

Lesson Plan – Analysis of Newspaper Articles

KLA ENGLISH
STAGE/S year 9-12
TIME = 45 mins

OUTCOMES: AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM & ACT SENIOR BOARD OF STUDIES

To develop students' skills in:

- Responding critically
- Evaluating and synthesising ideas
- Imagination and originality
- Use of language
- Control of medium
- Understanding, appreciating, responding to, analysing and creating literature

PRIOR LEARNING:

As mentioned by Japarta Maurie Ryan at the end of his oral history; his grandfather Vincent Lingiari led the walk off Wave Hill cattle station on 22 August in 1966. The station was owned by English millionaire Lord Vestey, but was built on the traditional lands of the Gurindji. The Vestey Pastoral Company made huge profits by paying Indigenous workers rations instead of money. Indigenous families at Wave Hill lived in iron huts in terrible conditions. Eventually the Gurindji were the first Indigenous Australians to be given land rights by the government.

On the 13 February 2008, eight years after Japarta Maurie Ryan was interviewed for the *Bringing Them Home* Oral History Project the Australian Parliament apologised to the Stolen Generations. Both the government and the opposition supported the apology and said 'sorry' to Aboriginal people who were taken away from their families from 1900 to the 1970s.

The 1997 'Bringing them Home' report had identified that many Aboriginal people were never paid for the work they did. The following newspaper articles document the arguments for and against wage parity for Indigenous workers made prior, during and after the Wave Hill walk out.

RESOURCES

- 'Petty's Comment' cartoon, *The Australian*, Friday, 19 February, 1965
- 'Govt. backing for increase in Aborigines' wages', p 5, *The Age*, Saturday, 10 July, 1965'
- 'Aborigines are not worth award wages says QC, p 5, *The Australian*, 9 July, 1965
- 'Aboriginal strike near crisis point', *The Age*, Saturday, 24 September, 1966
- 'Strike Parley', p 8, *The Courier Mail*, 31 August, 1966
- 'Award Rates Asked for N.T. Natives', p 14, *The Age*, Friday, 23 October, 1964
- 'Aborigines would lose jobs if pay raised – QC', p 7, *The Age*, Friday, 9 July, 1965
- 'The lordly young butcher hits out at 'abos, *The Herald Melbourne*, 2 October, 1972

(Need four copies of each article for a group of 30 students.)

LESSON DEVELOPMENT: ACTIVITY 1 ANALYSIS OF A NEWSPAPER ARTICLE 45 MINS

Split the class into seven groups of four. Provide each group with one article. Each group is to provide feedback summary to the class.

Students read newspaper articles and analysis using the following points:

- Are these newspaper articles or cartoons likely to be a primary or secondary source?
- News articles are supposed to answer the questions who, what, where, when, how, and why. Provide brief answers to these questions.
- What is the purpose of this article or cartoon? What does the author intend to transmit?
- Do the articles or cartoon reflect the writer's opinion on its topic, or is it purely objective?
- What sources does the author use to support their theories?
- What possible sources of evidence are not included?
- What information, if you had it, would make this article easier to understand?
- What did you learn about the topic or the time period from reading the article?
- Did you bring any bias to your own reading of this article?
- Does the author's vocabulary reflect the historical period? Give specific examples.
- List some of the things that have or haven't changed in the intervening years
- Is it important to know the historical context in order to understand this article or cartoon fully?

LESSON DEVELOPMENT: ACTIVITY 2 WRITING NEWSPAPER ARTICLES 45 MINS

- In the words of the song *From Little Things Big Things Grow* ...'Imagine the opposite'. Write an article titled 'Aboriginals finally achieve equality'. In your article hypothesise on the changes required to achieve this goal in the future. Use the structure of newspaper articles to answer who, what, where, when, how, and why.
- Rewrite the same article as it might appear in a newspaper or magazine today.

CONCLUSION

As Japarta Maurie Ryan states, 'the Commonwealth Ordinance policy was to remove half-caste children and bring them up as white kids.' Japarta Maurie Ryan was the Chairperson of the Northern Territory Stolen Generation Aboriginal Corporation.

Authorities at the time cited neglect as one of the reasons for taking Aboriginal children away from their parents. There is evidence to suggest, however, that malnutrition was caused by Aboriginal people not receiving the full wages that they were owed.

EVALUATION

Activity 1

Did students respond critically and analysis their articles in depth? Were they able to evaluate and synthesis these ideas in their feedback to the larger group?

Activity 2

Did the students respond to the medium of the newspaper article and answer the questions who, what, where, when, how, and why in the creation of their own articles?