

On-site activities

Organising your students in *Melbourne Story*

Students could work in teams to engage with and respond to the exhibition and make sense of how its stories are presented, or raise questions about what they are seeing. This can be done in a number of ways.

The exhibition has a definite chronological sequence and can be tackled in that manner – i.e. different teams investigate different periods of time, while permitting students to get an overview of the whole once the teamwork has been completed. The exhibition sections are:

1. 1835-1850 Melbourne the meeting place
2. 1850-1880 Gold Town
3. 1880-1900 Boom and Bust City and Little Lon
4. 1900-1920 Melbourne and the Nation
5. 1920-1945 Electric City
6. 1945-1980 Suburban City
7. 1980 to the present

Alternatively, students could investigate a number of themes which run through the exhibition, looking at how aspects of life in Melbourne have changed over time. Students might explore:

- Shelter and housing
- Transport and other technologies
- Work, paid and unpaid
- Melbourne's people – identity and a changing population
- Entertainment
- The economy - boom and bust
- Government and democracy

Whichever way of engaging with the exhibition is chosen, making presentations of their findings after the visit should be an integral part of students' experience.

Students should focus on how the exhibition has been assembled and the selection of primary source material used to tell its stories such as newspaper articles, booklets and posters, objects, photographs, artworks, and maps.

Strategy 1: Jigsaw the exhibition's sections chronologically

At school prior to the visit to the exhibition:

- Use the jigsaw technique where students are arranged in heterogeneous home groups.
- Each member of the home group is allocated a section of the exhibition (Sections 1-6 above) and questions to read and think about (see table below).

In the exhibition:

- Students form expert groups, that is, a student from each home group goes to the appropriate expert group.
- Expert groups collect ideas and information related to their questions.

Back at school

- After the excursion, each student returns to their home group and reports back to the group. For post-visit activities, teachers may wish to extend this part of the process. For example, groups could produce reports, posters, publications, and oral, web page or other electronic presentations.

Main questions about each historical period

1. 1835-1850 Melbourne the meeting place

- Why is Melbourne where it is?
- Where was the first white settlement in Victoria?
- What was it like before settlement?
- Why did people come?
- Who lived there?
- What was it like to be there?
- How was it organized / governed?

2. 1850-1880 Gold Town

- Who came and why?
- Who stayed, and what became of them (tracking people's stories)?
- Why did people leave?
- What size was Melbourne? What form did it take?
- What were the connections within Melbourne and between Melbourne and the world?
- How were people making Melbourne their home?

3. 1880-1900 Boom and Bust City and Little Lon

- What caused Melbourne to boom, and what did it mean for Melbournians?
- Did everyone benefit from the boom?
- Why did Melbourne have a depression, and how bad was it?
- What made Melbourne socially progressive in some areas?
- Why did Melbourne develop a new sewerage system? What was sanitation like in Melbourne?

4. 1900-1920 Melbourne and the Nation

- Why was Melbourne Australia's first capital?
- How long was Melbourne the capital, and why did the capital move to Canberra?
- What helped make Melbourne the manufacturing heart of Australia?
- How did Melbourne assist in putting Australia on the world map?
- How did Melbourne experience World War I?

5. 1920-1945 Electric City

- When did Melbourne houses become electrified?
- How did Melbourne experience the Depression and World War II?
- What were the effects of modernization on everyday life?
- How did the shape of Melbourne change – with growth of suburbs, industry and leisure?

6. 1945-1980 Suburban City

- How and where did Melbourne grow?
- What was the suburban experience in Melbourne in the post-war period? What were the expectations, dreams and experiences of those people who started new homes and families in this period?
- Who settled in Melbourne, and why?
- When and why were the high-rise public housing towers built?
- How did the car shape Melbourne?
- What is the distinctive character of Melbourne?

Strategy 2: Follow an exhibition theme with a focus on objects, images, oral histories and written records

Similar themes and ideas are in most sections of the exhibition, allowing students to investigate change and continuity through objects and narratives. Students could work in pairs or small groups to gather evidence about change and continuity in relation to, for example:

- Transport and technology.
- Housing and architecture.
- Work, paid and unpaid.
- The role of women.
- The development of a national identity.
- Social life and entertainment.
- Toys, games and the lives of children.

Strategy 3: Conduct a Community of Inquiry

It may be possible for museum staff to book a gathering space at the museum for you to conduct a community of inquiry. Alternatively, you may wish to gather your students outside the exhibition or conduct this back at school.

Students then consider the following questions as they visit the exhibition.

1. What is your favourite part of the exhibition?
2. What is the most thought-provoking part of the exhibition?
3. What do you see, feel and think in the exhibition?

Start with some problematic issue or question – one which cannot be resolved simply by gathering more information.

Have students thinking together

The discussion should be a 'community of inquiry'. This means the students are talking about and responding to the ideas of other students rather than thinking about what the teacher says or responding to the teacher's ideas. This is not the same as students being helped to get to the 'right' answer by the teacher. Nor is this the same as group work where the students all have a turn saying what they think.

Thinking together is when the students are talking together about ideas. Students suggest their ideas and respond to the ideas of other students. Their job is to help each other to make progress with these ideas rather than to win or show that their ideas are better than the ideas of others. The teacher's job is to help them to think through the ideas as effectively as possible rather than to get them to any particular answer or position.

In a practical sense this works best when the students are sitting in circle and can see the face of every other student and when they follow a few rules related to respect for the ideas of others:

No talking over others.

Listen to and consider what others say.

Respectful agreement and challenging is welcomed.

Making fun of or putting others down is banned.

Ask questions that encourage deeper thinking.

Instead of giving your opinion or helping your students to get to the answer you think is best, deliberately invite your students to think some more by asking thought-encouraging questions. Listen very carefully to what your students are saying and then ask one of the following questions (replacing the ... with the exact words the student used):

REASONING

Why might someone think ...?

What might someone say if they disagreed?

DEPTH

Could you explain some more about ...?

If ... is true, what else would that mean?

RELEVANCE & IMPORTANCE

How does ... help us answer our question?

What is the main point you want to make?

CLARITY & PRECISION

What does ... mean?

Have students respond using ‘thinking behaviours’

Good thinkers say certain things that poor thinkers do not say. To have our students think well about a topic, we can encourage them to say the things that good thinkers say. Encourage your students to respond to the ideas of others using some of the following phrases (where the students replace the ... with their own ideas), as well as agreeing and disagreeing as they did at the start:

DEPTH

To explain that further ...

If ... is true, that tells us ...

RELEVANCE & IMPORTANCE

The most important point is ...

... helps us because ...

CLARITY & PRECISION

... means ...

Encourage students to develop Essential Questions/Big Ideas

Essential Questions develop foundational understandings. Questions that probe for deeper meaning and set the stage for further questioning foster the development of critical thinking. They provide the fundamental organizing principles that bound an inquiry and guide the development of meaningful, authentic tasks.

Essential questions have several key components:

- They are innate and arise from people's attempts, throughout human history, to learn more about the world(s) we live in. Essential questions probably intrigued the ancients as much as they puzzle people living today.
- Essential questions are so compelling that people have raised them in many different ways. Essential questions invite perspective to be brought to bear in order to develop deep understanding.
- Attempts to answer essential questions allow people to explore the connection between their personal, individual, unique experience of the world and its exterior, objective, held-in-common dimensions. In exploring essential questions together, people are able to find expression for their own strongest gifts and interests at the same time that they are able to establish a sense of community with others.
- Essential questions allow us to explore what knowledge is, how it came to be, and how it has changed through human history.
- An essential question is always poised at the boundary of the known and the unknown. While permitting fruitful exploration of what others before us have learned and discovered, attempts to answer an essential question open up mysteries that successively reveal themselves the more we come to 'know'.

An essential question engages the imagination in significant ways. People can know only a limited amount about the world through direct experience. Questions spark the imagination and permit young and old to journey together into unknown realms.

A Sample Essential Question for *Melbourne Story*

What can we learn from the past to illuminate our experience of the present in order to imagine a better future?

This is the big question which can provide the focus for a whole range of investigations that employ a number of different perspectives from the Humanities, as required by the VELs. The following chart suggests how different perspectives might provide evidence for addressing this question.

History	Geography	Economics	Civics and citizenship
<p><i>Multiple perspectives, multiple ways of knowing. Each humanities discipline provides another insight into the story of Melbourne.</i></p> <p><i>When thinking about the following questions you might probe deeper and ask 'Why is it so?' and 'What if...?' and 'What other questions might we ask?'</i></p>			
<p><i>Who were the original inhabitants of the area now called Melbourne?</i></p> <p><i>Why was Melbourne chosen as a place for European settlement?</i></p> <p><i>Where have the people of Melbourne come from over the years?</i></p> <p><i>What impact did immigrants have on the growth of the city?</i></p> <p><i>What are some of the big events that make up Melbourne's history?</i></p> <p><i>In what way is our experience of Melbourne today a product of the past?</i></p>	<p><i>What was the environment of Melbourne like before it was colonised?</i></p> <p><i>How has the landscape impacted on the development of Melbourne?</i></p> <p><i>Where do most people like to live in Melbourne?</i></p> <p><i>Who makes decisions about where people live?</i></p> <p><i>Why is the environment of Melbourne so different today from pre-colonial times?</i></p>	<p><i>What sort of economic system did the Indigenous people use?</i></p> <p><i>How has the concept of ownership evolved throughout the growth of Melbourne?</i></p> <p><i>When were the key periods of economic growth?</i></p> <p><i>Who are some of the key players that have influenced working conditions?</i></p> <p><i>How has the nature of work evolved during the growth of Melbourne?</i></p>	<p><i>What was the Indigenous society of the area now called Melbourne like before colonisation?</i></p> <p><i>Why was Melbourne Australia's first capital?</i></p> <p><i>Who were the key people that influenced civic life in the early days of Melbourne?</i></p> <p><i>How has civic life changed in Melbourne over the years?</i></p> <p><i>What kinds of civic participation do we need to make Melbourne a better place for people to live in?</i></p>