

The 1965 Australian Freedom Ride

Lesson Map: <http://esriaustralia.com.au/education/SpatialActivity95>

Engage

What was the 1965 Australian Freedom Ride? (Historical context)

- ➔ Click on the map URL above to open the Story Map. The title page will be displayed. Scroll down to the major heading titled *Historical context* to begin.
- ➔ This StoryMap also has a navigation panel at the top of the page, which allows users to quickly jump to specific aspects of the Story Map.
- ➔ Read the information in this section. Take notes if required and stop to discuss if necessary.
- **Optional:** Access the ‘**U.S. Civil Rights Movement**’ Story Map to learn more about the U.S. Freedom Rides and other significant events that occurred during the U.S. Civil Rights Movement.
- ➔ Scroll down to the next section titled *Hatching the idea*. Read the information. Take notes if required and stop to discuss as necessary.
- ? Record the four aims that S.A.F.A. hoped to achieve during the Freedom Ride?
[Students record the four aims – as per the Story Map – in notebook]

Explore

What route did the Freedom Riders take? What racial discrimination did they witness?

- ➔ Scroll down to the major heading titled *Setting off and first steps*. Read the information. Take notes if required and stop to discuss as necessary.
- ➔ Scroll down to the minor heading titled *Wellington*. Read the information. Take notes if required and stop to discuss as necessary.
- ➔ Scroll down to the minor heading titled *Gulargambone*. Read the information. Take notes if required and stop to discuss as necessary.

Download student worksheet [here](#).

Time

1 lesson

Activity

Investigate the 1965 Australian Freedom Ride.

Learning Outcome

Students will be able to:

- Understand the context and timeline in which the 1965 Freedom Ride took place
- Engage with historical sources as a part of the process of historical inquiry
- Analyse and evaluate the origin and purpose of historical sources
- Synthesise evidence to support a historical argument

ACARA Curriculum Link

[Year 10 History: Rights and Freedoms \(1945 – Present\)](#)

[ACDSEH023](#) | [ACDSEH105](#) | [ACDSEH134](#) | [ACHHS182](#) | [ACHHS183](#) | [ACHHS187](#) | [ACHHS188](#) | [ACHHS190](#) | [ACHHS192](#) | [ACHHS193](#)

Teacher Feedback:

To share your feedback on this, or any Spatial Activity, please contact education@esriaustralia.com.au

- Scroll down to the major heading titled *Walgett*. Read the information. Take notes if required and stop to discuss as necessary.
- Read the newspaper article titled *RSL men rap the ‘color-bar’ riders*. Answer the following questions:
- ? What evidence did Jim Spiegelman and the other SAFA students find of a ‘color bar’ at Walgett RSL? [*According to the article, Jim Spiegelman and his SAFA colleagues discovered that Aboriginals were not allowed to join or enter the RSL club for service, even if they had served at war.*]
- ? What claims do members from Moree RSL club make about aboriginals and discrimination? Use **direct evidence (quotes)** to support your response. [*Members from Moree RSL club state that ‘there is no discrimination in Moree’ against Aboriginals, and that ‘Aboriginals get a fair go.’ One member supports this by going on to say, “There’s four [Aboriginals] in our club, black as your boots, but real gentlemen.”*]
- ? According to the article, what other evidence of racial discrimination existed in Walgett? [*In the article, Jim Spiegelman shares that SAFA students also witnessed discrimination at a bar, where a notice read that Aboriginals were only permitted to enter by ‘invitation only’. Further to this, students also observed a dress shop that refused to sell to Aboriginal girls and shut for several hours to avoid confrontation.*]
- ? Who is the intended audience of this newspaper article? Do you think this article gained a wider audience than just its intended audience? Why/why not? [*As this article appeared in the Walgett Herald, the intended audience is likely directed mainly at Walgett’s population, and smaller towns that are in close geographic proximity. However, it is likely that this article reached a wider audience. As is evident in the article, other rural towns – like Moree – were aware of the Freedom Ride and were probably on alert as to the trouble and unwanted media attention the students could bring with them.*]

Explain

What racial discrimination was challenged at Moree? What was the town’s response?

- Scroll down to the major heading titled *Moree*. Read the information. Take notes if required and stop to discuss as necessary.
- ? Observe the photo taken of Charles Perkins and the children in Moree pool. What emotions are likely being experienced by the children? What evidence exists in the photo to support your conclusion? [*The children appear to be happy and overjoyed*]

to be swimming in the Moree pool. This conclusion is supported by their facial expressions as many children are sporting smiles, as well as their body language as they are embracing each other with arms around shoulders.]

- ? Read the public meeting notice to Moree citizens. What does discussing the 'aboriginal question' mean? [*The 'aboriginal question' refers specifically to the ban of aboriginals at Moree baths, and more generally to the color bar and any other types of racial discrimination that may be occurring within the town.*]
- ? The public notice cites Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: **"All humans are born free and equal in dignity and rights."** What purpose does the following sentence in the public notice have on citizens in Moree that would have read it: **"Is this so in Moree?"** [*The purpose of including this question at the end of the notice implicitly charges citizens to reflect on the issue themselves, form an opinion on the matter, and come ready to share their perspective. This is effective as it promotes proactive and informed discussion and debate at the meeting, rather than reactive discussion and debate.*]
- Scroll down to the next minor heading titled *Boggabilla, Warwick, Tenterfield*. Read the information. Take notes if required and stop to discuss as necessary.
- Scroll down to the next minor heading titled *Moree continued...* Read the information. Take notes if required and stop to discuss as necessary.
- Engage with the **student questions** in the Story Map. They are also supplied in the worksheet below:
- ? Read the extracts from Charles Perkins and Ann Curthoys above (in the Story Map). What evidence of non-violent protest is evident in the extracts? [*There are several examples of non-violent protest evident in the extracts. Perkins attempted to speak to the crowd and moved to the front of the entrance line where he refused to move. Perkins and other students also demonstrated non-violent protest by blocking up the gate entrance.*]
- ? Why was the hostility likely directed at the university students instead of aborigines? [*Hostility was most likely directed at university students as they had come to the town uninvited, bringing about unsolicited attention and challenges to the town's status quo.*]
- ? What evidence exists in the extracts above (Story Map) that reveals Ann's perspective of Moree's citizens? How does this affect the accuracy of the source? [*Ann reveals her perspective of Moree's citizens when she refers to them as the most 'hostile, hate-filled people' she has ever met. This does affect the accuracy of the source as Ann includes emotionally-charged language that reveals a biased*

disposition of the events that occurred in Moree. However, this is to be expected as it appears in her diary entries that were used to record the events as she experienced and perceived them.]

- **Optional extension questions:** If your teacher has instructed you to, answer the extension questions as well. The extension questions require you to engage with the newspaper article titled *Violence Explodes in Racist Town*. You can click on the article in the Story Map to view it (scroll to read).
- ? When was this newspaper article published? What newspaper was this article published in? [*This newspaper article was published in the Mirror, a Sydney-based newspaper, on 21 February 1965.*]
- ? Who is the intended audience of this newspaper? How does this differ from the intended audience of the Walgett Herald? [*The intended audience of the Mirror is citizens that reside in Sydney, one of Australia's major cities. The Walgett Herald's target audience included the townspeople of Walgett and nearby rural communities.*]
- ? Observe the article's title. Explain how this title positions the audience. [*The use of a bold and capitalized title immediately captures the reader's attention, which is bolstered further by the inclusion of the words 'violence' and 'explodes' as these words are charged words that people connect with action. The use of the words 'racist town' also positions the audience to be on the side of the SAFA students and aboriginal population as 'racist' is a negative connotation that people do not want to be associated with. As a result, many readers would perceive the events occurring in rural NSW in favour of SAFA and aboriginal peoples.*]
- ? Observe the photo included in the article. Explain how the contents of this photo demonstrate a racial divide in Moree. [*The photo in the article depicts two aboriginal teenage girls in the doorway of a poorly constructed shack at Top Camp, on the Aboriginal reserve in Moree. The shack looks to be crudely constructed of mismatching parts of corrugated iron and appears to have a dirt floor, clearly illustrating racial discrimination and inequity in Moree with regards to living conditions.*]
- Scroll down to the next minor heading titled *Moree continued...* Read the information. Take notes if required and stop to discuss as necessary.

Extend

What did the 1965 Freedom Ride achieve?

- Scroll down to the major heading titled *The trip home*. Read the information and

take notes if required. Stop to discuss as necessary.

- Scroll down to the major heading titled *Public response*. Read the information and take notes if required. Stop to discuss as necessary.
- Scroll down to the major heading titled *Legacy*. Watch the news story by NITV news (10 mins).
- Scroll down to the major heading titled *Closing Task*. This section is designed as a concluding exercise, where students can demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the 1965 Freedom Ride.
- ? In a paragraph response, address whether you agree, disagree or agree in part with the following statement: **Although the life of SAFA was short, the 1965 Freedom Ride was significant in addressing racial discrimination in Australia.** In your response, refer to evidence from two (2) sources that were engaged with in this Story Map.

[Student answers will vary depending on their perspective to the statement, and their selection of evidence from the sources.]

Next Steps:

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