

National History Challenge

History of Place – scaffold



Research scaffold

This scaffold is intended to guide you through the research and planning of your entry for the special category ‘History of Place’.

Your entry should:

- Show how your project is connected to, or inspired by, a place or collection from Museums of History NSW (MHNSW)
- Focus on ‘Voices’ — the 2026 National History Challenge theme

Step 1

Choose a place or object that represents or contains the **voice** or **voices of people** from the past that are historically significant. This may be one of the places or objects managed by MHNSW or a place or object of significance to you that has been inspired by one of the MHNSW sites or objects.

Example

*The **Hyde Park Barracks** (an MHNSW site) – a place of convict voices*

Or:

*My grandparents’ house, where they have lived since the 1960s. **The kitchen at Susannah Place** (an MHNSW site) has an oven of the same vintage and it reminds me how we always gathered around the oven listening to Nan telling us how she made dinner, but we were just waiting to eat.*

Step 2

Find out more about the place or the object and its **voice** or **voices** using the scaffold provided in a next page to step you through your research.

Step 3

Using the information you have gathered, follow the National History Challenge instructions on presentation formats to present your research.

Place name or object name

Does the place or object have a name? Does it have a different/special name for you or others?

What sources of information could you use to find out more about this place or object and its voices?

Note: You might research online, interview people from your area, visit one of the MHNSW places and make observations, and examine historical objects and documents. Some suggested online sources are provided in the last section of this document.

What voices are attached to this place or object?

Who lived, worked or visited here? How are they significant to you?

Note: 'Voices' is the theme for 2026 and must be the focus of the entry.

How is this place or object historically significant?

How is this place or object historically significant to a wider audience or to you?

What makes this place or object special or important for you?

How has this place or object changed over time?

What does it mean to you or others today?

Interesting facts

Facts about the place or object and/or the voice or voices that you learned from your research and found memorable or intriguing.

If not answered above:

Which Museums of History NSW (MHNSW) place or collection inspired your choice?

How did the MHNSW place or collection influence, inform or connect with the place or objects you chose?

Bibliography

For Year 7 and above, cite sources and, in the bibliography, annotate the three most useful.

Useful links to support your research

Collections

Museums of History NSW holds several of the state's most significant and fascinating collections – from the vast State Archives Collection to the Caroline Simpson Library Collection, and individual collections relating to our museums and houses. Dive in and explore!

mhnsw.au/collections

Susannah Place – working-class lives

Are you interested in the lives of the working-class children who lived at Susannah Place in The Rocks in the early 20th century? Start here:

mhnsw.au/stories/general/growing-up-early-1900s

Hyde Park Barracks – convicts and immigrants

Want to learn about the lives of convicts who passed through Hyde Park Barracks between 1819 and 1848? Start here:

mhnsw.au/learning/day-life-convict/

Explore the stories of women who passed through the Hyde Park Barracks after it became an immigration depot in 1848:

mhnsw.au/stories/convict-sydney/female-migration/

Examine the layered history of the UNESCO World Heritage-listed Hyde Park Barracks through our site study resource:

mhnsw.au/learning/hpb-site-study-hyde-park-barracks-site-study/

Elizabeth Farm

Discover the homestead built in 1793 for the military couple John and Elizabeth Macarthur and their growing family. Elizabeth Farm tells a story of Dharug dispossession, convict rebellion, the toppling of governors and family turmoil.

John Macarthur – ambitious, volatile, self-confident:

mhnsw.au/stories/convict-sydney/john-macarthur-ambitious-volatile-self-confident/

Mr Butler, the Macarthurs' butler:

mhnsw.au/stories/general/mr-butler-macarthurs-butler/

Museum of Sydney – the site of the first Government House

To explore first contact experiences between European colonists and First Nations people at the site of Australia's first Government House, start here:

mhnsw.au/visit-us/museum-of-sydney