

Counting Convicts

Overview: Use the graphs and statistics in *A Drift of 'Derwent Ducks'* to investigate female convicts.

Big Question: What can statistics about female convicts tell us?

Key Element Outcomes:

MAJOR

- Communicating: Being Numerate

MINOR

- Thinking: Inquiry
- Communicating: Being Information Literate; Being Literate
- Social Responsibility: Understanding the past and creating preferred futures

Standards: 4–5

Background: 200 female convicts were transported on the *Australasia* from Dublin to Hobart in 1849. *A Drift of 'Derwent Ducks'* tells their stories and provides statistical information on the women and their children.

Lesson Ideas:

- Students use the 28 graphs in *A Drift of 'Derwent Ducks'* to convert between percentages and numbers of convicts, given the total number of convicts.

Example 1: Figure 20 on page 281 is a pie chart showing the ages at which colonial-born children of *Australasia* convicts died. The total number of children is given as 112 and the pie portions are given as percentages. Students can use this information to work out how many children died at different ages.

(Figures 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 24, 25, 27, 28 and 30 could also be used.)

Example 2: Figure 21 on page 285 is a column graph showing the ages of the convicts at the time of transportation. The total number of convicts is given as 200. Students can use the information in the graph to work out the percentage of convicts at each age.

(Figures 5, 19, 22, 23, 26 and 29 could also be used.)

- Students use the information provided in Table 6 on page 98—numbers, names and ages of children transported with their convict mothers on the *Australasia*—to work out the average age of the children transported with their mothers.
(Tables 10, 11, 13, 15, 19 and 20 could also be used.)
- Students use the data provided in Table 4 on page 31—percentage comparison of sentences of all Irish female convicts with *Australasia* convicts—to create a column graph, either by hand or by using MS Excel.
(Tables 2, 3, 5, 22, 24 and 25 could also be used.)

- Students compare relevant data (eg age at death of children, age at death) with today's statistics. Students could search for current statistics on the Internet.
- Students write a synopsis of the lives of the *Australasia* convicts from the statistics provided in *A Drift of 'Derwent Ducks'*.
- Students discuss their findings and consider how our lives are very different today from those of the *Australasia* convicts.

Resources:

- Graphs and tables from the book *A Drift of 'Derwent Ducks': Lives of the 200 Irish female convicts transported on the Australasia from Dublin to Hobart in 1849*
- Internet
- Microsoft Excel