

# RUTH CROW

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## Her Place: Women in The West

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**Class grouping:**  
**Time:**

Whole Class  
25 Minutes

**Purpose:**

The purpose of this activity is to introduce students to some of Ruth Crow's achievements prior to visiting the Her Place exhibition. Specifically, students will contemplate their existing knowledge about Australia's social and environmental history, geography and culture.

The activities in this resource work well if students are able to use their electronic devices to research some questions. This resource is inquiry based and provides students with leading questions for discovery and discussion.

**Activities:**

- 1. Group reading**
- 2. Comprehension**
- 3. Creative response**

**Preparation  
and Materials:**

Print out reading and questions for students.

## Her Place Education: Ruth Crow, 1916-1999

Ruth Crow married her husband, Maurice Crow, just before World War Two. They worked together throughout their lives, starting with their war efforts. Ruth, like other Australians, had a hard life during WW2, but she spent this time coordinating childcare and did a lot of work with women and children in Brunswick.

Ruth was spirited, dedicated, passionate, dynamic and, by all accounts, had a cheeky sense of humour. She was well liked by all. Her interest in childcare and pre-school child development focused on children of the working class, children from a variety of ethnic backgrounds and those of Aboriginal parentage. Her work always focused on the underprivileged.

Ruth's skills involved coordinating culturally relevant community involvement. Hers was a cooperative approach, focusing on building bridges and achieving fair outcomes for everyone. She contributed to the Melbourne City Council Childcare Consultation, organising community meetings, asking parents and young people to share their stories, and performing a demographic analysis that outlined the needs for these families.

Eventually, Ruth was involved in the Action for Adequate Childcare in 1970, and contributed to the revolutionary introduction of childcare that spread throughout Australia in the 70s and 80s.

Ruth and her husband were also heavily involved in the Communist Party and urban politics and planning. In 1969, the pair published Plan for Melbourne through the Communist Party. This document took a community based approach to the planning of Melbourne and addressed environmental issues, which were also represented in their work *Seeds of Change*.

In her later years, Ruth was a senior associate in the Faculty of Arts at Victoria University in Footscray. Her work can be found in the Crow Collection at the University. Ruth was also made a Member of the Order of Australia for her services to the community regarding participation in environmental land planning and social planning.

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## Questions:

1. What was Ruth Crow famous for during WW2?
2. What kind of demographic of people was Ruth Crow known for working with?
3. Ruth Crow had a cooperative approach – according to the reading, what does this mean?
4. What was the name of her work on the environment?
5. Use your computer or electronic device to find out what the Order of Australia means.

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## Creative Response:

Create a persuasive letter written by a man or woman during WW2 exploring how women are struggling to participate in the workforce and take care of their children while the men are away at war. Discuss the work that Ruth Crow is doing to help the woman/man, why it is necessary and why it needs to continue.

OR

Write a short poem (two verses/12-16 lines) that explores why it is important to help those who are less fortunate.

