

Students to complete selected pre-reading and preparation activities before visiting the Mornington Peninsula Regional Gallery or accessing artworks online.

Big idea: FINDING FREEDOM.

Art Galleries value freedom of expression which allows the public access to the complexities of human experiences expressed through the lens of individual artists. Being able to explore the concept of 'freedom' is an important aspect of a free society. In Art Galleries, curators have the important role to decide on the art works that are presented to the public. They ask; What is freedom? What does it look like? What does it mean to individuals or groups? What happens when freedom is taken away from people? Should people be concerned with other people's freedom? Art Galleries give the public an opportunity to explore a deeper understanding of the complexity of freedom and why it should be valued and protected. Curators go through a journey to explore important concepts to present to the public. This is an opportunity for you to learn one way a curator might prepare for an exhibition. This is your opportunity to be a curator.

A curator's journey: FINDING FREEDOM

The back story that occurs in your brain.

There is a big difference between finding Nemo and finding Freedom for most people. Let us begin by considering why finding Freedom is much harder for people than finding Nemo.

A lot of mental activity occurs in your brain to understand the statement, 'There is a big difference between finding Nemo and finding Freedom for most people.' Without you realising it your brain instantaneously unpacks the statement. Let us assume that most people would read the word 'Nemo' and understand the word as the fish in the movie by Disney Pixar, *Finding Nemo*. *(check copyright of image)



So, the words, 'finding Nemo' is understood in your mind as finding a fish. Although that might be a difficult search under the sea, finding a fish is much easier to understand than finding freedom. You may have learnt in English class that the word 'fish' is a noun, therefore it is a thing we can see and touch. We know what a fish is and although there are many fish, we can identify a fish easily. Generally speaking, most people agree on what a fish is, and what a fish is not. We know what we are looking for. However, the word 'freedom' is an abstract noun, therefore it is an abstract idea. Both 'freedom' and 'fish' are nouns, but fish is a defined, real thing we can see, whereas freedom is an undefined idea that we cannot see. Both 'fish' and 'freedom' are nouns but they are concepts constructed in our brain first. Our brain does all the work before we understand how to communicate our experiences and thoughts with other people. How well our brain unpacks language, determines how well we are able to communicate the meaning.

If we were curating an exhibition on *Finding Nemo* in an Art Gallery, there would be artworks that relate to Nemo and the movie. Generally speaking, it is an agreed understanding and the people visiting the exhibition would know what to expect. But, when we curate an exhibition around Finding Freedom, it is a much more abstract and complex situation. The artists and the viewers will interpret freedom in different ways. It is not an agreed understanding because human experiences and understanding are unique and complex. The exhibition may not be what the viewer expects to see at the Art Gallery. Freedom is an abstract idea and people express and understand abstract ideas in different ways. It can be exciting and confronting to explore the concept of freedom because the value of freedom is an important value to humanity. Therefore, freedom is an important concept.

Let us begin our journey into understanding the importance of investigating the concept of freedom through the lens of a curator of an Art Gallery. The steps to a critical inquiry into freedom begins with basic questions and answers to prepare a solid foundation to build a project upon. We need to be prepared when we are trying to communicate complex and abstract concepts.

STEP 1: Concepts.

Q: What is a concept?

A: Concepts are the mental tools we use to classify and order our experience in and of the world. Generally speaking, they are sometimes known as the 'vehicles of meaning.' We use concepts to categorise, classify and order thoughts to make judgements about that which we experience in the world, including other people. They are abstract signifiers that have been constructed by thinking beings to help us communicate effectively with each other.

Q: Are there different ways to understand concepts?

A: Concepts can be difficult to understand as they are mental tools and can sometimes be understood in different ways in different situations. Sometimes, that makes it tricky to agree to a standard meaning to any one concept. Let us consider the concept of fish. We all know what a fish is and what a fish is not. We know that the word fish is a noun and therefore denotes a thing. Therefore, a simple concept like 'fish' is easy to understand and communicate to others. But, let us consider an important concept that is more abstract like 'freedom.' Freedom is an abstract noun, therefore it is not a thing, it is an abstract idea. As part of a critical investigation, we first ask these three questions to identify if a concept is indeed an important concept.

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| 1) Is the concept used in our common day-to-day communication? | Yes/No |
| 2) Does the concept play an important role in our lives? | Yes/No |
| 3) Is the concept contestable? Can it's meaning be debated? | Yes/No |

If you have answered 'Yes' to all three questions, the concept is an important one and there is an opportunity to investigate the complexity of the concept. Let us test the concept of 'freedom' against the above criteria questions. Freedom is used in our common day to day conversations, and it plays an important role in our lives, and it can have different meanings to different people in different situations. Therefore, freedom is an important concept and there is an opportunity to investigate its implications to our live's experiences and the way we use it to communicate to others. Remember, people are very complex and how we communicate with each other is very complex. We cannot assume everyone understands or experiences 'freedom' in the same way. However, the concept of fish is used in our common day to day conversations, and it may or may not play an important role in our lives, but the concept of fish is not debatable. We do not argue over the understanding of what the word fish means. Therefore, the concept of fish is not an important concept, but freedom is an important concept.

Using the 3 criteria questions above, **test** the following concepts and circle which ones are important. Be careful and honest as you are not justifying the concept, you are **testing** them against the **criteria**.

Circle the important concepts:

CAT JUSTICE FOOTBALL JUSTICE HORSE FISH PEN
RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILTIES TEACHER FREEDOM

STEP 2: Complete the table below.

Give two different explanations of freedom in two different situations that show that the concept of freedom can be used in different ways. A good way to think about this is to think about times when you have felt free to do something or seen someone else achieve freedom.

1a) Complete the sentence below to show evidence of your understanding of the concept of freedom. What does freedom mean to you? Freedom is
1b) What does freedom mean to others? Find another student and ask them if they agree with your statement. Get them to explain why they agree or disagree with your responses and make notes below. Name:Agree/Disagree
2a) Complete the sentence below to show evidence of your understanding of the concept of freedom in a different way. What does freedom mean to you? Freedom is
2b) What does freedom mean to others? Find another student and ask them if they agree with your statement. Get them to explain why they agree or disagree with your responses and make notes below. Name:Agree/Disagree
Now, write out your definition of the concept of freedom. Freedom is

Does this exercise raise any questions for you about freedom? Write out the questions below.

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STEP 3: What is freedom?

We often use synonyms of concepts to make our school work interesting and complex. But, this may be doing your work a disservice. Some synonyms have a nuanced meaning that changes the concept slightly and that may change the intention of your meaning greatly. Sometimes the change is subtle but sometimes it is very obvious to others that you don't understand the complex meaning of a concept and this may affect your overall assessment result. It can be disappointing if you have tried to improve your work only to find it has not worked well.

- Using a good dictionary look up the definition of each of the following concepts in relation to freedom and write out the definition in the space provided.
- In the appropriate column, rank each concept from, 1 being the closest meaning to freedom and 6 being most different to freedom. Be mindful of the different nuances as these concepts are all related to freedom in different ways.
- Identify the ranking from 4 other students and document if their ranking agrees with your judgement.

Concepts:	Definition:	Ranking from 1 as the closest to freedom to 6 as least compatible.	Ask four other students and note how many agree with your ranking.
Liberty			
Self-determination			
Autonomy			
Independence			
Choice			
Sovereignty			

Individual reflection.

Explain the process of the prioritising exercise above including how you decided on the ranking from 1 to 6.

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Justify your first ranking and why you think it is closely linked to the concept of freedom. Note what the two concepts have in common and what is different.

Common:

Differences:

STEP 4: Develop the criteria for 'freedom.'

Find a partner or organise a small group of 3-4 students (any more will make this exercise too difficult).

Think about what ideas and situations relate to your understanding of freedom. Categorise the findings into Freedom and Not Free below in the table. Consider at least 6 examples from the working pair/group. Consider what is common to each experience and see if you can work out what they have in common to work out a criterion for testing the concept of freedom. You may realise that you need to move some ideas from one column to the other while discussing the reasons with your partner/group and why you put the idea in a particular column. Remember the group must agree on the criteria. It may be approximately three questions or three statements. Write your agreed criteria in the table below.

Complete the table:

FREEDOM	NOT FREE
<p>Agreed criteria for freedom is:</p>	

STEP 5: Optional challenges

Complete any of the following (a,b,c) to stretch yourself intellectually.

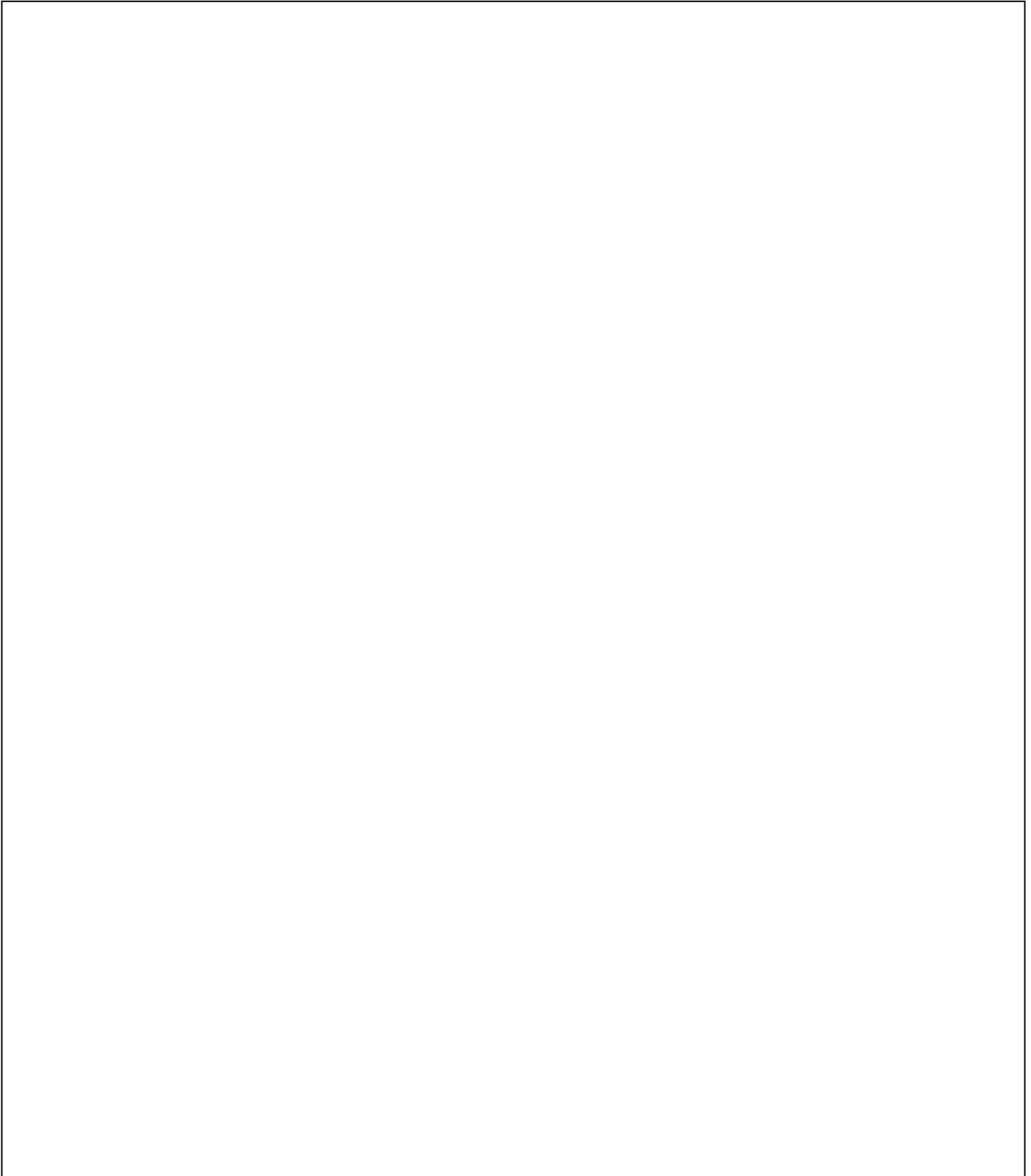
- a) Freedom is a very broad concept and can be used in many different ways. If you are up to the challenge, see if you can give some clear examples of freedom to different contexts below.

Concept of freedom.	Evidence to show your understanding of freedom in different contexts. Examples includes personal experiences, events in history, issues in the media, novels or films and other authorities.
Personal freedom	
Political freedom	
Religious freedom	
Economic freedom	
Social freedom	
Spiritual freedom	
Artistic freedom	
Freedom of Expression	

- b) In an Art Gallery an artist's work affirms their freedom of expression, but we should consider whether all artists should have the right to expression of freedom in the public domain.**

There is a complex idea embedded in this statement. Work with a partner and see if you can explain the meaning of this sentence and try to explain it in the box below. You might prefer to draw a response or write a response. It is up to you.

c) The above exercises show that the concept of freedom has varied applications in society. Think about what might happen if freedom was taken away from you or others. Explain what you think it might change in your life or the life of someone else. You might consider an asylum seeker, someone in a non-free country or a time in the past when historically people had no freedom. You may feel like this yourself or know someone who has their freedom limited. Write or draw your thoughts below.



To be completed by students visiting Mornington Peninsula Regional Gallery in person or online.

STEP 6: What does freedom look like?

After completing the classroom exercises, you should have a strong foundation to build your understanding of freedom upon. You may have widened your knowledge of concepts and/or the concept of freedom. You may have a lot of new information in your mind. These new mental tools will support your capacity to think deeper and wider about what freedom means to individuals and groups.

While considering the artists' work on exhibition, think about the following:

- freedom of expression from the artist perspective
- the concept of freedom expressed in the artwork
- the freedom of the viewer to interpret their personal response to the artwork
- the freedom of the curator of the Art Gallery to choose particular artworks

The Art Gallery is a very complex space.

Reflect on your thoughts here:

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Add any questions that arise during this exercise here:

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Refer to your criteria for freedom from your classroom notes and identify three different works of art in relation to freedom. (Note: you may need to make some changes to your criteria later in this exercise.)

- 1) Choose an art work that expresses 'freedom'
- 2) Choose an art work that expresses a lack of 'freedom'
- 3) Choose an art work that is unsettling or bothersome to you

On the following three pages, add the title of the artwork, the artist and a summary of the description provided by the Art Gallery. Jot down your thoughts about the art work in the form of drawings, notes, ideas, questions that relate to freedom. It might be about the artist, the artwork, yourself or the curator at the Art Gallery. There will be a lot to think about and you will need to take effective and relevant notes to help you form new judgements about freedom.

ARTWORK 1: An art work that expresses freedom is

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Explain how this selected art work has evidence of your criteria for identifying the concept of freedom.

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Other jottings:

ARTWORK 2: An art work that expresses a lack of freedom is

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Explain how this selected art work has evidence of your criteria for identifying the concept of freedom.

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Other jottings:

ARTWORK 3: An art work that is unsettling or bothersome to you is

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Explain how this selected art work has evidence of your criteria for identifying the concept of freedom.

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Other jottings:

STEP 7: Reflective exercise.

Consider your three selected artworks and reflect on these questions.

- 1. Why do you think the artworks have been chosen by the curator of the Art Gallery?

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- 2. Do you think the curator had 'freedom' in mind when the artworks were selected? Explain.

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- 3. Explain why you think that freedom is valued by individuals and/or groups in society?

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- 4. Have you changed your criteria for the concept of freedom? Refine your criteria here.

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Student opportunity to curate an exhibition on freedom.

STEP 8: You will curate an exhibition titled: FINDING FREEDOM.

We can stop referring to freedom as the concept of freedom as you will have realised that freedom is a concept and has become part of your common knowledge bank. You know that it is an important concept and needs to be understood and communicated in a deeper and richer way than before you started these mental exercises. So, now it your turn to show your deep understanding of the complexities of freedom.

You will curate an exhibition titled: **FINDING FREEDOM.**

Due date:

Your exhibition must include:

- **2-3 artworks that you have researched. You might like to paint/draw or sculpt one artwork yourself. The 2-3 artworks must be suitable for a public exhibition at an Art Gallery.**
- **Add a relevant quote under each artwork that relates to freedom** (ensure you have a range of quotes – songs, male/female, contemporary, historical quote, poetry, famous, personal etc).
- **Record the Artist, Title of Art Work, Date and Context of art work.**
- **Add a written reflection as the curator of the exhibition that must include the following:**
 - Introduction about the concept of freedom in relation to your exhibition.
 - You may need to explain that the concept of freedom has been applied in different ways to show your deep understanding of freedom. Think very carefully. You may have included personal freedom, political freedom or religious freedom. Conceptually the artworks are grouped to freedom but refer to different understandings/perspectives of freedom. One or two artworks might reveal the lack of freedom. You will need to be able to concisely communication your understanding of freedom with clarity. The artworks will need to be seen as a group on one level while remaining separate artworks in their own right. Take you time to plan carefully.
 - Explain why you judged the artworks as important to the exhibition.
 - Explanation of how the freedom quote relates to each art work.
 - Finish the written reflection with your opinion about why freedom is an important value.
- **Artistically present your exhibition – your creative choice.**

Planning space: