



ISLANDS

HIDDEN
HISTORIES
FROM
QUEENSLAND
ISLANDS

Learning notes

Secondary

Islands, an exhibition and digital collection brought to life in 2018 by State Library of Queensland, tells the hidden stories of five islands off the coast of Queensland. Far from being places of peace and tranquility, after the arrival of Europeans many islands became the scene of treachery and deception, violence and vengeance, life and death, and the struggle for survival and resources. There are, however, stories of triumph juxtaposed against those tragic tales, where love, family and home win out in the end and against the odds.

St Helena Island, in Moreton Bay, became a penal colony in the mid-1860s and gained a reputation as the *hell hole of the Pacific*. From 1926 a prison guard named Patrick Roche began transforming individual lives with his belief that prisoners might be reformed and that if men were 'treated as men and not beasts, they will respond'.

From 1907 to 1959, **Peel Island** was a leprosarium (leper colony) where Queenslanders who contracted or showed signs of the contagious disease were held in quarantine. Phyllis Ebbage was a young wife and mother from Far North Queensland who spent over 12 years on Peel, not seeing her two small daughters for the first eight years. Her husband's determination and her own personal isolation are two uniquely personal elements of the history of Peel Island.

Using Isolation Islands in your classroom

This activity has been designed for students in Years 9-10 to complete individually or in small groups. Download and print a copy of the **Isolation Islands** Challenge Cards and cut them into individual cards suffice for *1 card per student*. Invite students to draw a card at random to be tasked with their challenge. Students will need to conduct further research into either Peel or St Helena Island as they uncover the individual and personal stories of determination found within.

Australian Curriculum

Students will engage with elements of both the History and Civics and Citizenship curriculum:

Year 9 Civics and Citizenship

Citizenship, diversity and identity:

How and why individuals and groups, including religious groups, participate in and contribute to civic life ([ACHCK079](#))

Analysis, synthesis and interpretation:

Critically evaluate information and ideas from a range of sources in relation to civics and citizenship topics and issues ([ACHCS084](#))

Account for different interpretations and points of view ([ACHCS085](#))

Year 10 Civics and Citizenship

Citizenship, diversity and identity

The challenges to and ways of sustaining a resilient democracy and cohesive society ([ACHCK094](#))

Year 10 History

Historical Knowledge and Understanding:

Continuity and change in beliefs and values that have influenced the Australian way of life ([ACDSEH149](#))

and the General Capabilities of:

- Ethical understanding
- Critical and creative thinking

Extend this resource in your classroom by:

- Creating a multi-media presentation of the written work, similar to the Phyllis Ebbage digital story (State Library, 2018) (Media Arts, English)
- Create a written response to a theme, topic or story found in **Isolation Islands** in a format such as creative writing, expository writing, genre writing or scripting (English)
- Preparing and performing a role play or soliloquy from your character (English, Drama)

Further reading and resources:

- *Islands: hidden histories from Queensland islands* (exhibition website 2018, State Library of Queensland)
- [One Search](#), State Library's digital library catalogue has extended resources relating to both [St Helena](#) and [Peel Island](#)
- [Peel Island: the story of Phyllis Ebbage](#) (State Library, 2018)

References:

- *Peel Island, Phyllis Ebbage oral history* (State Library, 2018)
- *Letters to Patrick Roche from ex-prisoners*, John Oxley Library, State Library. [Accession 29427](#)
- *Dr Espie Dods and Patrick Roche*, 1926. Unidentified. John Oxley Library, State Library. [Accession 29427](#)
- *Phyllis Ebbage sitting on yacht*, ca. 1940s. Photographer unidentified. John Oxley Library, SLQ, [Accession 9997/14](#)