



Teacher Resource

Overland Telegraph

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. In the 1800s, how did people in Australia communicate with the rest of the world? What was a disadvantage of this form of communication?
2. How were messages sent on the telegraph?
3. Morse code uses a combination of dashes and dots to symbolise each _____.
4. Why did Charles Todd want to build a telegraph line from Adelaide to Darwin?
5. How did the Overland Telegraph change communication in Australia forever?

Activity: What do you see, think and wonder?

Students will watch the BTN Overland Telegraph story, then respond to the following questions:

- What did you SEE in this video?
- What do you THINK about what you saw in this video?
- What did you LEARN from this story?
- What was SURPRISING about this story?
- What QUESTIONS do you have?

Activity: Class Discussion

Students will discuss the BTN Overland Telegraph story in pairs and then share their thoughts with the class.

- Before the Overland Telegraph, how did messages come from Britain?
- When was the Overland Telegraph Line built?
- Why was it built?
- How were messages sent?
- How did it change the lives of people in Australia?

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KEY LEARNING

Students will learn more about the history of the Overland Telegraph Line and how it changed the lives of Australians.

CURRICULUM

HASS – Year 5

The impact of a significant development or event on an Australian colony.

Develop appropriate questions to guide an inquiry about people, events, developments, places, systems and challenges.



Activity: Glossary

Students will brainstorm a list of key words that relate to the BTN Overland Telegraph story. Here are some words to get them started.

TELEGRAPH	OVERLAND	ISOLATED
MORSE CODE	COLONIES	ELECTRIC TELEGRAPH TECHNOLOGY

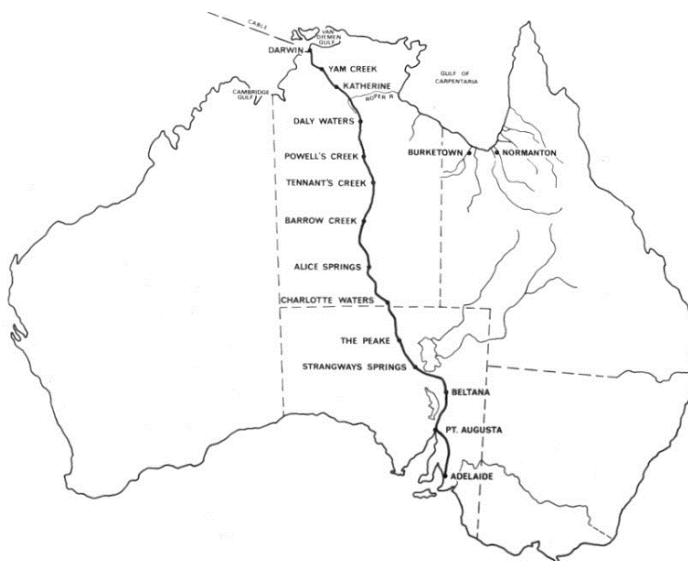
Activity: Overland Telegraph Research

Discuss the information raised in the BTN Overland Telegraph story. What questions were raised in the discussion and what are the gaps in students' knowledge? The following KWLH organiser provides students with a framework to explore their knowledge on this topic.

What do I <u>k</u> now?	What do I <u>w</u> ant to know?	What have I <u>l</u> earnt?	<u>H</u> ow will I find out?

Students will develop their own question/s to research or choose one or more of the questions below. Encourage students to collect and record information from a wide variety of sources and present the information they find in an interesting way.

- How did the Telegraph Line connect Australia with Britain? Why do you think this was considered important?
- What were some of the challenges constructing the Overland Telegraph Line?
- Telegraph messages were sent using Morse code. Find out when Morse code was invented and how it works.
- How did the Overland Telegraph Line impact the lives of people in the late 1800s?
- How did the Overland Telegraph Line open up inland Australia?
- Explain why the Overland Telegraph Line was described as the 'greatest engineering feat carried out in nineteenth century Australia'.



Activity: Visual literacy

In this activity students will analyse a range of images of the Overland Telegraph Line. Students will choose one or more of the images below and respond to the following:

- What is happening in the image? What people, objects or activities can you see?
- What does the image tell you about the Overland Telegraph Line?
- Create a caption for each image.
- What questions do you have about what you see in the image?



[Source of image](#)



[Source of image](#)



[Source of image](#)



[Source of image](#)

Activity: Morse Code

Explain to students that telegraph messages were sent and received in Morse code. Students will use Morse code to write a short message and then ask a partner to decode it. Students can also send their message by flashing a torch light.

CODE MORSE MORSE CODE					
A	· —	J	· — — —	S	· · ·
B	— · · ·	K	— · —	T	—
C	— · — ·	L	· — · ·	U	· · —
D	— · ·	M	— —	V	· · · —
E	·	N	— ·	W	· — —
F	· · — ·	O	— — —	X	— · · —
G	— — ·	P	· — — ·	Y	— · — —
H	· · · ·	Q	— — · —	Z	— — · ·
I	· ·	R	· — ·		

Students can also use the [Morse Code Translator](#) to type a message and translate it to Morse code.

Useful Websites

- [The Overland Telegraph Line revolutionised Australia 150 years ago and broke its extreme isolation](#) – ABC News
- [Overland Telegraph Line remembered as significant feat with complex history on 150th anniversary](#) – ABC News
- [Overland telegraph](#) – National Museum Australia
- [The Overland Telegraph Line: Telegraph Collection](#) – Migration Heritage Centre