

# Treasures Wall Exhibition Teachers' Kit



The Treasures Wall showcases historical and contemporary materials held in the State Library of South Australia. It is an exhibition of unique items that reflect our cultural identity. Selected items tell stories of times past and present, of historical moments and of great achievements.

By having such items on display, we can introduce the people of South Australia to their heritage, provide a sense of history and an appreciation of those who helped shape it.

The Treasures Wall exhibition is an ideal focus point for the study and appreciation of history. Students of all ages will find something of wonder and interest, and gain an understanding of the vital role which cultural institutions play in the preservation of our heritage for future generations.

Because of the eclectic nature of the exhibition and the regular changeover of artefacts, the exhibition is best viewed as a whole, with an emphasis on its heritage value rather than trying to fit each exhibit into a particular historical context. To this extent the State Library of South Australia Education Unit has put together a kit that builds onto the concepts expressed in the South Australian school curriculum's Change and Continuity strand of the Society and Environment band.

## **Prepare your class for a visit to the Treasures Wall**

It is recommended that teachers spend some time preparing their class for a visit to the State Library. If possible, visit ahead of students in order to plan lessons around the particular learning objectives.

Activity sheets can be downloaded and printed from our website or posted to you before the class visit, so that teachers can instruct their students on how to complete the sheet and make best use of their visit.

Look at the treasures on the State Library website [www.slsa.sa.gov.au/exhibitions](http://www.slsa.sa.gov.au/exhibitions) as a class and read the associated information attached to each exhibit.

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## **Primary Students**

### **Teaching suggestions for Years 3 - 7**

For younger children you may want to focus on the experience of visiting the Library as an example of a public institution that is dedicated to collecting and preserving our culture.

Discuss the concept of heritage with your class, posing questions like:

What is heritage?

What makes one item considered to be of more heritage value than another?

Explain to the class that the exhibition they are about to see is about showing off special items that represent certain times and events in our history.

The wall itself incorporates natural materials that have played an important part in the commercial and industrial history of South Australia. Highlighting how industries such as wine making, wool or vehicle manufacture have contributed to South Australian life could be included in the visit.

If you would like to use the worksheets prepared, print the one suitable for your class and distribute. Explain what they will do with them when they come into the Library.

### **Back at school – things to do when you return to the classroom**

Explain that heritage can relate to things of a local or personal level as well as public value. For example, discuss things that reflect the heritage of your school – school motto, sporting trophies, school magazines, class photographs.

Have your students think of something special that they might have at home that is part of their family heritage. Are these items on display?

Children could list some items of personal heritage that could be displayed at home.

Ask the children to draw a picture of their own exhibition.

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## **Secondary Students**

### **Teaching suggestions for Years 8 – 10**

Introduce the concept of examining artefacts as evidence of past events.  
Discuss how items from the past tell us about how people lived.

Brainstorm: think of some everyday items around you that might one day be considered a curiosity.

Ask the class whose role is it to collect and maintain such historical items.

Look at the Treasures Wall website [www.slsa.sa.gov.au/exhibitions](http://www.slsa.sa.gov.au/exhibitions) before your visit to the State Library.

### **Back at school activity**

Have students complete a research project related to one of the historical items they have chosen to focus on in the exhibition, eg cuneiform writing, illuminated manuscripts, or the importance of the River Murray in Australia. This would give the visit to the Library a contextual relevance.

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## What's it made from?

One of the features of the Treasures Wall is the range of natural materials that the panels are made from. The materials used have a special place in the development and the history of South Australia.

The panels are made from materials such as:

- Abalone shell
- Bluestone
- Cattle hide
- Coal
- Copper
- Glass (green)
- Gold
- Granite
- Grapevine prunings
- Iron ore
- Lead
- Limestone
- Opal
- Quartz composite
- Salt
- Silver
- Slate
- Steel: car duco
- Talc
- Wheat
- Wool
- Zinc

*Find out where these materials are mined or produced in Australia.*

*What do you think is the most unusual material used here? Why?*

*What material do you think looks best on the Wall?*

*Why do you think materials such as wheat, grapevines, opal and coal have been used?*

*Which of these are particularly relevant to South Australia? Why?*

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## Senior Secondary Students

### Teaching suggestions for Years 11 - 12

The Treasures Wall can serve as a good introduction to teaching senior history students about source analysis.

Look at the different kinds of sources for examining and interpreting history. Explain the difference between primary sources and secondary sources.

Look at the Treasures Wall website for examples of primary sources and how we can use these sources to 'read' history.

#### **Quick quiz: Is it a primary or a secondary source?**

Draw up two columns.

Label one **Secondary Source** and the other **Primary Source**.

Put each item on the list into an appropriate column.

- *Book written by an historian*
- *Newspaper*
- *Diary of a passenger on the HMS Buffalo*
- *Ship's Log*
- *Journal article written by an historian*
- *Diary or book of letters published in a book format*
- *Oral History*
- *Film or video*
- *Photographs*
- *Exhibits of artefacts*
- *Facsimiles (a facsimile is an exact copy of the original item)*

Print the Senior Secondary Worksheet for students to preview in preparation for their visit to the State Library.

Encourage students to try and flesh out the story behind the item, drawing on what they know about the period to which it belongs or its background.

#### **Extension work**

- Preservation of artefacts: students could research the preservation and conservation techniques used by libraries, archives and museums to ensure that valuable items do not deteriorate over time.
- Students with an interest in exhibition design could look at the different styles and techniques that are used to exhibit historical artefacts.