

THE 80s ARE BACK

History (Stage 5) Australia's Social and Cultural History in the Post-War Period (Topic 8)

Introduction

The 80s are back is an exhibition that explores Australian life and popular culture during this formative decade of social, cultural, economic and political change. Interpreted through subcultures, movements and trends, this exhibition allows students to explore key themes relevant to history, society and popular culture including design, fashion, film and music.

Inquiry question

- What have been the major social and cultural features of the post-war decade?

The eleven sections of The 80s are back exhibition will allow students to answer that inquiry question for themselves as they actively explore history to learn about:

- The impact of changing technology on everyday life in post-war Australia
- The social and cultural features of one post-war decade

Powerhouse Museum as a site study

The syllabus suggests a museum as a site study, making *The 80s are back* exhibition at the Powerhouse Museum ideal for an excursion. The Museum opened in March 1988 on the site of the former Ultimo Power Station, which was refurbished to house the Museum. Recycling disused buildings and sites was a major urban and architectural trend of the 80s. The Powerhouse Museum and

the Wharf Theatre were the most notable examples in Sydney. Relevant to the site itself, the original Powerhouse logo, featured in the Design section of the exhibition, was created by Garry Emery's minimalist rendering of the Museum building, reflecting descriptions of the Museum as a 'compendium of 80s design'.

Relevant outcomes

- 5.1 explains social, political and cultural developments and events and evaluates their impact on Australian life
- 5.2 assesses the impact of international events and relationships on Australia's history
- 5.4 sequences major historical events to show an understanding of continuity, change and causation
- 5.5 identifies, comprehends and evaluates historical sources
- 5.6 uses sources appropriately in an historical inquiry
- 5.7 explains different contexts, perspectives and interpretations of the past.

In these notes you will find

- Exhibition map — page 2
- Pre-visit and post-visit activities — page 3
- Focus study: Post-war Australia — page 3
- Focus study: Decade Study — page 6
- Unit of work — page 13

EXHIBITION FLOOR PLAN

The exhibition is divided into eleven sections:



1. ON THE SCREEN



2. VIDEO AND COMPUTER GAMES



3. MUSIC



4. SUBCULTURES



5. PARTYING



6. THE AIDS CRISIS



7. FASHION



8. FADS AND TOYS



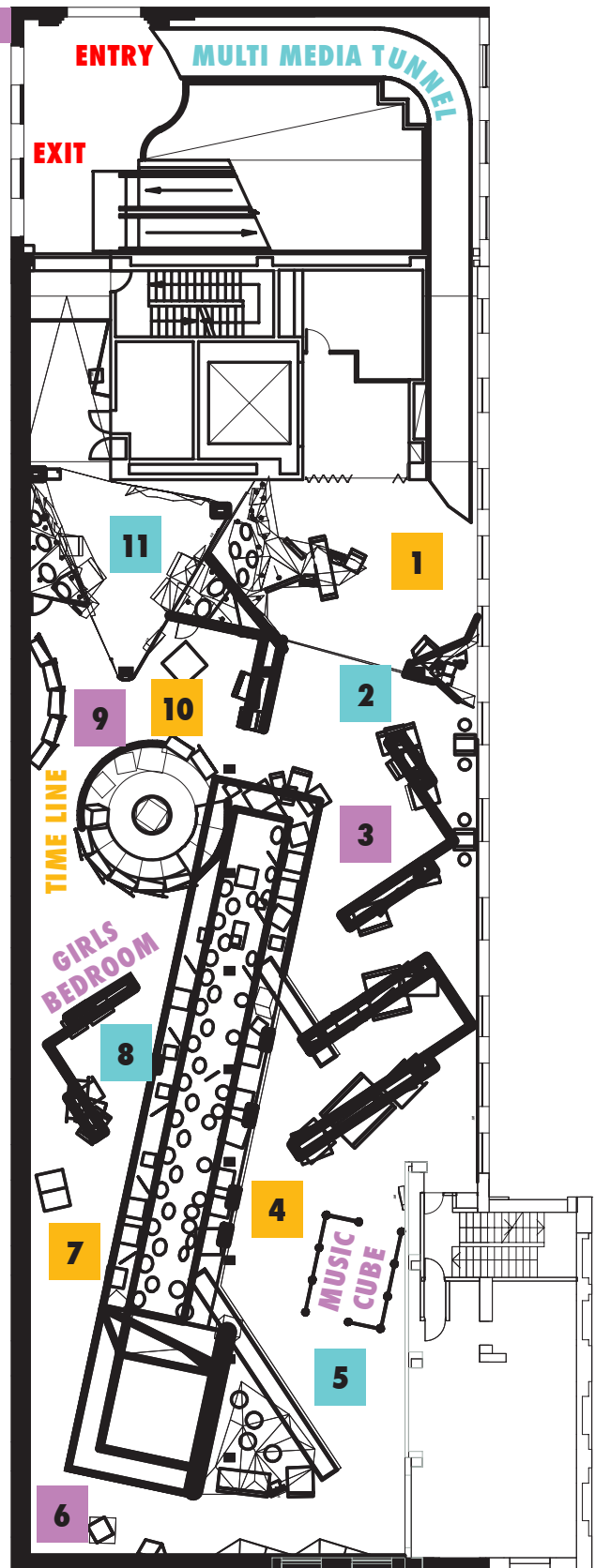
9. DESIGN



10. THE BIG EVENTS



11. THE NEO-80S



Pre-visit activities

You can explore some of the focus studies and related questions outlined in these notes with your students prior to your visit by viewing as a group the exhibition slideshow, which can be found at <http://www.powerhousemuseum.com/the80sareback/index.php/education/exhibition-slideshow>

Post-visit activities

Along with the general 80s timeline featured in the exhibition, themed timelines, which sequence the decade in terms of its major social and cultural features have been developed for Stage 5 history students, including fads and fashion, music, entertainment and sports. See *the unit of work for activities for students (page 13)*.

Focus study: Post-war Australia

The exhibition allows students to learn about the impact of changing technology on everyday life in post-war Australia in terms of the following focus areas:

■ Housing and Architecture (Design section)

The 80s saw a desire to incorporate meaning into buildings and focus on urban form and community, widely perceived as a failure of modern cities at the time.

Architects and designers envisioned new and complex high-density cities, designed to reintegrate work, leisure, sporting and other urban functions.

After decades of neglect, Sydney's public spaces became a focus of the city's 1980s makeover. The new Darling Harbour leisure precinct was the major outcome. This 'place for people' was a new approach to public space, featuring privately developed retail and entertainment venues, two museums and the Monorail people mover.

Key focus study items in this section include:

- Model of North Sydney's Optus Tower
- The Multi-Function Polis Model, designed by Edwards Madigan Torzillo Briggs.

■ Home appliances (Design section)

The 80s were the 'design decade', a time when appliances complemented the other, sometimes flamboyant design features of a home and interiors.

Key focus study items in this section include:

- 'Tree Tops' floor lamp designed by Ettore Sottsass
- Mantel clocks designed by US architect Michael Graves

■ Transport (Design Section)

The privately funded monorail 'people mover' was designed to overcome Darling Harbour's isolation from the Sydney CBD. However it quickly became a symbol of the Bicentenary building boom and its impact was criticised as wasteful and a blight on Sydney's urban spaces, often referred to by people as 'Monsterail'.

Key focus study items in this section include:

- Model of Monorail

■ Entertainment (On the Screen section)

The Miniseries

The 80s saw a boom in television production in Australian, particularly in high quality miniseries dramatising Australian history. These programs had an influence on a developing sense of national identity.

Student activity: What miniseries would you like to make to capture your understanding of Australian history?

Key focus study items in this section include:

- The Kennedy Miller miniseries *The Dismissal*, *Vietnam* and *The Cowra Breakout*

The VCR revolution

VCRs (Video Cassette Recorders) became available in 1981, changing the way people watched television allowing more choice about what we watched and when. Video also had an impact upon cinema attendance, as we could now watch movies on video at home. By 1985, 38% of Australian households owned a video cassette recorder. VHS and Beta formats battled it out, with VHS eventually emerging as the consumers' preferred format, not because it was better but due to more effective marketing. VHS was the commonly used format until being replaced by DVDs and Blu-Ray discs.

Key focus study items in this section include:

- Sony Beta video cassette player
- VHS video cassette player

■ Entertainment (Video & Computer Games section)

The 80s were the golden age of video games with innovations in graphics and concepts constantly coming onto the market. By the middle of the decade, the impact of the personal computer was being felt as it was adopted for business use and computer games. In 1983 *Time* magazine named the computer Machine of the Year.

This shift away from consoles toward PCs contributed to the video game collapse of 1983. The Nintendo DS in 85 was a significant technological development, which had a positive impact on bringing the console industry back to life

Personal Computers such as the Tandy TRS-80, the first mass marketed computer moved games out of the arcade and into the home, introducing a generation of kids to cyberspace and setting the scene for the digital age. The launch of the user friendly Apple Macintosh in 1984 transformed computer access.

Key focus study items in this section include:

- Computers — Commodore 64, the Tandy TRS-80 and the Apple Mac 128
- Arcade games — Space Invaders, Pac-Man, Donkey Kong
- Portable games — Nintendo Game and Watch series
- Consoles — Atari 2600 Console

Computer timeline

- **1982** — Commodore 64 home computer released and a commercial success within the year.
- **1983** — *Time* magazine names the computer as 'Machine of Year'
- **1984** — Apple releases the **Macintosh**, first computer to have a mouse and a graphic user interface
- **1985** — **Dulmont Magnum laptop computer**: One of the first laptop produced in Australia, it came with 96 KB of RAM and cost \$2995.
- **1986** — first 386 microprocessor launched
- **1986** — first laptop computer (IBM convertible)
- **1988** — first 486 microprocessor is launched

See complete computer timeline at http://www.powerhousemuseum.com/pdf/education/80s/80s_timeline.pdf

■ Entertainment (Music section)

Audio technology

The development of the cassette and cassette players made music portable, a technological change that transformed the way we listened to music. By the mid 1980s cassettes accounted for more than 50% of global music sales in the mid-1980s and most new cars were fitted with cassette players.

The Sony Walkman (1979) was a groundbreaking personalised wearable hi-fi product that boosted the boom in cassette sales. The Walkman was the iPod of its day, although cumbersome and heavy by comparison. It was as an extension of the user's private space. It had clunky buttons, short battery life and no shuffle mode.

The portable stereo cassette and radio player was also known as a boombox or Ghetto Blaster and was used for performances in public spaces rather than listening to music in a private space.

Albums and cassettes dominated until the end of the decade but the arrival of the Compact Disc (CD) was a major technological change. Cassettes along with vinyl records were quickly cast aside with the coming of CDs. John Farnham's *Whispering Jack* was one of the first Australian CDs. The CD succeeded because various manufacturers agreed on a single format.

Key focus study items in this section include:

- Audio cassette player, Sony Walkman model TPS-L2, 1979
- Various cassette mixtapes with cover artwork
- Sony Walkman cassette player, Japan, [1984] (with earphones)
- Compact disc player, the Sony Discman, 1987

Question

There was hesitation in the 80s around the idea of people listening to music on their own. How does this compare to today where the use of MP3 players such as the iPod are commonplace

Synth Pop and Dance Music

Technological development in music production meant that by the mid 80s synth pop and electronic dance music was replacing the raw post-punk sound. It embraced the synthetic and artificial such as synthesizers, sequencers and drum machines. People began to move away from live music in pubs and into the party and nightclub scene

Key focus study items in this section include:

- New technologies eg Prophet 5 synthesiser used by ICEHOUSE
- The music cube — featuring electronic music from Severed Heads and other bands

Music video

The launch of MTV and the music video in the early 80s transformed the way we experienced music, with the look in many cases becoming as important as the sound. Songs were for the first time accompanied by a visual presence changing the way people received and interpreted music.

Key focus study items in this section include:

- video clips of 80s bands

■ **Communications (Fashion, Video and Computer Games, Timeline section)**

Key dates

- **1981** — the first 186 microprocessor becomes available
- **1981** — Mobile Telephone System 007 (PAMPS) begins operating in Australia
- **1981** — the Cochlear company established to advance the bionic ear developed by Dr Graeme Clark and colleagues in Australia.
- **1981** — IBM introduces its first personal computer, using Microsoft's MS-DOS operating system
- **198x** — The new mobile network, Advanced Mobile Phone Service (AMPS) is launched, replacing the old limited mobile network - Mobile Telephone System 007 (PAMPS)
- **1985** — **AUSSAT** launches its first domestic satellite from NASA's space shuttle. These satellites have an impact on remote areas in rural Australia allowing radio and TV to be broadcast into these communities.
- **1987** — Telecom (now Telstra) establishes first analogue mobile phone network in Australia

Key focus study items in this section include:

- Telecom Walkabout mobile phone in the Fashion section
- Apple Macintosh in 'Video and Computer Games' section.



Focus study: Decade Study

The exhibition allows students to learn about the **social and cultural features of ONE post-war decade** including the following focus areas:

Exhibition sections/ focus study areas	Key ideas	Look for key focus study items including
Fashion	<p>From the theatrical flourishes of Vivienne Westwood and Zandra Rhodes to Katharine Hamnett's slogan T-shirts; from Madonna's outer — underwear to Margaret Thatcher's bow tie blouses and power suits — the 80s saw as many fashion styles and statements as there were parties, boardrooms and protest marches where you could wear them. This section looks at a few of these fashion statements and what they tell us about the decade</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 'power suit' for men and women — upwardly mobile men and women dressing for success; tailored suits with broad shoulders the look of choice for women asserting their authority in the work place • Celebrity style — the influence of Madonna's style; Princess Diana's romantic and sloan ranger look; Hammer pants popularised by MC Hammer; Stay alive in 85' T-shirt, by Katharine Hamnett, bearing political slogans • The body beautiful — aerobics inspired leisure wear, the style driven by the obsession with the 'body beautiful' and a new emphasis on strong, fit women • Avant garde — Japanese and British designers challenging traditional ideas of fashion and glamour • 'Post-punk' art clothes — designed by Australian designers like Katie Pye and Bronwyn Bancroft • Slide show — hair and fashion of the 80s • Teenage girl's bedroom — reconstruction from the decade, including various examples of focus studies including, fashion, music, entertainment, British or American influences on popular culture. <p>As a comparative study, examine how this room differs from your room today or that of a girl you know.</p> <p>See the complete 80s fads and fashion timeline at http://www.powerhousemuseum.com/pdf/education/80s/80s_fads_and_fashion_timeline.pdf</p>

Exhibition sections/ focus study areas	Key ideas	Look for key focus study items including
<p>Music</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post-punk/new wave • Inner city indie scene • Suburban pub rock • Synth pop and new romantic • Dance music 	<p>First there was post-punk and new wave ... then there was Madonna, Michael and MTV. The decade that began with a celebration of do-it-yourself indie styles also witnessed some of the slickest, biggest selling productions ever, as music became as much about the look as the sound. In the process a lot of Australian bands hit the big time at home and overseas.</p> <p>By the mid 80s synth pop and electronic dance music was replacing the raw post punk sound; record companies cultivated Australian versions of these synth bands including ICEHOUSE, Pseudo Echo, The Reels, Mi-Sex and Real Life. Fans began moving away from live music in pubs and into the party and nightclub scene as electronic dance music and more sophisticated venues grew in popularity.</p> <p>In a world without the internet, poster art and fanzines flourished to spread the word. Also 2JJ and community radio played a big part in getting airtime for local indie bands.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Michael Jackson — featuring the sequined jacket worn by MJ when he revealed his signature dance move, the moonwalk plus the glove he wore to collect Grammy awards for <i>Thriller</i> album in 1983 • 80s superstars — paraphernalia, instruments and costumes from International and Australian stars including Boy George, David Bowie, Nick Cave Men at Work, Midnight Oil and INXS (including handwritten lyrics by Michael Hutchence) • Inner city post-punk indie scene — posters and album covers from pioneer punk and post-punk bands including Radio Birdman and the Birthday Party; independent record labels including Phantom and Mushroom Records • New technologies — cassettes made music portable; followed by arrival of CDs • Suburban pub rock — Cold Chisel/Jimmy Barnes, The Church, Midnight Oil paraphernalia; posters and magazine covers • Synth and dance music — posters and album covers; new technologies used by these bands, eg Prophet 5 synthesiser used by ICEHOUSE <p>See the complete 80s music timeline at http://www.powerhousemuseum.com/pdf/education/80s/80s_music_timeline.pdf</p>



Exhibition sections/ focus study areas	Key ideas	Look for key focus study items including
<p>Entertainment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TV soaps • Films • Consoles • Arcade games • PCs • Gameboys • Games • Barbie • Spin-offs 	<p>Film and TV The 80s were a coming of age for Australian cinema and television. New tax incentives encouraged investors to plough money into the industry and the result was not only a boom in production but a new confidence in the way Australia presented itself to the world. On the small screen American soaps like <i>Dallas</i> and <i>Dynasty</i> were a defining influence in 80s popular culture, while local soaps like <i>Neighbours</i> and <i>Prisoner</i> became overseas successes.</p> <p>Video and computer games The 80s were the golden age of video games with innovations in graphics and concepts were constantly coming onto the market. By the middle of the decade the personal computer had moved games out of the arcade and into the home, introducing a generation of kids to cyberspace and setting the scene for the digital age. This section looks at some of the classics from these early days.</p> <p>Fads and toys The 80s were the decade of conspicuous consumption and ‘must have’ products — for kids and adults alike. Cashed up parents were easy targets for marketing techniques that made Rubik’s Cubes, Sylvanian Families and Strawberry Shortcake dolls essential items for Generation X kids. Merchandising spin-offs from television and movies expanded the ‘must-have’ mix. This section looks at a few of these quintessentially 80s items</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clips — from a selection of Australian 80s movies • Guitar — featured in the film <i>Young Einstein</i>, played by Yahoo Serious • Posters — for Australian 80s films • Audiovisuals — clips from Australian soaps • Paraphernalia — costumes and posters etc from local and international soaps and miniseries • Arcade games — including Space Invaders, Pac-Man, Donkey Kong • Portable games — Nintendo Game & Watch series • Computers — Commodore 64 Computer Tandy TRS-80, the first mass marketed computer and Apple Mac 128 • Consoles — Atari 2600 Console, Commodore 64 Computer • Mind games — Rubik’s Cube and Trivial Pursuit were international sensations selling millions • Cabbage Patch Kids — expensive and often hard to find adding to their desirability. • Barbie — reinvented in the 80s as a credit card-carrying executive and aerobics instructor • Star Wars — the huge success of the <i>Star Wars</i> films in the 80s fuelled sales of merchandise. • Teenage girl’s bedroom — a typical bedroom from the 80s with fashion, film posters and accessories <p>‘See the complete 80s entertainment timeline at http://www.powerhousemuseum.com/pdf/education/80s/80s_entertainment_timeline.pdf</p>

Exhibition sections/ focus study areas	Key ideas	Look for key focus study items including
<p>Sport</p>	<p>Timeline</p> <p>During the 80s Australia enjoyed many sporting achievements, which were widely celebrated across the nation. The Timeline lists a number of these key events with images</p> <p>The 80s saw various sporting figures named Australian of the Year highlighting the country's recognition of their sporting achievements. They include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International marathon runner Robert De Castella (83) • Solo yachtsman, Kay Cottee (88) • Test cricket captain Allan Border (89) 	<p>Some Key Events</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jan 1981 — The Australian Institute of Sport (AIS) in Canberra is officially opened by the Prime Minister, Hon. Malcolm Fraser. This formed part of the government's efforts in developing sporting schemes throughout the decade. • Feb 1981 — Trevor Chappell in a one-day match against New Zealand bowls the final infamous ball underarm to Brian McKechnie • May 1981 — Olympic Federation votes 6–5 in favour of sending a team to the Moscow Olympics despite the Fraser's Government request for a boycott to protest USSR invasion of Afghanistan • 1982 — Commonwealth Games open in Brisbane • 1983 — <i>Australia II</i> wins the America's Cup. America had previously enjoyed a 132 year reign over the wining title. • 1984 — Tim MacCartney-Snape and Greg Mortimer become the first Australians to reach the summit of Mount Everest. • July 1987 — Pat Cash defeats Ivan Lendl to win Wimbledon Men's Singles tennis title <p>See the complete 80s sport timeline at http://www.powerhousemuseum.com/pdf/education/80s/80s_sport_timeline.pdf</p>

Exhibition sections/ focus study areas	Key ideas	Look for key focus study items including
<p>British or American influences on popular culture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Television • Film • Music • Video games • Subcultures 	<p>Television and film</p> <p>Television during this decade also provided a medium for British and American values, style and humour, which influenced Australian society. Examples included <i>Dallas</i> and <i>Dynasty</i>. The miniseries <i>Return to Eden</i>, was strongly influenced by the lavish, melodrama of shows such as <i>Dynasty</i>.</p> <p>Local soaps also flourished with overseas successes like <i>Neighbours</i> and <i>Prisoner</i> putting Australia in the spotlight. In terms of dominance at the Australian box office, American comedies and large-budget action movies were most popular.</p> <p>The role of video in music</p> <p>Music videos in the 80s helped create the avenue for globalisation as both sound and image became so easily transportable. Music from countries such as America and Britain were successfully imported into Australia through the music video format. Music program such as <i>Countdown</i> and <i>Rage</i> allowed Australians to readily view music videos from International artists. Music videos were produced that accompanied songs where the videos became equally important as the music itself.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On the screen — costumes and posters etc from local and international soaps <p>See the 80s entertainment timeline at http://www.powerhousemuseum.com/pdf/education/80s/80s_entertainment_timeline.pdf</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Michael Jackson — the biggest music star of the 1980s who revolutionised the music video clip and broke new ground for black musicians in America. On display is MJ's jacket worn when he first performed his legendary dance the Moonwalk and the single sequined glove he wore when he collected five Grammy awards for <i>Thriller</i> <p>Consider the popularity and impact of Michael Jackson? How much of this was attributable to Music videos?</p> <p>Consider artists today and the role of music videos. What is different in terms of the way people watch music videos and how does this affect their influence on popular culture?</p>

Exhibition sections/ focus study areas	Key ideas	Look for key focus study items including
British or American influences on popular culture (cont'd)	<p>Music</p> <p>The aftermath of late-70s punk was termed new wave, a catch-all term for a set of British-influenced, fashion-conscious styles. New wave revisited past genres, eg 60s mod (The Jam), ska (Specials), rockabilly (Stray Cats). Music, style and graphic design worked together to emphasize the newness of the genre. British artists included Elvis Costello, Joe Jackson, Madness and the Police. Australians were among the first to appreciate the Police, who played at the Hordern Pavilion in March 1980.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culture Club — England’s Culture Club was one of the bands of the decade until they split in 1986. Boy George was an innovator in fashion and style, as well as one of the decade’s biggest pop stars. • American new wave bands — included Talking Heads, Blondie and Devo. Other key American acts were Bruce Springsteen, the Go-Go’s, the Bangles, John Mellencamp, Hall & Oates, Cyndi Lauper, Janet Jackson, the B-52s, Tina Turner, Violent Femmes. Many of them toured Australia and played at the Sydney Entertainment Centre which opened in 1983. So did British acts like Thompson Twins, Bananarama, Billy Idol and David Bowie. Other British acts included Wham!, Eurythmics, Phil Collins, Dire Straits.



Exhibition sections/ focus study areas	Key ideas	Look for key focus study items including
<p>British or American influences on popular culture (cont'd)</p>	<p>Subcultures What you wore was often much more than a simple fashion choice in the 1980s. The decade saw a burst of subcultures, with clothing, music and venue the distinctive 'badges' of the different urban tribes. Some were revivals of earlier subcultures, like rockabilly and mods, and others like goths and hip hop were completely new phenomena. This section looks at some of the stories and the styles of these different groups.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goths — goths emerged from the British punk scene in the late 1970s, with a style that was also influenced by the theatrical androgyny of the new romantics • Rockabilly — rockabilly originated in the United States in the 1950s, with its roots in hillbilly music, rock 'n' roll and country. A revival in the late 70s and early 80s brought rockabilly to Australia. • Skinheads — skinheads, named for their close-cropped or shaven heads, originated in the 1960s in the working class suburbs of London, influenced by the style of the original mods and Jamaican ska music. • Mod — the mod subculture originated in Britain in the late 1950s, with the term referring initially to those who preferred 'mod' to 'trad' jazz. The release of the film <i>Quadrophenia</i>, the rise of mod-influenced bands such as The Jam and Purple Hearts and the emergence of the ska label Two Tone fuelled a mod revival. • Punk — inspired by the anarchic music and look of the Sex Pistols, the punk subculture burst onto the scene in London in the mid 1970s. • Hip hop — hip hop emerged in the late 1970s out of the African American and Latin American communities of the Bronx in New York. Including MCing (rapping), DJing (turntablism), breaking (dancing) and graffiti writing, hip hop culture became an important expression of identity in these disadvantaged communities. <p>See subcultures videos from the exhibition at http://www.powerhousemuseum.com/the80sareback/index.php/education/videos-from-the-exhibition/</p>

Unit of work

Australia's Social and Cultural History in the Post-War Period

5 weeks

Outcomes

- 5.1** explains social, political and cultural developments and events and evaluates their impact on Australian life
- 5.2** assesses the impact of international events and relationships on Australia's history
- 5.4** sequences major historical events to show an understanding of continuity, change and causation
- 5.5** identifies, comprehends and evaluates historical sources
- 5.6** uses sources appropriately in an historical inquiry
- 5.7** explains different contexts, perspectives and interpretations of the past.

Syllabus link

What have been the major social and cultural features of the 80s?

Significance

What comes to mind when I think about what I know of the 80s?

How did the 80s impact on my parents?

Higher order thinking

Why do decades get stereotyped?

How have the 80s been stereotyped?

What might this reveal about the people who write history?

Teaching and learning strategies

- Contextualisation: discuss the 80s with parents. Pick 5 items which they say represents that decade: photograph/sketch them; map out why they are included and find out what they mean/ meant to your parents. Students present findings for a 'show and tell' discussion.
- As a group, create an 'alternative 80s exhibition' as well as a '00s exhibition' which reflects student's own adolescence. Get students to compare and contrast the two as a decade study
- Timeline: sequence the emergence of new technologies that impacted on everyday life in the 80s (appliances, entertainment, transport, communications)
- Flow chart: outline the main social and cultural features of the 80s
- Group or individual research and presentation on one of the social and cultural features of the 80s, eg fashion, music, sport etc
- Mind map: British and American influences on Australian life in the 80s

Resources

- Museum site study: *The 80s are back* exhibition at the Powerhouse Museum
- *The 80s are back* exhibition microsite <http://www.powerhousemuseum.com/the80sareback/>
- Pre-visit exhibition walkthrough <http://www.powerhousemuseum.com/the80sareback/index.php/education/exhibition-slideshow/>
- Howitt, B. My Generation
- Howitt, B. Rock Through History
- <http://eightiesclub.tripod.com/>
- <http://www.80s.com/>
- http://www.powerhousemuseum.com/pdf/education/80s/80s_timeline.pdf
- http://www.powerhousemuseum.com/pdf/education/80s/80s_entertainment_timeline.pdf
- http://www.powerhousemuseum.com/pdf/education/80s/80s_fads_and_fashion_timeline.pdf

Teaching and learning strategies (cont'd)

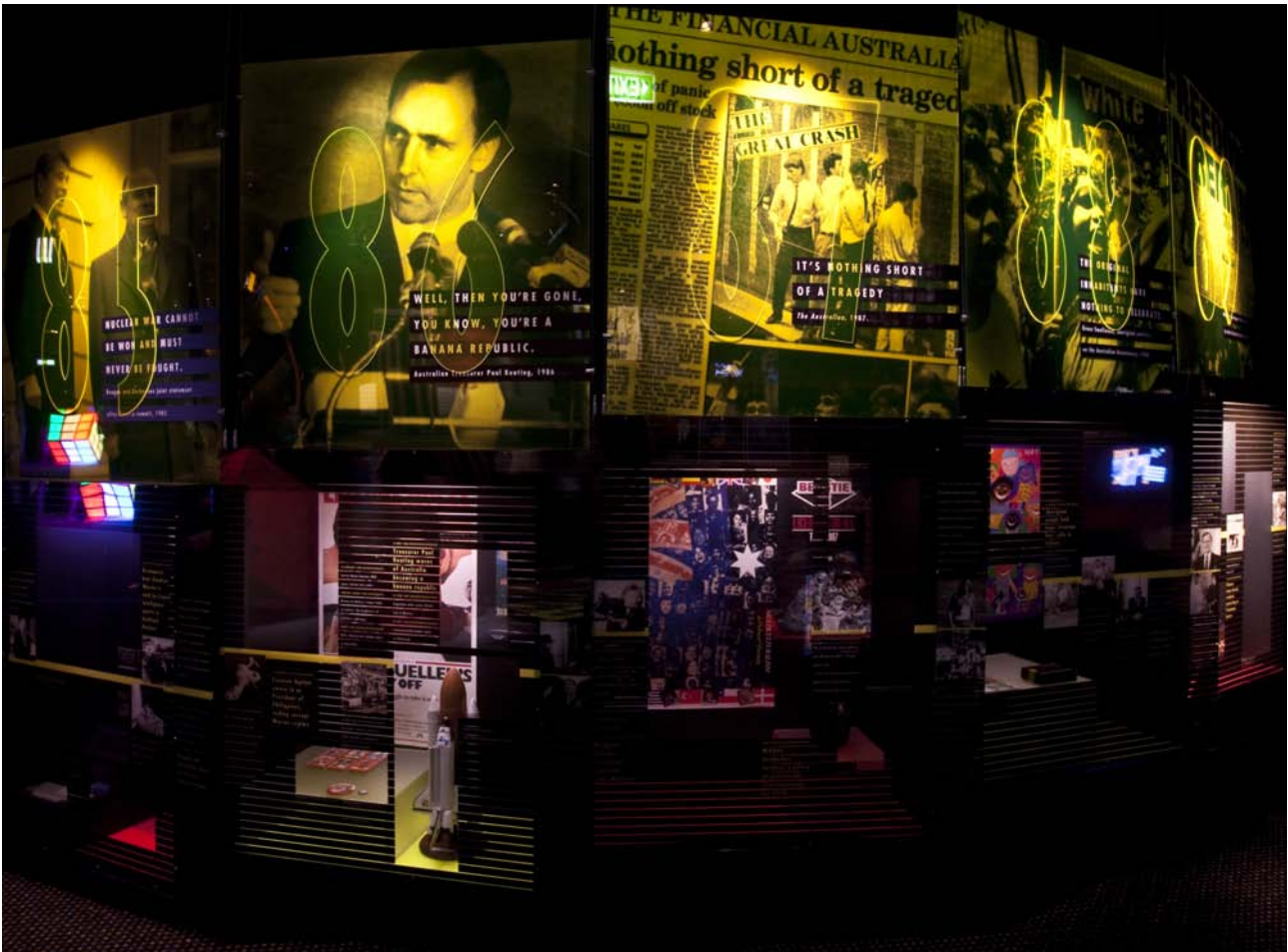
- Using the 80s timeline, get students to create their own themed timelines for a focus study of their choice
- Get the students to take on the role of curator, where their challenge is to create a similar exhibition for their own decade — what choices would they have to make? What makes an object significant? Which artefacts would have to be included? Get student to assess the impact of the chosen decade in shaping Australian identity in contrast to the 80s.
- Get students to reflect on the influences of Britain or the USA on Australian popular culture today in contrast to the 80s.
- Visual learning: create 'The 80s collage'. In the exhibition, students work in groups to record images of the exhibition for each section using cameras, video or sketching. Back at school negotiate what is the most important images to include in a final collage, which captures 'The 80s'.
- Discuss: consider music artists today and the role of music videos. Is the way in which people watch music videos today different?
- Debate topics:
 - 'The 80s were all about style and colour, but had no substance'
 - 'Australia didn't change in the 80s, it just got brighter'
 - 'The Bicentennial was an insensitive glorification of an Australia that doesn't exist'
 - 'To understand today you have to understand the 80s'

Resources (cont'd)

- http://www.powerhousemuseum.com/pdf/education/80s/80s_music_timeline.pdf
- http://www.powerhousemuseum.com/pdf/education/80s/80s_sport_timeline.pdf

Synthesis

Assess the impact of the 80s in shaping Australia's social and cultural identity.



Above: part of the 1980s timeline in *The 80s are back* exhibition.

Page 5: Apple Macintosh, Powerhouse Museum collection.

Page 7: Michael Jackson image courtesy Everett Collection/Headpress Pty Limited; walkman, Powerhouse Museum collection; fashion image by David Mist.

Page 11: part of the 'Music' section in *The 80s are back* exhibition.

For more information on the exhibition
***The 80s are back*, visit the Powerhouse Museum's**
website [www.powerhousemuseum.com/](http://www.powerhousemuseum.com/the80sareback/)
[the80sareback/](http://www.powerhousemuseum.com/the80sareback/)

For more information about education support
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