EDUCATION ON TRACK

SENIOR SECONDARY (11–12)
MODERN HISTORY TRAIL

“There are many ways of seeing landscape, and none more vivid… than from a railway train.”
RL Stevenson
This program has been produced and published by The Workshops Rail Museum, North Street, North Ipswich, Qld, Australia 4305.

The Museum’s Vision Statement is:

To be recognised as a creative, innovative and exciting journey of discovery into Australia’s rail story.

The Mission Statement is:

To harness the significance of the Workshops precinct by delivering international standard cultural and tourism related activities, education and public programs associated with the interaction of rail on people’s lives.

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Purpose and Overview

The following activities are designed to get students thinking about a range of topics specific to their Modern History Unit. It can be used as a focus for:

1. A school based theme
2. The History of Everyday Life
3. Local History
4. The Individual in History (Oral History)
5. Studies of Change (Cultural and Social changes, Industrial Technology and Change)

You may choose to complete some or all of the activities depending on how they relate to your current unit of work.

Each of the activities aims to develop student’s historical inquiry skills in:

- planning and using an historical research process
- forming historical knowledge through critical inquiry
- communicating historical knowledge

and include the following aspects of inquiry as described in the 2004 Education Qld Modern History Syllabus:

- definitions
- sources
- backgrounds, changes and continuities: motives and causes
- effects, interests and arguments
- reflections and responses

On the following page is a map of The Workshops Rail Museum. You can refer to this map to help orientate yourself throughout the trail activities.
Zone 7 Ipswich Railway Workshops

This section of the museum contains information, artefacts and audiovisual displays about the history of the Ipswich Railway Workshops. Work your way through the zone to develop your understanding of what it was like to live and work in this location over the years.

Activity 1
Create a brief timeline of the Ipswich Railway Workshops.
Activity 2

Examine the list of trades and occupations from 1934. Which trades and occupations still exist within the workshops today?

Activity 3

There is a list of slang words somewhere in this zone. What are they? What do the words mean? Do you use slang at school or work? What about nicknames – do you or your friends have one?

Activity 4

Have a look at the kitchen scene. How has rail travel affected Ipswich over the years? Consider the economic and social implications caused by the change from steam to diesel engines, and the impact on the interconnectedness of the Workshops and its focus on self-sufficiency and sustainability.
Activity 5

The museum has an annual worker’s reunion every year. Why are these sorts of activities important? How do you think ex-workers would feel about coming back to the workshops?
Zone 8 Rail in Queensland

This zone focuses more generally on the history of rail in Queensland and some major historical events and changes over time. While working through this section, imagine what it might have been like to live and work during early years of Australia’s history.

Activity 1

The Zone contains a large timeline of important Australian events as well as important rail events. Summarise what you think are key dates in your own timeline.
Activity 2

Watch the film about the beginnings of rail in Queensland and answer the following questions.

1. What was the rail gauge used in Queensland and what were its benefits?

2. Who was Abraham Fitzgibbon? What role did he play in the Queensland rail journey?

3. Where did Queensland’s first rail line travel to and from?

4. What was the purpose of the first Queensland railways?

5. What is the Garratt Locomotive?

Activity 3

Zone 8 contains uniforms worn by past rail workers. Draw a diagram of two uniforms.
What do these uniforms tell us about the work and society of the past? Compare the uniforms to those that might be worn today, are there any differences? Why/why not?

Activity 4
Trains have led to both social and economic change in Queensland. Create a list of the social and economic changes that you can think of.

Activity 5
Read and listen to the personal accounts of past employees of QR. Imagine what it would have been like to be a Stationmaster, Locomotive Driver, Traveller, Commuter or a Refreshment Room Worker. Give an account of a day in your life.
Rail has undergone many changes in the last 145 years and these four zones encompass many of the interesting and quirky aspects of rail history in Queensland. These zones also clearly display different classes of people that lived, worked and travelled in Queensland.

Activity

Write a brief evaluation of the class system of the past and present using the questions below as a guide. Sketch some of the evidence you see.

- What classes existed within Australian society of the past?
- Do those classes still exist today?
- What evidence can you see that helps you to distinguish between these classes of the past?
- Can you find evidence like this from modern day materials items or possessions?
- How do you feel about class systems of the past and present?
- Do agree or disagree with them?
- Why do you think they exist?
Zone 16 Museum Collection and Storage

One of the primary roles of The Workshops Rail Museum is to house, preserve and interpret objects that help tell the story of rail in Queensland. Have a look through the window into the large collection stores where you will find where we store everything from old machinery, station signs, steam engine name plates, lights, models of trains and even artworks.

The evolution of rail in Queensland in terms of both history and technology means that The Workshops Rail museum is continuously acquiring new objects for its collection.

After seeing the objects and exhibitions at the Museum, draw a picture of the objects that you would use if you were curating a social history display about the different people who catch trains.