

THE 80s ARE BACK

Society and Culture (Stage 6) Preliminary Depth Study: Personal and Social Identity

Introduction

The exhibition has an extensive section on youth subcultures which will be of direct relevance to Year 11 Society and Culture students studying Personal and Social Identity, in particular:

- the processes of socialisation, and
- the development of personality, identity and the social self

Outcomes

- P2** identifies and describes relationships within and between social and cultural groups
- P3** describes cultural diversity and commonality within societies and cultures
- P5** investigates power, authority, gender and technology, and describes their influence on decision-making and participation in society
- P6** differentiates between, and applies, the methodologies of social and cultural research
- P8** selects, organises and considers information and sources for usefulness, validity and bias

Subcultures overview

In the process of developing a sense of their own identity, adolescents often adopt the look, music and style of a particular subculture. This is a means of expressing their identity and difference

from the mainstream, while connecting with people with similar ideas and attitudes. Though there are great differences between subcultures, they have in common the fact that they can give young people a sense of belonging and identity.

The 80s 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 focuses on seven of these subcultures featuring:

- the distinguishing outfits worn by the different groups
- fanzines, flyers, posters and music produced or collected by the different subcultures
- interviews with members of different 80s subcultures giving insights into why young people identify with different looks and styles and how this experience influences their lives

Audiovisual resources

The subcultures interviews plus full text transcripts can also be found on the exhibition website and make an excellent resource for pre-visit or follow up activities. View at: <http://www.powerhousemuseum.com/the80sareback/index.php/category/remembering-the-80s/subcultures/>

In these notes you will find

- Exhibition map — page 2
- Focus study areas — page 3
- Unit of work — page 5

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



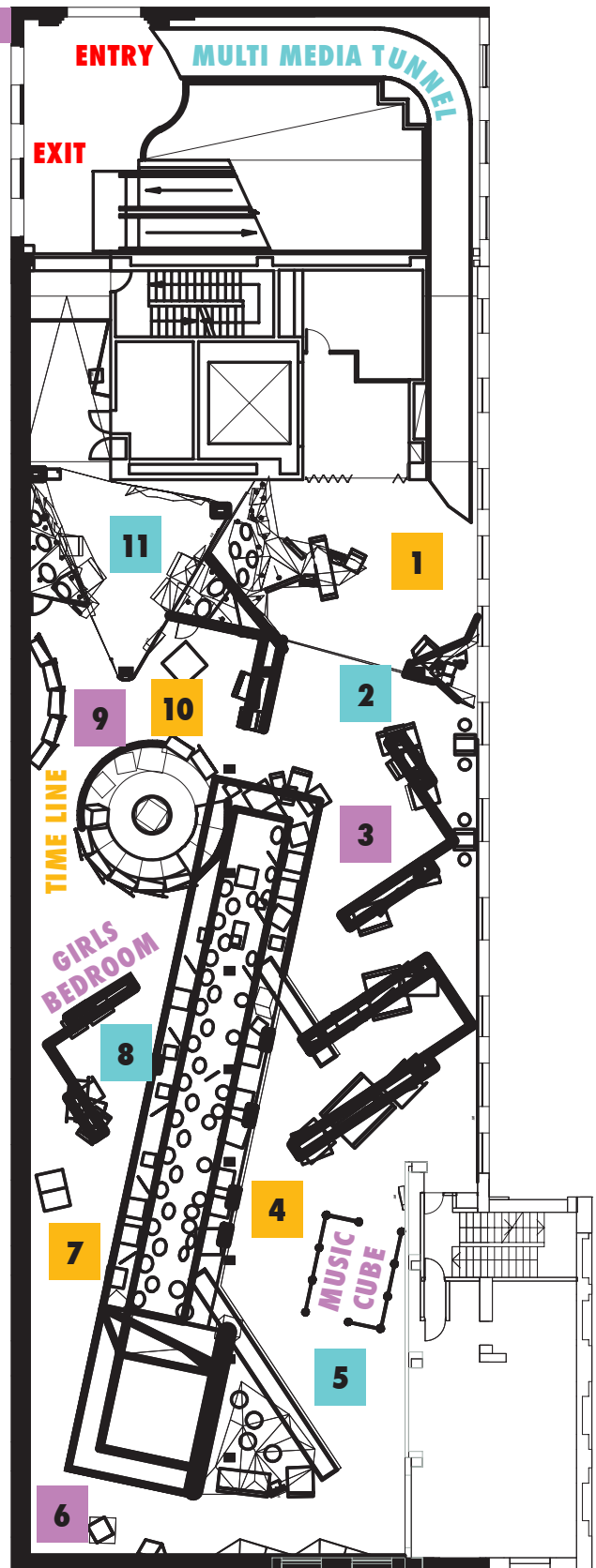
9. DESIGN



10. THE BIG EVENTS



11. THE NEO-80S



Focus study areas in the exhibition	Look for key items including
<p>Goths</p> <p>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. The subculture’s fascination with death and decay drew on gothic literature, horror films and historical dress styles. The key non-conformist expression of this melancholy and romantic outlook was through black clothing and introspective keyboard-heavy music</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goth dress — long black dress with trailing sleeves • Audiovisual — goths in the 80s: interviews (11 mins)
<p>Rockabilly</p> <p>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. With the music at its core, the rocker lifestyle embraced 50s symbols of youthful rebellion reflected in styles of dress, hair, cars and furnishings. The subculture emphasised traditional gender roles ‘masculine/feminine’ and members were largely ‘white and heterosexual’</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rockabilly outfit — shirt, jacket, string tie, jeans and shoes • Audiovisual — rockabilly in the 80s: interview (7 mins)
<p>Skinheads</p> <p>Skinheads, named for their close-cropped or shaven heads, originated in the 1960s in the working class suburbs of London, where they rejected the youthful counterculture movement. Skinheads were influenced by the style of the original mods and Jamaican ska music. In the late 1970s punk gave the subculture a harder more working class edge. The aggressively masculine look sported by skins matched a lifestyle revolving around drinking, fighting and comradeship.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skinhead outfit — Harrington jacket, Fred Perry shirt and Doc Marten boots • Audiovisual — skinheads in the 80s: interview (6 mins)
<p>Mods</p> <p>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. Tailor-made 1960s inspired clothing, retro hairstyles and European motor scooters were central to the subculture.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women’s mod outfit — 1960s jacket and blouse, skirt, black ankle boots and beret • Men’s mod outfit — anorak, suit, Pelaco shirt, tie and shoes • Audiovisual — mods in the 80s: interviews (9 mins)
<p>Heavy metal</p> <p>The heavy metal subculture is one centred wholly on the music which set it apart from the mainstream. Born out of 60s and 70s blues and rock, heavy metal is distorted guitar-driven, loud, technical and often aggressive music. It was a reaction against commercial pop music in the 1980s, [underpinned by rebellion?]. Despite rejecting mainstream music’s trappings, heavy metal was regularly in the top ten charts through the decade.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heavy metal outfit — leather jacket, T-shirt and ripped jeans • Audiovisual — metalheads in the 80s: interviews (6 mins)

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. At the time it represented a rejection of the establishment and conservative complacency, and led to a revolution in fashion and music that was felt around the world. Punk's anarchic do-it-yourself ethic was to inspire creative freedom in many aspects of mainstream culture.

- **Punk outfit** — sleeveless shirt, jeans, bum flap, Doc Marten boots and leather jacket
- **Audiovisual** — [punks in the 80s: interviews \(8 mins\)](#)

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.

Hip hop remained an underground movement throughout the 1980s.

- **Hip hop outfit** — sleeveless jacket with backpatch
- **Letterman jacket** — signed by the late Jam Master Jay, 1986, and Ice-T, 1989
- **Audiovisual** — [hip hop in the 80s: interviews \(14 mins\)](#)



Social and Cultural Continuity & Change in Australian society

Society & Culture students will find the following sections in the exhibition of relevance to Social and Cultural Continuity and Change in Australian Society.

Partying and the AIDS Crisis

Key ideas

- The growing emergence of gay subculture in the 1980s, celebrated in Sydney's Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras
- The gay community's response to the AIDS crisis and their rallying to educate people about the virus.

Fashion and Design

Key ideas

- The rise of a new social class, known as 'yuppies' (young urban professionals), who

announced their financial success through luxury cars, expensive appliances and designer clothes

- 'Designerism' in furniture and appliances etc

The big events

Key ideas

- Environmental activism as seen in the Tasmanian Franklin River campaign, and the Greenpeace antinuclear campaign.
- The Indigenous response to the Bicentenary. The influence of Indigenous rock bands in the 80s is looked at in the Music section.
- Migration stories of Cambodian refugees to Australia in the 80s,
- Timeline highlighting key events of the decade in Australia and the world in the areas of politics, technology, communication, migration and popular culture.

Unit of Work

Preliminary Depth Study: Personal and Social Identity

1–2 weeks

Outcomes

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Syllabus link

How can subcultures contribute to a person's identity and sense of self?

Significance

Do I know anyone whose identity was influenced by belonging to one of the subcultures discussed in the exhibition? How does this compare with my own or my friends' experience today?

Higher order thinking

How evident is the influence of youth subcultures in a person's subsequent adult personality?

Teaching and learning strategies

- Contextualisation — situate 80s youth subcultures on a timeline of similar groups from the 1950s through to the present; identify similar general characteristics; consider 'revivals'
- Research — group or individual research and presentation on one subculture of the 80s, for example, goths, mods, punks or skinheads.
- Theories — relate knowledge gained to theories of socialisation and adolescence studied earlier.
- Debate — discuss the role of women in 80s subcultures. Were there any that excluded women?

Resources

- The 80s are back exhibition at the Powerhouse Museum
- Exhibition micro site
<http://www.powerhousemuseum.com/the80sareback/>
- Online exhibition walkthrough
<http://www.powerhousemuseum.com/the80sareback/index.php/education/exhibition-slideshow/>
- Online interviews with different subcultures
<http://www.powerhousemuseum.com/the80sareback/index.php/category/remembering-the-80s/subcultures/>
- Film *Quadrophenia* (1979)
- The History of rock music: 1976–1989
<http://www.scaruffi.com/history/cpt42.html>
- GOTH.NET
<http://www.goth.net/goth.html>
- Rockabilly
<http://www.rockabilly.com/>
- Mod revival
<http://www.modrevival.net/>

Synthesis

Assess the significance of youth subcultures in the formation of identity and sense of self.



Above: 'Subcultures' section in *The 80s are back* exhibition.

Page 3, from left to right: 80s heavy metal style, photo by Michael Keating; 80s mods, photo by Kirstin Sibley; 80s punks, photo by Susan Sunandar; 80s hip hop/graf artists, photo by Rosano Martinez.

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
 or your booking, contact Bookings at the
 Powerhouse Museum:
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 Fax — (02) 9217 0622
 Email — edserv@phm.gov.au

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www.powerhousemuseum.com/teachersguide/teachersemailsignup.php

	<p>500 Harris Street Ultimo PO Box K346 Haymarket 1238 www.powerhousemuseum.com</p>
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