



# A-Z OF CONVICTS IN VAN DIEMEN'S LAND

## SIMON BARNARD

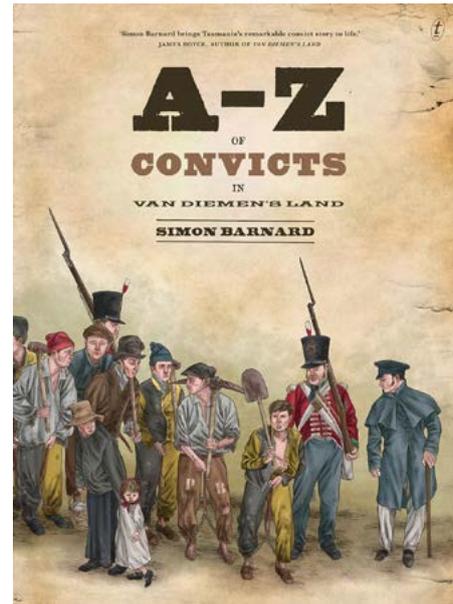
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**RECOMMENDED SCHOOL YEAR LEVEL:**

**Year 5 and up**



### Teaching Notes for the Australian Curriculum

- ▶ These activities are designed for teachers to explore the book in line with the Australian Curriculum: History  
Year 5 Level – The Australian Colonies  
Year 9 Level – The Making of the Modern World (Depth Study – Movements of People (1750–1901))
- ▶ Activities are arranged in ascending order of complexity. The earlier activities may be more suited to the year 5 classroom, and the later to the year 9 classroom.
- ▶ These activities cover the following historical skills:  
Chronology, Terms and Concepts  
Historical questions and research.  
Analysis and use of sources  
Perspectives and interpretations
- ▶ Links to the Australian Curriculum: History content codes and capabilities are provided next to each question. Refer to the legend below and the accompanying [Australian Curriculum: Scope and Sequence reference chart](#) to decipher these codes.

<b>Strands</b>	LA – Language LT – Literature LY – Literacy
<b>Modes</b>	W – Writing L – Listening R – Reading
<b>General capabilities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Literacy</li> <li> Ethical behaviour</li> <li> Intercultural understanding</li> <li> Personal and social capability</li> <li> Critical and creative thinking</li> <li> Numeracy</li> <li> Information and communication technology</li> </ul>
<b>Cross-curriculum priorities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Sustainability</li> <li> Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia</li> <li> Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures</li> </ul>

### SYNOPSIS

Between 1803 and 1853, an estimated 75,000 prisoners were sent on a six-month journey to the British colony Van Diemen's Land. The *A-Z of Convicts in Van Diemen's Land* takes its readers deep into this world, through meticulously detailed illustrations and text, exploring the everyday experiences of the convicts, their masters and the military. Simon Barnard recreates this world of prisons, penitentiaries and punishment where the labour of thieves, mutineers, forgers and arsonists was used to build prisons, roads, bridges, farms, hospitals and homes. Thumbnail biographies of individual convicts personalise the convict experiences and suggest that while many suffered some prospered in this new world.

The rugged Tasmanian environment also features in this book, with illustrations showing how the convicts and colonists adapted native flora and fauna for their own uses and how the dense forest wilderness became both a refuge for bushrangers and a graveyard for many of those who tried to escape the colony. The book also dispels some myths about convict life: there isn't any evidence, for example, that they wore balls and chains. We learn that guard dogs were chained to floating kennels, singing in jail could lead to a public lashing and the toughest women in the Female Factory were called the Flash Mob.

More than a picture book, *A-Z of Convicts in Van Diemen's Land* is a result of years of painstaking historic research into primary sources and academic publications. The convict story is one of national significance as identified in the Australian Curriculum, and this book is a valuable and entertaining teaching resource for the history classroom.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Simon Barnard was born and grew up in Launceston. He spent a lot of time in the bush as a boy, which led to an interest in Tasmanian history. He is an illustrator and collector of colonial artifacts. He now lives in Melbourne with his girlfriend and a little dog.



## ACTIVITIES

- Compare the convict uniforms on pp. 76–77 with the free colonists' fashion on p. 23. What are the features of the convict uniform? What message does the uniform give about the place of convicts in Van Diemen's Land Society? (ACHHK094)
- Study pages 64–65 SHIP and decide which of these statements are True, False or Maybe. Compare your answers as a class and be prepared to defend your decision.
  - convicts ships were called transports
  - a muster is a collection of convicts
  - the convicts slept in bunks and hammocks
  - the convicts were guarded by military men armed with machine guns
  - the convicts were shackled in chains for the journey
  - it took at least six months to travel to Van Diemen's Land on a transport
  - the authorities were not concerned if convicts became sick or died
  - the convicts were fined if they were troublesome and disobeyed orders
  - there were children onboard convict transports
  - the convicts were well treated onboard the transports
  - life on the convict transports was unhealthy and dangerous (ACHHS099) (ACDSEH083) (ACHHS098) (ACHHS101)
- Read p. 43 LEISURE. Singing and dancing was a way convicts could make fun of the authorities, tell their story and celebrate their experiences. Write a convict song based ON one of these people events or places: Bushrangers (pp.8–9), working the coalmine p. 15, Eaglehawk Dog Line p. 18, Escaping pp.20–21, Flash Mob at the female factory pp. 22–23, Gallows pp. 24–25, Port Puer pp. 39–40, Road building pp. 60–63, Transportation pp. 64–65, or another topic. (ACHHS099) (ACDSEH083) (ACHHS098) (ACHHS101)
- Write a dialogue or draw a cartoon explaining the following convict terms to a visitor to Van Diemen's Land.
  - assignment
  - bushranger
  - emancipist
  - ticket-of-leave
  - female factory
  - free-certificate
  - secondary punishment
 (ACHHK094) (ACHHS099) (ACHHS101) (ACHHS103) (ACHHS105)
- Find out the meaning of these convict slang words and use all of them in a paragraph describing a scene on a Hobart street.
  - Traps (p. 41)
  - Flash mob (p. 23)
  - Bolter (p. 3)
  - Bare knuckles (p. 43)
 (ACHHS101) (ACHHK094)
- To survive, human beings need food, water, shelter and clothing. An energy source is another (secondary) human need. The British brought supplies with them to the new colony but they also need to use what they could find in the Australian environment and they learnt from Aboriginal Tasmanians.
 

Study the illustrations in the book to identify what they found in the bush to help them survive and build the colony. Write a paragraph explaining and describing your findings. (ACHHK094)
- What role did animals, both introduced and native, play in the development of convict society? (p. 3, pp. 18–19, p. 34) (ACHHK094) (ACHHS101)
- How were attitudes towards children in Van Diemen's Land in 1815 similar and different from those of today? (Juvenile p. 38–39) (ACHHK094) (ACHHS104) (ACDSEH083) (ACHHS172)
- What would a time traveller from the present find similar and different if they visited Van Diemen's Land in the early 1800s? (ACHHK094) (ACHHS104) (ACDSEH083) (ACHHS172)
- You are a soldier serving with the 46th Regiment in Van Diemen's Land (pp. 44–45) in 1814. Write a letter home to your family describing life and work in the colony and your impressions of convict life.
 

Use the following sentence starters if you wish:

My job is ...

My fellow soldiers ...

The convicts are ...

I live in...

I eat ...

I wear..

I saw...

I was surprised by...

I feel ...

 (ACHHK094) (ACHHS101) (ACHHS104) (ACHHS170) (ACDSEH018)
- How did the British authorities use the natural features of the environment to control or punish the convicts? How did the convicts use the natural environment to escape imprisonment? (Hint p. 8, p. 18–19, p. 20–21, p. 32, p. 48) (ACHHK094) (ACDSEH083) (ACHHS164)
- Imagine you are designing a convict historical display for a museum of convict experiences in Hobart, Tasmania. Select five objects used or associated with that convict life from this book you believe are important in explaining the convict experience. Write an interpretation panel for each



exhibit explaining the object's historical significance.

(ACHHK094) (ACDSEH083) (ACHHS164) (ACHHS170)   

13. Convicts were employed in many trades and professions, some which no longer exist. Write a short job advertisement for each of the following positions to be published in the *Hobart Times* in 1821.
- trap (p. 41)  
 lamp lighter (p. 18)  
 javelin man (p. 41)  
 turnkey (p. 27)  
 flagellator (p. 57)  
 blacksmith (p. 5)  
 stonemason (p. 10)  
 being 'on the town' (p. 55)  
 quack (p. 29)
- Do any of these professions still exist? What professions have they been replaced with? (ACHHK094) (ACDSEH083) (ACHHS165)  
14. Among some of the primary sources Simon Barnard researched in writing the book were love tokens (p. 43) graffiti (p. 29) and tattoos (p. 72). What do these sources tell him about everyday life of convicts that official sources black books, government reports or court records) couldn't? (ACHHK094) (ACDSEH083) (ACHHS169) (ACHHS171)  
15. Alexander Pearce (p. 3) Martin Cash (p. 9), Catherine Henrys (p. 9), William Thompson (p. 15), Maria Lord (p. 19), John Quigley (p. 37), Charles Henry Theodore Costantini (p. 51) and Isaac Solomon (p. 41) were all transported to Van Diemen's Land. Draw up a chart comparing their personal histories. Record the following information for each point:
- the crime they committed in Britain
  - punishments received
  - life in Van Diemen's Land
  - successes and failures in Van Diemen's Land
16. Much of what we know about convicts comes from the government 'black books'. These were official records compiled in during the first half of the nineteenth century. Each convict's crime, literacy level, religion, trade, place of birth, family members and appearance were catalogued. Simon Barnard used these records, now available online at the Tasmanian Archives, in researching his book.
- What information can't these types of official sources give us about the convict experience? (ACDSEH083) (ACHHS169) (ACHHS170) (ACHHS171)   
17. People in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries had a different worldview from people in the twenty-first century. Ideas about the role of men and women, attitudes towards children, treatment of animals, ideas about race and religion and even health and cleanliness held by people in the past may appear strange, illogical or even cruel today. It

is important as historians that we try to understand attitudes from the past; this does not mean we accept or support them.    

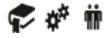
Read the information in the book on chapel (p. 12), gallows, (p. 25), gibbets (p. 28) punishment, (pp. 56–57), leg irons (p. 42), solitary (pp. 70–71), and treadmill (pp. 74–75).

What do these forms of punishment suggest about this society's attitude to criminals, crime and changing people's behaviour? (ACDSEH083) (ACDSEH084) (ACDSEH085) (ACHHS169) (ACHHS170) (ACHHS172)    

18. During the twentieth century such forms of physical punishment came to be seen as 'cruel and unusual' and were outlawed in many countries as they were seen to breach human rights. How are criminal punished today in Australia? Are any punishments similar to those used in Van Diemen's Land still used today? (ACHHS169) (ACHHS170) (ACHHS172)    
19. After reading through the book and considering the way the convicts and their masters lived life, how much do you think our lifestyle has changed since convict times? (Consider things such as food, communication, media, entertainment, clothes, buildings, health and leisure.)
- (ACDSEH083) (ACDSEH084) (ACDSEH085) (ACHHS169) (ACHHS170) (ACHHS172) (ACHHS173)    
20. Chose a picture from the book or a short biography of a convict and write a biography poem. Write your poem from the point of view of a convict in Van Diemen's Land. Convince your reader that your character is a real convict by using language, historical information and dialogue authentic to the period.
- I am ... (two special characteristics you have)  
 I wonder ... (something you are curious about)  
 I hear ... (imagine you hear a real sound)  
 I see ... (and imaginary or real sight)  
 I touch ... (an imaginary or real touch)  
 I want ... (an actual desire)  
 I am ... (repeat first line)  
 I face ... (a barrier or challenge you face)  
 I worry ... (a worry that you have)  
 I seek help of ... (a person or people who help you)  
 I am inspired by ... (a person or people that inspire you)  
 I am ... (repeat first line).  
 I understand ... (what you know to be true)  
 I say ... (something you believe in)  
 I dream ... (something you dream of)  
 I try ... (something you really make an effort to do.)
- (ACDSEH083) (ACDSEH084) (ACDSEH085) (ACHHS169) (ACHHS170) (ACHHS172) (ACHHS173) (ACHHS174)   



21. You are a famous author who has been hired to write a textbook about convict life. Write a proposal to a publisher explaining five historically significant things you book will explore. (ACDSEH083) (ACDSEH084) (ACDSEH085) (ACHHS169) (ACHHS170) (ACHHS172) (ACHHS174)



22. Simon Barnard's detailed drawings of convict buildings show many places that are no longer standing. He relied on historical maps and architectural drawings, newspaper reports, archeological reports and pictures to recreate the buildings and their interiors. After transportation to Van Diemen's Land ended in 1853 and the colony was renamed Tasmania in 1856 and convict buildings were abandoned and neglected. Stones from some were used for new buildings and some were deliberately destroyed. The 'convict stain' was the name given to describe how Tasmanians felt ashamed of their convict past. Today old convict sites are popular tourist destinations and are protected under heritage legislation. Many families are proud to find convict ancestors.

Work in groups and develop some theories as to why attitudes to Australia's convict past have changed over time. (ACDSEH083) ((ACDSEH084)

(ACDSEH085) (ACHHS169) (ACHHS170)

23. Visit Tasmania tourism sites online. Identify as many convict sites as you can. How is the convict experience marketed for tourists today? (ACDSEH083)

(ACDSEH084) (ACDSEH085) (ACHHS169) (ACHHS170)



24. Essay questions

Use evidence from the book to help you respond to the following essay topics.

'Convicts built Tasmania'. Discuss

'The convicts were not so different from us.' Do you agree?

To what extent was Van Diemen's Land was a place of cruelty and suffering?

'Van Diemen's Land offered criminals the chance to start a new and better life.' Do you agree?

How and why did the convicts change the environment of Van Diemen's Land? (ACDSEH083)

(ACDSEH084) (ACHHS169) (ACHHS170)