

Year 4 Teacher Guide: Government House, Darwin

The Highest Award in the Commonwealth

Learning Area: History Stage of Schooling: Year 4

Topic: How people, places and environments interact, past and present

Knowledge and Understanding:

Students will investigate Australia's early colonisation and develop understandings about contact between societies (continuity and change, cause and effect) and its effects on people and their environments (perspectives, empathy).

Achievement Standard:

By the end of Year 4, students recognise the significance of events in bringing about change. They explain how and why life changed in the past and identify aspects of the past that have remained the same. They describe the experiences of an individual or group in the past.

Students sequence information about events and the lives of individuals in chronological order with reference to key dates. They develop questions about the past and locate, collect and sort information from different sources to answer these questions. They analyse sources to detect points of view. Students develop and present texts, including narrative recounts, using historical terms.

Inquiry Questions:

What was the nature and consequence of contact between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and early traders, explorers and settlers?

Lesson: The Highest Award in the Commonwealth

Learning Intention:

Students will use the tour of Government House to explore early contact of Aboriginal people with the British and the impact that it had on their lives.

Success Criteria:

Students will -

Question: Why was Ayaiga recognised?

Research: Government House to find out how other Aboriginal people have been recognised.

Analyse: What were the different opinions of people of the time?
Why was Ayaiga the only Aboriginal man to receive this award?

Evaluate: By comparing and contrasting the recognition of Aboriginal people between now and then.

Communicate: By creating and sharing your research about other events from the colonisation of the Northern Territory.

Supporting Materials:

Story: The Highest Award in the Commonwealth

Suggested Activities:

Excursion Activity 1. Recognition

Excursion Activity 2. Who am I?

School Activity 1. A Bravery Award

School Activity 2. Ayaiga's Bravery

School Activity 3. Points of View

School Activity 4. Find out more.

Suggested Sequence:

- Read and discuss the story.
- Complete school activities 1-4.
- Complete excursion activities 1 or 2.

References

Story and photos from:

Northern Territory Library: The Story of Ayaiga, February 1911.

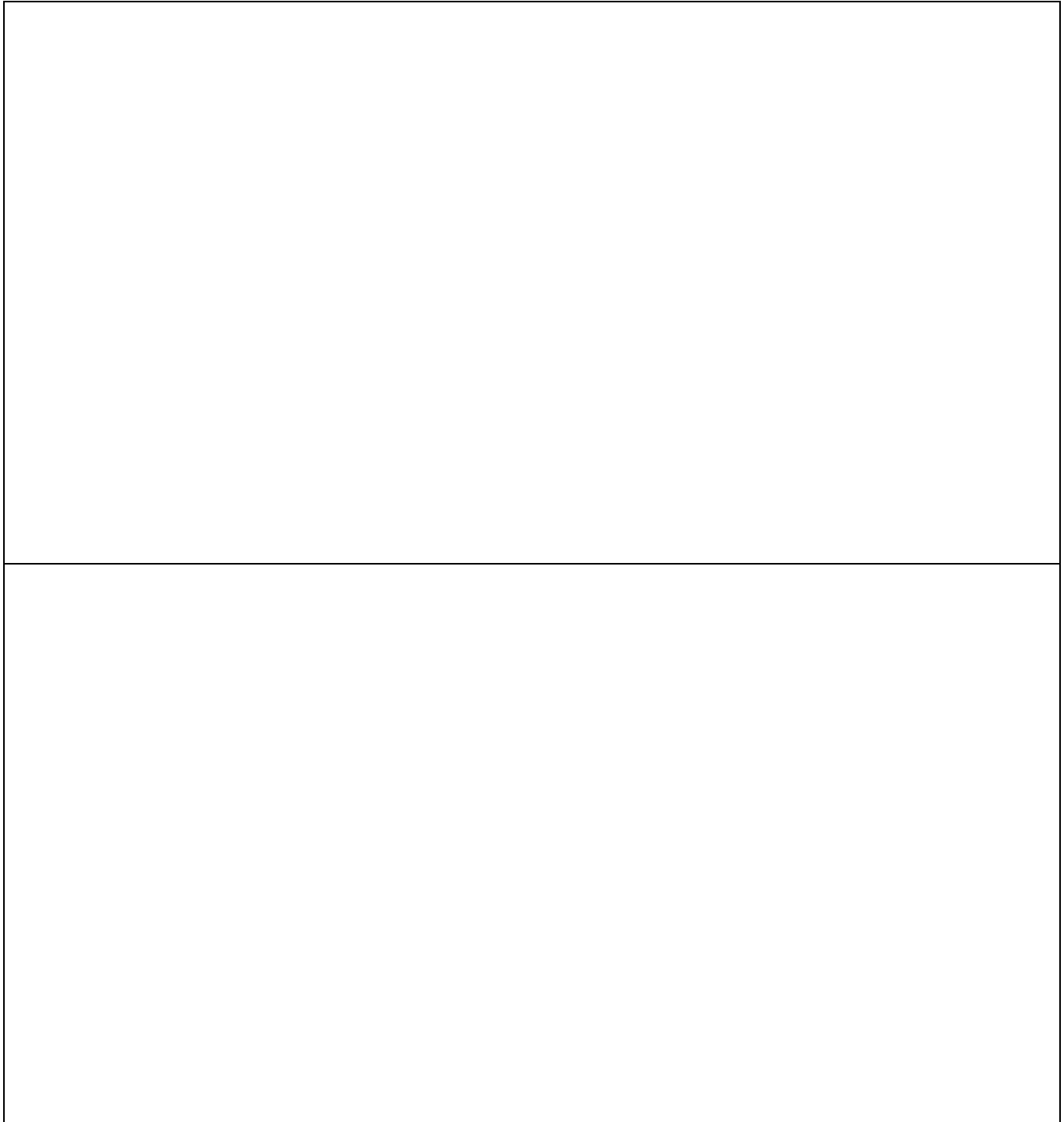
<https://ntl.nt.gov.au/story/story-ayaiga>

Teacher Questions on Story: The Highest Award of the Commonwealth

Page	Possible Questions
5	What would traditional life have been like for Ayaiga? How did it change with the pastoralists? How do you think the Alawa people felt?
8	Why do you think they used neck chains? Are the used today? Why not?
9	What do you think about trying to cross a flooded river? Do you know any stories about people today who have tried to do that?
10	What choices did Ayaiga have? Why do you think he risked his life?
13	Why didn't the Prime Minister want to nominate Ayaiga for the award? Why do you think the policeman and Ayaiga became friends?
14	Explain what you think the artwork means.
15 16	Discuss the meaning of the speeches. How did the different people view Aboriginal people at the time? What words did they use that are unacceptable today?
17	Explain what Ayaiga's grandson meant in his speech.
18	How does his medal being kept at Government House make you feel? Why did they decide to do this?

Excursion Activity 1. Recognition

At Government House, find out how Aboriginal people are remembered and recognised.
Sketch two important things you have found and find out what they mean.

A large empty rectangular box with a black border, intended for students to sketch and write their findings and reflections on Aboriginal people's recognition at Government House.

Excursion Activity 2. Who am I?

Use your tour of Government House to find the answers.

Clues	I think it is:
<p>I am a very important woman. I live overseas. I have visited Government House and stayed overnight. My picture is in Government House and I am looking out over one of the rooms.</p> <p><i>Who am I?</i></p>	
<p>I am a man. I lived more than one hundred years ago. My painting is on the wall. I was once the Administrator.</p> <p><i>Who am I?</i></p>	
<p>I am an Aboriginal man. I have done something brave. I have medals.</p> <p><i>Who am I?</i></p>	
<p>I am made of metal. I fell from the sky. I caused lots of damage.</p> <p><i>What am I?</i></p>	
<p>I am outside. I am up high and can look down on you. I am black, white and yellow. I am not human.</p> <p><i>What am I?</i></p>	
<p>Write your own '<i>Who am I?</i>' question and see if someone else can guess who it is.</p>	

School Activity 1. A Bravery Award

Think about what makes someone brave. Choose someone that you think deserves a bravery award. Write about what happened and why they would be worthy of a bravery award.

School Activity 2. Ayaiga's Bravery



The artwork in the book tells the story of Ayaiga. Create your own artwork to show his bravery. It could be a sculpture or a painting, as long as it shows bravery.

School Activity 3. Points of View

Each group will be given one of the cards with a newspaper report on it. Read the report and try to make sense of it. Remember that the reports were written more than 100 years ago so some words are not acceptable now and would never be used. Discuss the report with your group to answer the following questions. Be prepared to share your ideas with the class.

1. Summarise what the report means in one sentence.
2. What do you think the attitude of people were in those days?
3. What words did the reporter use that would not be used today?

Rewrite the report how it would be written today.

School Activity 3. News Reports about Ayaiga

Remember: The words in these old newspaper reports are not acceptable today.

News Report 1: A Black Hero

The only successful way of helping the aborigine is to give him regular, suitable, and paid work. The Roper River event shows that a good result comes from training the blacks in self-respect, related to education and honest work.

Register (Adelaide, SA: 1901 - 1929), Wednesday 18 December 1912, 12.

News Report 2: The Brave Aboriginal Who Was Honoured by the King

It is hoped that this Royal act will have the effect of raising the aboriginal in the eyes of Australians, who usually look upon the black as worthless and disgraceful creatures. This is surely a cruel way to look at the aboriginal...

Casino and Kyogle Courier and North Coast Advertiser (NSW: 1904 - 1932), Wed 3 Jul 1912, 3.

News Report 3: A Black Hero

The untrained savage's bravery was just the opposite of what might have been expected. Some explorers, station managers, and others have found that the wild people of Australia can be changed into faithful and loyal workers, who would think there was no work too difficult or dangerous, if they are treated with kindness and confidence but also with firmness.

Register (Adelaide, SA: 1901 - 1929), Wednesday 18 December 1912, 12.

News Report 4: A Black Hero

If Neighbour had thought about it, he might have decided that few, if any, white men in similar situations would have thought that an aborigine's life was worth taking a serious risks to keep alive.

Register (Adelaide, SA: 1901 - 1929), Wednesday 18 December 1912, 12.

School Activity 3. News Reports about Ayaiga

News Report 5: A Black Hero

On the whole, Australian whites have failed in their duty to the blacks. They have degraded them, either by making them receivers of hand outs, or by regarding them as a total nuisance...

Register (Adelaide, SA: 1901 - 1929), Wednesday 18 December 1912, 12.

News Report 6: The Searchlight

This paper shakes hands with Neighbour.

Critic (Adelaide, SA: 1897-1924), Wednesday 25 December 1912, 7.

News Report 7: Black Prisoner's Heroism

No one could have greater admiration for the brave deed of the native. It might be worth the Royal Society's medal, but the question is whether the true importance of it was understood by the native.

Geelong Advertiser (Vic: 1859 - 1929), Tuesday 21 March 1911, 4.

News Report 8: Brave Aborigine

An interesting ceremony was recently held at Government House, Port Darwin when an aborigine named Neighbour was presented with the King Albert medal for bravery in saving a life. Each of the speakers said that this was the first time in which the heroism of an aborigine has been publicly recognised.

Papuan Times (Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea: 1911 - 1916), Wednesday 8 January 1913, 6.

News Report 9: An Aboriginal Hero

Perhaps had he been asked, Neighbour would have preferred a blanket to a medal, because the value of the medal would not be appreciated by his friends.

Daily Herald (Adelaide, SA: 1910 - 1924), Friday 10 May 1912, page 4

N.B. These articles have all been paraphrased and simplified for easier reading by students.

School Activity 4. Find out more

Choose one the following to find out more. Use the mind map to plan your research questions further.

1. What was life like for Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory when Ayaiga received his award?
2. Who is another person who has received an award from the Administrator?
3. Or your own question about colonisation of the Northern Territory.

