Background

At around 4.30 am on Sunday 25 April 1915, the first soldiers of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC) landed near Ari Burnu on the Gallipoli Peninsula. On the same morning, soldiers from Britain, France and their colonies launched assaults at nearby Cape Helles and Kum Kale. The Allies wanted to destroy the forts overlooking the Dardanelles to allow a fleet to enter the Sea of Marmara and bombard the Ottoman (commonly known as Turkish) capital, Constantinople. They hoped Turkey would surrender, easing pressure on Russia and depriving Germany of an ally.

Men of the 3rd Australian Brigade were the first Anzac troops ashore. Approaching the coast on board Royal Navy warships, they were woken around 1 am, fed and assembled. The first wave boarded thirty-six rowing boats and were towed towards the beach until they were close enough to row to shore. Mostly landing at a place that became known as Anzac Cove, the Australian troops came under fire before they had stepped ashore.

_We thought that our landing was to be effected quite unopposed, but when our boats were within about 30 yards [around 27 metres] of the beach a rifle was fired from the hill in front of us above the beach right in front of where we were heading for. Almost immediately heavy rifle and machine gun fire was opened up on us. We had to row for another 15 yards [around 4.5 metres] or so before we reached water shallow enough to get out of the boats._


Under increasingly heavy Turkish machine gun and rifle fire, the Anzacs raced inland into a warren of steep ground, razor-back ridges and scrub-filled gullies that caused formations to either bunch together or separate into small groups.

The following waves of Anzacs came ashore as Turkish shells began bursting over the landing area. A soldier’s experience of the landing could be remarkably different depending on when he landed on that first day. One described it as ‘a perfect hail of bullets’ at dawn, while a New Zealand officer landing in mid-morning wrote of his surprise at how relatively ‘peaceful’ the landing was.

Meanwhile, Turkish troops were responding to the Anzac landing in force. The battle ebbed and flowed, with the Anzacs taking, losing, and then retaking ground in the face of Turkish counter-attacks. In some places the Anzacs were forced off key locations, such as the hill known as Baby 700, which they would not retake during the entire campaign.

By the end of that first day, the Turks threatened to force the Anzacs into the sea. The situation was so precarious that the Anzac commanders considered immediate evacuation. However, they were ordered to dig in by their superior, General Sir Ian Hamilton.

Historian estimate some 2000 Australians were killed or wounded on 25 April, but there are no precise casualty figures for that day – the fighting was too confused and casualties were widely dispersed across the battlefield, the beach and on board hospital ships. The Anzacs were evacuated in December 1915, and by then some 8700 Australians and 2700 New Zealanders had been killed. In total, the Gallipoli campaign cost the lives of around 44,000 Allied and 86,000 Turkish soldiers.

References

Dr Richard Reid, Australians in World War I: Gallipoli, Department of Veterans’ Affairs, Canberra, 2010.
Denis Winter, 26 April 1915 – The inevitable tragedy, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 1994.
Teaching Activities

Use the posters, background information, and websites listed on page 4, to answer the following questions:

1. Look at the two Anzac Day posters for 2015.
   a. What can you see in each poster?
   b. How do the two posters differ?
   c. Do they both show the same event? Explain your reason.
   d. What perspective of the landing do both posters show? Is there a perspective that is not shown?

2. Read the following information about the images in the posters and answer the questions below:

Artwork: AWM ART92417

Titled Soldiers disembarking at Anzac Cove 1915, this painting was completed by artist William Beckwith McInnes around 1925. It incorporates the main elements of the early moments of the landing – boats coming towards the beach, men disembarking under heavy fire, dead and wounded on the beach and men beginning to scale the cliffs. The soldiers in the painting are landing in what appears to be daylight – though fighting had moved inland by this time and the men on the beach were not under direct fire. McInnes was an accomplished artist who worked at the National Gallery School in Melbourne between 1916–1918 and went on to win the Archibald Prize for Portraiture seven times.

Photograph: AWM P02226.014

This photograph shows members of No. 2 Field Company, Royal Australian Engineers, landing on the Gallipoli Peninsula at around 6.30 am on 25 April 1915. The men in the boats are disembarking in an orderly manner, implying they are not under direct fire. The beach is empty of dead and wounded men, suggesting the early casualties had already been evacuated from this portion of the beach. In the background on the left, bayonets from men of the 7th Battalion (Victoria) can be seen as the soldiers advance up a gully. The photo was taken by Cyril Lawrence, a soldier who served at Gallipoli and was awarded a gallantry medal on the Western Front. He survived the war and enlisted again during the Second World War.

   a. Identify whether each image is a primary or a secondary source.
   b. Does the information above change your understanding of each poster? How?
   c. As historical sources, what are the strengths and weaknesses of each image?

3. If you were to design your own poster to commemorate the Anzac Centenary, what image/s would you use? You may wish to consider your theme (e.g. the impact of war on your local community; the Anzac Centenary period as a whole); the central image/s (e.g. artwork, photograph); any words that will appear on the poster (e.g. title, caption); and where you will get the image/s. As a class, you may wish to consider exhibiting your posters in a public space, such as your school foyer.

   a. In pairs, discuss what theme you would use for your poster.
   b. Use online sources, such as the websites listed on page 4, to find your image/s, then design your commemorative poster.
   c. Justify your selection and design by writing one or two sentences explaining your choices.

4. Using your knowledge of the landings and the information in Source 1, place the images on page 3 in chronological order. Write two to three sentences explaining your choices.

Source 1: Timeline of the Gallipoli landings, 24–25 April 1915

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>24 April 1915</td>
<td>Anzac troops board their transports in preparation for the journey to the Gallipoli peninsula.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 April 1915</td>
<td>After arriving off the coast of Turkey, the first wave of Anzac troops begin forming up in small convoys of row boats for the short journey to the shore.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The first waves of Anzac troops, from the 1st Australian Division, land on the Gallipoli peninsula.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A steady stream of Anzac troops come ashore throughout the rest of the morning. As the fighting moves further inland away from the beach, the troops are able to form up on the beach without coming under direct fire.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. Sometimes history is contested, meaning that aspects of the past are open to debate because of different interpretations or a lack of evidence. Read ‘A brief description of the landing’ from the Gallipoli and the Anzacs website and pick one issue which is still debated about the landings at Gallipoli – e.g. the amount of enemy fire the Anzacs faced, the timing of the landings, the location of the landings, or the identity of the first soldier to land ashore on the 25th of April.

a. What issue did you pick?

b. What evidence does the source provide?

c. Why is that issue still contested today?

d. How might modern technology, such as smart phones, GPS, or computers, change how a battle is recorded or monitored today?

e. In a small group, discuss one issue and provide reasons why it is contested, and how modern technology would influence that issue today. Present your findings to the class.
6. Read Sources 2 and 3 describing actions on the first day, 25 April, and answer these questions for each source.
   a. Whose perspectives are offered in the source?
   b. How does this source add to your understanding of the Gallipoli campaign?
   c. Is any of the information surprising? Does the source challenge any perspectives you may have of the Gallipoli campaign?

Source 2: quote from a Turkish soldier

“... we saw a group of soldiers running towards us from the Hill 261 [the southern shoulder of Chanuk Bair]. I stopped them and asked them why they were running, they said, ‘Sir, the enemy!’ and showed a small band of soldiers following them at a distance ... I shouted ‘You can not run away from the enemy!’ They said they had no bullets left and I replied, ‘If you have no ammunition you have your bayonets’ and ordered them to fix bayonets and face the enemy ... Pretty soon, the first company [of reinforcements] arrived. I ordered these soldiers to start firing at the enemy ... Then I received a report that the 27th Regiment also came to the location and began engaging the enemy ... By 11.30 a.m., the enemy was in retreat.”

Lieutenant Colonel Mustafa Kemal, Commander, 19th Division

Source 3: diary entry of an Australian soldier

“The beach is littered with wounded, some of them frightful spectacles; perchance myself I may at any moment be even as they are. Indians bringing ammunition mules along the beach – the scene of carnage worries them not [at] all. It is commencing to get dark – we are now climbing the heights. I am given a pick to carry – half way up I had to drop it, it was too much for me. The lads on the top of the hill are glad to see us for they have been having an anxious time holding their position on the Ridge – ‘Pope’s Hill’ – they had scarcely time to throw up more than a little earth to take cover behind. The noise now is Hell ... Now some of the chaps are getting it – groans and screams everywhere, calls for ammunition and stretcher bearers, though how the latter are going to carry stretchers along such precipitous and sandy slopes beats me. Now commencing to take some of the dead out of the trenches; this is horrible; I wonder how long I can stand it.”

Signaller Ellis Silas, 16th Battalion AIF, 25 April 1915

7. Consider the following statement in Source 4 on the impact of the Gallipoli campaign.
   a. Why is the Gallipoli campaign, and Anzac Day in particular, being commemorated in Australia 100 years on?
   b. In Source 4, the authors link the Gallipoli campaign with Australian nationhood. Given that Australia became a nation in 1901, do you agree or disagree with their statement? Explain your reasons.
   c. Why might the Gallipoli campaign be ‘remembered as just another name’ in some countries?
   d. Why might the Turkish people commemorate a different date to the 25th of April?

Source 4: Commemorating the Gallipoli campaign

“For the British, French, Canadians, Indians and Germans, the Gallipoli campaign is remembered as just another name in a long, tragic list of World War I battles. For Turks, Australians and New Zealanders, Gallipoli is something apart – a significant event in the self-development of their individual nations. Gallipoli occupies a special place in the national memory. As such, the battles have not been allowed to fade in people’s memory ... In Turkey, the annual commemoration centres around the decisive victory won over the British and French fleet on 18 March 1915.”


Websites

- **Department of Veterans’ Affairs**
  Q7 - www.anzacsicite.gov.au/2visitting/tourasia2.html

- **Australian War Memorial**
  Q3 - www.awm.gov.au/search/all/?op=Search&format=list

- **National Library of Australia**
  Q3 - trove.nla.gov.au/picture

For more information on Australia’s wartime history, an Order of Service and music files to support a commemorative ceremony, or to download this document, visit the Anzac Portal at www.anzacportal.dva.gov.au.