



Australian students celebrate Empire Day.

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From 1905 until the 1950s, Empire Day was celebrated in Australia on 24 of May, Queen Victoria's birthday. Schools held special lessons, formal ceremonies with speeches, and concerts where children performed poetry and songs. Students were encouraged to feel proud of their country, to be good citizens, and to understand that they were part of the British Empire. Other people, such as soldiers or important members of the town, were sometimes invited too. At the end of the ceremony, teachers could close the school for the rest of the day and send the students home!

The New South Wales Department of Education suggested that children in their schools:

- 1 Have an assembly of important visitors, with soldiers if possible.
- 2 Raise the flag (which was the Union Jack at that time).
- 3 Sing the national anthem (at the time, 'God Save the Queen'), and a song called 'Flag of Britain'.
- 4 Listen to speeches about Britain and the British Empire, and how to be a good citizen (perhaps with pictures or maps).
- 5 Say a poem about being a good citizen of their country.
- 6 Read a hymn or say a prayer.