

History: Important Australian Figures

Madame Tussauds Sydney — Schools Resource

NSW Syllabus: History K–10 | **Stage:** Stage 3 (Years 5–6)

About this resource

This resource uses Madame Tussauds Sydney's Australian figures to explore the syllabus focus on Australia as a nation; the people, movements and achievements that have shaped it.

Curriculum outcomes addressed

- **HT3-3** — identifies change and continuity and describes the causes and consequences of change on Australian society
- **HT3-4** — describes and explains the struggles for rights and freedoms in Australia
- **HT3-5** — applies a variety of skills of historical inquiry and communication

Key inquiry question

What contributions have significant Australians made to our nation, and how has Australian identity changed over time?

Exercise 1: What Do We Already Know?

Format: Classroom-based | 20 minutes

Students brainstorm well-known Australians, then discuss what makes someone “significant” and why people are remembered.

Exercise 2: Meet the Australians

Format: Excursion-based | Individual worksheet

Find three Australian figures in the gallery and record their field, contribution, and how they represent change over time.

Exercise 3: Nominate an Australian

Format: Classroom-based | Extended task

Research a significant Australian and write a short nomination letter explaining their achievements, why they deserve recognition, and a “did you know?” fact.

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Exercise 1: What do we already know? (Classroom — Pre-Visit)

As a class, brainstorm famous Australians students already know — from any field: sport, politics, science, entertainment, activism.

Famous Australians We Know		
Name	Field	Why They're Famous

1. In pairs, choose one and discuss what they contributed and why they're remembered.

My chosen Australian is:

A "significant Australian" can mean different things — nation-builders, changemakers, record-breakers, cultural icons.

What makes someone 'significant'?

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Exercise 2: Meet the Australians

Format: Excursion-based | Individual worksheet

Find three Australian figures in the gallery. Madame Tussauds Sydney's line-up has included figures such as Steve Irwin and Robert Irwin (conservation), Cathy Freeman and Ian Thorpe (sport), Ned Kelly and Bob Hawke (history and politics), and Chris Hemsworth and Miranda Kerr (entertainment and fashion) — though the exact figures on display may vary.

Figure 1

Figure name:

Field:

Biggest contribution:

Represents change because:

Figure 2

Figure name:

Field:

Biggest contribution:

Represents change because:

Figure 3

Figure name:

Field:

Biggest contribution:

Represents change because:

Extension Questions:

- If you find Cathy Freeman, research why her 2000 Olympic win was significant beyond sport.

- Which Australians do you think are missing from this gallery? Who would you nominate, and why?

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Exercise 3: Nominate an Australian (Classroom – Post-visit)

Imagine your class is choosing the next Australian to be added to Madame Tussauds Sydney.

1. Research a significant Australian (from history or today) using at least two sources.
2. Write a nomination letter (200–250 words) explaining their achievements and why they deserve recognition.
3. Include a "did you know?" fact that most people wouldn't already know about them.

Research Notes:

Australian chosen:	
Source 1:	
Source 2:	
Key achievements:	
'Did you know?' fact:	

Draft your nomination letter below (200-250 words):

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Teacher note: This task can be presented as a class vote, gallery walk, or persuasive writing assessment piece, and links well to HT3-4 if students choose a figure connected to rights and freedoms movements.

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