



Teacher Resource

# Hans Heysen

## Focus Questions

Discuss the BTN story as a class and record the main points of the discussion. Students will then respond to the following:

1. What kinds of paintings is Hans Heysen best known for?
  - a. Landscape
  - b. Abstract
  - c. Portrait
2. What landmarks in Australia are named after Hans Heysen?  
Name one.
3. Where was Hans Heysen born and where did he grow up?
4. What did you learn about Hans Heysen?
5. What did you like about this BTN story?

**EPISODE 33**  
18 November 2025

### KEY LEARNING

Students will learn more about Australian artist Hans Heysen and respond to his artwork.

### CURRICULUM

#### Visual Arts – Years 3 and 4

Explore where, why and how visual arts are created and/or presented across cultures, times, places and/or other contexts.

Use visual conventions, visual arts processes and materials to create artworks that communicate ideas, perspectives and/or meaning.

Share and/or display artworks and/or visual arts practice in informal settings.

#### Visual Arts – Years 5 and 6

Explore ways that visual conventions, visual arts processes and materials are combined to communicate ideas, perspectives and/or meaning in visual arts across cultures, times, places and/or other contexts.

Use visual conventions, visual arts processes and materials to plan and create artworks that communicate ideas, perspectives and/or meaning.

Select and present documentation of visual arts practice, and display artworks in informal and/or formal settings.



What questions do you have?

Discuss the story as a class

## Activity: Connection to Environment

In this activity students will explore the symbolism, importance and features of the eucalyptus tree in Hans Heysen's paintings. Students will look at Heysen's key artworks to understand how he communicates place, identity and connection to the environment.

### Responding to art

Show 2-3 key pieces of Hans Heysen's artworks to your class that feature the iconic eucalyptus landscapes. You may want to print out copies for your students or display them using your class whiteboard. Below are some examples.



[Art Gallery NSW](#)

Hans Heysen, *Summer*



[National Gallery of Australia](#)

Hans Heysen, *The three gums*

Discuss why the eucalyptus tree is symbolic of the Australian landscape. Ask your students the following questions as they look at the artworks.

- What do you first notice in this painting?
- How does Hans Heysen use light and shade to make the trees feel peaceful?
- How do these images represent Australia?

Students will then work individually or in pairs to analyse one Hans Heysen artwork in more detail, responding to the following:

- What colours stand out?
- What mood does the painting create?
- What message or story do you think the artist is trying to convey?

### Observing your natural environment

Move your class outside to observe the natural environment. It may be the environment of your school grounds or a park nearby. Students will take a pen and piece of paper with them to record their observations, responding to the following:

- Find a place in the environment to sit. Observe the shapes, shadows, textures and colours of the natural elements around you.
- Notice the light where you are, where is it brightest and where are there shadows.
- Write down what you see. Sketch 1-2 studies of a tree, leaf pattern or the shape of the landscape.
- How does being where you are, make you feel?

## Create an artwork

Students will create an artwork inspired by their outdoor sketches. Students can base their artwork on one of the following:

- a tree that has meaning to them
- a small landscape scene of the school yard
- a symbolic drawing showing how they feel in nature.

## Curate an art exhibition

Students will curate an art exhibition of their landscape artworks. As a class use the following questions to help plan your class exhibition:

- Where will it be? You could hold it at school and invite other classes to attend or consider another location in the local community.
- What are the dates of your exhibition?
- How will you label your artworks? Include the following information: a title, artist name, date and a description. Here is some more information about [Exhibition labelling](#).
- Who will you invite to the exhibition opening?
- How will you let people know about your exhibition?
- How long will the exhibition run for?
- Are the artworks for sale?

## Activity: Timeline Poster

Students will research the life and achievements of artist Hans Heysen and create a timeline poster and prepare an oral presentation summarising key events in Hans Heysen's life. Alternatively, students can choose a different Australian landscape artist to investigate, for example, Albert Namatjira, Mary Tonkin, Tom Roberts, Frederick McCubbin, Arthur Streeton or Sidney Nolan.

### Timeline Poster

Your students' task is to create a timeline poster, responding to the following areas of research.

#### Research

- Early Life - Information about your significant person's parents. When/where was your significant person born? What type of education did your significant person receive?
- Family - Personal information; Was your significant person married? Did they have children?
- Legacy - What event and/or action led to them becoming a significant person in Australia's History? What did they do that had an impact on the lives of others?
- 'Where are they now?' If your significant person has died, you can outline where they are buried. If they are still alive you can outline what their life looks like now.
- 2 x 'Interesting Facts' and 2 x 'Did You Know?'
- A minimum of 6 and a maximum of 10 photos with captions.
- Include a bibliography on the back of your poster.

## Oral Presentation

Students will prepare a short oral presentation, speaking in ‘first person’. They will speak about their life, their family, character, the decisions they made and why, and their impact and influence on society.

## Further Research

Students will choose one of the activities to further investigate their significant person.

### Interview

- Imagine you could sit down and talk to the person.
- What questions would you ask about their life and achievements?
- Find answers to your questions.

### 5 w's

- What are some of the key events in their life?
- Write a summary for one key event, which answers the 5 W's – Who, What, Where, When and Why?

## ABC iView

In this fun ABC series, one smart kid and one adequate adult embark on a [fact-finding mission](#) through all things “art”. Who will be declared the Know It All in the quiz: the kid or the adult?

[ABC iView - Know It Alls: Visual Art](#)



## BTN The Arts collection

Visit BTN’s collection of stories which focus on the arts. After watching any one of the BTN videos ask students to respond to the discussion questions.

[BTN - The Arts collection](#)



## Useful Websites

- [Hans Heysen](#) – Heysen the Cedars
- [Hans Heysen](#) – National Gallery of Australia
- [Sir Hans Heysen](#) – SA History Club
- [Hans Heysen](#) – Australian Dictionary of Biography
- [Sewing \(The Artist's Wife\) by Hans Heysen](#) – National Museum Australia
- [Hans and Nora Heysen: Two Generations of Australian Art](#) – NGV