

Year 4 – Early trading and currency chaos

Introduction

In the following activities students will explore the trading systems and routes of First Australians and consider the items that were traded, particularly focusing on the idea of trading stories, songs and ceremonies.

Subsequently, students will investigate the currency situation for early settlers. They will look at the coins that were brought to Australia by officers, convicts and settlers and imagine the chaos that ensued in the colony with such a large variation of coins. Finally, students will learn about Governor King and the proclamation coins that were supposed to restore currency stability.

These activities could be undertaken within a larger History unit.

Links to the Australian Curriculum (v8.2)

Humanities and Social Sciences

Inquiry and skills

Questioning

- Pose questions to investigate people, events, places and issues ([ACHASSI073](#))

Researching

- Locate and collect information and data from different sources, including observations ([ACHASSI074](#))
- Sequence information about people's lives and events ([ACHASSI076](#))

Evaluating and reflecting

- Draw simple conclusions based on analysis of information and data ([ACHASSI079](#))

Knowledge and Understanding – History

- The diversity of Australia's first peoples and the long and continuous connection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples to Country/Place (land, sea, waterways and skies) ([ACHASSK083](#))
- Stories of the First Fleet, including reasons for the journey, who travelled to Australia, and their experiences following arrival ([ACHASSK085](#))

Learning outcomes

After participating in these activities, students will be able to:

- explain how and what was traded by First Australians
- describe how the lack of a single currency affected the lives of early settlers
- explain what actions Governor King took to try and bring currency stability to the colony.

Resources

Activity 1: Early trading – what was traded?

- **‘Trading tales’** fact sheet
- **‘Early trade’** activity sheet
- Computers with internet access

Activity 2: Sharing stories

- Resources for students to create their personal story

Activity 3: Currency chaos

- **‘Currency in early settlement’** fact sheet
- Resources to make currency (e.g. paper or card, pencils, textas, etc.)
- Various classroom resources for trading

Activity 4: Currency stability

- Computers with internet access
- **‘Exchange rate’** activity sheets

Activities

Activity 1: Early trading – what was traded?

Write the word ‘trade’ on the board. Ask students what they think it means. Discuss the definition (the act of exchanging goods and services). In pairs, ask students to discuss when they have been involved in trading. They may have traded a favourite toy with a sibling, or have collector cards that they trade regularly with friends. Ask several students to share their ‘trading’ stories.

- What sort of items have students traded?
- Who do they trade with?
- How do they decide what to trade?
- How do they come to an agreement about an item’s value?

Individually, or in pairs, students to read through the information on the **'Trading tales'** fact sheet and undertake further research (there are some websites provided on the sheet). Then students can complete activities listed on the **'Early trade'** activity sheet. This can be done as individuals, pairs or in small groups (or can vary per activity).

Activity 2: Sharing stories

First Australians often traded stories with other groups (as mentioned on the **'Trading tales'** fact sheet from Activity 1). This was designed to facilitate relationships between groups, share knowledge and deepen connections to the land.

Discuss this idea further with students.

Provide students with a few minutes of quiet reflection to think about what they feel a deep connection to in their life. Explain to students that this could be anything, a prized possession, a person, a photo, a memory etc.

After this reflection, students will think about a story from their life that they could share with someone to help that person understand more about them. It could be a story about family, a celebration or a special event. Students to choose a format to record their story. This could be written, drawn, in a PowerPoint presentation, as a short video etc.

Teachers must use their discretion about the appropriateness of each story and gain the student's permission before sharing with the class.

Activity 3: Currency chaos

As a class, or in pairs, read and then discuss the information on the **'Currency in early settlement'** fact sheet.

- What questions do students have about the information?
- What information did they already know?
- What information was new to them?

In pairs, students to discuss what early life would have been like for the settlers, particularly in terms of buying and selling goods and services. Ask students to imagine coming from a place where a single currency was widely used, to a new colony where they had no currency at all.

In order to allow students to experience the currency chaos of the early settlers, organise them into small groups (4-5 students per group). Each group will be responsible for creating its own currency. Students should design the currency, name it and then make a supply of it. Each group will also be responsible for different classroom resources (e.g. Group 1 will be responsible for the scissors, pencils and computers; Group 2 will be responsible for the staplers, textas and paper etc.) and will set a value for these items in their own currency.

Once each group has designed and made their currency and set a value for their resources, set a class task that requires students to 'buy' resources that they need from other groups. Ultimately, this will be a difficult task as the students are holding different currencies.

This should lead to a discussion about solutions to this problem. What did Governor King do?

How can the class work together to set equivalent values for their currencies? Whose currency is worth the most? Discuss and debate this issue.

If the class cannot come to an agreement about setting a value for the currencies, discuss creating one class currency that can be used by everyone. Once a solution has been reached, try trading again and discuss the difference a stable currency makes.

Activity 4: Currency stability

Setting comparison rates for currencies (as Governor King did) is something that is still done today. It allows people to travel freely and exchange their home currency for another.

In small groups, students to research the value of various currencies in Australian dollars. Investigate the currency of the countries of origin of the students in your class. If your class does not have a diverse range of cultures, you could focus on the top ten countries of birth (for those born overseas) in Australia. These are:

1. United Kingdom
2. New Zealand
3. China
4. India
5. Italy
6. Vietnam
7. Philippines
8. South Africa
9. Malaysia
10. Germany

(Australian Bureau of Statistics – 2011 Census data)

This information can be recorded on one of the '**Exchange rate**' activity sheets. There is one sheet with space for the countries of origin in your class, and one with the top ten countries of origin listed.