Embedding career education in the Victorian Curriculum F–10

History, Levels 9 and 10

An existing learning activity linked to a particular learning area or capability in the Victorian Curriculum F–10 can be easily adapted to incorporate career education, enriching students’ career-related learning and skill development.

1. Identify an existing learning activity

**Curriculum area and levels:** History, Levels 9 and 10

**Relevant content description:** Effects of World War II, with a particular emphasis on the changes and continuities brought to the Australian home front and society ([VCHHK148](https://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCHHK148))

**Existing activity:** Investigating the impact of World War II on work opportunities for women in Australia and the resultant changes and continuities for different groups of women at the time.

**Summary of adaptation, change, addition:** Comparing the opportunities for women during WWII with contemporary opportunities in the defence forces and wider society.

2. Adapt the learning activity to include a career education focus

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| Existing learning activity | Adaptations, changes or extensions that can be made |
| In small groups, students examine a range of written and visual primary sources about work opportunities for women in World War II. They classify these opportunities into three categories: Service (women who enlisted in or volunteered for the Armed Forces), Industry (women who worked in war-related industries) and Replacement (women who replaced roles vacated by men who enlisted). Students can access the Australian Women in War project (see Additional resources) and research the experiences of Australian women across all three categories. | As an extension, students research the Service category within the context of contemporary opportunities for Australian women in the defence forces. They identify what opportunities now exist in the defence forces, and what (if any) career options remain closed to women. |
| Students use inquiry and research and investigative skills to identify, compare and contrast the experiences/perspectives of the different categories of women (location/age/class/ethnicity).  Students identify and explain changes and continuities in the work lives of different groups of women from these opportunities during the war and how it changed after the war. They develop an evidence-based argument evaluating the extent of change and what stayed the same for different groups of women before, during and following World War II. | Students extend the existing activity to use their inquiry and research skills to look at how and why the different opportunities for women in the defence forces have come about. They link the opportunities for women following WWII to those available today, identifying key changes and continuities.  Students broaden the scope of their inquiry to the issue of gender and employment outside the ADF (connections can be made to the past, present and futures throughout these tasks) and identify key changes and continuities to issues of gender and work today. Students may consider questions such as:   * Is the ‘gender divide’ diminishing? * Should ‘gender equity’ be a focus for change? Why/why not? * What other equity issues should drive change? |
|  | Students reflect on how the activity has influenced their understanding of opportunities and potential career paths available to them. Encouraging them to draw comparisons between defence force roles and similar roles in civilian employment is also relevant. |

Considerations when adapting the learning activity

* Not every student will have considered a career in the defence forces, nor is this activity intended to be a promotional exercise. The exploration of the changing roles of women in the defence forces can be very successfully used to scaffold reflection on changes in society more broadly, and to track how industries change in response to societal changes. In Australia, this issue has received significant media coverage in recent years, which lends itself to the integration of contemporary media sources into the classroom. Supporting students to critically analyse such information sources will assist them to develop key career-related skills and attributes.
* Teacher will need to consider how they use the concept of past–present–future to scaffold and support discussion about gender and the workplace, and its relevance to students as they explore and build their careers.
* The activity could be extended as students consider the opportunities available to the various generations of adults in their lives and identify elements of continuity and change.

Additional resources to help when adapting the learning activity

* Australian War Memorial, ‘[Australian women in war](https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/LIB100003689)’
* Defence Jobs, ‘[Women in the ADF](https://www.defencejobs.gov.au/about-the-adf/women-in-the-adf)’
* Business News Daily, ‘[Gendered' jobs are on the decline, but stereotypes remain](https://www.businessnewsdaily.com/10085-male-female-dominated-jobs.html)
* Forbes, ‘[The Uberization of work: Pros and cons of the gig economy](https://www.forbes.com/sites/charlestowersclark/2019/07/08/the-uberization-of-work-pros-and-cons-of-the-gig-economy/#2d0b01e61cc7)’

Benefits for students

Know yourself – self-development:

* Exploring opportunities available to women, and the ways in which they have shaped, and continue to shape careers, encourages students to critically engage with, and respond to, societal issues of consequence.

Know your world – career exploration:

* Students learn about the changing nature of participation in the workforce as it relates to work and gender, and the changes and continuities these brought to Australian society, thus contributing to their capacity to understand work at a macro or societal level.

Manage your future – be proactive:

* Building an understanding of how work opportunities change over time encourages students to embrace change and find and use opportunities.
* Consideration of how changing work patterns and issues of gender shape job opportunities encourages students to make informed decisions as they explore career possibilities.