



Teacher Resource

Women's History Month – Mum Shirl

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. Why didn't Mum Shirl go to school?
2. How did Mum Shirl help others?
3. Think of three adjectives to describe Mum Shirl.
4. What are Mum Shirl's main achievements?
5. What else did you learn about Mum Shirl?

Activity: Personal Response

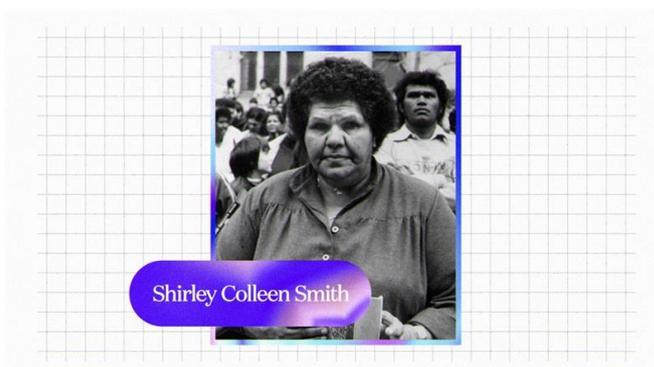
Respond to the BTN Mum Shirl story as a class. Students will complete one or more of the following incomplete sentences:

- Mum Shirl is an important Australian because...
- These are five words that I would use to describe Mum Shirl...
- This story made me feel...
- It is important to celebrate Mum Shirl because...

Activity: Class Discussion

After watching the BTN story, hold a class discussion using the following discussion starters.

- What did the BTN story tell you about the life of Mum Shirl?
- What challenges did Mum Shirl face?
- How did Mum Shirl help others?
- Name at least one of her achievements.
- What questions do you have about Mum Shirl?



EPISODE 5

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KEY LEARNING

Students will recognise and celebrate Australian women who have made significant positive changes in society.

CURRICULUM

HASS – Year 3 and 4

Pose questions to investigate people, events, places and issues.

Locate and collect information and data from different sources, including observations.

HASS – Year 5 and 6

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

Locate and collect relevant information and data from primary sources and secondary sources.

History – Year 6

The contribution of individuals and groups to the development of Australian society since Federation.

HASS – Year 7

Construct significant questions and propositions to guide investigations about people, events, developments, places, systems and challenges.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people should be aware that this document contains images and names of deceased persons. It also contains links to sites that may use images of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people now deceased.

Activity: Vocabulary

Students will brainstorm a list of key words that relate to the BTN Mum Shirl story. Below are some words to get them started. As a class discuss the meaning of each word/terminology and how it relates to Mum Shirl and her story.

First Nations peoples

Humanitarian

Activist

Compassion

Advocacy

Justice

Indigenous Rights

Community

Further Investigation

- Students will add to their glossary by downloading the transcript for the BTN Mum Shirl story and highlight all the words that relate to the topic.
- Mum Shirl is described as having a *heart of gold*. What qualities might a person with a heart of gold have? As a class brainstorm a list of words that describe Mum Shirl, for example: generous, compassionate, supportive, brave, caring and kind.
- What is advocacy? Ask students to give an example of when Mum Shirl was an advocate on Indigenous issues.

Activity: Listening and Writing

Listening

Start this activity by listening to the [ABC Fierce Girls podcast about Mum Shirl](#) as a class. After listening to the podcast discuss what your student's reactions are to the story and how it made them feel.

- What is your initial response to Mum Shirl's story?
- What challenges did Shirley face throughout her life?
- How did Mum Shirl help others? Give 3 examples.
- How did the stories about her life make you feel?
- What important achievements did she make?
- How did she contribute to society?



ABC Fierce Girls podcast – [Mum Shirl](#)

Writing

Students will then choose a point in time in Mum Shirl's life, focussing on a particular event or moment in time. Students will then complete one of the following activities:

- Imagine you are Mum Shirl. Write a letter from her perspective to either a friend or family member explaining how she feels and what she is going through.
- Mum Shirl is described as having a heart of gold because of her kindness and compassion towards others. Write a 4–8-line stanza poem about Mum Shirl using descriptive language which reflects her positive character traits.
- Imagine you could sit down and talk to Mum Shirl. What questions would you ask about her life and achievements?

Activity: Who inspires you?

Class Discussion

Start the lesson by asking students which women past or present inspire them. It could be women they know in their family, the wider community or someone well-known.

- Which woman in your life do you look up to? Why?
- Which woman in your life inspires you?
- Think about a time a woman in your life helped you solve a problem. What was the problem, and how did she help you solve it?
- Think of a list of women trailblazers.
- What have people that are trailblazers got in common? Think of a list of traits.



Creative Writing

Who inspires you? Students will write an original story (approx. 500-800 words) about an Australian girl, or woman you admire most. They could be someone well known or someone you think the world should know more about!

Podcast

Write stories about people doing inspirational things in your community. Create a podcast using [PodOmatic](#), [Buzzsprout](#) to share your stories with the school community.

Useful Websites

- [Mum Shirl](#) – National Portrait Gallery
- [How Your School Can Get Involved](#) – UN Women
- [Mum Shirl – the girl who became a mum to thousands](#) – Fierce Girls