

Empathy and perspective: seeing events from different points of view

The First Fleet in Sydney Cove

A British perspective

Imagine you are on the First Fleet as the ships anchor in Sydney Cove. Discuss the questions:

It is January 1788, so what would the weather and temperature be like?

What sights would you be seeing for the first time?

What sounds would you hear? What unfamiliar smells would there be?

As you looked toward the forest, what would you be thinking? What questions would you have?



This painting, 'First Fleet in Sydney Cove' is reproduced with the permission of artist, Frank Allen

An Aboriginal perspective

Imagine you are watching when ships anchor in Sydney Cove. Discuss the questions:

What sights and activities would you be seeing for the first time?

What sounds would you hear? What different smells would there be?

As you watched from the shore, what would you be thinking? What questions would you have?

Teaching Notes - The First Fleet in Sydney Cove

This activity provides an opportunity for developing historical understanding through the key concepts of 'perspective and empathy' (**Australian Curriculum F-10**) by encouraging students to look at a particular scene from different viewpoints and by using art as a stimulus for talking and writing about an event.

Australian Curriculum F- 10 History: concepts for developing historical understanding

(Sourced from: <https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/humanities-and-social-sciences/history/structure/>)

Perspectives: people from the past will have different views and experiences, eg. views on the arrival of the British in Australia from a British and an Aboriginal point of view.

Empathetic understanding: developing an understanding of another's views, life and decisions made, eg. developing an understanding of the life and attitudes of an early colonist or convict.

Teaching Activity Notes - The First Fleet in Sydney Cove

- Copy and distribute **First Fleet in Sydney Cove** (overleaf), or display on an interactive whiteboard.
- Decide if the class will be divided so that different groups do either a convict perspective or an Aboriginal perspective simultaneously and report to the class, or if all students will do the activity from a convict perspective, then an Aboriginal Australian perspective.
- Draw attention to the image of '**First Fleet in Sydney Cove**' (a painting by marine artist Frank Allen) and ask students to imagine themselves there, and respond to the questions (from a **British perspective** and/or an **Aboriginal perspective**).

The above discussion activity can be followed by brainstorming perspectives using visual mind maps.

See free downloadable 'First Fleet in Sydney Cove' Mind maps activity at:

http://www.birrongbooks.com/images/Convict_and_Aboriginal_perspectives_mind_maps.pdf

Selected reading of '**Stories of Life at Sydney Cove**' for providing varied perspectives and building empathy:

Chapters 1- 5 (pages 1- 30) give varied **perspectives on convict life** before and during the voyage of the First Fleet, building empathy for their experiences.

Chapter 6 gives a perspective from an **Aboriginal viewpoint** as they watch the First Fleet approaching.

Pages 54 -61 (Chap 12) gives varied **perspectives of convicts and marines** on their arrival in Sydney Cove.

Chapter 13 and Chapter 14 give perspectives of both British and Aboriginal people on the early settlement at Sydney Cove.

Chapter 20 – 21 begins the story of Arabanoo, a native man who was kidnapped and brought to Sydney Cove, and of the friendship he formed with Governor Phillip later.

Chapter 21 introduces the stories of Aboriginal children, Boorong and Nanberry who survive small pox and live in Sydney Cove with white families.

Chapter 23 continues the stories of Boorong and Nanberry and introduces the story of Bennelong and his long-term association with the British people.

Learn more about Susan Boyer's school visits at: <http://www.susanboyer.com.au>

Interpreting perspectives

What sources does author, Susan Boyer, use to interpret and describe the different perspectives in 'Stories of Life at Sydney Cove'? See journals and records cited in '*Stories of Life at Sydney Cove*' page 255, or online at:

<http://www.birrongbooks.com/images/SLSC-References-to-original-journals.pdf>