



**PROGRAMME TITLE** Pricing the Priceless

**SCHOOL LEVEL** Junior Secondary  
Senior Secondary

### **EDUCATION DESCRIPTION**

Can you put a cash value on the world's "priceless" iconic monuments? An engineer with a firm belief in numbers sets about finding out how much it would cost by modern standards to scrap, build, or move the Great Pyramid of Giza, the Eiffel Tower of Paris and New York's Grand Central Station.

### **TEACHER BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Human achievement can be measured in many ways. One of these is the building of historical monuments that withstand the dual tests of time and changing fashion. While we can all admire these buildings for their engineering feats, beauty and power, we don't often pause to consider the finer details of their construction. Even less, do we ponder possibly scrapping, rebuilding or moving them to another location.

The host of this original and engaging series is an engineer with a passion for deconstruction and analysis. Over three episodes, he examines three of the world's most famous and recognisable buildings – Egypt's Great Pyramid, France's Eiffel Tower and the USA's Grand Central Station – and calculates their actual worth.

His outrageous concepts of reducing each of the buildings to scrap, rebuilding them with modern materials and technology, and physically translocating them make for compulsive viewing. Blending elements of such disciplines as history, geography, social science, architecture, engineering, tourism, business and finance, the images and commentary are lively and engaging.

As we follow our host in his quest, we cross the world, meeting historians, archaeologists, real estate agents, and a host of other workers, gaining an insight into their contrasting professions. We see behind the scenes in some of the buildings, where incredible secrets (such as Roosevelt's private train carriage) are revealed. We also compare and contrast the series' visually stunning geographical locations in Giza, Paris, New York and Las Vegas.

This documentary series takes an unusual approach in analytical thinking, which is an excellent foil for teaching the intricate details about our cultural and historical monuments, and importantly, their place and value in our society.

## **CURRICULUM POINTERS**

### **Junior Secondary Curriculum**

*History is a distinctive and indispensable form of understanding practiced across many generations. Human civilisation is marked by a preservation of the past in oral memory, documents, artefacts, monuments and traditions.*

Shape of the Australian History Curriculum 2009 Page 4

*Geography shows students ways in which they can positively influence their world as active local, national and global citizens by encouraging them to question why things are the way they are, to investigate issues and to evaluate alternative, more sustainable futures. Through exploration and discussion, students develop an informed view of their responsibilities towards the environment and to people throughout the world.*

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### **Senior Secondary Curriculum**

*Historical study is based on the evidence of the remains of the past. It is interpretative by nature, promotes debate and encourages thinking about human values, including present and future challenges. It develops transferable skills associated with the process of historical inquiry, including the ability to ask relevant questions, critically analyse and interpret sources, consider context, respect and explain different perspectives, develop and substantiate interpretations, and communicate effectively.*

Australian History Curriculum 2010: Rationale

*The Modern History curriculum aims to develop students' knowledge and understanding of the past, as well as an appreciation of how past events and forces have contributed to the present and inform the future.*

Australian History Curriculum 2010: Rationale

*The curriculum recognises that this knowledge is dynamic and can be contested, and helps students to understand how people can come to different conclusions about the same questions. However, students also learn that opinions and conclusions must be backed up with evidence and logical argument.*

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## CURRICULUM OUTCOMES

### Junior Secondary

In undertaking these tasks, students of History will:

- *Ask and explore inquiry questions about three historic, iconic buildings in different geographical locations, researching relevant and comprehensive answers*
- *Use a range of different forms of evidence to provide historical explanations, recognising how these forms of evidence may vary in their value*
- *Develop appropriate techniques of communication and organisation.*

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In undertaking these tasks, students of Geography will:

- *Gain an understanding of the uniqueness of three different geographical locations, as well as the similarities between them*
- *Gain an understanding of the significance of location*

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### Senior Secondary

In undertaking these tasks, students of Ancient History will:

- *Use timelines to organise and interpret historical events and developments*
- *Learn about the perspectives, beliefs and values of people in the past, developing an appreciation of how individuals and groups in the present may perceive the world in diverse ways*
- *Investigate the Great Pyramid in the context of the Giza Pyramid Complex*

Australian Ancient History Curriculum 2010: Page 3

In undertaking these tasks, students of Modern History will:

- *Gain an understanding of Roosevelt's role of as leader of the USA*
- *Analyse and synthesise evidence from different types of sources*

Australian Modern History Curriculum 2010: Page 12

In undertaking these tasks, students of Geography will:

- *Examine and appreciate the geography of economic activity*
- *Examine and appreciate the elements of culture and geography*

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## STUDENT LEARNING TASKS

### Junior Secondary

#### Task 1

Download a map of the world from

<http://maps.nationalgeographic.com/maps/print-collection/world-map-classic.html>

Save the map to your files, or print it and paste it into your workbook. On the map mark the locations of:

- Giza in Egypt
- Paris in France
- New York City and Las Vegas in the USA

#### Task 2

Divide a page in your workbook into four columns. Entitle the first column *Features*. Head each of the other three columns with these monuments: *Great Pyramid of Giza*, *the Eiffel Tower* and *Grand Central Station*.

Now in the *Features* column write the list:

- Year of construction
- Construction material/s
- Purpose of the construction
- Current estimated value

Complete the table by writing the information for each of the three monuments.

#### Task 3

Which of the great buildings from the series *Pricing The Priceless* would you most like to visit? Write a 150-word letter to a friend from the building site. Describe the size, shape and design of the building, its geographical setting, and why you think it is one of the world's greatest architectural monuments.

#### Task 4

In the documentary series *Pricing The Priceless*, the narrator interviews a number of different workers to help him with his calculations. Choose three of these people and write a paragraph about the contribution each person made. Include the calculations discussed in the series - such as costs, quantities of construction material, areas etc.

### **Task 5**

What does the word *iconic* mean? Does Australia have any world standard iconic architectural monuments? Write 100 words to suggest why Australia may not have as many such buildings as the northern hemisphere. Include mention of any Australian buildings you believe deserve an iconic priceless status.

## **Senior Secondary**

### **Task 1**

Draw a timeline that shows the chronology of the construction of the Great Pyramid, Eiffel Tower Grand Central Station. Add to the timeline significant world events from the three construction periods.

### **Task 2**

Deconstruction and calculating were two techniques used in the documentary to assign a monetary value to each of the iconic buildings. What other techniques were used? Make a list of all the different techniques and explain how they contributed to the final result and value.

### **Task 3**

Write a paragraph on each to explain how the Great Pyramid, the Eiffel Tower and Grand Central Station represent their era of construction and cultural vision of their architects.

### **Task 4**

In a secret compartment of Grand Central Station, we saw President Roosevelt's private train carriage. Write a 300-word essay to describe the carriage and explain what world events required the President of the USA to take such extreme precautions.

### **Task 5**

What does the word *iconic* mean? Of the three iconic buildings presented in the Pricing The Priceless series, choose the one that you feel is most worthy of iconic status. Support your opinion with facts and figures about the building, as well as discussion about what makes it iconic.