



Australia and Oceania

Exhibition Workbook for High School Students ANSWERS



This workbook is meant for school excursion groups. It is primarily conceived to be used by high school students, eventually by students of the last year of primary school. Some of the following exercises are supposed to lead students into discussions about particular issues. Since these exercises do not have a single correct answer, here you have some more or less complex suggestions on how to lead a debate.

We recommend to print this workbook on both sides of A4 paper to serve as a prospect.

1) How can we study different cultures? What should we do to learn the most about them?

You can mention the basics of anthropology—What is it? How do anthropologists study other societies and their respective cultures? Or you can give some examples of correct/incorrect anthropological research.

2) Write down some scientific disciplines useful for studying other cultures.

The majority of scientific disciplines can be useful in certain situations. You can point out the difference between physical and cultural anthropology. Physical anthropology can use data provided by genetics, osteology, chemistry, paleoanthropology, medicine etc. The latter works with history, philology, religious studies, psychology, demography, ethnography etc. Some scientific disciplines, for example archaeology, can be used by (and belong to) both.

3) Which weapons did native Australians use?

boomerang, stone club, spear, lance, axe



4) How can we substitute woven cloths? What materials can we use instead?

The most well known substitution is so called tapa. It is a type of textile fabric made traditionally from tree barks which are crushed by wooden mallets. After that the thick outer bark is separated and discarded, leaving only the crushed inner bark, which is then dried in the sun, soaked to gain elasticity and cut into strips. These strips are again beaten in order to flat out. Individual flattened strips are then merged together by additional beating, forming a sheet of tapa. A special plant glue can be used if strips do not hold together.

Often all women even a whole village work together on a single huge sheet of tapa. Tapa can be also decorated by painting or embroidery.

Other plant fibers can be used instead of tree barks. They can be simply braided together into various types of strings.

Apart from plant fibers other materials are used too. In the exhibition you can see for example a coat made from bird feathers or bracelets made from human hair.

5) Look at the Australian paintings and engravings and think of what they may represent.

These pictures display scenes from the so called dream time. It is a mythical period before the beginning of time. Earth was inhabited by various mythical beings, animals or heroes with different supernatural powers although they were not gods. These heroes created our world by travelling across the yet unshaped Earth and establishing sacred places. Their journeys are known up to present day thanks to songs, dances and stories. Every soul flows in the endless dreamtime before it enters a body of an unborn child. When a pregnant woman feels the movement of her child for the very first time, it is a sign, that it's soul has finally arrived.

These pictures are commonly very abstract, so you have an opportunity to let your imagination fly.

6. Explain the „kula“ trade system.

The „kula“ trade system was for the first time described by the anthropologist Bronisław Malinowski. In kula trade red or white shell jewellery is exchanged between societies living on the Trobriand islands. Exchange is always made in established directions—red shell necklaces in clockwise direction and white shell bracelets in the counter-clockwise. Important men sail from time to time to the nearby island, where they ritually exchange this jewellery. Other, ordinary items are also exchanged on this occasion. The Kula trade system enforces political prestige of leaders and maintains contact between societies on disparate islands.

7. Try to explain who is the so called „big-man“ and what function in society he has by following a short passage from an article, written by the famous anthropologist Marshall Sahlins.

Passage is taken from an article: *Poor Man, Rich Man, Big-Man, Chief: Political Types in Melanesia and Polynesia*, 1963 (accessible on www.jstor.org).



8. Decide, if following statements are T(true) of F(false). What does the „ancestral cult“ mean?

- a) true; b) true; c) false; d) false

Ancestral cult is known in many cultures across the world and it is one of the most ancient religious phenomena. It is a system of religious concepts and related acts, which are supposed to lead to good relations with ancestors. Ancestors are believed to be active even after their death, and so they can help or harm their living descendants. This is why it is very important to ritually keep them satisfied.

9. There are only two items made from metal in this exhibition. Find them and write down where are they from. Did oceanic people know metalworking?

The club resembling european axe is from New Ireland and the axe with european metal head comes from New Caledonia.

Metalworking wasn't known before arrival of Europeans.

10. How did the Solomon islands gain their name?

- a) Europeans had mistaken the yellow pyrite on native's weapons for gold.

11. Word Find Puzzle

- 1) tapa
- 2) didgeridoo
- 3) kartan
- 4) kava
- 5) kula
- 6) cannibal
- 7) mana
- 8) Asmat
- 9) Uli
- 10) ancestors
- 11) dreamtime
- 12) Janszoon
- 13) churinga
- 14) pig

		E	M	I	T	M	A	E	R	D
K	D	I	D	G	E	R	I	D	O	O
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U		V				G		C		A
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