WARNING: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are warned that some of the photographs in this study guide may contain images of deceased persons.

A STUDY GUIDE BY FIONA HALL

http://www.metromagazine.com.au

http://www.theeducationshop.com.au

On January 26th 1988, over 2.5 million people lined the streets of Sydney Harbour to commemorate the arrival of the First Fleet in New South Wales, a day that marked the beginning of European settlement in Australia.

Coined the “Celebration of a Nation”, the 1988 re-enactment of the First Fleet held a very different meaning for Australia’s Aboriginal community. On that very same day, Aboriginal people from across the country took part in Sydney’s largest march since the Vietnam Moratorium. Convoys of people travelled from every corner of Australia took part in the March for ‘Freedom, Hope and Justice’. The march was a statement of survival and sobering reminder at the exclusion of Aboriginal voice in Australian history.

Earlier protests at the 1982 Commonwealth Games had attracted significant interest with International media outlets. The efforts had created global awareness about Australia’s true origins and put the Aboriginal message firmly into the spotlight. 1988 therefore was deemed a prime opportunity to make a stand. In a time prior to mobile phones and social media, a grassroots mobilisation of communities throughout Australia was the only way to draw mass media attention to Australia’s appalling human rights record.

The protest message was loud and clear to all, “White Australia has a Black history.” 1988 subsequently became known as “The Year of Mourning”, a sharp contrast to a national event that remains to this day, one of the biggest celebrations Australia has ever witnessed.

‘88’ is a landmark documentary that explores the remarkable events that led up to January 26th 1988. The Bicentennial of the First Fleet was a watershed moment in Australian history and it triggered the largest gathering of Indigenous people this country has ever seen, who came together to tell their story. The protest that occurred on that day instigated mass public debate about the concept of Australian history, the position of Aboriginal people in contemporary society and their sheer determination to be heard.

The subsequent events of 1988 changed white and black Australia forever. They led to the establishment of numerous peak Indigenous organisations, a new generation of leaders, new attitudes towards the way we celebrate Australia Day and a realisation of the issues facing Aboriginal people in the present day. For the first time ever, Indigenous people became part of the wider dialogue and there was acknowledgment that January 26th had a very different resonance for the country’s Indigenous communities. A line had indeed, been drawn in the sand.
The curriculum areas that ‘88’ can be related to include:

1. The Discipline-based learning Domain of **History**
2. The Discipline-based learning Domain of **English**

Specific links to the Australian National Curriculum:

### 1. The Discipline-based learning Domain of History:

‘88’ can be used at Year 9 when studying ‘The Making of the Modern World’. It specifically relates to Depth Study 2 ‘Australia and Asia; Making a nation’.

Level 9 History Content Descriptions particularly applicable to ‘88’:
- The extension of settlement, including the effects of contact (intended and unintended) between European settlers in Australia and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (ACDSEH020)

‘88’ can also be used at Year 10 when studying ‘The Modern World and Australia’. It specifically relates to Depth Study 2 ‘Rights and Freedoms’, as students investigate struggles for human rights in depth. This will include how rights and freedoms have been ignored, demanded or achieved in Australia and in the broader world context.

Level 10 History Content Descriptions particularly applicable to ‘88’:
- The significance of the following for the civil rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples: 1962 right to vote federally; 1967 Referendum; Reconciliation; Mabo decision; Bringing Them Home Report (the Stolen Generations), the Apology (ACDSEH106)
- Methods used by civil rights activists to achieve change for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and the role of ONE individual or group in the struggle (ACDSEH134)
- The continuing nature of efforts to secure civil rights and freedoms in Australia and throughout the world, such as the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007) (ACDSEH143)

### 2. The Discipline-based learning Domain of English:

‘88’ can be used as a supplementary text when studying themes of identity, belonging and connection to landscape in English from Years 10 – 12. Level 10 English Content Descriptions particularly applicable to ‘88’:

Literature and Context:
- Compare and evaluate a range of representations of individuals and groups in different historical, social and cultural contexts (ACELT1639)
- Evaluate the social, moral and ethical positions represented in texts (ACELT1812)

For the purposes of study, the documentary can be broken into three Acts:
1. Act One: The Eighties
2. Act Two: The Convoy and the Long March
3. Act Three: The Aftermath
ACTIVE ACTIVITIES

ACT ONE: The Eighties

POPULAR CULTURE IN AUSTRALIA IN THE 1980S

- The opening sequence shows many images of Australia in the 1980s. For many Australians, it was an era of wealth and prosperity, with several well-known Australians taking to the world stage in areas of music, sport and cinema.
- Using the internet and working in pairs, research and locate as many images of mainstream Australia in the 1980s and create a poster. Refer to the following table to help with your research:
- Select one of the events/people from the table above and complete a one page report on it. Include important details and images. Teachers should ensure students select a range of different events/people and are encouraged to add to the above list. There is the option of getting students to present their research orally to the class.
- The documentary begins with a snippet of the television commercial “Celebration of a Nation – Australia 1988”. This advertisement was made specifically to encourage Australians to celebrate the Bicentenary.
- As a class, view the TV clip “Celebration of a Nation – Australia 1988” at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZDxjLoTuAlA
- As a class, discuss your reactions to the advertisement, considering the following:
  - There are 60 people in the advertisement; they include television personalities, sports people, singers, fashion designers and artists. Are there any people you recognise? List at least 10 people you think would be included in a similar advertisement filmed today.
  - What images stand out from the advertisement? What sense of ‘Australia’ do you think the advertisers were trying to create?
  - Do you see any representations of Indigenous Australia or Indigenous Australians in the advertisement? How do you think Indigenous Australians would have reacted to this ad?

THE STATE OF ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS IN AUSTRALIA IN THE 1980S:

When British settlers arrived on the east coast of Australia in the 18th century, they failed to negotiate treaties with the Indigenous population. The fact they could not find signs of permanent residence and established farms resulted in the proclamation of ‘terra nullius’ – a Latin term that literally

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1983 America’s Cup victory</th>
<th>Paul Keating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bob Hawke</td>
<td>John Farnham</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kylie Minogue</td>
<td>1982 Commonwealth Games</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Neighbours’</td>
<td>Alan Bond</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Crocodile Dundee’</td>
<td>Christopher Skase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘INXS’</td>
<td>Lang Hancock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World Series Cricket</td>
<td>Franklin Dam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Azaria Chamberlain</td>
<td>‘Midnight Oil’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
translates as ‘nobody’s land’. This proclamation was issued by New South Wales Governor Sir Richard Bourke in 1835, and it meant that Indigenous occupation or use of the land was not formally recognised.

The policies of successive governments in the late 19th and 20th centuries compounded the negative effects of European settlement for Indigenous Australians.

• Divide the class into groups of 3, and allocate each group one of the following areas to research.
  1. The Assimilation Policy and the Stolen Generations
  2. The Day of Mourning, January 26th 1938
  3. The Wave Hill Walk-Off
  4. The Australian Freedom Rides
  5. 1967 Referendum
  6. The Tent Embassy
  7. 1987 Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody

• Each group must create a PowerPoint presentation on their allocated research area. Slides should address the following broad areas:
  - How did this event/policy impact Indigenous Australians at the time? What have been the lasting effects?

• Sites to help with research include:
  - http://www.aboriginaltentembassy.net/

REATIONS TO CELEBRATING THE BICENTENARY IN 1988:

The documentary explores a range of Indigenous reactions to the Bicentenary celebrations. The Australian Bicentenary Association was established in 1979, by the Federal Government, and was entrusted to set the objectives and goals for the celebrations, as well planning and co-ordinating the events during 1988.

They set the theme for the celebrations as ‘Living Together’.

• Do you think those people interviewed in the documentary would have felt part of the ‘Living Together’ theme for the Bicentenary celebrations? Explain your response.

• What are some of the main criticisms those interviewed had about the nature of the planned celebrations?

EXTENSION TASK:

• In 1985, the Institute of Public Affairs Journal, Review, published a controversial article by Dr. Ken Baker entitled “The Bicentenary: Celebration or Apology?”. In it, Dr. Baker openly criticised the Australian Bicentenary Association for failing to emphasise Australia’s British heritage and cultural values in their plans for the celebrations in 1988. Read Dr. Baker’s article here: https://ipa.org.au/library/publication/1213679776_document_review28-4_baker-bicentenary-celebrationorapology.pdf

• What are his main arguments?
• What are your reactions and responses to his arguments?
• Assume the role of an Aboriginal Activist and write a one page response to Dr. Baker’s article. Ensure you address his main points with your own feelings about the nature of the Bicentenary celebrations. Support your points with research obtained from previous activities.
ACT TWO:
The Convoy And The Long March

Act Two of the documentary examines the preparations of the ‘March for Freedom, Justice and Hope’ and the convoys. We learn that the idea of the march came from Reverend Charles Harris, who took his inspiration from Martin Luther King’s March on Washington and his famous “I Have a Dream” speech.

The March on Washington took place on August 28, 1963 and was the largest protest demonstration in U.S. History. It occurred at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C., where 250,000 blacks and whites gathered to lobby for passage of sweeping civil rights measures by Congress.

- Visit the following site and read about the March on Washington: http://www.history.com/topics/march-on-washington

What were the main aims of those marching on Washington? Were the aims of those marching on Sydney in January 1988 similar? Any differences?

EXTENSION TASK:
- Watch Martin Luther King’s “I Have a Dream” speech as a class: http://www.history.com/topics/march-on-washington
- Have students research and prepare a biography of either Martin Luther King or Rosa Parks. Focus on their main actions and the lasting legacy they have left.

THE CONVOYS

We hear about the buses, the personalities, the memories, and the actual roads they travelled down to reach Sydney, coming together from across the country.

- Assume the role of a person on one of the buses from...
Alice Springs. Write a series of diary entries on your experiences on the convoy. Include; the journey, the passing away of an elder from Kimberly in Port Augusta, the arrival in Sydney and the meeting in La Perouse, the march itself and your hopes for the future.

- We hear about the sad moment when a Kimberly Elder passes away on the convoy at Port Augusta. We see the convoy grapple with the decision to break ‘lore’ and continue the journey to Sydney. Visit the following site and write a report on the mourning rituals of Indigenous Australians: http://www.creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/people/mourning-an-aboriginal-death#toc2
  In what ways are these rituals similar and in what ways are they different from the mourning rituals of your own culture?

THE MARCH

- What are some of the feelings people involved in the March recollect?
- What were the differing aims of the ‘Sydney Radicals’ and those of Reverend Charles Harris?
- What was the significance of the large number of non-Aboriginal Australians joining in on the March?
- One of the marchers recalls the moment they came down Elizabeth Street and the reaction they received as they emerged from the tunnel. What was significant about this moment?
- What was the significance of the large Aboriginal flag hung from the crane for those involved in the March?

ACT THREE: The Aftermath

The documentary ponders the questions; ‘What happened after the March, when everyone went home? Did the march change anything for Aboriginal people in this country, did it make a difference?’

For some of those present at the March, the event symbolised the first real step towards reconciliation, while for others, there is a lament that Aboriginal Activists have failed to show the same sense of unity and purpose since that event.

There have certainly been many advancements in the cause for Indigenous Rights since 1988; however the question remains, has there been enough ‘real’ change?

ATSIC

The Hawke Labor Government established the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) in 1990. ATSIC was an elected body selected by Indigenous Australians; it was seen as a body through which Indigenous people could be formally involved in government processes and it was hoped to be a first step towards Aboriginal self-determination.

Following continued controversy, ATSIC was abolished in 2004.
Read the following articles:
- http://www.abc.net.au/unleashed/27934.html
- http://www.creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/selfdetermination/aboriginal-representative-bodies

- What was the structural and organisational nature of ATSIC?
- Did it provide an effective vehicle for Indigenous representation?
- What are the main goals of the National Congress of Australia’s First Peoples (NCAFP)?
- In what ways does the NCAFP differ from ATSIC?

MABO AND WIK

- Break students into pairs. One student will research the Mabo decision and one will research the Wik Case. Students have one lesson to undertake their research; they are to prepare an explanation of their allocated topic that they can confidently teach to their partner.

Students can prepare a summary sheet to give to their partner, and should be prepared to answer any questions their partner may have.

Students can visit the following site to help them begin their research:

THE REDFERN PARK SPEECH

Six months after the Mabo decision, in December 1992, then Prime Minister Paul Keating spoke to a mainly Indigenous audience in the Sydney suburb of Redfern. In his speech, Keating challenged Australians to imagine what it would have been like if they had experienced some of the injustices experienced by Aboriginals, and the speech is widely acknowledged as one of the most significant delivered by an Australian prime minister on Indigenous issues.


- What are your reactions to the speech?
- How do you think Indigenous Australians would have reacted to the speech?
THE APOLOGY TO THE STOLEN GENERATIONS

On 13 February 2008, the new Labor Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd, apologised to Indigenous Australians for the unjust treatment they had received from the time of European settlement through to recent years. He acknowledged the harm caused to the Indigenous people and the unfairness of past government policies. He pledged that Australia would never again allow such injustice to occur.

Read the transcript of the speech here:

- Print out a copy of Rudd’s speech. Undertake the following analysis activity:

| Highlight in pink | The people Rudd apologises to |
| Highlight in yellow | The actions Rudd apologises for |
| Highlight in green | The recommendations he proposes for moving forward |
| Highlight in orange | Words/phrases related to the possible reasons behind the apology |

In your view, do you feel this represented a full apology, or whether there were other issues your believe Rudd should have addressed? Explain your opinion with reference to previous research.

FIGHTING FOR EQUITY – THE STRUGGLE CONTINUES:

Indigenous Australians experience vastly poorer outcomes in health, education and housing in comparison to non-Indigenous Australians. Work is being done to help address these inequities; however, there is still a long way to go.

In recent years there have been major improvements in the recognition of the rights of Indigenous Australians, thanks to the work of Indigenous leaders and activists, past and present, whose words and actions continue to influence governments.
Visit the following sites:
adidas-indigenous-health-crisis-in-depth/
FactSheets/Fair-Australia-FactSheet.pdf

• Using information from the above sites, as well as your own research, outline the main differences in health, housing and education between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.
• Read about the ‘Close the Gap’ campaign here: https://
close-the-gap/
What are the campaign’s main objectives? Do you think these are achievable?
• In pairs, create a mind map that shows the challenges faced by Indigenous Australians today. Consider aspects such as poverty, employment and education, and show how you think they are connected. Once your mind map is completed, come up with suggestions for steps that could be taken to help address the problems you identified. Share these with the class.

CLASS DEBATE

• Debate continues over the celebration of ‘Australia Day’ on January 26th each year, with many Australians feeling this date is inappropriate and culturally insensitive to our Indigenous people. Aboriginal activist Sam Watson has suggested moving the day of celebration to June 3, the date when the Mabo decision was handed in 1992. Others have called for Australia Day to remain January 26th, however, to include in the calendar a separate date that enables Aboriginal people to celebrate being the first Australians.

Western Australian Indigenous leader Peter Yu has suggested that the title of Australia Day could be changed rather than the date. He feels the day could embrace the theme of reconciliation, and as such, be called ‘Reconciliation Australia Day’.

• Break students into groups of 3, matching pairs of groups together. Allocate the following debate topic: “Australia Day should not be celebrated on January 26th”. Assign one group the affirmative and one group the negative on the topic, and give them 20 minutes to prepare their debate. Each team must make reference to the events of the March for Freedom, Justice and Hope on January 26th 1988, and are encouraged to quote from those interviewed in ‘88’.

Have students present their debates to the class, awarding a winning team for each pair. Following the debates, have a class discussion about people’s overall feelings about the topic.
REFERENCES:

Books:


Websites:

- http://www.aboriginaltentembassy.net/
- http://www.history.com/topics/march-on-washington
- http://www.creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/people/mourning-an-aboriginal-death#toc2
- http://www.abc.net.au/unleashed/27934.html
- http://www.creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/selfdetermination/aboriginal-representative-bodies

Endnotes


This study guide was produced by ATOM. (© ATOM 2014) ISBN 978-1-74295-405-9 editor@atom.org.au

For information on SCREEN EDUCATION magazine, or to download other study guides for assessment, visit <http://www.metromagazine.com.au>.

Join ATOM’s email broadcast list for invitations to free screenings, conferences, seminars, etc. Sign up now at <http://www.atom.asn.au/lists/>.

For hundreds of articles on Film as Text, Screen Literacy, Multiliteracy and Media Studies, visit <http://www.theeducationshop.com.au>.