

An aerial photograph of a beach. Two surfers are walking on the sand, carrying their surfboards. The ocean waves are breaking on the shore, creating white foam. The water is a deep blue-green color, and the sand is a light brown color. The overall scene is peaceful and scenic.

AUSTRALIANS
TOGETHER

Australia Day Teacher Guide

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Introduction

Is January 26 an appropriate date to celebrate Australia Day?

It's a debate that's escalated in recent years and has been amplified by media and social media. But, different opinions about Australia Day aren't new – in fact, the first Australia Day protest was in 1938 when a 'Day of Mourning and Protest' was organised as Sydney celebrated 150 years of colonisation.

Australia Day commemorates the arrival of the British on January 26, 1788. For many First Nations people, this date was the beginning of disease epidemics, loss of land, destruction of culture and separation of families. These events have resulted in disadvantage and injustice, which continues to impact many First Nations people today. So, while there's much to celebrate about Australia, for many Australia Day is a difficult day.

Teaching different perspectives about Australia Day is useful for and relevant to your students. Here's why:

1. It **consolidates prior knowledge and learning about Australian history** and shows the usefulness of historical knowledge in contemporary contexts.
2. It has **distinct and understandable perspectives** which have cogent arguments, making it accessible for students of differing abilities, backgrounds and levels of understanding.
3. It **invites an opinion from all who call Australia home**; whether they be First Nations people, newly arrived or from earlier migration waves.
4. It provides the opportunity to **examine the role of new technologies** in debates, campaigns and expressions of belief and identity.
5. It's an **ideal project for cross-curricular collaboration**. It brings together a number of disciplines, notably Civics and Citizenship, History and English. Discussing and planning its delivery provides the opportunity to discuss the wider implementation of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures cross-curriculum priority.

Australians Together resources referred to in this document

- Pride and Pain timeline: <https://www.prideandpain.org.au>
- Article 1: What's the fuss about Australia Day? <https://australiantogether.org.au/discover/australian-history/australia-day>
- Article 2: Australia Day: answers to tricky questions <https://australiantogether.org.au/discover/australia-day-campaign/answers-to-tricky-questions>
- Article 3: Australia Day: Pride and Pain <https://australiantogether.org.au/discover/australia-day-campaign>

Other resources referred to in this document

- The National Australia Day Council website - <https://www.australiaday.org.au>

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Student activities

Australians Together Resource	Teacher guidance	Teaching ideas These activities encourage deep thinking about this topic while developing critical thinking, research and literacy skills. These can be adapted for your classroom.
Pride and Pain timeline	This presents an argument or justification for First Nations perspectives on Australia Day, presented in a non-standard way (through a timeline). This provides a rich opportunity to think about different ways information can be presented.	<p>Group timeline task: Use the information on this timeline to create a line graph with orange and blue lines representing First Nations people and non-Indigenous people. Your y (vertical) axis represents the wellbeing of this group; the x axis represents years from pre-colonisation to now. Label the graph with the events listed on the webpage. Afterwards, present your work explaining your choices.</p> <p>Reorganisation of information task: This information has been presented as a timeline. Recreate it with a different text structure or type of your choice; a series of images with captions, an essay, a set of dot points, or a concept map.</p>
Article 1: What's the fuss about January 26?	This page provides a coherent background to Australia Day and includes First Nations voices through the use of quotes.	<p>Short comprehension task: Explore this statement from Australians Together: <i>"Australia Day claims to be about unifying all people who call Australia home, and yet ironically, it's a divisive day for some people."</i> What do the words claim, unify, ironic and divisive mean in this context? Rewrite the statement using different terms.</p> <p>Argumentative essay: Use the statement above to write an argumentative essay. Back up your opinion with evidence and perspectives from people who hold different views.</p> <p>Organising information: Create a table with three heading: 'save the date', 'change the date' and 'cancel the date'. Either individually or in groups, comb through the article for arguments or reasons in favour of keeping Australia Day on January 26, reasons for changing the date of Australia Day, and reasons for cancelling Australia Day all together.</p> <p>Reflection task: What role is appropriate for non-Indigenous people to take in each of the following approaches: Invasion Day, Day of Mourning and Survival Day?</p> <p>Class discussion: Why does a country need a national day? Is it necessary? What would happen if we didn't have one? Think of other representations of national identity, such as flags and anthems. Are these necessary? Justify your views.</p> <p>Analytical essay: The National Australia Day Council describes Australia Day as <i>"the day to reflect on what we have achieved and what we can be proud of in our great nation. It's the day for us to re-commit to making Australia an even better place for the future."</i> Explore and analyse this statement, using research and evidence to justify your position.</p>

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<p>Article 2: Australia Day: answers to tricky questions</p>	<p>This page explores some of the differences of opinion and provides responses to some common thoughts or reactions from non-Indigenous people.</p>	<p>Reflection task: Examine the question: <i>“Can’t I just celebrate our beautiful country without feeling guilty?”</i> Some people do use the term guilt in reference to this issue. Examine your thoughts after learning about the issue. Do you personally feel guilty? Is it a useful phrase? What other words might be more useful or accurate?</p> <p>Class debate: Consider the question: <i>“Should we change the date or save the date?”</i>* Explore media reports on this topic from recent years. Research your side thoroughly, then engage in an organised class debate. Instead, you might want to have a lunchtime debate against teachers on this topic. *These are the two most common perspectives about Australia Day. If you prefer, other perspectives, such as cancelling the date, could be explored.</p> <p>Research task: After examining the Australians Together material about Australia Day, look at the official government website https://www.australiaday.org.au/about/. How do the two websites represent the ideas and perspectives of First Nations people? In what way is the information similar, or different? How is language used differently on each? How do non-written components support each website’s perspectives?</p>
<p>Article 3: Australia Day: Pride and Pain</p>	<p>This page gives readers some concrete ideas on how to take action.</p>	<p>Reflection Task: Read ‘10 things you can do on Australia Day’. Order them by 1 to 10 with those that might be most effective for you and your peers at the top to those that might be least effective.</p> <p>Sharing of Perspectives Task: As a class, or in groups, decide on what you can do to influence others with your opinion on the matter of Australia Day. Send your thoughts as a short summary to contact@australianstogether.org.au to share your ideas and actions with others.</p>

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ACARA Links

The contested date of Australia Day can be discussed at most year levels and is ideal for examination as part of the cross-curriculum priority for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures. It's most pertinent within the Civics and Citizenship curriculum, as listed below, and also relevant to Australian History (studied at Years 3 & 4 and Years 9 & 10).

Because English teachers and the English classroom can often have more flexibility than other areas, below are some useful English curriculum statements (note: these aren't elaborations) that provide a starting point from which a teacher can use the Australians Together resources. Locate your year level below and reflect on how these statements can be used to create rich learning opportunities for your classroom.

Year 3 English

Literacy/Texts in context: Identify the point of view in a text and suggest alternative points of view ([ACELY1675](#))

Literacy/Interacting with others: Listen to and contribute to conversations and discussions to share information and ideas and negotiate in collaborative situations ([ACELY1676](#))

Year 4 English

Language/Language for interaction: Understand differences between the language of opinion and feeling and the language of factual reporting or recording ([ACELA1489](#))

Language/Text structure and organisation: Understand how texts vary in complexity and technicality depending on the approach to the topic, the purpose and the intended audience ([ACELA1490](#))

Year 5 English

Language/Language for interaction: Understand how to move beyond making bare assertions and take account of differing perspectives and points of view ([ACELA1502](#))

Literacy/Interacting with others: Clarify understanding of content as it unfolds in formal and informal situations, connecting ideas to students' own experiences and present and justify a point of view ([ACELY1699](#))

Literacy/Interpreting, analysing, evaluating: Use comprehension strategies to analyse information, integrating and linking ideas from a variety of print and digital sources ([ACELY1703](#))

Year 6 English

Language/Language for interaction: Understand the uses of objective and subjective language and bias ([ACELA1517](#))

Literacy/Texts in context: Compare texts including media texts that represent ideas and events in different ways, explaining the effects of the different approaches ([ACELY1708](#))

Literacy/Interacting with others: Participate in and contribute to discussions, clarifying and interrogating ideas, developing and supporting arguments, sharing and evaluating information, experiences and opinions ([ACELY1709](#))

Literacy/Interpreting, analysing, evaluating: Use comprehension strategies to interpret and analyse information and ideas, comparing content from a variety of textual sources including media and digital texts ([ACELY1713](#))

Year 7 English

Literacy/Texts in context: Analyse and explain the effect of technological innovations on texts, particularly media texts ([ACELY1765](#))

Literacy/Interpreting, analysing, evaluating: Analyse and explain the ways text structures and language features shape meaning and vary according to audience and purpose ([ACELY1721](#))

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Year 7 Civics and Citizenship

Knowledge and understanding/Citizenship, diversity and identity: How groups, such as religious and cultural groups, express their particular identities; and how this influences their perceptions of others and vice versa ([ACHCK053](#))

Skills/Analysis, synthesis and interpretation: Critically analyse information and ideas from a range of sources in relation to civics and citizenship topics and issues ([ACHCS056](#))

Skills/Problem-solving and decision-making: Appreciate multiple perspectives and use strategies to mediate differences ([ACHCS057](#))

Year 8 English

Literacy/Interpreting, analysing, evaluating: Analyse and evaluate the ways that text structures and language features vary according to the purpose of the text and the ways that referenced sources add authority to a text ([ACELY1732](#))

Literacy/Interpreting, analysing, evaluating: Use comprehension strategies to interpret and evaluate texts by reflecting on the validity of content and the credibility of sources, including finding evidence in the text for the author's point of view ([ACELY1734](#))

Literacy/Interpreting, analysing, evaluating: Explore and explain the ways authors combine different modes and media in creating texts, and the impact of these choices on the viewer/listener ([ACELY1735](#))

Year 8 Civics and Citizenship

Knowledge and understanding/Citizenship, diversity and identity: Different perspectives about Australia's national identity, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives, and what it means to be Australian ([ACHCK066](#))

Skills/Analysis, synthesis and interpretation: Critically analyse information and ideas from a range of sources in relation to civics and citizenship topics and issues ([ACHCS070](#))

Skills/Problem-solving and decision-making: Appreciate multiple perspectives and use strategies to mediate differences ([ACHCS071](#))

Year 9 English

Literacy/Texts in context: Analyse how the construction and interpretation of texts, including media texts, can be influenced by cultural perspectives and other texts ([ACELY1739](#))

Literacy/Interpreting, analysing, evaluating: Interpret, analyse and evaluate how different perspectives of issue, event, situation, individuals or groups are constructed to serve specific purposes in texts ([ACELY1742](#))

Literacy/Interpreting, analysing, evaluating: Use comprehension strategies to interpret and analyse texts, comparing and evaluating representations of an event, issue, situation or character in different texts ([ACELY1744](#))

Literacy/Creating texts: Create imaginative, informative and persuasive texts that present a point of view and advance or illustrate arguments, including texts that integrate visual, print and/or audio features ([ACELY1746](#))

Year 9 Civics and Citizenship

Knowledge and understanding/Citizenship, diversity and identity: The influence of a range of media, including social media, in shaping identities and attitudes to diversity ([ACHCK080](#))

Skills/Analysis, synthesis and interpretation: Critically evaluate information and ideas from a range of sources in relation to civics and citizenship topics and issues ([ACHCS084](#))

Skills/Problem-solving and decision-making: Recognise and consider multiple perspectives and ambiguities, and use strategies to negotiate and resolve contentious issues ([ACHCS086](#))

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ACARA Links

Year 10 English

Literacy/Texts in context: Analyse and evaluate how people, cultures, places, events, objects and concepts are represented in texts, including media texts, through language, structural and/or visual choices ([ACELY1749](#))

Literacy/Interpreting, analysing, evaluating: Identify and analyse implicit or explicit values, beliefs and assumptions in texts and how these are influenced by purposes and likely audiences ([ACELY1752](#))

Literacy/Creating texts: Create sustained texts, including texts that combine specific digital or media content, for imaginative, informative, or persuasive purposes that reflect upon challenging and complex issues ([ACELY1756](#))

Year 10 Civics and Citizenship

Knowledge and understanding/Citizenship, diversity and identity: The challenges to and ways of sustaining a resilient democracy and cohesive society ([ACHCK094](#))

Skills/Analysis, synthesis and interpretation: Critically evaluate information and ideas from a range of sources in relation to civics and citizenship topics and issues ([ACHCS097](#))

Skills/Problem-solving and decision making: Recognise and consider multiple perspectives and ambiguities, and use strategies to negotiate and resolve contentious issues ([ACHCS099](#))