

Celebrating bridges

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

Research project

Divide the class into groups and have each group complete a research project on a different bridge from a different Australian or overseas city. Students should include the following information:

- who designed the bridge
- when the bridge was completed
- why the bridge was built
- how long it took to build
- how much money it cost
- how many rivets were used
- how many men worked on the bridge?
- the height of the bridge?
- the length of the bridge?
- other interesting facts.

Each group should present its findings to the rest of the class.

Major bridges in capital cities

List the major bridges in each capital city of Australia. Here are some to get you started: West Gate Bridge (Melbourne), Gateway Bridge (Brisbane), Narrows Bridge (Perth), Tasman Bridge (Hobart). Display photos of these bridges and ask the students to classify them according to their type.

Captain Francis De Groot

Discuss the opening of the Sydney Harbour Bridge. Talk about the New South Wales Premier John T. Lang and what happened at the ceremony when Francis de Groot arrived on horseback. Have the students write a story about de Groot explaining why he cut the ribbon with his sword.

Bridge climbing

Look at a website about the Sydney Harbour Bridge. Print out or show images of the different views from the top of the bridge and distribute these to the class. Ask the students to imagine that they are on top of the bridge at sunrise or sunset. Have them sketch or paint what they would see from the top of the bridge.

The 1932 Sydney Harbour Bridge

The 1932 Sydney Harbour Bridge opening was a huge event and created a great sense of national pride. School children participated in a number of events to celebrate the opening of the bridge, the main four being:

1. *Opening Pageant* Over 500 children participated at the head of the pageant to open the Harbour Bridge.
2. *Message of Goodwill* A 'Message of Goodwill' was organised. The Message of Goodwill and Congratulations was from the 'Heart of New South Wales' to the citizens of Sydney. The message originated in Tottenham, the town chosen by the Lands Department to be the central school location in the state. The message was carried by pupils from each school to the next school by horse, bike and in some instances, by car. There were 73 schools located on the route and the message was signed by the teachers and two representatives from each school. The Historic Houses Trust of New South Wales maintains the list in their archives—many of the schools that participated still exist today.
3. *School's Day* A School's Day was organised permitting school children to be the first to able to walk across the bridge—three days prior to the official opening. Children were nominated from the different districts and up to 52,000 participated.
4. *School Display* A School Display was arranged at the Sydney Cricket Ground by the Public School Amateur Athletics Association with approximately 12,000 children participating.