The First Fleet Lessons

The following lessons are focussed on the theme of the First Fleet and are designed to accompany the tall ship craft activity and extend the students' learning. They are written for primary students, but can be adjusted to suit lower or higher year levels.

Curriculum Alignment

Humanities and Social Sciences – History

History Inquiry and Skills

▪ Pose a range of questions and engage with a variety of texts to gather information.

Historical Knowledge and Understanding

▪ Explore the stories of the First Fleet and the people who travelled on board.

Broad Learning Outcomes

Participating in the lessons will assist students in achieving the following outcomes:

▪ Students will learn about the beginning of European settlement in Australia.

▪ Students will consider settlement from various perspectives.

Lessons Ideas

▪ Research artworks that depict the arrival of the First Fleet. What do these images tell us about this event? Do they provide a true reflection of the experience? Whose experience do they show?

▪ Students to imagine they are a person involved in the arrival of the First Fleet and write a letter or diary entry explaining what they saw and how they felt. They could pretend to be:

- a captain on one of the eleven ships
- a family member of one of the ship's crew
- a convict being transported to Australia
- an indigenous Australian watching the fleet arrive.

▪ The First Fleet left Portsmouth, England in 1787. It travelled to Santa Cruz at Tenerife, then to Rio de Janeiro, then to the Cape of Good Hope, then landed at Botany Bay. Students to mark these locations on a map, then try to work out how far the ships sailed.

▪ Read *The Rabbits* written by John Marsden and illustrated by Shaun Tan, and discuss how the words and images depict the arrival of European settlers and early settlement.

- The First Fleet arrived in Botany Bay in 1788. Students to research to find out what else was happening in the world around this time.

- Students to imagine that they are heading to an unknown land to create a new settlement then make a list of the items that they would take or need.

- The First Fleet consisted of eleven ships:

  - two Royal Navy ships – HMS Sirius and HMS Supply
  - six convict transports – Alexander, Charlotte, Friendship, Lady Penrhyn, Prince of Wales and Scarborough
  - three store ships – Borrowdale, Fishburn and Golden Grove.

  Students to imagine that they are in charge of a fleet of ships. What would they name them and why?

- Research the conditions on board the convict ships. What were some common hardships that the crew/passengers/convicts had to face? What do you think their everyday life was like aboard the ships?

- Create a voyage timeline of the First Fleet.

- Investigate the various reasons why convicts were transported to Australia. What were their crimes?

- Conduct an internet search to find out what sort of uniforms the naval personnel may have worn around the time of the First Fleet. Sketch some of the common styles. Compare with uniforms worn today. How do they differ?