

Teacher notes



Servant or Slave
Aboriginal Studies: Stage 6

1. Before viewing

My own notes

About the Documentary

Servant or Slave uses first-person accounts, archival footage and reconstructions to give a powerful and evocative insight into the domestic servitude forced upon Aboriginal women in 20th Century Australia.

If your school has a Clickview account you can view the whole documentary [here](#)

About the Resource

The *Servant or Slave* Aboriginal Studies resource provides students and teachers with the opportunity to gain a greater understanding of Heritage and Identity. While this resource focuses on NSW Aboriginal Studies, activities can be applied to a broader range of subjects such as Community and Family Studies and English.

Activities have been designed around the 8 ways pedagogy to engage students in years 11-12. Teachers should tailor and adjust the complexity of the activity to suit their class. Suggestions will be provided, as well as links to NSW Aboriginal Studies Curriculum.

About the 8 ways Pedagogy

This resource utilises the 8 ways pedagogy to provide classroom activities aligned to [the clips](#) from *Servant or Slave*. 8 ways is a pedagogy framework that allows teachers to include Aboriginal perspectives by using Aboriginal learning techniques.

Aboriginal perspectives are not found in Aboriginal content but rather in Aboriginal processes... Tell a story. Make a plan. Think and do. Draw it. Take it outside. Try a new way. Watch first, then do. Share it with others.

Teach through culture rather than about culture.

1. Story sharing – Approach learning through narrative. We connect through the stories we share
2. Learning maps – explicitly mapping/visualising processes. We picture our pathways of knowledge
3. Non-verbal – applying intrapersonal and kinesthetic skills to thinking and learning. We see, think, act, make and share without words
4. Symbols and images – using images and metaphors to understand concepts and content. We keep and share knowledge with art and objects
5. Land links – place-based learning, linking content to local land and place. We work with lessons from land and nature
6. Non-linear – producing innovations and understanding by thinking laterally or combining systems. We put different ideas together and create new knowledge
7. Deconstruct and reconstruct – modelling and scaffolding, working from whole to parts (watch then do). We work from wholes to parts, watching and then doing
8. Community links – centering local viewpoints, applying learning from community benefits. We bring new knowledge home to help our mob.

2. Curriculum Links

My own notes

Syllabus Outcomes - Preliminary

- P1.2 - explains the consequences of invasion and colonisation for Aboriginal and other Indigenous peoples on social justice and human rights
- P1.3 - explains a variety of responses to social justice and human rights issues including bias and stereotyping of Aboriginal peoples and cultures
- P2.2 - explains the importance of Country and the interrelationship between Country, culture, economic life and social systems for Aboriginal and other Indigenous peoples
- P3.1 - describes government policies, legislation and legal decisions in relation to racism and discrimination
- P3.2 - explains the impact of key government policies, legislation and legal decisions in relation to land and water rights, and heritage and identity
- P3.3 - explains the responses and initiatives of Aboriginal and other Indigenous peoples to key government policies, legislation and legal decisions

Syllabus Outcomes - HSC

- H3.1 - assesses the effectiveness of government policies, legislation and legal decisions in addressing discrimination
- H3.2 - evaluates the impact of key government policies, legislation and legal decisions on the socioeconomic status of Aboriginal peoples and communities
- H3.3 - evaluates initiatives that promote the social, economic and political independence of Aboriginal and other Indigenous peoples

ACARA Curriculum Links

Year 9 Humanities and Social Sciences:

[ACDSEH020](#) – The extension of settlement, including the effects of contact (intended and unintended) between European settlers in Australia and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

Year 10 Humanities and Social Sciences:

[ACOKFH022](#) – The major movements for rights and freedom in the world and the achievement of independence by former colonies.

Year 10 Humanities and Social Sciences:

[ACDSEH104](#) – Background to the struggle of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples for rights and freedoms before 1965, including the 1938 Day of Mourning and the Stolen Generations.

Recommendations before viewing in the classroom

As with all resources, teachers are encouraged to watch *Servant or Slave* and the associated clips before showing it to students. The content addresses some very significant themes and it is important teachers are comfortable with the content beforehand. These resources have been designed to help you feel confident to engage in safe discussions in your classroom.

Talk, if possible, with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, staff, families or community members before using *Servant or Slave* learning resources to make sure that they are comfortable with you sharing this content in your classroom. *Servant*

2. Curriculum Links

continued

My own notes

or Slave raises themes that may be confronting to students, particularly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Considering and pre-empting possible responses so as to be able to facilitate sensitive and informed debriefs and discussions is very important.

The resources have been designed to help teachers feel confident to engage students in safe discussions within the classroom. Some ideas to consider are:

Set classroom ground rules: Due to the sensitive nature of the content in *Servant or Slave*, setting classroom ground rules with your students before viewing is an important step in creating a safe space and helping develop mutual respect and understanding between the members of your classroom community.

- Be respectful: Each person has their own beliefs and values.
- Value diversity: Each person has their own world views, experiences and opinions.
- Listen politely: Each person has a right to contribute without pressure or intimidation.
- Act with courage, and respect others' thoughts and acts: Be brave in sharing experiences, ideas and opinions.
- Appreciate privacy: Each person has the right to uphold their privacy.
- Act responsibly: Share feedback with thoughtful consideration and a positive attitude towards others.
- Work collaboratively with students to create a contract that outlines the expected standards of behaviour around using the interactive.
- Use the think/puzzle/explore reflection protocol to prompt discussion and reflection after viewing the interactive.

THINK: What ideas, emotions or situations did the clip make you think about?

PUZZLE: What ideas, people or situations in the clip puzzled you?

EXPLORE: What ideas presented in the clip would you like to explore further?

- Encourage students to frame discussion comments as their own (as in "I think") and avoid forceful language (such as "you should").
- When responding to others in classroom discussion or within the associated activities encourage students to challenge ideas rather than people.
- Allow adequate time at the end of each viewing session to debrief the content, associated activities and discussion.

Suggested activities

Watch the clips and have students complete all or some of the following:

1. Think about an event or story that is significant to you and your family. Why is it important for you and your family to be able to talk about this event, or tell this story, from your own perspective? How do you think you would feel if this event or story was not given respect or recognition, or if it was misrepresented by others?
2. As a class, construct a [learning map](#). Use your learning map to draw sequential links and comparisons between what life was like for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples:
 - Prior to colonisation: what information can you find about what family life was like? How were kinship structures determined? How did these structures influence daily life?
 - After colonisation: What happened to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples under colonial policies and practices? What have some of the immediate and intergenerational impacts have included?

3. Suggested Activities

My own notes

Start this activity by focusing on one theme from your chosen clip, and work towards identifying and illustrating how this theme is intricately interrelated with other core events, themes and issues explored in the clips.

3. In the documentary, Rita Wenberg explains how she uses visual art as a way of expressing and coping with the traumatic experiences she underwent at the Cootamundra Girls Home. On an A3 sheet of paper, create a visual representation of the impacts of the forced removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families, cultures and Country as they were moved into domestic labour-training institutions. Think about how you might use colours, textures and symbols to convey some of the effects and emotions associated with forced separation and forced labour. Draw on inspiration, ideas and information from direct quotes in one or more chosen clips, and consider how you can use unwritten or non-verbal language to interpret and illustrate these.
4. The documentary deals with a number of confronting issues including psychological, emotional, physical and sexual abuse, which can evoke strong emotional responses from audiences. Reflecting and building on Activity 3, encourage students to think about and discuss how signs and symbols can be used to express how they feel in response to the personal stories and information shared in the clips. Evaluate the value of visual compared to verbal expressions of feelings and emotions.
5. Research the different kinds of institutions that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander boys and girls were forced into after being taken away from their families by government authorities. Select one to independently research as an in-depth case study – you might like to consider the [Cootamundra Girls Home](#) or the [Kinchela Boys Home](#), or you might like to see if you can locate one from your local area or another area across Australia. While researching your selected institution, make sure to consult a range of primary and secondary sources and perspectives, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives. As a class, plot each of the institutions identified and researched on a map of Australia to illustrate the extent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children’s experiences of forced separation and forced labour, and share and compare your research findings. What are some of the similarities and differences between each of the case studies? What new learnings and understandings did you gain by engaging with a range of perspectives and examples?

Note: You may want to use an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander [linguistic-cultural map](#) of Australia to highlight how children were often separated from their distinct families and speaker communities.

6. After engaging with the information and personal narratives in the documentary clips, write a creative, reflective response to the following questions:
 - If you could travel back in time as a government policy researcher/writer in the pre-1960s colonial context, what would you have done differently, or what changes would you make, with regard to the policies that underpinned the Stolen Generations and Stolen Wages experiences?
 - If you were the Prime Minister of Australia today, what would you do to address past mistreatment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by government policies and practices, and to address the intergenerational impacts of this mistreatment?



3. Suggested Activities

continued

My own notes

To what extent does your response resonate with Prime Minister [Kevin Rudd's 2008 National Apology speech](#)?

The following fact sheets by Reconciliation Australia may be useful:

[Apology Fact Sheet](#)

[Sorry Day Fact Sheet](#)

7. After watching and deconstructing the documentary clips, write a list of *Servant or Slave*'s key messages and arguments. Next to each listed message/argument, write down any direct quotes from the documentary that reflect or reinforce that argument. Who is the speaker behind the quote, and how might their personal experiences have shaped their thoughts and words? What are your own personal perspectives on each of the key messages/arguments, what experiences or assumptions are your perspectives based on, and how would you articulate them?
8. If you could ask a local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elder or community member three questions concerning the key content, messages or arguments of *Servant or Slave*, what would they be?

Where appropriate, invite a local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elder or community member to come in and share some of their personal stories and perspectives. Please bear in mind that it is generally more respectful to establish genuine and meaningful relationships with community members before asking them to contribute to activities in your school. Please also bear in mind that the documentary's subject matter is very sensitive in nature, and your prospective guests may not feel comfortable thinking or talking about such matters. Documents such as these provide some useful guidelines around building relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members and inviting them into the classroom:

[QCAA Building Relationships with Local Communities](#)

[Inviting Indigenous Speakers](#)

[Engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities](#)

HSC Extension

Using the stories shared by the women featured in *Servant or Slave* as stimuli, create a PowerPoint presentation or [prezi](#) that responds to the following question:

How have past policies and treatment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people impacted on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people today?

Refer to examples and evidence from the documentary clip/s in your presentation.





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