Symbols of AUSTRALIA

FOCUS ACTIVITY: Upper Primary and Secondary Students

Exploring Australian Identities

Aims

This *Exploring Australian Identities* activity aims to facilitate an examination of the relationship between symbols and identity in Australian society and culture.

Focus activity

- Provide students with an opportunity to view the exhibition. Ask them to consider how symbols may change over time and how the students relate to each of the symbols highlighted in the exhibition.

- Introduce the object interrogation activity: select one object to model the examination of an object as a way of considering aspects of identity and characterisation. Ask the students to answer questions such as
    - *what* is the object,
    - *where* is the object used,
    - *why* is the object a symbol of Australian identity?

  It is important to emphasise to students the difference between Australia as a nation and *being an Australian.*

- Divide the class into small groups and provide each group with an object or groups of objects from the suitcase. Ask groups to brainstorm and explore the ideas that are prompted by the object(s). Following the brainstorming exercise, ask students to identify three to five key words associated with each object or objects which describe Australians and share these with the class.

- Use the reporting back to facilitate a concluding discussion about whether there is such a thing as a typical Australian and what qualities students think are important for all Australians to have.

- To aid the discussion you may choose to use the posters showing 'stereotypical' images of Australians, eg. drovers in the outback, surf lifesavers at the beach and so on. Ask students to consider stereotyping. Have a class discussion about the impacts this has on them as individuals and the impact they think it has on society in general. Conclude by having your students consider the following questions: What does it mean to be an Australian? How do you think people from overseas view Australians? Are there characteristics that can be attributed to a 'typical' Australian?

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