later actions, results or effects, e.g. reasons for the outbreak of World War I and the effects of this conflict; the reasons for and impact of the struggle for rights and freedoms of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- Significance
 - The importance of an event, development, group or individual and their impact on their times and/or later periods, e.g. the importance of the changes brought about by the Industrial Revolution; the importance of World War II on Australia's relations with other countries.

Skills

A student:

- explains and assesses the historical forces and factors that shaped the modern world and Australia ([HT5-1](#))
- sequences and explains the significant patterns of continuity and change in the development of the modern world and Australia HT5-2 explains and analyses the causes and effects of events and developments in the modern world and Australia ([HT5-4](#))
- identifies and evaluates the usefulness of sources in the historical inquiry process ([HT5-5](#))
- explains different contexts, perspectives and interpretations of the modern world and Australia ([HT5-7](#))
- applies a range of relevant historical terms and concepts when communicating an understanding of the past ([HT5-9](#))
- selects and uses appropriate oral, written, visual and digital forms to communicate effectively about the past for different audiences ([HT5-10](#)).

The following inquiry based unit of work covers aspects of the Australian Curriculum content.

The activities are designed using an inquiry based approach and maybe done as group work. Each group may like to assume a title based on World War II historical personalities. Each week the tasks are open-ended, research based and use historical sources. Students' thinking about sources is carefully supported to encourage historical understanding and build concepts such as significance and cause and effect. Historical empathy, research, communication and contestability are addressed.

Content

- An overview of the causes of the wars, why men enlisted and where Australians fought. ([ACDSEH021](#)) ([ACDSEH095](#)) ([ACDSEH024](#))

Students:

- outline the main causes of both wars
- locate and sequence the places where Australians fought in both wars
- explain why Australians enlisted to fight in both wars.

- The scope and nature of warfare. ([ACDSEH095](#)) ([ACDSEH107](#))

Students:

- describe the nature of warfare during the Gallipoli campaign
- explain the outcome of the Gallipoli campaign
- outline and sequence the changing scope and nature of warfare from trenches in World War I to the Holocaust and the use of the atomic bombs to end World War II.

- History K–10 Syllabus 93: Significant events and the experiences of Australians at war. ([ACDSEH108](#))

Using sources, students investigate the following features of each war:

- prisoners of war
- a specific campaign, e.g. the Western Front 1916 and the New Guinea campaign 1942
- the role of women
- participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- a specific event/incident, e.g. the Battle of Hamel 1918 and the Fall of Singapore 1942.

- Impact of the wars on Australia. ([ACDSEH096](#)) ([ACDSEH109](#))

Students outline the Australian governments' control on the home front in both wars for each of the following:

- conscription
- use of government propaganda
- changing roles of women
- enemy "aliens"
- wartime controls/censorship.

- Significance of the wars to Australia. ([ACDSEH110](#))

Students:

- explain the impact of the wars on returned soldiers/civilians
- analyse the changing relationship of Australia with other countries after World War II.

- Commemorations and the nature of the Anzac legend. ([ACDSEH097](#))

Students:

- explain how and why Australians have commemorated the wars
- explain different perspectives on the Anzac legend.

Teaching Note

The references and sources are drawn from primary and secondary collections that present an Australian perspective. Students are encouraged to use sources and materials from the Australian War Memorial and the Department of Veterans' Affairs. It is designed to develop student work and thinking using the practices and principles of historical inquiry. All tasks are open-ended and build historical thinking. Tasks have incorporated Information and Communications Technology (ICT) where possible and student creation and use of evidence is encouraged.

Links

Throughout the Unit there are clear links to the New South Wales Curriculum, Stage 5.



Course Overview

Week	Lesson	Content/Activities	State/Territory and ACARA curriculum links	Assessment
1	1–3 MacArthur Casualties	<p>Inquiry Questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why study World War II? • Why is World War II important for Australia? • How is World War II significant for all Australians? • How and why should we commemorate World War II? <p>Learning Activity: Why should we learn about World War II? <i>“Fellow Australians, it is my melancholy duty to inform you officially, that in consequence of a persistence by Germany in her invasion of Poland, Great Britain has declared war upon her and that as a result, Australia is also at war.”</i></p> <p>Prime Minister Robert Menzies spoke these words in his address to the nation on 3 September 1939. World War Two had broken out two days earlier when Germany invaded Poland. After Britain and France declared war on Germany, Australia, part of the British Empire, promptly followed suit. It would be six years before Australia, and the world, was at peace again. www.ww2roll.gov.au/doc/overview.asp</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your task is to find out Why World War II was about and determine if and why Year 9 students should know about. You will in your groups make an argument about the relevance and importance of World War II based on evidence of impact of World War II on Australia and the World. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Brainstorm/mind map all you know about the topic WWII already. Create a list of key events, people or ideas about WWII. – Select an appropriate name for your group from your brainstorm. – Create a glossary of key terms for WWII based on your brainstorm and design a Wordle poster with the meanings and terms. www.wordle.net/create – Work through in groups or individually the following tasks below to find out whether WWII is important to know about and how we should commemorate it. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explains and assesses the historical forces and factors that shaped the modern world and Australia (HT5-1) • Sequences and explains the significant patterns of continuity and change in the development of the modern world and Australia (HT5-2) • Explains and analyses the causes and effects of events and developments in the modern world and Australia (HT5-4) • Identifies and evaluates the usefulness of sources in the historical inquiry process (HT5-5) • Explains different contexts, perspectives and interpretations of the modern world and Australia (HT5-7) • Applies a range of relevant historical terms and concepts when communicating an understanding of the past (HT5-9) • Selects and uses appropriate oral, written, visual and digital forms to communicate effectively about the past for different audiences (HT5-10) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students’ prior knowledge on World War II is informally assessed • Students’ use of historical terms and concepts for this topic is informally assessed

Week	Lesson	Content/Activities	State/Territory and ACARA curriculum links	Assessment
		<p>Learning Activity: What were the costs?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Find out how many Australians enlisted in WWII. www.awm.gov.au/encyclopedia/enlistment/ww2.asp Construct a table showing the number of enlistments. Find out the actual numbers of deaths for Australian units and construct a graph that shows the number of deaths in comparison to other conflicts Australia has served in. www.awm.gov.au/encyclopedia/war_casualties Based on the numbers of enlistments and the number of deaths work out what percentage died of those who served. Work out a ratio of how likely you were die in WWII. Consider the impact of those injured and the large number of deaths on the home front. Based on this evidence consider whether WWII is important to know about today. 		

Week	Lesson	Content/Activities	State/Territory and ACARA curriculum links	Assessment
2	4–6 Menzies Air Raids and Attacks	<p>Learning Activity: How real was the threat to Australia?</p> <p>“It’s fight, work or perish.” <i>Department of Information slogan, 1942</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Find out from the sources whether Australia was really under threat in WWII. www.awm.gov.au/encyclopedia/air_raids On a map, draw in the number and place of air raids and other attacks that occurred. Find sources that show the impact of the attack on Australia and create a classified news reel/movie (use iMovie or Movie Maker) that highlights the impact. Discuss why you think censoring happened during WWII. Create a PMI chart to list down the Pluses, Minuses and Interesting Facts of censorship. Do you think the public had a right to know? Explain your responses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explains and assesses the historical forces and factors that shaped the modern world and Australia (HT5-1) Sequences and explains the significant patterns of continuity and change in the development of the modern world and Australia (HT5-2) Explains and analyses the causes and effects of events and developments in the modern world and Australia (HT5-4) Identifies and evaluates the usefulness of sources in the historical inquiry process (HT5-5) Explains different contexts, perspectives and interpretations of the modern world and Australia (HT5-7) Applies a range of relevant historical terms and concepts when communicating an understanding of the past (HT5-9) Selects and uses appropriate oral, written, visual and digital forms to communicate effectively about the past for different audiences (HT5-10) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Informal assessment of student thinking and researching

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3	7–9 Curtin	<p>Learning Activity: How grave was this hour of History for Australia? What was the home front experience?</p> <p><i>The Australian Labor Party under Prime Minister John Curtin took government in October 1941. Soon after Japan entered the Pacific war, the Curtin government declared that Australians faced “the gravest hour of our history”. Curtin asked “every Australian, man and woman, to go about their allotted task with full vigor and courage.”</i></p> <p>www.awm.gov.au/exhibitions/underattack/bombed/curtin.asp</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Find out how Australia responded to WWII on the home front. www.awm.gov.au/exhibitions/underattack/mobilise Examine the information about identity labels, the austerity campaigns and the “killer of Santa Claus”. Create a digital story, picture book or diary/blog about the home front experiences from the eyes of child. Consider how daily life was affected by WWII. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifies and evaluates the usefulness of sources in the historical inquiry process (HT5-5) Explains different contexts, perspectives and interpretations of the modern world and Australia (HT5-7) Applies a range of relevant historical terms and concepts when communicating an understanding of the past (HT5-9) Selects and uses appropriate oral, written, visual and digital forms to communicate effectively about the past for different audiences (HT5-10) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Informal assessment of student thinking and researching 																					
4	10–12 Nackeroos	<p>Learning Activity: What do the artefacts of WWII tell us about the Australian experience of WWII?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using the sources from the WORLD WAR II Australian War Memorial Exhibition find out more about Australia’s experience of WWII. www.awm.gov.au/exhibitions/underattack/exhibition Complete the following source chart for 3–5 sources. <p>Source Chart</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Source</th> <th>Description</th> <th>Primary/Secondary</th> <th>Origin/Date</th> <th>Who or how was it used?</th> <th>What does it tell us about the experience of WWII</th> <th>What perspective does it give us WWII?</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Source	Description	Primary/Secondary	Origin/Date	Who or how was it used?	What does it tell us about the experience of WWII	What perspective does it give us WWII?															<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sequences and explains the significant patterns of continuity and change in the development of the modern world and Australia (HT5-2) Explains and analyses the causes and effects of events and developments in the modern world and Australia (HT5-4) Identifies and evaluates the usefulness of sources in the historical inquiry process (HT5-5) Explains different contexts, perspectives and interpretations of the modern world and Australia (HT5-7) Applies a range of relevant historical terms and concepts when communicating an understanding of the past (HT5-9) Different audiences (HT5-10) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Informal assessment of student thinking and researching
Source	Description	Primary/Secondary	Origin/Date	Who or how was it used?	What does it tell us about the experience of WWII	What perspective does it give us WWII?																			

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5	13–15 Saunders Indigenous Soldiers and Experience	Learning Activity: Who was fighting? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find out how Indigenous Australians participated in the WWII. www.awm.gov.au/encyclopedia/aborigines www.dva.gov.au/commems_oawg/commemorations/education/Documents/Indig_secondary.pdf • Create list of Indigenous Australians who participated. • Choose one of their stories and create a representation of their experiences using primary and secondary sources (Movie Maker or in text). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – What was the contribution of Indigenous Australians? – Why do you think this important to know? – How do you think this contribution should be acknowledged? 		
6	16–18 POWs	Learning Activity: Who were POWs and why do we need to know? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find out about Australia’s POWs. www.awm.gov.au/research/infosheets/pow/japanese/#basic • Using the site identify how many Australians were POWs. • Create a pie chart showing the different places and numbers where Australians were POWs. • Using the site locate a POW and find out: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – full name – unit – service number – country where he/she was captured/imprisoned. • Names of people or places associated with imprisonment (e.g. name of medical officer, camp name, and prisoner-of-war ship). • Create an empathetic account or photo-story of the POW experience. • Why do you think this story should be told? Explain using references to sources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explains and analyses the causes and effects of events and developments in the modern world and Australia (HT5-4) • Identifies and evaluates the usefulness of sources in the historical inquiry process (HT5-5) • Explains different contexts, perspectives and interpretations of the modern world and Australia (HT5-7) • Applies a range of relevant historical terms and concepts when communicating an understanding of the past (HT5-9) • Selects and uses appropriate oral, written, visual and digital forms to communicate effectively about the past for different audiences (HT5-10) 	

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7	19–21 Bullwinkel	<p>Learning Activity: What was it like for the nurses who served?</p> <p>“Even during the worst barrages there was no panic and no comments.” —Matron Kathleen Best</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find out about nurses who served in WWII. www.awm.gov.au/exhibitions/nurses/ww2 • Choose to investigate a nurse and find out more about her experiences. www.awm.gov.au/exhibitions/fiftyaustralians/5.asp • Create a collage or digital representation using quotes, photos and other sources that illustrates the experience. www.dva.gov.au/commems_oawg/commemorations/education/Documents/Devotion.pdf <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – To what extent did women contribute to active service in WWII? – What were the risks to the nurses who served? – Discuss if nurses should be commemorated and how this should be done? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifies and evaluates the usefulness of sources in the historical inquiry process (HT5-5) • Explains different contexts, perspectives and interpretations of the modern world and Australia (HT5-7) • Applies a range of relevant historical terms and concepts when communicating an understanding of the past (HT5-9) • Selects and uses appropriate oral, written, visual and digital forms to communicate effectively about the past for different audiences (HT5-10) 	

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8	22–24 The Anzacs	<p>Learning Activity: Why and how should we commemorate our Anzacs?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider as a class all the evidence and conclusions you have reached. Create a classroom exhibit of the sources you have used and annotate this with your conclusions. Hand out paper red poppies and discuss the significance of this and the link to World War I. Prepare an alternate debate (form a circle in the classroom and each person presents one point and alternates the position as you move around clockwise). Debate the following statement and draw your ideas together about the service and contributions of the Anzacs and all those who made sacrifices during World War II. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explains and assesses the historical forces and factors that shaped the modern world and Australia (HT5-1) Sequences and explains the significant patterns of continuity and change in the development of the modern world and Australia (HT5-2) Explains and analyses the causes and effects of events and developments in the modern world and Australia (HT5-4) Identifies and evaluates the usefulness of sources in the historical inquiry process (HT5-5) Explains different contexts, perspectives and interpretations of the modern world and Australia (HT5-7) Applies a range of relevant historical terms and concepts when communicating an understanding of the past (HT5-9) Selects and uses appropriate oral, written, visual and digital forms to communicate effectively about the past for different audiences (HT5-10) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formal assessment of the sources and exhibit the students create. See rubric and formal task of attached documents (pages 10–11)

Resources List

Week	Lesson	Resources List
1–8	1–24	<p>Publications <i>Devotion</i> (2013). DVA Education Resource. <i>Indigenous Service</i> (2013). DVA Education Resource.</p> <p>Websites www.awm.gov.au/encyclopedia/enlistment/ww2.asp www.wordle.net/create www.awm.gov.au/encyclopedia/war_casualties www.awm.gov.au/encyclopedia/enlistment/ww2.asp www.awm.gov.au/encyclopedia/war_casualties www.awm.gov.au/encyclopedia/air_raids www.awm.gov.au/exhibitions/underattack/mobilise www.awm.gov.au/exhibitions/underattack/exhibition www.awm.gov.au/exhibitions/nurses/ww2 www.awm.gov.au/exhibitions/fiftyaustralians/5.asp www.awm.gov.au/exhibitions/underattack/bombed/curtin.asp www.awm.gov.au/encyclopedia/aborigines</p>



Word cloud created by Kay Carroll

Assessment Task and Rubric

Why is WWII Significant For Australia?

Task Instructions

Create a classroom exhibit of the primary and secondary historical sources you have used and annotate this with your conclusions.

This exhibit should show your knowledge and understanding of “Australians at War” and your perspective about the different stages, groups, individuals and experiences of World War II. You should present your sources using ICT and display these as a real or virtual exhibit. Each source needs to be labeled with the accurate provenance and reference details. Consider how your sources and annotations using evidence create historical meaning and empathy for the viewer.

Mark	8–10	5–7	1–4
Descriptor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A substantive and comprehensive assessment of the historical forces and factors that shaped the modern world and Australia in relation to WWII. A clear and detailed explanation of the significant patterns of continuity and change in the development of the modern world and Australia with relationship to WWII. A succinct and coherent analysis of the causes and effects of WWII on Australia. A highly sophisticated and reliable evaluation of different contexts, perspectives and interpretations of sources that shows how WWII affected Australia and the world. Presents a range of relevant and accurate historical terms and concepts when communicating an understanding of the WWII. Uses appropriate oral, written, visual and digital forms to communicate effectively about the past for different audiences in a way that generates historical understanding about the effects and significance of WWII. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A sound and clear assessment of the historical forces and factors that shaped the modern world and Australia in relation to WWII. A clear and generally well-justified explanation of the significant patterns of continuity and change in the development of the modern world and Australia with relationship to WWII. A generally coherent explanation and analysis of the causes and effects of WWII on Australia. A valid and reliable evaluation of different contexts, perspectives and interpretations of sources that show how WWII affected Australia and the world. Presents a range of relevant and mostly accurate historical terms and concepts when communicating an understanding of the WWII. Uses appropriate oral, written, visual and digital forms to communicate effectively about the past for different audiences in a way that generates sound historical understanding about the effects and significance of WWII. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A limited explanation of the historical forces and factors that shaped the modern world and Australia in relation to WWII. A general description of the significant patterns of continuity and change in the development of the modern world and Australia with relationship to WWII. A basic description of the causes and effects of WWII on Australia. Some description of different contexts, perspectives and interpretations of sources that show how WWII affected Australia and the world. Uses some historical terms and concepts when communicating an understanding of the WWII. Uses descriptive oral, written, visual and digital forms to communicate some aspects of the past for different audiences in a way that generates limited and a generalised historical understanding about the effects and significance of WWII.