

Interpreting Lives

Overview: Use the biographies of the *Australasia* convicts provided on the CD accompanying *A Drift of 'Derwent Ducks'* to write a creative story about a convict.

Big Question: What can the lives of female convicts tell us?

Key Element Outcomes:

MAJOR

- Communicating: Being Literate; Being Arts Literate
- Social Responsibility: Understanding the past and creating preferred futures

MINOR

- Thinking: Reflective Thinking
- Communicating: Being Information Literate

Standards: 2–5

Background: Transportation and description details, plus a chronology of important life events, is provided for each *Australasia* convict on the CD which accompanies the book *A Drift of 'Derwent Ducks'*. The CD can be copied for educational purposes if you wish to have a class set. Alternatively, the pdf files could be loaded onto a drive accessible to students. There is one pdf file for each of the 200 convicts.

Information on the convicts is provided from the time of their transportation offence to the time of their death, as far as is known.

Lesson Ideas:

1. Students browse the CD files and choose a convict. Alternatively, students randomly choose a convict (*eg* draw the name out of a hat).
2. Students read the story of their chosen convict. They may need to refer to the list of abbreviations and acronyms provided on pages 343–344 of the book to assist their interpretation. The book may also assist with other information for which they do not know the meaning, as may the Female Factory Research Group website (see Resources for address).
3. It may be useful at this stage for students to work in small groups to discuss the stories of their chosen convicts.
4. Students generate a piece of creative writing (story, poem, song, limerick, play, script) about their chosen convict.
5. Students discuss what the life of their chosen convict tells them that could inform their own life.

Resources:

- *A Drift of 'Derwent Ducks': Lives of the 200 Irish female convicts transported on the Australasia from Dublin to Hobart in 1849* – book and CD
- Female Factory Research Group website – www.femalefactory.com.au/FFRG
- Female Factory Historic Site Interactive Tour for Primary School students – www.femalefactory.com.au/school.htm