

TASMANIAN MUSEUM & ART GALLERY PRESENTS

UNSHACKLED

THE TRUE CONVICT STORY

Learning Program

An Education Resource

Centre for Learning and Discovery


Tasmanian
Government

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Overview

Exhibition Overview

Unshackled liberates the stories of the men and women transported from their homelands to the Australian prison colonies to uncover true stories of repression, exploitation, resistance and redemption. Thousands of revolutionaries, labour protestors, trade unionists, Irish freedom fighters, rebellious slaves, mutinous soldiers and working-class radicals were also transported as political prisoners. Even those transported for non-political crimes undertook acts of individual and collective disobedience and defiance in the colonies.

This largely hidden history of convict Australia, interweaves the shared experiences of the dispossessed poor, political prisoners and First Nations resistors across the invaded continent.

Education Overview

This Unshackled: Education Resource provides an overview of the organising themes of the exhibition. The Resource is particularly relevant to aspects of **Year 9 of the Australian Curriculum: History (Version 9.0)**. Educators working with other Years will also find relevant material. Some key elements from each theme are discussed in terms of how they might be explored by students and teachers. Additional resources for each theme are provided at the end of the document.

Unshackled Exhibition Website

For additional information supporting the exhibition and the education resource, teachers and students are strongly encouraged to visit: <https://exhibition.unshackled.net.au>



Unshackled Themes

The four themes of Unshackled are:

- Repression – An Empire in Turmoil
- Exploitation – 100% Discount on Land and Labour
- Resistance – Unfree but not Silenced
- Redemption – Democracy was no Accident

Theme 1: Repression – An Empire in Turmoil explores the social, political and economic circumstances in Britain which contributed toward the colonisation of Australia. Factors such as the enclosure laws, and the Agricultural and Industrial Revolutions led to mass-migration from rural to urban areas in Britain and Ireland, high unemployment, extreme levels of poverty, and an associated increase in crime. At the same time there was a growth in revolutionary new ideas for liberal and social reform. These ideas led to political actions in such forms as written materials, mass-meetings and secret societies. With the loss of American colonies and Lieutenant James Cook's exploration of the East coast of Australia the seed was sewn for the establishment of British colonies in Australia. Britain was provided with the perfect opportunity to expand its empire and banish to the other side of the globe political activists and the criminalised poor alike.

Theme 2: Exploitation – 100% Discount on Land and Labour explores the exploitation of convict labour for profit and the punishments meted out for those refusing to conform or who were simply lacking the skills to do the jobs asked of them. Those convicts deemed as 'useless' to their masters due to age or lack of skills cost the same to feed, clothe and house as those deemed 'useful'. As such, it was in the master's interest to have the 'useless' charged with offences in the hope that any replacement was more 'useful'. Serious breeches by assigned convicts could lead to harsh punishments. Males could be sent to work in road gangs, be put in leg irons, and for the most serious misconduct they could be sent to places of secondary punishment such as Port Arthur. Women could be put to hard labour in the Female Factory.

Theme 3: Resistance – Unfree but not Silenced examines the continued acts of disobedience and protest of convicts in the Australian colonies. Over 3,600 convicts (one in 45) transported to Australia due to involvement in protests or revolts continued their struggle for change in exile. Here they were joined by other convicts in acts that included the 'Castle Hill Rebellion of 1804'. In addition, thousands of convicts collectively resisted authority through actions such as strikes, refusal to eat, sabotage and rebellions on road gangs and the female factories. Some absconded, and the most serious of such offenders took to the bush as bushrangers, seized ships or some, including Thomas Meagher and John Mitchel, were assisted to escape the colony. With the digitised data now available from convict records it has been established that, in addition to individual acts of disobedience, there were over 11,600 recorded instances of collective dissent.

Theme 4: Redemption – Democracy was no Accident explores the end of transportation to most Australian colonies and then the extension of the vote to all men in all colonies by the 1860s. The combined efforts of convicts and former convicts helped reform the convict system and strengthen the growing union movement. It saw the end of an economy based on unfree labour and the introduction of collective bargaining for better wages and conditions for workers. While many former convicts achieved redemption, many never escaped the stigma of their convict past.

Unshackled Themes with Curriculum Connections (History)

Knowledge and Understanding Strand Connections

The exhibition themes connect to two sub-strands of the Australian Curriculum History:

- The Industrial Revolution and the Movement of Peoples (1750-1900)
- Making and Transforming the Australian Nation (1750-1914)

Themes 1 and 4 connect to both sub-strands, while themes 2 and 3 connect primarily to 'Making and transforming the Australian nation (1750-1914)'. Table 1 outlines the specific content descriptions that can be addressed for each theme.

Table 1:

Theme	Subthemes	Curriculum Connections - Year 9 Australian Curriculum: History
Repression: An Empire in Turmoil	Chaos in the Cities Chaos on the Land	Sub-strand: The Industrial Revolution & Movement of Peoples 1750-1900
		AC9HH9K13 the social, economic, political, technological and/or environmental causes and effects of the Industrial Revolution on Europe in the late 18th and 19th century
		AC9HH9K014 the changing population movements and settlement patterns during the period 1750 to 1900
		AC9HH9K15 the short-, medium- and long-term effects of population movements and changing settlement patterns during this period, such as global demographic changes, transport, new ideas, and political and social reforms
		AC9HH9K16 the different perspectives and experiences of men, women and children during the Industrial Revolution, and their changing way of life
		AC9HH9K17 the ideas that emerged and influenced change in society, such as nationalism, capitalism, imperialism, socialism, egalitarianism and Chartists
		AC9HH9K18 the role of a significant individual or group such as agricultural and factory workers, inventors and entrepreneurs, landowners, politicians and religious groups in promoting and enacting some of the ideas that emerged during the Industrial Revolution
		Sub-strand: Making and Transforming the Australian Nation 1750-1914
		AC9HH9K01 the causes and effects of European imperial expansion and the movement of peoples in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, and the different responses to colonisation and migration

Theme	Subthemes	Curriculum Connections - Year 9 Australian Curriculum: History
Exploitation: 100% Discount on Land and Labour	Punishing the Punished	Sub-strand: Making and Transforming the Australian Nation 1750-1914
	Built by the Unfree	<u>AC9HH9K02</u> the key social, cultural, economic and political changes and their significance in the development of Australian society during the period
		<u>AC9HH9K06</u> different experiences and perspectives of colonisers, settlers and First Nations Australians and the impact of these experiences on changes to Australian society's ideas, beliefs and values
Rebellion: Unfree but not Silenced	Collective Action	Sub-strand: Making and transforming the Australian nation 1750-1914
	Fighting Back	<u>AC9HH9K03</u> the causes and effects of European contact and extension of settlement, including their impact on the First Nations Peoples of Australia
	Absconding and Freedom Fighters	<u>AC9HH9K06</u> different experiences and perspectives of colonisers, settlers and First Nations Australians and the impact of these experiences on changes to Australian society's ideas, beliefs and values
Redemption: Democracy was no Accident	Ideas Cannot be silenced	Sub-strand: The Industrial Revolution & Movement of Peoples 1750-1900
	Patterns of Protest	<u>AC9HH9K16</u> the different perspectives and experiences of men, women and children during the Industrial Revolution, and their changing way of life
		<u>AC9HH9K17</u> the ideas that emerged and influenced change in society, such as nationalism, capitalism, imperialism, socialism, egalitarianism and Chartism
		Sub-strand: Making and Transforming the Australian Nation 1750-1914
		<u>AC9HH9K04</u> significant events, ideas, people, groups and movements in the development of Australian society
		<u>AC9HH9K06</u> different experiences and perspectives of colonisers, settlers and First Nations Australians and the impact of these experiences on changes to Australian society's ideas, beliefs and values

Table 1: Connection of themes to content descriptions of the Australian Curriculum: History

Connection to the Skills Strand of the Australian Curriculum: English

Unshackled and related activities carried out in a classroom also provide opportunities to address the skills strand of the Australian Curriculum: History

- Questioning and researching
- Using historical sources
- Historical perspectives and interpretations
- Communicating

The main focus of the suggested learning approaches in this guide relate to:

- Using historical sources
 - **AC9HH9S03**: identify the origin and content of sources, and explain the purpose and context of primary and secondary sources
 - **AC9HH9S04**: explain the usefulness of primary and secondary sources, and the reliability of the information as evidence
- Historical perspectives and interpretations
 - **AC9HH9S05**: analyse cause and effect, and evaluate patterns of continuity and change
 - **AC9HH9S06**: compare perspectives in sources and explain how these are influenced by significant events, ideas, locations, beliefs and values
 - **AC9HH9S07**: analyse different and contested historical interpretations

In turn, the skills strand provides opportunities for links to be made to the Australian Curriculum: English. Table 2 outlines those skills content descriptions which can be linked to English.

Table 2:

Skill	Related English Content
AC9HH9S03 identify the origin and content of sources, and explain the purpose and context of primary and secondary sources	AC9E9LY01 analyse how representations of people, places, events and concepts reflect contexts
AC9HH9S06 compare perspectives in sources and explain how these are influenced by significant events, ideas, locations, beliefs and values	AC9E9LY03 analyse and evaluate how language features are used to represent a perspective of an issue, event, situation, individual or group
	AC9E9LY05 use comprehension strategies such as visualising, predicting, connecting, summarising, monitoring, questioning and inferring to compare and contrast ideas and opinions in and between texts
AC9HH9S07 analyse different and contested historical interpretations	AC9E9LY05 use comprehension strategies such as visualising, predicting, connecting, summarising, monitoring, questioning and inferring to compare and contrast ideas and opinions in and between texts

Table 2: History skills and related English content description

Unshackled Content and Suggested Teaching and Learning Approaches

Unshackled utilises both traditional museum formats such as artefacts, reproduction objects graphic displays and interpretative text, but also uses a range of digital media including short films, screen projections and access to additional content generated by QR codes. Table 3 outlines:

- the major elements of the exhibition for each theme
- some pedagogical strategies that might be used to address those skills in the Australian Curriculum: History outlined earlier

The rest of this section then provides a description of each of the pedagogical strategies outlined in Table 3.

identify the origin and content of sources, and explain the purpose and context of primary and secondary sources

Table 3:

Theme	Display Elements	Pedagogical Strategies
Repression: An Empire in Turmoil	1) Short Films: Unrest and protests – protest movements such as Chartists, Swing Rioters, Young Irelanders, Tolpuddle Martyrs, Ribbonmen, and Freeminers and their causes	<u>Summarising Circle of Viewpoints</u>
	2) Poster Wall: Bill Posters from the era – related to repression and protest	<u>TOMACPRU</u>
	3) Objects: Including halfpenny tokens of political activist Thomas Spence, bust of Thomas Muir and a man trap	<u>See, Think, Wonder</u>
Exploitation: 100% Discount on Land and Labour	4) Short Films: Detailing the convict experience, the assignment system and punishment of the ‘useless’, penal stations, the kangaroo economy, treatment of cheap labour	<u>Summarising Step Inside</u>
	5) Graphic Wall: Portraits with QR codes that activate ‘interviews’ with landowners, judges, clergymen and Governors	<u>Step Inside</u>
	6) Objects and Reproductions: in particular tools of trade including bricks, a coal pick, rake, sail making tools, carpentry tools and a large spinning wheel used by female convicts	<u>Circle of Viewpoints</u>
Resistance: Unfree but not Silenced	7) Projection: Animated female convict network map and associated touch screen to provide female case studies and examples of other rebellions	<u>Summarising</u>
	Objects: Weapons for both punishment and for absconders to fight back, including truncheons, flintlock pistols, a pike head and cat-o’-nine-tails	<u>See, Think, Wonder</u>
	8) Short Films: Absconders and freedom fighters – Looking at a number of absconders, bushrangers and Aboriginal freedom fighters	<u>Summarising Step Inside</u>

Theme	Display Elements	Pedagogical Strategies
Redemption: Democracy was no Accident	9) Objects: Including figurines of William Smith O'Brien and a claret jug sent to Henry Maning in recognition of his assistance in the escape of Young Irelander John Mitchel and a silver cup presented to Zephaniah Williams (another political prisoner)	<u>See, Think, Wonder</u>
	10) Graphic Wall: Portrait reproductions with QR codes activating digital 'interviews' with a range of political prisoners, Aboriginal warriors, convict women and landowner Thomas Burbury	<u>Summarising Step Inside</u>
	11) Short Films: Capturing the impacts of political prisoners such as Chartism, the anti-transportation movement, trade unions, 8-hour day, miners' rights, shearers' strike and Eureka	<u>Summarising Headlines</u>
	12) Graphics: Reproductions of the Eureka flag and the Anti-transportation flag	<u>See, Think, Wonder</u>
	13) Graphic Poster Wall: A range of posters, including those related to Eureka, anti-transportation and the masters and servants act, as well as union banners and pamphlets	<u>TOMACPRU</u>

Table 3: Exhibition content by theme and pedagogical strategies



Pedagogical Strategies and Links to Unshackled

The information that follows provides a summary of the strategies outlined in Table 3. The numbers for display elements in Table 3 are indicated in brackets at the end of each strategy. More information on each strategy can be found by selecting the highlighted link for each.

Summarising

Summarising is an important element of historical inquiry. While often associated with written texts, it can also be used for film, audio-visual and digital formats. During the exhibition dot points might be collected as the basis for summaries on aspects of the exhibition created back in the classroom. Dot points and summaries also provide the basis for additional inquiry questions and follow-up research. (Display Elements 1, 4, 5, 7, 9, 11,12) [**More Information**](#)

Circle of Viewpoints

Circle of viewpoints is a **Visible Thinking** strategy which encourages students to see an event or period of history from the perspective of a participant in that period of history. After identifying the person of focus, students write about the event/s or period from the perspective of that person. They also ask questions from the perspective of that person which might then be used to identify areas for further research and/or considering the same event/s or period from other perspectives. (Display Elements 1, 6) [**More Information**](#)

TOMACPRU

TOMACPRU is a structured approach to analysing primary sources such as posters. While not being necessarily covered in the order listed, the acronym TOMACPRU stands for type, origin, motive, audience, content, perspective, reliability and usefulness. Each of these elements are addressed in an analysis of the source, as in this [**analysis of a WW1 recruitment poster**](#). (Display Elements 2, 14) [**More Information**](#)

See, Think, Wonder

See, Think, Wonder is a **Visible Thinking** strategy which encourages a focussed observation of an object or source rather than jumping straight to a potentially narrow interpretation. The first phase encourages observations without interpretations. If a student makes interpretations rather than observations, the teacher might use the **'What makes you say that?'** strategy to refocus on observation. The second stage is to look at possible interpretations based on the observations and the third is to look at any questions or wonderings that arise from the first two stages. (Display Elements 3, 8, 10, 13) [**More Information**](#)

Step Inside

Step inside is a similar **Visible Thinking** approach to **Circle of Viewpoints** in that encourages looking at an event or period from the point of view of a participant in that event or period. It takes it a step further by breaking the perspective down into things that the person might have perceived, knew, believed or cared about. (Display Elements 4, 5, 9, 11) [**More Information**](#)

Headlines

Headlines is a **Visible Thinking** strategy which requires the students to write a headline that captures the core idea or essence of the topic investigated. (Display Element 12) [**More Information**](#)

Additional Resources

The primary website for this resource is Unshackled Exhibition: <https://exhibition.unshackled.net.au>

The following is a list of documentaries available on the website:

Theme 1: Repression

- [An Empire in Chaos](#)
- [The Great Hunger](#)
- [The Chartists are Coming](#)
- [The Dissenters](#)
- [Tearing Down the Fences](#)
- [Peterloo](#)

Theme 2: Exploitation

- [The Prison Without Walls](#)
- [Punishing the Punished](#)
- [The Assignment System](#)
- [The Kangaroo Economy](#)
- [The Numbers Don't Lie](#)
- [A Convict's Tour of Hell](#)
- [The Flat Pack Colony](#)

Theme 3: Resistance

- [We Are All Alike](#)
- [The Battle of Castle Hill](#)
- [Convict Resistance](#)
- [Political Convicts](#)
- [The Strange Life of William Buckley](#)
- [Resistance and Survival in Van Diemen's Land](#)
- [Escape from Fremantle](#)

Theme 4: Redemption

- [William Cuffay](#)
- [Convicts and Unions](#)
- [The Anti Transportation League](#)
- [Masters and Servants](#)
- [The Jarrow Seven](#)
- [Death or Liberty](#)

The following is a list of external resources:

Theme 1: Repression

- [BBC: Agricultural Revolution in England 1500 – 1850](#)
- [BBC: Industrial Revolution](#)
- [BBC: The Chartist Movement 1838 – 1848](#)
- [BBC: The Origins of the Industrial Revolution](#)
- [BBC: The Peterloo Massacre](#)
- [Freeminers: Warren James](#)
- [History Skills: How the Agricultural Revolution Changed England](#)
- [History Skills: Year 9 Industrial Revolution Lessons](#)
- [National Archives: What caused the ‘Swing Riots’ in the 1830s?](#)
- [National Museum of Australia: Castle Hill Rebellion](#)
- [People’s History Museum: William Cuffay](#)
- [Rebecca Riots](#)
- [Tokens of Revolution](#)
- [Tolpuddle Martyrs](#)
- [The Irish Story: Ribbonmen](#)

Theme 2 & 3: Exploitation & Resistance

- [ABC Education: The Colonisation of Hobart \(Digibook\)](#)
- [ABC: Musquito](#)
- [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Freedom Fighters](#)
- [Cascades Female Factory Historic Site: Education](#)
- [Female Convicts Research Centre](#)
- [Indigenous Australia: Musquito](#)
- [Libraries Tasmania Guide to Convict Records](#)
- [Port Arthur Historic Site: Education](#)
- [Reassign](#)
- [Reassign Stories](#)
- [TMAG: Introduction to the Bond Store](#)
- [TMAG: Our Changing Land: Creating Tasmania Exhibition](#)
- [Unshackled – Hobart Penitentiary](#)

Theme 4: Redemption

- [ANU: Trade Union Banners](#)
- [ACTU: History of Australian Unions](#)
- [BBC History: William Cuffay \(1788 – 1870\)](#)
- [Chartism in Australia](#)
- [Conviction Politics: How Convicts Shaped Australian Democracy](#)
- [National Museum: Eight-Hour Day](#)
- [The convicts who shaped Australian democracy as we know it](#)
- [UTAS: Anti-transportation movement](#)
- [Young Irelanders: Exiles in Paradise](#)

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Conviction Politics is a four-year collaboration involving highly regarded academics, historians, authors, social demographers, visual artists, filmmakers, animators, creative technologists, musicians, poets, songwriters and museum specialists in an array of different combinations.

Conviction Politics brings together ten Australian and international universities and numerous cultural institutions, private organisations and individuals. The exhibition has been financially supported by The Mineworkers Trust and Maurice Blackburn Lawyers with foundational investment from the NSW Teachers Federation, Trade Union Education Foundation of the ACTU, Libraries Tasmania and Australian Manufacturing Workers Union and significant in-kind support from Roar Film, Monash University and the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery.

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