

A spotlight on Afghanistan

A resource exploring the Victorian Curriculum Capabilities

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About the resource:

This resource is designed to be a week-long project designed to spread awareness about the current situation in Afghanistan.

This resource includes:

- Links to the Victorian Curriculum Capabilities
- Teacher Advice
- Vocabulary List
- 6 student worksheets

Victorian Curriculum Links:

- **Intercultural Capability (Years 9-10)** - Analyse the complex and dynamic interrelationships between and within cultures in a range of contexts and the impact of these interrelationships on their own and others cultural practices (VCICCB017)
- **Personal and Social Capability (Years 9-10)** - Analyse how divergent values and beliefs contribute to different perspectives on social issues (VCPSCSO047)
- **Ethical Capability (Years 9-10)** - Discuss issues raised by thinking about consequences and duties, in approaches to decision-making and action, and arguments for and against these approaches (VCECD022)
- **Critical and Creative Thinking (Years 9-10)** - Investigate the characteristics of effective questions in different contexts to examine information and test possibilities (VCCCTQ043)

Content Warning:

This resource and linked resources may contain material that is confronting and disturbing. Including themes (not exhaustive) of Abuse, Violence, Death or dying, Racism, Hateful language, and Trauma. A strong Trigger warning is advised, and teachers should review all content before use with their students.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people should be aware that resources may include references to, or images and names of, people now deceased.

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Teacher Advice:

This resource is made for students in years 9 or 10 and is designed to be either used in a single class or across multiple disciplines.

VOCABULARY:

We recommend providing students with the vocabulary list at the start of use. Students should refer to this section as they learn about this issue. Key vocabulary is italicised throughout the documents. We recommend assigning students a different word to make a Freya chart (see visual) and compiling the student responses as an additional resource. A few students could share their vocabulary words at the beginning or end of the lesson.

STAGE 1: Understanding the issue. (Recommended time: 50 minutes)

This section was designed as a basic understanding of the issue. However, optional further research and viewing/reading are encouraged.

We recommend running Stage 1 as a Socratic Circle using the discussion questions. For more information about how to run a Socratic circle, please read our [blog post](#).

STAGE 2: Diversity and Culture. (Recommended time: 50 minutes)

This section was designed for students to understand and respect the diversity of different cultures.

We recommend that students conduct individual research for Stage 2 and share their responses/findings with the class.

STAGE 3: Interpreting Data (Recommended time: 25 minutes)

This section was designed for students to understand how to interpret a range of data in different formats and think critically about the credibility of each data set.

We recommend that the data set explanation is teacher-led followed by student reflection in either groups or individually.

STAGE 4: Opinions and the Media. (Recommended time: 25 minutes)

This section was designed for students to have some choice and agency in their learning. Students set their own research questions. Teacher guidance may be needed in determining credible sources. References to the articles cited are in the Bibliography if students would like to complete additional research.

STAGE 5: Taking Action. (Recommended time: 100 minutes)

This section was designed for students to be creative and feel as though they are having an impact.

Sample posts may wish to be referred to as exemplars for students to create.

Vocabulary list:

Al-Qaeda: A network of Islamic fundamentalist groups, founded in 1988 and associated with the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center in 2001

Asylum: the protection granted by a state to someone who has left their home country as a political refugee.

Islam: the religious faith of Muslims, based on the words and religious system founded by the prophet Muhammad and taught by the Koran, the basic principle of which is absolute submission to a unique and personal god, Allah.

Communist/Communism: a theory or system of social organization in which all property is owned by the community and each person contributes and receives according to their ability and needs.

Coup: a sudden, violent, and illegal seizure of power from a government.

Democratic: based on a form of government in which the people choose leaders by voting

Fundamentalist: a form of a religion, especially Islam or Protestant Christianity, that upholds belief in the strict, literal interpretation of scripture

Guerrilla: a member of a small independent group taking part in irregular fighting, typically against larger regular forces.

Humanitarian: concerned with or seeking to promote human welfare.

Mujahedeen: members of a number of guerrilla groups operating in Afghanistan during the Afghan War (1979–92) that opposed the invading Soviet forces and eventually toppled the Afghan communist government

NATO: a military alliance between 28 European countries and 2 North American countries.

Pashto: the language of the Pashtuns, which belongs to the Iranian group. It is the official language of Afghanistan and is also spoken in northern areas of Pakistan.

Refugee: a person who has been forced to leave their country in order to escape war, persecution, or natural disaster.

Republic: a state in which supreme power is held by the people and their elected representatives and which has an elected or nominated president rather than a monarch.

Reputable: having a good reputation, reliable, trustworthy.

Sharia Law: the system of religious laws that Muslims follow.

Source: a place, person, or thing from which something originates or can be obtained.

Soviet Union: A former federation of 15 republics occupying the northern half of Asia and part of Eastern Europe, comprising Russia, Belorussia (Belarus), Ukraine, the Baltic States (Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania), Georgia, Armenia, Moldova (Moldavia), Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kirghizia, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan.

Sunni Islam: The larger of the two main branches of Islam, which differs from Shia.

Taliban: A fundamentalist Muslim movement that in 1996 set up an Islamic state in Afghanistan. The Taliban was overthrown in 2001 by US-led forces and Afghan groups following the terrorist attacks of 11 September.

United Nations: an association of many countries that aims to improve economic and social conditions and solve political problems in the world peacefully.

Picture:

Word used in a sentence:

Word:

Synonym:

Definition:

Antonym:

Definition in your own words

Stage 1: Understanding the issue

Task: What do you already know about Afghanistan?

The history of Afghanistan: 1970-2021

Afghanistan has been in some form of war for the past 40+ years. After the King was overthrown by his cousin in 1973, The *Republic* of Afghanistan was established, and the leadership of the country has been fought over at the expense of civilian lives.

Between 1973 and 1979, two presidents were killed in *coups* before a *communist* leader became the head of the government. Then, the *Soviet Union* invaded Afghanistan in late 1979 to support the communist government who was facing internal and external pressures.

This invasion led to a war between the Soviet invaders and the *Mujahideen* rebels, who were a resistance group supplied with arms and training by the USA, Pakistan and Britain. To eliminate civilian support for the Mujahideen, the Soviets bombed rural areas, causing 2.8 million Afghans to seek *asylum* in Pakistan and another 1.5 million to flee to Iran. An estimated one million Afghan civilians were killed during this nine-year conflict.

Despite the withdrawal of Soviet troops, the Mujahideen had still not won and were still fighting the Afghan government and army for leadership of the country until 1992, when they took control. However, many individual groups had formed within the Mujahideen, and they began warring with each other in another civil war. This civil war led to the formation of the *Taliban*, who believed Muslim rule had not been properly established after the communist government was removed. The Taliban used the very weapons provided by the US to defeat the Soviets to take leadership of the country, and by 1998, the Taliban controlled 90% of Afghanistan.



Listen

[Click here](#) to listen to the Daily Aus Podcast
"Who is the Taliban?" Start time: 3:15.
Duration: 5 minutes.



Watch

[Click here](#) to watch Mr History Youtube
Video "A super Quick History of
Afghanistan".

Stage 1: Understanding the issue

Who is the Taliban?

The word Taliban means 'students' or 'seekers' in *Pashto*, one of the two official languages of Afghanistan. The group emerged in the 1990s after the Soviet Union withdrew troops from Afghanistan. The group adheres to a strict interpretation of *Sunni Islam* and enforces its own version of *Sharia* or *Islamic Law*.

They ruled the country from 1996 - 2001 with no parliament or elections. Originally, the Taliban were welcomed by the Afghan people as an alternative to the Mujahideen, the *guerilla* groups who had opposed the Soviet forces and eventually toppled the communist regime, taking power. This was because they curbed government corruption, enforced law and tried to make the country more prosperous. However, their strict laws led to public executions of convicted murderers and adulterers and amputations for those found guilty of theft. In addition, men had to grow beards, and women had to wear the burqa. The Taliban also banned women from education and employment, except for female doctors, and anyone who did not obey could be jailed or publicly beaten. They also banned television, music and cinema and were accused of various human rights abuses as they persecuted minority groups.

Only four countries recognised the Taliban as a legitimate government when it was last in power, including Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Turkmenistan.

The Taliban's links to the terrorist organisation, *Al-Qaeda*, responsible for September 11, 2001, attacks on the twin towers and their refusal to hand over Al-Qaeda's leader, Osama bin Laden, who was hiding in Afghanistan, led to the US invasion in 2001. The Taliban were overthrown within a few months; however, they continued to wage war against the US and the newly built Afghan army for 20 years.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF CONFLICT

DURING THIS 20 YEAR PERIOD, THE TALIBAN CONTINUE TO FIGHT TO REGAIN POWER. THE ELECTED GOVERNMENT REMAIN IN POWER LARGELY DUE TO AMERICAN SUPPORT



Discussion questions:

Why would someone flee their country and seek asylum?

Do you think it was right for the USA to provide the Mujahideen with weapons? Why?

Why do you think the Afghan people were originally welcoming towards the Taliban?

Do you agree with the US decision to withdraw troops from Afghanistan and why?

Stage 2: Diversity and Culture

Task: Research the information required to respond to the following questions.



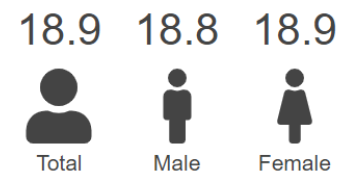
Question 1: Afghanistan is a 'landlocked' country. What does this term mean?

Question 2: Australia has a national sport, 'The AFL'. Afghanistan has 'Buzkashi'. What is this?



Question 3: The median age in Afghanistan is 18.9. What does this mean?

Afghanistan Median Age



Afghanistan Population by Age

There are 20,507,567 adults in Afghanistan.
<https://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/afghanistan-population>

Question 4: What is the primary language in Afghanistan?

Question 5: What religions are practiced in Afghanistan?

Question 6: Find a picture of a landmark in Afghanistan and insert the image to the right.

Question 7: Watch this [video](#). What is "Nowruz"? What activities are done during Nowruz?

Question 8: Watch this [video](#). What types of cuisines are traditional for Afghan people?

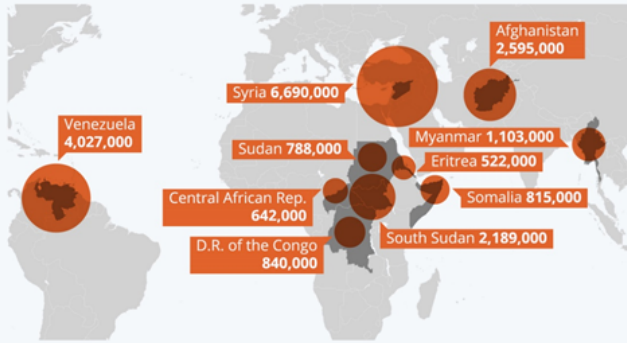


Stage 3: Interpreting data

Task: Look at the following infographics and graphs and respond to the questions that follow.

Mapping The World's Refugee Population

Top 10 origin countries of people displaced across borders at the end of 2020



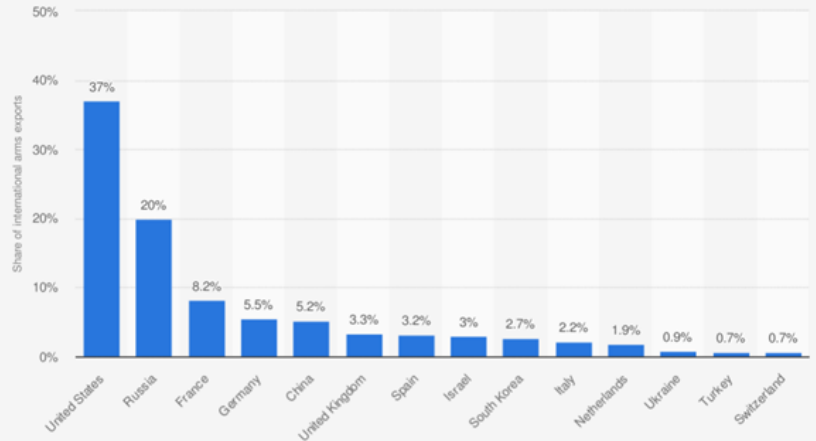
Excludes asylum seekers abroad
Source: UNHCR



statista

A) <https://www.statista.com/chart/18436/total-number-of-refugees-by-origin-country/>

Market share of the leading exporters of major weapons between 2016 and 2020, by country



Source: SIPRI © Statista 2021

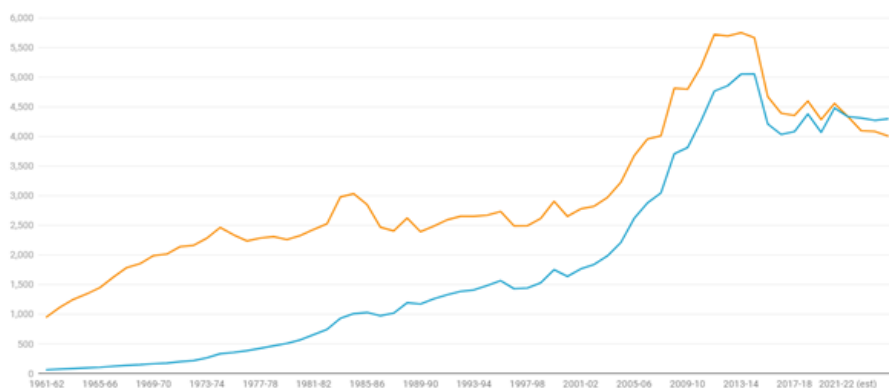
Additional Information: Worldwide; 2016 to 2020

statista

B) <https://www.statista.com/statistics/267131/market-share-of-the-leading-exporters-of-conventional-weapons/>

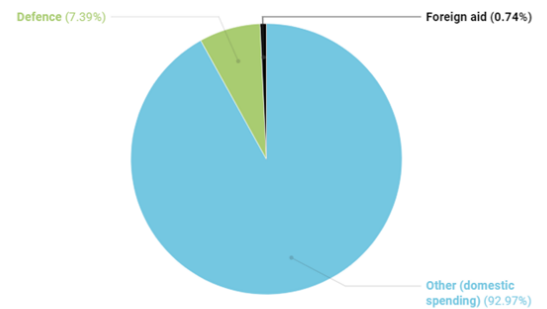
Australian aid over time (\$ millions)

Australian official development assistance (ODA) between 1961-62 and 2023-24. 2020-21 to 2023-24 are budget estimates and projections based on the 2020-21 budget. The blue line shows ODA in current prices for each year. The orange line adjusts for inflation, using 2021-22 prices.



C) <https://devpolicy.org/aidtracker/trends/>

Australian foreign aid as percentage of 2021-22 Federal Budget spending



Created with Datawrapper

D) <https://devpolicy.org/aidtracker/trends/>

Question 1: Looking at the graphs... I see... I think.... I wonder...

Question 2: What information can we gather from these data sets? What do we know?

Question 3: What does this mean?

Stage 4: Opinions and the Media

Task: Select an area of focus (or explore all six) for Stages 4 and 5 and answer the questions that follow.

Legal Systems in Afghanistan

Recent Headline:
"Afghanistan president flees country as Taliban moves into Kabul" - *7 News*

Funding the Taliban

Recent Headline:
"Where does the Taliban get its money and weapons from?" - *The Independent*

Women's Rights

Recent Headline:
"No chance of women's rights being preserved in Afghanistan under the Taliban, says researcher" - *CNBC*

Relationship with Australia

Recent Headline:
"How many Afghan refugees is Australia taking? Are going to expand our refugee intake?" - *ABC*

International Intervention

Recent Headline:
"Afghans need a humanitarian Intervention right now" - *Foreign Policy*

I have my own idea...

Recent Headline:
Find a concept you wish to explore further in relation to the issues in Afghanistan

Question 1: My focus issue is _____

Question 2: What are five questions you have about your focus issue headline?

Question 3: Select two questions from your list above and conduct some research to respond to your questions (make sure you consider *reputable sources*). What did you learn?

Stage 5: Taking Action



Task: You are going to create a social media post to help share information about how individuals can help spread awareness and help the situation in Afghanistan.



Step 1: Brainstorm all the ideas you have that could help. There are no bad ideas. Write down the first 20 that come to mind.

Step 2: Select your two best ideas from Step 1. Create a list of the arguments for and arguments against these two ideas.

Step 3: Select the idea from Step 2 that you think will have the greatest impact.

Step 4: Create a social media post that you believe will reach the largest audience. This can be a TikTok, youtube video, Instagram post, infographic, podcast etc.

Step 5: Reflect. Do you think students help bring about change? What ideas do you have on what you could do next to help support this issue?

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