

BUSHRANGERS

ACTIVITIES

Bushranger songs

Find some different songs about bushrangers. Choose one or two to teach the class. Discuss and show the students different instruments used by bush bands. Invite the class to use everyday objects to design and make percussion instruments to accompany the bush songs.

The Australian bush

Provide the students with books, paintings or photos that show different aspects of the Australian bush. Give the students paints, brushes and paper and ask them to create a scene that depicts the Australian bush.

A day in the life ...

Encourage the students to imagine they are bushrangers back in the 1800s. Invite each student to choose a nickname for their character and to write a 2–3 page narrative outlining an interesting time in their life.

Bushranger gallery

Divide the class into groups of 4 to 6 students. Encourage each group to create a short drama (about 30 seconds long) depicting some of the activities of bushrangers. Place each group in a different part of the classroom. As you move past the group have them perform their short play. Ask the group to stop moving when you 'Freeze!', and hold their position to create live paintings in an art gallery. Have each group 'unfreeze' and further act out their drama before 'freezing' them again in a different position to create a different painting.

Money, money, money!

Explain to the class that money systems in the time of the bushrangers were very different from our dollars and cents. Provide the students with books and photos of pounds and pence. Ask the students to calculate how much a pound back in the 1800s would be worth in today's dollars and cents.

The Wild Colonial Boy

Give each student a copy of the poem 'The Wild Colonial Boy' (author unknown) and encourage different students to learn each verse. Sing or recite the poem as a class.

Ask the students to work in small groups to rewrite one of the verses in modern-day English. To extend this activity ask the groups to create their own verse of 'The Wild Colonial Boy'.

Here is the full text of the poem.

'Tis of a Wild Colonial Boy, Jack Doolan was his name,
Of poor but honest parents he was born in Castlemaine.
He was his father's only hope, his mother's pride and joy,
And dearly did his parents love the Wild Colonial Boy.

Chorus

Come, all my hearties, we'll roam the mountains high,
Together we will plunder, together we will die.
We'll wander over valleys, and gallop over plains,
And we'll scorn to live in slavery, bound down with iron chains.

He was scarcely sixteen years of age when he left his father's home,
And through Australia's sunny clime a bushranger did roam.
He robbed those wealthy squatters, their stock he did destroy,
And a terror to Australia was the Wild Colonial Boy.

In '61 this daring youth commenced his wild career,
With a heart that knew no danger, no foeman did he fear.
He stuck up the Beechworth mail-coach, and robbed Judge MacEvoy,
Who trembled, and gave up his gold to the Wild Colonial Boy.

He bade the judge 'Good morning', and told him to beware,
That he'd never rob a hearty chap that acted on the square,
And never to rob a mother of her son and only joy,
Or else you might turn outlaw, like the Wild Colonial Boy.

One day as he was riding the mountain-side along,
A-listening to the little birds, their pleasant laughing song,
Three mounted troopers rode along — Kelly, Davis and FitzRoy —
They thought that they would capture him, the Wild Colonial Boy.

‘Surrender now, Jack Doolan, you see there’s three to one.
Surrender now, Jack Doolan, you’re a daring highwayman.’
He drew a pistol from his belt, and shook the little toy,
‘I’ll fight, but not surrender,’ said the Wild Colonial Boy.

He fired at Trooper Kelly and brought him to the ground,
And in return from Davis received a mortal wound.
All shattered through the jaws he lay still firing at FitzRoy,
And that’s the way they captured him — the Wild Colonial Boy.