Special places and spaces

Learning about world views and religions

Geography, Years 5 and 6

Sample unit of work

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Overview

Introduction

This sample unit of work should be located within a broader unit of work on exploring the interconnections between people and environments. This sample unit includes learning about how and why certain religions and world views value and utilise particular places and spaces in Australia.

Religions and world views are integral to society. They contribute to social cohesion, the development of communities and the consolidation of ethical principles and moral values. The focus within this sample unit of work is on students becoming aware of some places and spaces in Australia that have special meaning for particular religions and secular world views and how those world views influence the characteristics and use of those places and spaces. The lessons support insightful student explanations of the use of and meaning associated with particular locations.

Note, the three lessons are concerned with only the teaching and assessment of this focus; lessons for the broader unit on place, space and interconnection and the factors that shape and influence interconnections are not included.

What students will learn

Students will learn about:

* some places, and spaces within places, in Australia that are important for particular religions and secular world views
* how and why religions and secular world views influence the characteristics and use of these places.

Students will begin by identifying, describing and explaining the characteristics of some places, and spaces within them, that are special to particular religions and secular world views in Australia. They will explore how these religions and secular world views influence the characteristics and use of these places and their spaces.

Links to the Victorian Curriculum F–10

This sample unit of work is not intended to teach the whole of any content description nor fully prepare students to meet an achievement standard. Rather this unit of work:

* contributes towards teaching a range of content descriptions (as described below)
* supports students to demonstrate their learning (as described in the relevant extracts from the achievement standard, below).

The unit of work utilises the Victorian Curriculum F–10 document [Learning about world views and religions key premises](https://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/static/docs/Learning%20about%20World%20Views%20and%20Religions.pdf).

**Curriculum area:**  Geography

**Curriculum band:**  5 and 6

**Content descriptions:**

Geographical Concepts and Skills – Place, space and interconnection

* Describe and explain the diverse characteristics of places in different locations from local to global scales [(VCGGC085)](https://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/the-humanities/geography/curriculum/f-10#level=5-6&search=76e984da-fb05-49b4-b60d-f916bfe42014) (Lesson 1 and Lesson 3 )
* Describe and explain interconnections within places and between places, and the effects of these interconnections [(VCGGC087)](https://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/the-humanities/geography/curriculum/f-10#level=5-6&search=19ad0563-d866-4f75-b21b-ad3a246128a6)(Lesson 1, Lesson 2 and Lesson 3)

Geographical Knowledge – Factors that shape places and influence interconnections

* Environmental and human influences on the location and characteristics of places and the management of spaces within them [(VCGGK096)](https://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/the-humanities/geography/curriculum/f-10#level=5-6&search=9594e4dc-7e56-4f56-8498-8623afcc4c5b) (Lesson 2)
* Factors that influence people’s awareness and opinion of places [(VCGGK097)](https://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/the-humanities/geography/curriculum/f-10#level=5-6&search=4e5f77fe-4811-447a-bb81-74b358ac7af1) (Lesson 2)

**Achievement standard (extracts):**

By the end of Level 6, students describe and explain spatial characteristics and characteristics of places from local to global scales. They describe and explain interconnections and their effects.

Structure

This sample unit of work contains five key elements:

* focus questions for each lesson
* guiding information for each lesson, outlining knowledge students will be explicitly taught and other information for teachers
* suggested learning activities for students, including worksheets (see the appendices)
* suggested assessment, for formative or summative purposes
* a list of resources for teachers and students.

Teacher notes

Teachers will determine the duration of these lessons, what prior student learning is necessary, the pedagogical methods and the resources used to teach the unit.

Duration

There is no prescribed time for the unit of work. Teachers will determine the duration through the time they devote to specific teaching points and the associated learning activities and assessment. A suggested duration is 3 × 50 minute lessons.

Pedagogy

The lesson content provides suggested teaching and learning activities, assessment tasks and resources to use – and the pedagogy in this resource reflects the time allocation of 3 × 50-minute lessons – but teachers will make pedagogical choices about how students can best be engaged in the content learning. These pedagogical choices will be about individual, group or paired work, research and the use of student-generated or teacher-derived research questions, use of resources, guided reading, scaffolded inquiry using questions, teacher-directed learning, the degree of teacher control over content and assessment tasks compared to the degree of student choice, and the use of extension learning activities for interested students and those needing further challenges.

Prior learning

Teachers will determine what background learning would prepare students for undertaking these lessons. Any prior learning should be drawn from relevant Victorian Curriculum F–10 curriculum areas. For example, students could develop understanding of the following Geography Levels 5 and 6 content prior to these lessons:

* the diverse characteristics of places in different locations [(related to VCGGC085)](https://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/the-humanities/geography/curriculum/f-10#level=5-6&search=76e984da-fb05-49b4-b60d-f916bfe42014)
* the interconnections within places and between places, and the effects of these interconnections [(related to VCGGC087)](https://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/the-humanities/geography/curriculum/f-10#level=5-6&search=19ad0563-d866-4f75-b21b-ad3a246128a6)
* environmental and human influences on the location and characteristics of places and the management of spaces within them [(related to VCGGK096)](https://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/the-humanities/geography/curriculum/f-10#level=5-6&search=9594e4dc-7e56-4f56-8498-8623afcc4c5b)
* factors that influence people’s awareness and opinion of places [(related to VCGGK097)](https://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/the-humanities/geography/curriculum/f-10#level=5-6&search=4e5f77fe-4811-447a-bb81-74b358ac7af1).

Resources

Teachers will decide which resources from the included list they want to use, and they could also use resources not listed here. Some of the resources on the list are web-based. Some sample teacher-written resources such as worksheets have been included in this document, but these resources should not be considered a kit or a package of pre-digested resources. Teachers have the flexibility to adapt these resources to student needs and to link to multiple world views and perspectives related to the context and the content descriptions.

List of resources

General

[Learning about world views and religions](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/static/docs/Learning%20about%20World%20Views%20and%20Religions.pdf), Victorian Curriculum F–10 document

Lesson resources

Lesson 1

Activity 1, Glossary task ([Appendix 1](#Appendix1))

Internet access is required for research.

Lesson 2

Activity 2, Research – Special places and spaces ([Appendix 2](#Appendix2))

Internet access is required for research.

Lesson 3

Assessment task, Tour guide activity ([Appendix 3](#Appendix3))

Further information for the teacher

See historian Thomas Woods’ statement on [Making sense of places](http://www.importanceofplace.com/2009/04/what-is-sense-of-place.html).

**Islam**

* [https://www.islamreligion.com](https://www.islamreligion.com/articles/5214/forgiveness-of-sins/)
* <https://www.islamicity.org/>
* <https://www.islamweb.net/en/>

Lessons

Lesson 1

Focus questions

What are the meanings and purposes of some of the characteristics of places, and spaces within them, in Australia, that are special to particular religions and secular world views?

Guiding information

In these lessons the term ‘place’ refers to an established location that contains a building for particular purposes within a religion or secular world view.

Special places are often places where people of the same religions and secular world view gather, united as a community. They can give to the adherents ‘a sense of place’ and an experience in which certain feelings and ideas are evoked. Some places may be considered ‘sacred’, which means they are set apart as different in some distinct way.

A special place is created when humans give particular meaning to a place. Areas or spaces within a special place may be set aside for particular purposes that have their own distinct meaning.

Religions and secular world views leave their imprint on landscapes in the form of buildings such as shrines, churches, temples, mosques and monuments. These structures can provide a ‘sense of place’ for people to experience. Authorities protect the sites for the benefit of future generations. Most special places do not need to be re-established with each new generation because there is an inherited appreciation of their distinctiveness. When people visit these places, the symbolic meaning and special purpose of the place contribute to their experience. Visiting these places at different times, such as during a ceremony or on a tour, can convey different impressions and meanings.

Below are the glossary terms, with a brief definition, that students are asked to research for Lesson 1 Activity 1. This activity will provide them with the background knowledge for the next two lessons.

**Altar/Table**:a flat structure that is the focus for ceremonies or worship, as ritual actions are performed there

**Ark**:a cabinet with doors and curtains in a synagogue, behind which is the scroll of sacred writings of the religion (the *Torah*). The Ark is placed to face the direction of Jerusalem.

**Bell/Chime/Gong/Chant/Trumpet/Bugle call**:the sound is intended to transport a person to a higher level of experience; to bring peace, happiness or wisdom; to bring them to the place; or to remind them of a special purpose or meaning

**Bimah/Pulpit/Minbar/Dais**:a raised area perhaps within a synagogue, church, mosque or secular shrine or monument; perhaps with a pedestal, stand or podium with a flat platform on top for holding the texts read during rituals and services, giving talks or sermons, or conducting ceremonies.

**Church**: a place for all of common belief in Christianity to gather for rituals, spiritual activities, worship or prayers

**Dome/Spire/Tower/Steeple/Minaret**: architectural features symbolically reaching to the sky, the highest mountain, or the realm of the gods, and symbolically reaching beyond the physical and limited world towards insight, wisdom, revelation and enlightenment. Often the call to remembrance, worship or prayer is made by voice or bell ringing from such structures.

**Entrance gate/Archway/Porch**:usually highly decorated to symbolise entry into a place and a space set apart from the ordinary

**Flame/Light/Lamp**:varying in size and number, these are often permanently alight to symbolise the presence of a deity or as a constant reminder of those who are honoured in the special place. These sources of light act as symbols of remembrance, reverence, respect and honour

**Font**: a receptacle for water (in churches, used during a ritual of initiation or baptism). It can be of varying size, material and ornamentation and used for different purposes

**Hall:** the spaces for prayer, secular celebrations and meditation, often without any furniture or fixed furniture

**Inner chamber/Sanctuary**:an inside space of restricted use, usually by priests, that represents the presence of the god and often has an image or symbol of the divinity. Such spaces can also be located within special places of secular importance

**Mandala**:spirituallysymbolic artwork that is ritually produced and used in Buddhist and Hindu rituals to evoke meditation and healing. Sand mandala take days to construct yet upon completion the art is destroyed and disposed of in the nearest river or ocean, symbolic of the letting go of attachments to worldly possessions. This pertains to the teaching of ‘impermanence’ in Buddhism

**Mihrab**:ornamental arched niche set into the wall of a mosque to indicate the direction of Mecca. Muslims face the mihrab during prayer so that they pray facing Mecca

**Mosque**: a place where Muslims (adherents of Islam) worship and pray

**Pool**:a supply of water is required by many religions for rituals or for cleansing prior to going inside the special place. Pools are also used to create spaces of calm and reflection within places of secular importance

**Sanctuary**: an area usually restricted to priests that contains the altar, tabernacle and pulpit and is the focal point for conducting services

**Shrine/Alcove**: spaces of varying size set aside to honour a particular god, saint or hero, often containing a statue or image. They are used for personal prayer, reflection and meditation or to remember and honour the hero

**Statuary:** carved, cast or chiselled images of animals, people, gods or spirit beings that tell stories of importance to the religion or secular world view and act as aids for devotional or remembrance practices

**Stupa**:hemispherical structure that can vary in height and decoration and be part of a temple or separate. They are places for worship and meditation, and where relics of the Buddha and some sacred scriptures are kept and protected

**Synagogue** (shul): The Jewish place of worship, which is also used as a place to study and often as a community centre as well. In Orthodox Jewish tradition men and women sit in separate areas, with women sitting on the upper level area or on the same level with a divider in between

**Tabernacle**:a free-standing container or a compartment within a wall. It represents the specific dwelling place of the divinity among the people of the religion

**Temple**: a structure reserved for religious or spiritual rituals and activities such as prayer and worship, usually within Buddhism and Hinduism

**Walkway/Aisle**: spaces to guide movement around the inside of special places

Learning activity

Activity 1

Students are given Activity 1, Glossary task ([Appendix 1](#Appendix1)).

They are asked to create a three-column table in their preferred computer program, as shown below.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Glossary | | |
| Term | Definition/Explanation | Image |
|  |  |  |

A list of glossary terms to research is provided on the worksheet. Students need to research the terms and then write their own dictionary-style definition for each. They also need to include one or more images to demonstrate the term. They should include the name of the place shown, as well as the source of the image.

This activity will give students some of the background knowledge they will need in order to do the activities for Lesson 2 and Lesson 3.

Assessment

An assessment task will be done in Lesson 3, using the information provided and research from Lessons 1 and 2.

Lesson 2

Focus questions

What characteristics of these special places and the spaces within them reflect the religion or secular world view of those for whom this place is important?

Guiding information

Through the study of a specific example students will learn that one of the interconnections between places and people is that places and the spaces within them are shaped by the meaning given to them by people and that tangible and intangible characteristics of places express, embody and reflect the experiences and aspirations of people. The meaning given to places is one factor that influences awareness of and opinions about places.

Students will select places connected to a particular religion or secular world view and use the information from Lesson 1 and a guided internet search to complete questions on an activity sheet.

Students begin by noting the characteristics that these places have in common and then identify the key premise of the selected religion or secular world view that would give meaning to these features for adherents. Students learn that spaces within these special places are the physical expression of the religion or secular world view.

The activity for Lesson 2 has been limited to particular places in Melbourne and to some of the spaces within.

The religions and secular world views represented are Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, and Secular Humanism and Rationalism.

Learning activity

Activity 2, Research – Special places and spaces

Students choose at least one religion or secular world view from Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, and Secular Humanism and Rationalism.

Give students the relevant search terms for the religion or world view they have chosen:

* Buddhism – search ‘Buddhist temples in Melbourne’
* Christianity – search ‘churches in Melbourne’
* Hinduism – search ‘Hindu temples in Melbourne’
* Islam – search ‘mosques in Melbourne’
* Judaism – search ‘synagogues in Melbourne’
* Secular Humanism and Rationalism – search a variety of secular buildings such as ‘Shrine of Remembrance’, ‘observatory Melbourne’, ‘universities in Melbourne’

Students conduct research and respond to the questions on the worksheet ([Appendix 2](#Appendix2)) about special places and their spaces that have particular purposes for the selected religion or secular world view.

When completing the questions students should refer to the glossary they developed in Lesson 1 and the key premises of the religions and world views in [Learning about world views and religions](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/static/docs/Learning%20about%20World%20Views%20and%20Religions.pdf) (Victorian Curriculum F–10 document).

Assessment

An assessment task will be done in Lesson 3, using the information provided and research from Lessons 1 and 2.

Lesson 3

Focus question

How do particular key premises of a religion or secular world view give meaning to a special place and the spaces within it?

Guiding information

Students will demonstrate their learnings from Lesson 1 and Lesson 2 about important characteristics of places and spaces that are special to a particular religion or secular world view and the key premises that give meaning to these characteristics.

Learning activity

Assessment task, Tour guide activity

Using the information from Lesson 1 and Lesson 2, students first answer a series of question ([Appendix 3](#Appendix3)).

Students then make a list of talking points that a tour guide might use to show and tell a group of tourists about this place. Students could present their tour guide narrative orally, with the rest of class acting as the tour group.

Assessment

By the end of Level 6, students describe and explain spatial characteristics and characteristics of places from local to global scales. They describe and explain interconnections and their effects.

Student responses to the tour guide activity demonstrate:

* an understanding of the characteristics of their selected place and its spaces
* how these characteristics relate to the key premises of the particular religion or world view and to each other
* how these characteristics might influence members’ awareness of these places and the spaces within them.

Appendix 1

Activity 1, Glossary task

1. Create a three-column table in your preferred computer program with the title and headings below. Allow 23 rows in your table, for each of the 23 terms below.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Glossary** | | |
| **Term** | **Definition/Explanation** | **Image**  **(including source)** |
|  |  |  |

2. Type in these terms in the ‘Term’ column.

* Temple
* Church
* Mosque
* Synagogue
* Ark
* Bell/Chime/Gong/Chant/Call/Trumpet/  
  Bugle call
* Sanctuary
* Bimah/Pulpit/Minbar/Dais
* Altar/Table
* Tabernacle
* Mihrab
* Font
* Shrine/Alcove
* Stupa
* Hall
* Statuary
* Dome/Spire/Tower/Steeple/Minaret
* Walkway/Aisle
* Inner Chamber/Sanctuary
* Flame/Light/Lamp
* Entrance Gate/Archway/Porch
* Pool
* Mandala

3. Research each term and write your own dictionary-style definitions. You could use an online or hardcopy dictionary.

Include one or more images to demonstrate each term. Include the source of each image and the name of the building or place.

This activity will give you some of the background knowledge you will need in order to do the activities in Lesson 2 and Lesson 3.

Appendix 2

Activity 2, Research – Special places and spaces

1. Use a search engine such as Google for this internet research activity. Type in the search term/s for your selected religion or world view.

Search terms: …………………………………………………………………………………………………

Selected religion/world view: ………………………………………………………………………………..

2. The search engine will list a few special places/buildings. If using Google, click ‘More places’ to see more. A map will appear showing the locations. Click on the symbols to see photographs of these places/buildings.

3. Consider all the photographs of the special places/buildings. Answer the following questions. You can refer to the images and information in your completed Glossary table from Lesson 1, too.

1. What features on the outside of these buildings do they all have in common?
2. What do the features on the outside of the buildings tell you about the way the place is used by people from that particular religion or world view?
3. What features on the inside of these buildings do they all have in common?
4. What do the features on the inside of the buildings tell you about the way space is used by the people from that particular religion or world view?

4. Refer to the key premises of the selected religion or world view in [Learning about world views and religions](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/static/docs/Learning%20about%20World%20Views%20and%20Religions.pdf) (Victorian Curriculum F–10 document) and complete the following questions.

1. What view about ‘ultimate reality’ gives meaning to the features that you identified in Questions 1–4?
2. What view about the meaning and purpose of human life gives meaning to the features that you identified in Questions 1–4?

Appendix 3

Assessment task, Tour guide activity

Stage 1

Pull together the information you gathered in Lessons 1 and 2. This can be done by answering the following questions.

1. What is the name given to the special places of the religion or secular world view that you have researched?
2. What is the religion or secular world view associated with these places?
3. What are some of the typical features of these places and the spaces within them?
4. What might be the intended purposes of these features?
5. When a person from the religion or world view visits these places, and/or the spaces within them, what might they see, hear, think and feel?
6. When a tourist visits these places, and/or the spaces within them, what might they see, hear, think and feel?

Stage 2

Prepare a list of talking points that a tour guide might use when taking a group of tourists to this place. Be prepared to present your tour as an oral presentation.