

Fall of Singapore Lessons, Outline

The centre of this is a research project on Australians who were present at the Fall of Singapore on 15 February 1942. This unit assumes students already know at least the basic outline of the war.

1. Teacher gives general introduction to the Malaya-Singapore campaign, which began the same day as Pearl Harbour (7 December 1941). The following article from the VWMA provides background to Japan's growing power and the events leading up to the Fall of Singapore <https://vwma.org.au/collections/home-page-stories/the-fall-of-singapore> . The AWM provides good brief overviews of the Malaya Campaign (<https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/E84717>) and the subsequent Battle for Singapore (<https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/E84308>). This Singaporean video (4 mins) also briefly describes the course of the campaign until Japanese troops landed on Singapore island and beat back the Australian troops on 8 February (<https://youtu.be/BktyGG36viE>). Finally, this long (24 mins) video from the Dept of Veterans' Affairs (https://youtu.be/7WNGKKI_gc0) features interviews with several Australian soldiers who fought in the campaign and were subsequently imprisoned.

The aim is to ensure students have at least a basic grasp of the campaign and how quickly the Japanese were successful. If the teacher can accurately convey the sense of panic in Singapore (and, indeed, Australia), that will help. This means the rest of the unit will make sense.

2. Listen to *The Sudden Storm* podcast Parts 1 and 2 about the massacre of nurses escaping Singapore on Bangka Island. See the supporting materials on the VWMA website.

3. Students are allocated a soldier or nurse* to research. Using the Research Guides on the VWMA website (<https://vwma.org.au/education/resources-for-students>), students complete as much information as they can on their person's:

- Life before the war
- Actions and movements of them and their unit during the Malayan-Singapore campaign
- Immediate fate (i.e. in February)
- Ultimate fate (if they survived February)

Students should also find at least ten pictures to accompany this.

4. Students present the information they have researched in a creative fashion. This might be a Biography or Digital Story.

Where they can add information, students should upload what they have learned to the person's profile on the Virtual War Memorial.

There were a few different possible outcomes and experiences, but each student will have a few others researching people who went through the same thing.

*VWMA to provide a mix of people who evacuated via the Empire Star to safety or the Vyner Brook to be either murdered or imprisoned as a POW. Contact the Schools Program Manager schools.program@vwma.org.au