

ALMA THORPE

Class groupings:

Whole class, pairs, individual

Time:

50–90 minutes

Purpose:

The purpose of this lesson is to introduce students to the context of Alma Thorpe's work prior to visiting the *Her Place* exhibition, where they will be able to explore Alma's contributions to her community in more depth. In this lesson, students will consider Alma's role in establishing the Victorian Aboriginal Health Service, research the role of the service itself, and use poetry to reflect on Alma's work.

Activities:

1. Screening of short video
2. Speed research
3. Alma Thorpe haiku

Preparation and materials:

- Teacher access to screen/projector for screening short video
- Student access to internet
- **One** printed copy **per student** (or a digital link) to the Alma Thorpe haiku handout

Activity 1

10 minutes

Whole class

Screening and class discussion

This task is intended to help students to begin to develop a basic understanding of the life and work of Alma Thorpe.

1. Screen the short video about Alma Thorpe found here:
<https://herplacemuseum.com/biographies/alma-thorpe> (Duration: 1:04)
2. Ask students what they think Alma might be referring to when she says that ‘the oppression that was there those days ... [is] still there these days’?
Do students think any of the same discrimination has or does occur in their own community?
Write student responses on the board and revisit at the end of the class.

Activity 2

15 minutes

Paired or small groups

Speed research

1. In pairs or small groups, ask students to conduct some research into the Victorian Aboriginal Health Service (VAHS). It may be more efficient if students divide the questions amongst their groups or pairs, or if you allocate questions to each grouping yourself to save time.

Guiding questions:

- What is the Victorian Aboriginal Health Service?
- How and when was it established?
- What was Alma Thorpe's role in the establishment of the service? Why do you think she worked as a volunteer for such a long time?
- What sorts of services does the VAHS provide?
- Why is it necessary for there to be a health service that specifically supports the Aboriginal community?

Provide the following links to your students as a starting point for their research:

Victorian Aboriginal Health Service website

<http://bit.ly/herplace-vaqs>

Victorian Aboriginal Honour Roll - Alma Thorpe

<http://bit.ly/herplace-alma>

2. After 15 minutes of research, ask one student from each pair or group to share a fact they have discovered about the VAHS (and in particular Alma Thorpe's role in its establishment), something interesting they have discovered in the process of their research, or a question they may have about the VAHS.

Activity 3

30 minutes

Individual task

Poetic response: Haiku

1. Read through the task below with your students and then ask them to complete a haiku (or more if time allows) for Alma Thorpe. Provide students with the opportunity to share their work with the class and discuss whether any of the themes of the poems link with the discussion that occurred in Activity 1.
2. You may wish to display your students' work in your classroom.

Alma Thorpe Haiku

A haiku is a traditional form of Japanese poetry. A typical haiku is a three-line observation about a fleeting moment involving nature, although haiku are also written about much broader subjects. In this instance, you are going to write a haiku that highlights the achievements and personal characteristics of Alma Thorpe.

Haiku poems have a set of rules. They consist of 3 lines. The first and last lines of a haiku have **5 syllables** and the middle line has **7 syllables**. The lines rarely rhyme. Here's a haiku to help you remember:

I am first with five
Then seven in the middle
Five again to end.

Activity

1. Think back to the research you undertook about Alma Thorpe and the video you watched of Alma speaking about her work earlier in your class.
2. Come up with some key words or themes that summarise Alma's achievements, or the way she speaks about her life's work.
3. Compose a haiku that reflects Alma's achievements.
4. Check with your teacher that your syllable pattern is correct.
5. Share your work with your class!

