

Life on the Murray River

Activity 4

View the 'Life on the Murray River' VR tour at www.lsv.com.au/vr



Key Learning

During this lesson, students will investigate what Australia's history looks like in visual form by creating a timeline to scale. They will find out about some of the most important events/information from across this whole period. They will reflect on the sheer magnitude of time that the Aboriginal people have been on this continent.



Resources

- Masking tape
- Tape measure
- Post-it notes
- Computer access for students
- Appendix A: *Metric Conversion Chart*



Engage

- Measure out 10m on the ground using a tape measure and then mark out this line using masking tape. Using Post-it notes, mark 100,000 at one end and 0 at the other. Explain to students that 0 means zero years ago (i.e. today) and that 100,000 means 100,000 years ago.

Ask students:

- How many centimetres in a metre? How many millimetres? (Some time could be taken here to demonstrate measurement conversions using Appendix A: *Metric Conversion Chart* depending on student need)
- If we were to mark the date of British Colonisation (1788), where do you think it would be on the line?



Curriculum

History – Historical Concepts and Skills

Chronology

Levels 5 & 6

- Sequence significant events and lifetimes of people in chronological order to create a narrative to explain the developments in Australia's colonial past and the causes and effects of Federation on its people ([VCHHC082](#))

Mathematics – Measurement and Geometry

Using units of measurement

Level 5

- Choose appropriate units of measurement for length, area, volume, capacity and mass ([VCMMG195](#))

Level 6

- Connect decimal representations to the metric system ([VCMMG222](#))
- Convert between common metric units of length, mass and capacity ([VCMMG223](#))
- Solve problems involving the comparison of lengths and areas using appropriate units ([VCMMG224](#))



Explore

- Explain that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are one of the oldest populations on earth and are believed to have been here for tens of thousands of years. Studies have traced back their history in Australia up to 70,000 years. British colonisation occurred in 1788. Challenge students to work out (in small groups) the correct place to mark each of these on the timeline.

Teachers may scaffold the problem using the following steps:

- Step 1: Work out how many years in 1m
- Step 2: Work out how many years in 1cm
- Step 3: Work out how many years in 1mm
- Step 4: Combine these as needed to calculate the total distance



Explain

Ask a representative from each group to share their answers and explain their strategy. Mark both events on the timeline as follows:

- 100,000 years = 10m
- 100 years = 1cm
- 10 years = 1mm

Therefore: If Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people arrived 70,000 years ago, that's 7m along the timeline. If the British arrived in 1788 and it is now 2018, that's 230 years which is 23mm or 2.3 cm along the timeline.



Elaborate

- Explain to students that they will now be doing some research to fill in the timeline with more events and detail. Students will investigate either Pre-Colonisation or Post-Colonisation. Each time they find a new fact/event, they need to write it on a sticky note and place it in the appropriate position along the timeline.



Evaluate

In pairs, ask students to reflect on what they have learnt and share:

- Something they didn't know before; Something that surprised them; Something that they think other people should know.

Finally, have students gather around the timeline and discuss:

- How would you describe Australia's history? What can you say about the information we have collected? Is it evenly spread? Why do you think this is? How important do you think it is to know about our entire history?

References

Australian Geographic. *DNA confirms Aboriginal culture one of Earth's oldest*, <http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/data/?ref=ftir> [viewed 15 July 2021]

Appendix A Metric Conversion Chart

