

Lest We Forget

How do Australians remember the people who served and died in all wars in which this country has been involved? Is it only by erecting war memorials and by conducting Anzac Day marches? Have things changed since the first servicemen and women returned from the Boer War over 100 years ago?

To the teacher

Recommended levels

Upper primary Lower secondary Middle secondary Upper secondary

Background information

Commemorations on Anzac Day and Remembrance Day (originally Armistice Day) started from World War I. Australia had a much smaller population then – about 5 million people – and hardly a town or family was not affected by the war. More than 416 000 men and women enlisted and of that number more than 61 000 died and 155 000 were wounded. These casualties were far higher than those in any other war in which Australia has participated, including World War II. On Anzac Day and Remembrance Day we take special time to remember those who have fought and suffered to save our way of life and give us the freedom we have. Commemoration ceremonies give us a link with the past and the opportunity to think about those who served and died in war, and to ask what can be learnt from past conflicts. In this unit, students will examine how Australians honour those who have served in wars, and use this knowledge to develop their own forms of commemoration.

Indicators of student achievement

At the end of this unit students should be able to:

- **recognise** significant features of memorials and commemorative ceremonies
- **explain** how methods of commemoration have changed or remained the same over time.

Introductory activity

Students should go to the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) website.

www.dva.gov.au > Commemorations > Photo Galleries

Divide the class into groups and allocate each group a gallery to investigate. Students should list in their notebooks each object and activity they see (for example, wreaths, medals, poppies, speeches, marching). Draw the class together and construct a database on the board under the following headings:



Chocolate box from the Boer War showing Queen Victoria, 1900.

DVA



World War I Memorial, Ipswich, Queensland.

AWM H17698

Historical literacies

Events of the past
Research skills
ICT understandings
Making connections
Representational expression
Historical explanation



AWM A04406

Section of 75th anniversary of the Boer War exhibition, showing a photograph and medals of the period.

Activities	Buildings/constructions	Objects	Behaviours

Ask the students what it is that all of the photographs have in common. Introduce to the class the concept that these are all forms of commemoration used by Australians. Ask the students if they can suggest other ways of remembering important events or people that they know about and add them to the list. These could include functional memorials such as hospitals, halls or sports ovals named after people or events. Write on the board the focus question 'What is commemoration?' and indicate to the class that they have, in fact, begun to collect material for an answer.

Activity 1: What do collections of memorabilia teach us about the past?

In this activity students will make a virtual collection for a Memorial Box like the ones already available from the Australian War Memorial (AWM). Throughout the process of assessing and choosing memorabilia they will focus on the following questions:

- 1 What kind of items constitute memorabilia?
- 2 Where can they be found?
- 3 Why do we preserve them?
- 4 What can we learn from them?

Senior students might also consider:

- 5 Why is primary source material valuable in the study of history?
- 6 Is primary source material necessarily accurate?
- 7 Are some items of memorabilia more representative than others?
- 8 What items existing today should be preserved for future generations?

The ideal way to start this activity would be to arrange the loan of one of the Memorial Boxes from the AWM. Each State and Territory has a complete set of all boxes with duplicates of the most popular titles. Suggest students go to the AWM website.

www.awm.gov.au > Education > Memorial Boxes

Let them look at the examples of objects provided, read the case studies and complete some of the suggested activities. Discuss why these boxes were developed and what the class has gained from the activity. Other examples of memorabilia can be found in State museums and local collections brought together by historical societies and veterans' groups.

Working the web

Introduce the class to the idea of making up their own memorial box for a conflict that is not presently represented. Have students go to the AWM website.

www.awm.gov.au > Australians at War > Military Statistics > Australian Military Commitments 1885–1973
www.awm.gov.au > Collection Databases > Collections Search > Boer War

Ask which wars the current boxes represent and which ones are missing. Explain that they will be using resources from the web to put together their own 'virtual' collection which will represent the Boer War.

Set the terms of the web hunting and collecting activity. Students will need to use the Australians at War website.

www.australiansatwar.gov.au > Through My Eyes > Experience the Boer War
www.australiansatwar.gov.au > The Great Search > Boer War

Both sections of the website have extensive and user friendly resources on the Boer War. Photographs, extracts from letters or diaries, cards and news items are all available. Students can also use the DVA website.

www.dva.gov.au > Media Centre > Publications > Commemorative Publications > Memories and Memorabilia > Memorabilia

Another website has several sections with pictures and biographies of Boer War veterans.

www.hagsoc.org.au > Boer War > Biographies

Explain to students that because of the volume of material available they will need to refine their research. Give them a range of possible sub-topics on which to focus. These could include:

- attitudes of young soldiers to the war
- what it was like to be in battle
- hardships and suffering
- the sights and sounds of South Africa.

Divide students into pairs. Have each pair choose a sub-topic (they may have their own to suggest) and use the cut and paste functions to transfer six relevant items to a Microsoft PowerPoint presentation. Allow enterprising students to use photographs to represent actual objects in the box (for example, a uniform or weapon) that may exist in a museum. Each item must be accompanied by a brief description/history. Warn students that they will be asked to explain their choices and give additional information orally as the work progresses.



Australian soldiers standing by a one-pounder Pom Pom gun, South Africa, 1901.

Identifying and analysing

At intervals, as students collect their materials from the web, bring the class together for discussion. Ask sets of partners to print off and show the group an item they are considering for their collection. Talk with students about the significance of the item: What does it tell us? How hard is it to understand? How accurate might its information be? How does it compare with similar items? How rare or common is it? These meetings will help students refine their choices and provide a forum for exchange of information.

Presenting the findings

When students have prepared their virtual Memorial Boxes on Microsoft PowerPoint, they will need to present them to an audience. This could be their own class, other classes in the school or parents. Teachers may wish to disperse these presentations over several classes or time periods for maximum effect. After the presentations, ask the students in the audience to write down what they learnt, what they liked best and any suggestions for improvement. Use these responses to analyse the success of the presentations in a plenary session with the class, at which students can suggest further improvements.

Activity 2: What would a trip to Gallipoli be like?

In this activity, students will prepare an itinerary for a tour of Gallipoli. These trips have become increasingly popular in recent years, particularly with young people. In this preparation they will address the following focus questions:

- 1 What do I want to see?
- 2 What activities will I take part in?
- 3 What will I take?

Senior students might also consider:

- 4 Why do Australians want to go to a battlefield? Why Gallipoli in particular?
- 5 Why have trips to Gallipoli become so popular?
- 6 What changes does this indicate in our society?

First, have the students brainstorm what they currently know about Gallipoli. Collate the information on the board under the following headings.

What it looks like	Where it is	Its history	What happens there today

Discuss the first two columns with the class. Look up Gallipoli in an atlas and on a globe. Talk about distance from Australia, the climate and the fact that Gallipoli is in

the northern hemisphere. Suggest students go to the Anzac website to get an initial impression of what it is like today. Point out that the text mentions that little has changed since 1915.

www.anzacsite.gov.au > Visiting Gallipoli Today > Views of Gallipoli
www.anzacsite.gov.au > Australians at Gallipoli and at War > Images

Working the web

Provide students with a copy of the focus questions. Discuss how they will record their information. Relevant sections should be copied to a disk or hard drive, but printing out items to keep in a folder will also be necessary for class discussion work. Students could work as individuals or in pairs for this stage. Two websites have significant amounts of information and will probably be sufficient to complete the activity. The following paths are particularly useful:

www.anzacsite.gov.au > The Anzac Landing at Gallipoli
www.anzacsite.gov.au > Visiting Gallipoli Today
www.dva.gov.au > Commemoration > Anzac Day > Anzac Day services at Gallipoli, Turkey

Other subsections of the Anzac Day section of the DVA website also have lots of information.

Identifying and analysing

Once students have collected enough information it can be brought to a class discussion. Talk about the focus questions given out at the beginning of the activity and check that individuals or pairs have sufficient information to proceed to the next stage. Invite students to talk about their findings.

Making connections

Challenge senior students to look at changes in activity at Gallipoli. Years ago, very few Australians made a special trip to this area. Today many travel agents arrange feature tours to Turkey, particularly in April, and the crowds at such events as the Anzac Day Dawn Service are so great as to require formal management arrangements. More Australians currently attend the Dawn Service each year than actually landed there on 25 April 1915! Discuss with students what is different in today's Australia that has caused this change. Why are so many young people interested in an event that took place long before even their grandparents were born? How is our society different from the 1960s when it seemed as though Anzac commemoration could well fade away? (This topic is explored further in the final activity of this investigation.)



Office of Australian War Graves

North Beach, Gallipoli, looking towards Suvla Bay. With little exception, the environment of rugged hills and rough terrain has remained unchanged since the battles of 1915.

Presenting the findings

Students should prepare a brochure or booklet for a travel agent to give out to customers interested in a trip to Gallipoli. It should contain all relevant information on conditions, activities, travel arrangements and restrictions. There should also be a section on the importance of Gallipoli to Australians and Turks, with reference to the implications this should have on the behaviour of visitors. These documents could go on display at school or even at a local veterans' organisation, with feedback invited from possible travellers.

Activity 3: What are the particular features of a war memorial?

In this activity students will study the features and purposes of war memorials. They will compare various examples – old and new, in Australia and overseas. Case studies of local issues will be examined. Finally, students will be asked to use the information they have collected to design their own memorial to commemorate those who served and continue to serve. During the study the following questions will be considered:

- 1 What can a war memorial be like?
- 2 Why are war memorials built?
- 3 Where are they built?
- 4 What things are usually found on a war memorial?
- 5 Have war memorials changed over time?

Discuss the Australian War Memorial, London, in terms of the focus questions above. Students should make a sketch of the memorial and label its significant parts. Some State governments have websites listing memorials.

www.dva.gov.au > Commemoration > Major Commemorative Events > Commemorative Mission – London 2003 > Background to Mission

Discuss a local war memorial that would be known to the class, using the same focus questions.

Working the web

Direct students to the Anzac website.

www.anzacsite.gov.au > Building the Anzac Commemorative site

This website gives a complete picture of the concepts, design and construction of an important commemorative site, allowing students to follow the process from beginning to end. They could also do a key word search on 'memorials' on the AWM website.



AWM P01447-009
Memorial to the men of the Z Special Unit on Fraser Island, Queensland.

www.awm.gov.au

Once the class has had a chance to look at the photographs and plans, have students visit the DVA website.

www.dva.gov.au > Commemoration > War Graves > Overseas memorials

Divide the class into groups and give each group one country to examine and have them fill in a data retrieval chart like the one below.

Shape	Materials	Markings/ decorations	Surroundings

Print out some of the pictures from the website.

www.dva.gov.au > Media Centre > Publications > Commemorative Publications > Memories and Memorabilia

Draw the class together again and combine the information into one large database on the board or a chart. Discuss what seems to be common to most memorials and some of the unusual features. Use the pictures you have prepared to challenge students with questions such as:

- 1 Is it possible to predict the age of a memorial by its design features?
- 2 Can a museum or building be a memorial? Why?
- 3 Can a whole area, such as a park or highway, be a memorial? Why?
- 4 Who is commemorated by the memorials you have seen? All people who served, or just those who died?

Direct students to the Memories and Memorabilia subsections. These ten pages have a wealth of interesting material. Divide the class into groups. Give each group either one of the case studies from the website or one of the community checklists and have them take on the role of an investigative journalist. They should write a short news item on the case study, or a report of the local situation based on the checklist. The articles should be in newspaper style and come complete with an attention-grabbing headline.

Identifying and analysing

Students must now use the knowledge and understandings they have acquired about war memorials to design one of their own. The memorial will commemorate those who served in the peacekeeping forces in East Timor. A brief and simple outline of



The Hiroshima-Ken Shorei Kan memorial to the dropping of the atomic bomb.

AWM P01867.015



AWM 069817

The memorial gateway to the cemetery at Ela Beach, Port Moresby.

this mission is available in the publication *Time to Remember*, which was distributed to primary schools in April 2003 (and is also available as a pdf file).

www.dva.gov.au > Commemoration > Anzac Day > Education resources page > Time to Remember

More detail is available from AusAid.

www.usaid.gov.au > Hot Topics > Hot Topics archive > East Timor Survivors Rebuild Their World

Students will need to consider all aspects of the building of memorials in their design. Work could be produced as drawings, models or Microsoft PowerPoint presentations and should be accompanied by labels or descriptions of significant features.

Presenting the findings

Hold a display of the final memorial designs in the school hall. Students should be on hand to explain the significance of their designs to others.

Going further

Students could go on to further investigate forms of commemoration in their local communities. The history of commemorative items such as halls, memorials or honour boards and the stories behind the names inscribed on many of them would make an interesting study. Practical advice is available in the unit 'History at Home' in the Making History – Upper Primary section of the National History Project. This was distributed to all primary schools in 2003 and is available on the website.

www.hyperhistory.org > National History Project > Curriculum Resources > Primary > History at Home

Other resources

Australia Through Time, Sydney, Random House, 1993.

Peter Cochrane, *Australians at War*, Sydney, ABC Books, 2001.

Michael Dugan, *The Two World Wars*, Melbourne, Macmillan Australia, 1992.

Adrian Gilbert, *Going to War in World War I*, Sydney, Franklin Watts, 2001.

Great Events in Australian History, Sydney, Child & Associates, 1988.

Ken Inglis, *Sacred Places: War memorials in the Australian landscape*, Carlton South, Melbourne University Press, 1999.

A unit of work entitled 'We Remember' is available in the kit *Discovering Democracy*, distributed to all primary schools in 1998.

Most travel agents will have brochures on travel to Turkey and possibly specialist tours to Gallipoli.

MAD MOUSE

- 1 On which side of the chest does a veteran wear medals?
- 2 What is an important material in the new Australian War Memorial, London?
- 3 What is Plugge's Plateau?
- 4 Who was Woolly the Warrior?
- 5 What is the name of the soldier whose tomb is the centrepiece of the Hall of Memory at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra?