

Protecting Aboriginal cultural heritage sites

Overview

About the lesson

Students consider the contribution of cultural heritage to the liveability of places and explore the threats to Aboriginal heritage sites.

Year level

Year 7

Learning objectives

Students will:

- Consider ways cultural heritage contributes to the liveability of places.
- Identify examples of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal heritage sites in their area.
- Locate example(s) of Aboriginal heritage sites on a map and explore the reasons for their cultural significance.
- Identify some threats to Aboriginal heritage places.
- Consider the role of governments, organisations and individuals in protecting Aboriginal heritage.
- Measure the extent of community awareness about Aboriginal heritage sites in their local area. (Optional)

Curriculum Links

HASS	
History	ACDSEH148
Geography	ACHGK043
	ACHGK045
	ACHGK047
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures	OI.2
	OI.3
	OI.9

> Lesson Plan

Engage and set the scene

1. What is a 'cultural heritage' site?
 - Can you name any cultural heritage sites in Australia and around the world?
2. Show some examples of culturally significant sites that have been destroyed.
 - What would it be like to live in a world with NO heritage sites?
3. Review the term 'liveability', and consider how cultural heritage places can contribute to liveability of places.
4. As a class, brainstorm the sort of things people do at these places (e.g. pray, reflect on the past, meet and connect with people who share their beliefs, take part in special events, offer thanks for something, look and appreciate the beauty of the place, connect with their ancestors, marvel at the construction, etc.)

Equipment and Links

[10 historic sites destroyed for awful reasons](#)

[Religious sites destroyed since 2005](#)

[Scenes from Notre Dame cathedral fire](#)

[10 incredible historic sites we've lost forever](#)

Explore

1. How are Aboriginal heritage sites different to some other heritage sites, such as early colonial buildings, cemeteries, churches or mosques?
 2. Do you know of or have you been to any Aboriginal heritage sites in your area?
 3. How would someone go about finding out where
 - Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal heritage sites are where you live? Discuss different ways of finding out (e.g. internet research, talk to members of the community, visit museums and galleries, look for signage etc.)
 4. Discuss possible internet search terms and give students 5-10 minutes to come up with locations. Compare and discuss search results.
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Equipment and Links

- Tablets/computers
 - Internet access
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Explain

Discuss:

1. Aboriginal heritage sites are areas of past Aboriginal habitation and/or link to creation stories. They are often located near natural water sources, which also have high amenity value for the community as a whole.
2. Sometimes, people in the community may not know about Aboriginal heritage sites in their area. This is because:
 - Aboriginal sites are part of the natural environment. They are usually marked on maps as a natural features rather than sites of cultural significance. Members of the public might identify a spot as 'just a swamp' rather than 'a swamp with important spiritual connection for Aboriginal people'.
 - Some heritage sites are also sacred places and only known to people of a certain sex, age, or cultural experience.
 - Aboriginal knowledge is traditionally passed on orally - from elders to other people in their family and local community. Some stories have not been recorded or are not easily found by the general public.
 - For a long time, Aboriginal stories were not included in the school curriculum. Older people, as well as migrants who may not have grown up in Australia may not have had an opportunity to learn about Aboriginal history as part of their education.

If needed, contribute to the students list of Aboriginal heritage sites in your local area, mark and label those places on a blank map and discuss/have them research reasons why these sites are culturally significant. Ask if any students have visited the areas mentioned, and talk about what they are like/ what sort of activities take place there.

3. Discuss:
 - Well managed and protected places of cultural and spiritual significance contribute to the perception of liveability of places.
 - Good management and 'protection' of heritage sites includes maintaining their environmental quality (e.g. for significant Aboriginal sites around Derbarl Yerrigan / Swan River, this might mean ensuring the river is free of pollution). In protecting the natural environment around heritage sites, we are enhancing the liveability of places for the whole community, not just for people who are spiritually or culturally linked to that site.

Lesson Plan

Equipment and Links

- For background information about significant Aboriginal heritage sites around Perth water ways, see the Water Corporation Kep Waangkiny resource (Include as a hyperlink)
- For information about other sites across the State, consult with DoE, CEWA or AISWA Aboriginal advisers, Aboriginal language centres or your local community members.
- Blank map of your local area

Extend and elaborate

1. Read the Creative Spirits article 8 major threats to Aboriginal land*. Using the information provided in the article, summarise the issues which can pose a threat to Aboriginal heritage sites.

**The Creative Spirits article contains images of nudity, which are explained in the context of disrespectful tourist behaviour. If you would rather not use this site, students can find news articles relating to the destruction of Aboriginal heritage sites around Australia.*

- Can you think of any other threats, which were not listed in the article(s)?
 - Which of the issues identified might pose a bigger issue to heritage sites in your area?
2. Discuss:
 - Who has the responsibility of protecting areas of Aboriginal heritage? Consider how governments, organisations, you and your family can contribute to the preservation of Aboriginal sites in your area.

Optional extension activity

In order to protect and respect Aboriginal heritage sites, people have to know about them in the first place.

3. As a class, design a survey to see how much knowledge people in your community (your parents, grandparents, students in different classes etc.) have about significant Aboriginal cultural sites in your area. Consider the type of information you want to collect and structure your questions to get a range of different answer types, including yes/no responses, rating (Likert) scales and questions which will result in open ended, qualitative responses. Use Survey Monkey or other survey software to design and deliver the survey.

Write a summary of the main findings of your survey.

Equipment and Links

[8 major threats to Aboriginal land](#)

Threats to heritage sites graphic organiser (include as a hyperlink)

Evaluate and reflect

1. Create a poster or a series of social media posts to either:
 - inform the public about the nature and significance of Aboriginal heritage sites in your local area; or
 - Encourage people to respect and care for Aboriginal cultural sites.
2. Discuss as a class, or provide a written response:
 - To what extent do you agree with the following statement: "The best way to protect natural areas which are sacred Aboriginal heritage sites is to limit access to them by the general public."

Useful resources

- Water Corporation (n.d).Western Australian Aboriginal language centres contact list. <https://www.watercorporation.com.au/-/media/files/education/lessons-and-teaching-resources/lesson-plans/activity-sheets-and-fact-sheets/western-australian-aboriginal-language-centres-contact-list.pdf>
- Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage (n.d.). *Aboriginal heritage inquiry system*. <https://maps.daa.wa.gov.au/AHIS/>
- ABC. (2017) *Ancient Aboriginal sites left vulnerable*. <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-12-21/brooke-boney-road-back-home-cultural-preservation-in-australia/9269956>



Threats to Aboriginal heritage sites

Issue	Explanation of why this issue can have a negative impact on Aboriginal heritage sites	What could governments/ organisations do to protect the site from this threat?	What can you or your family do to minimise this threat?

Rank the issues identified from greatest to least significant threat for an Aboriginal heritage site in your area.

Information source(s) used to complete this table:

Name of website	Author	Date	Article title	URL address

