

Teacher Resource

FREMANTLE PRISON



KEY TO
KNOWLEDGE

Convict History



FREMANTLE PRISON
The Convict Establishment

Convict History

TEACHER RESOURCE



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Front cover illustration:

Convict Prison, Fremantle – detail 1859, Henry Wray (1824-1900)
National Library of Australia

Convict History

TEACHER RESOURCE

INTRODUCTION

Fremantle Prison is one of Western Australia's most important historical sites. Convicts built the prison between 1851 and 1859. Before the arrival of the convicts in 1850, the Swan River Colony was on the brink of collapse. From their base at the prison, convicts built much of the State's vital infrastructure, such as roads and public buildings, transforming Western Australia from an isolated settlement into a vibrant community. The story of convicts and the Convict Establishment, now known as Fremantle Prison, plays an important part of the history of our state.

The *Fremantle Prison Convict History* program includes a teacher resource, a student resource, and four information packs. It supplements the Convict History tour at Fremantle Prison. The activities can be cherry-picked to suit your class program. Alternatively this resource could form the basis for a 'Depth Study' on Western Australian convict history.

The *Teacher Resource* provides pre-visit and post-visit activity suggestions.

The *Student Resource* contains instructions and activity sheets for each activity which can be photocopied and handed to your students.

The four information packs provide themed information on various aspects of convict history in Western Australia and include transcripts of authentic historical documents such as excerpts from journals, letters and official papers.

- *Convict Biographies* tell the stories of individual convicts transported to Western Australia.
- *Convict Daily Life* describes what day to day living was like for convicts.
- *Building the Convict Establishment* describes the monumental process involved in the convict construction of Fremantle Prison.
- *Convict Escapes* tell the stories of the convicts who attempted to escape from Fremantle Prison.



Officers' quarters and guardroom, convict prison, Fremantle 1859, Henry Wray (1824-1900)
National Library of Australia

LINKS TO CURRICULUM

The Fremantle Prison Convict History program is designed for upper primary school students studying early colonial or convict history. It has been developed to support an inquiry based approach to the teaching of history.

The activities provide learning opportunities in the Time, Continuity and Change; Investigation, Participation and Communication; and Active Citizenship strands of the Western Australian Curriculum Framework.

This resource also acknowledges the current development of a National History Curriculum to be implemented by 2011. As such it has been informed by the recommendations in the National History Curriculum – Framing Paper produced by the National Curriculum Board in November 2008, as well as in the History Teachers’ Association of Australia (HTAA) Response to the National Curriculum Board’s History Framing Paper, 11 February 2009.

This resource recognises that there are core historical literacy skills or historical understandings that will be fundamental to any best-practice approach to teaching history.

The *Fremantle Prison Convict History* program provides students with opportunities to:

- investigate important people, ideas and events in Western Australia’s colonial history;
- investigate changes and continuities in Western Australia’s colonial history;
- learn about a significant heritage site;
- understand how people, ideas and events from the past affect the way people live today;
- use information from a variety of primary and secondary sources;
- plan questions and observations for an excursion;
- gather evidence from a range of sources and summarise information;
- use evidence to support a point of view;
- empathise with people from the past and see past events from different perspectives; and
- engage in public debate while respecting the opinions and beliefs of others.

TOPICS TO EXPLORE

The transportation of convicts to Fremantle between 1850 and 1868 had a significant and lasting influence on the history of Western Australia.

The following questions can be used as the basis for classroom discussion or as focus questions for extended investigations:

- When did convicts come to Western Australia?
- Who were they? (Where did they come from? What crimes did they commit?)
- Why were convicts transported to Western Australia?
- Where did they stay?
- What did they do while they were in prison?
- What did they eat?
- What did they wear?
- Did any convicts escape?
- How were they punished?
- How were they rewarded for good behaviour?
- When did convicts stop coming to Western Australia?
- How did convicts contribute to the development of Western Australia?

PRE-VISIT ACTIVITIES

Activity

HOT SEAT

Place yourself in the hot seat!

This is a simple and fun way to introduce the topic of convicts while providing a lot of introductory information that can ground further activities and investigations.

1. Read the resource documents available with this program to build your knowledge of the history of convicts in Western Australia.
2. Tell your students you have a special guest coming to visit the class today – an ex-convict who spent time at the Convict Establishment (Fremantle Prison). This visitor will be able to answer all their questions about convicts.
3. Move your students' chairs into a large circle, and then leave the room.
4. Change into an historically appropriate prop costume – trousers and a waistcoat, even an old hat would do.
5. Return to the classroom in character, an ex-convict who has enjoyed relative success in their post prison life - many ex-convicts became school teachers, public servants and trades people.
6. Seat yourself in the middle of the circle and introduce yourself. Provide background information to orientate your students to the narrative context.
7. Invite questions from your class about your life as a convict. Encourage them to be creative but to stick to the topic.

Activity

TURN ON THE LIGHTS

This small investigation activity familiarises your students with the context of convicts in Western Australia. Some of the questions below may have been answered during the Hot Seat activity. This activity also provides a mechanism for allocating 'roles' to your students which can help guide their learning and which they can use in the role play activity described later.

Allocate the focus questions to small groups to investigate and report back to the class.

Focus Questions

- When did convicts come to Western Australia?
- What sort of crimes did they commit?
- Why were convicts sent to Western Australia?
- Where did they stay?
- Did any escape?
- How were they punished?
- How were good convicts rewarded?
- When did convicts stop coming to Western Australia?
- Name two buildings built by convicts in Western Australia.

Allow the students who correctly answer all the questions the quickest to take on the characters of the first convict administrators. You can allocate the roles of:

- Comptroller-General
- Superintendent
- Chief Warder
- Surgeon
- Flagellator (this could be a warder)
- Warders

These students should retain these personas throughout your convict program. The remaining students should be delegated as convicts.

If you direct your students to investigate individual convicts later in your program, have your 'administrators' investigate their real-life historical counterparts.

PRE-VISIT ACTIVITIES

Activity

CONVICT ESCAPE

Hundreds of convicts and prisoners escaped from Fremantle Prison during its operational history. Convicts continually came up with ingenious ways to escape from what administrators tried to make an escape-proof prison.

This activity is a fun way to get your students engaged with the convict story. It allows them to think creatively and problem solve, and gives them the opportunity to 'get inside the head' of a convict.

1. Read to your students some of the stories from the Convict Escapes resource. Ask them to think about what the convicts did right and what they did wrong in their escape bids.
2. Provide your students with the background context and the prison maps located in the Student Resource.
3. Discuss the elements students need to think about in order to plan their escape. Ask them to identify what could go wrong in their escape attempt and to plan for these potential problems.
4. During the planning phase, discuss the architecture and layout of the prison complex. Ask your students why the prison was designed the way it was.
5. Direct your students to mark out their escape route on the maps and to write out a 10 step plan of escape.
6. Discuss the escape plans as a class and vote on which plan has the most likely chance of success.



Fremantle Prison Gatehouse with signal cannon in foreground c1870s
Fremantle Prison Collection

During and after a visit to Fremantle Prison students will have an opportunity to evaluate and fine tune their escape plans.

Your student groups could present their escape plans in dramatic form, acting out or narrating their escape.

This presentation could be held at Fremantle Prison in the Prison Library as part of your on-site excursion.

Activity

CONVICT RULES VERSUS SCHOOL RULES

The document below shows the rules that convicts had to follow at the Convict Establishment in 1862. It is one long sentence! Help your students identify each rule and compare them with the rules students have to follow at school.

No prisoner shall disobey the orders of the overseer or any other officer ... or be guilty of swearing, or any indecent or immoral expression or conduct, or of any assault, quarrel, or abusive language, or smoking inside the ward, cell, privy cookhouse, washhouse, or workshops, or any talking or other noise during meal-hours, or after the silence-hours at night; leaving the square allotted as their exercise-ground on any pretence, except to the closet, or converse or hold intercourse with any other prisoner or tradesman employed about the yard, except as authorised by the prison rules, or cause annoyance or disturbance by singing, whistling, or making unnecessary noise, or pass or attempt to pass, without permission, out of his ward or beyond the bounds of the ward or other place to which he may belong, or when at work go without leave beyond the limits assigned for such work, or disfigure the walls or other parts of the prison by writing on them or otherwise, or deface, secrete, destroy, or pull down any paper or notice hung up by authority in or about any part of the prison, or wilfully injure any bedding or other articles, or commit any nuisance, or have in his bay or possession any articles not furnished by the establishment or allowed to be in the possession of a prisoner; or shall give or lend to or borrow from any other prisoner any food, book, or other articles without leave, or refuse or neglect to conform to the rules and regulation or orders of the prison, or otherwise offend.

Rules and Regulations for the Convict Department Western Australia, 1862.

1. Help students read the Rules and Regulations document by breaking it into small components.
2. Ask students to list the convict rules and identify whether equivalent rules exist today at your school.
3. ROLE PLAY – take your students outside the classroom and get them to engage in a mundane task such as weeding the oval or removing pebbles from a path. Direct your 'administrators' to watch over the convict students and enforce the convict rules.
4. Facilitate a group discussion about how it felt having to follow a strict set of rules and having their peers tell them what to do.
5. Ask your students why these rules were necessary and what they think the long-term effects would be on convicts having to follow them.

PRE-VISIT ACTIVITIES

Activity

INVESTIGATION: CONVICT PROFILE

This activity helps students learn more about the individuals involved in Western Australia's convict history. Knowing how people were affected on a personal level will help students gain a more authentic perspective into our convict history.

1. Allocate or allow students to select a historical figure to investigate. Students who have been given the roles of 'administrators' should investigate their counterparts.
2. Provide your students the list of questions to help guide their investigation.
3. Help students find sources of information.
4. Direct students to take notes and organise information according to their investigation questions.
5. Once students have completed their convict (or other) profile, get them to move around the classroom and meet the other historical figures, (they could do this in 'character'). Ask them to work out who they think their person would have gotten along with and who they would have disliked. This will help them get a sense of their subject's personality.
6. Lead a class discussion on the subject of convict crime and punishment. Ask your students whether they believe the punishment of transportation suited the crimes committed by convicts.

Sources of information

While there were many convicts sent to Western Australia, information about specific convicts can be hard to find. Information about some of the convicts listed on the next page can be found in the *Convict Biographies* resource.

Information about historical figures can also be found on the Fremantle Prison Convict Database at:

<http://www.fremantleprison.com.au/Pages/Convict.aspx>

Extra information on individual convicts can be found at:

<http://www.fremantleprison.com.au/History/Pages/default.aspx>

<http://www.convictcentral.com/>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:Convicts_transported_to_Western_Australia

List of convicts

- **Joseph Lucas Horrocks** – opened a successful copper mine
- **Moondyne Joe** – famous escape artist
- **James Walsh** – talented artist
- **Thomas Bushell** – hanged for attacking a warder
- **Thomas 'Satan' Browne** – opened a pleasure resort in South Perth
- **Patrick Gibbons** – attacked an ex-convict by biting off his bottom lip
- **John Boyle O'Reilly** – famous Irish convict
- **William 'Fiddler' Graham** – escape artist and 'ladies man'
- **Joseph Ralph** – escape artist
- **Thomas Smirk** – had twelve children and lived in Fremantle
- **Ross Alexander** – convicted for accidentally killing an old lady while drunk

List of convict administrators

- **Governor John Hampton** – autocratic governor who interfered in convict affairs
- **Comptroller-General Edmund Henderson** – first Comptroller-General
- **Henry Wray** – Captain of the Royal Engineers who helped to build the prison
- **Superintendent Thomas Dixon**
- **Surgeon George Attfield**

Students could also investigate the warders, Royal Engineers, or the Pensioner Guards.

Questions to guide investigation

- What was his name (and convict number)?
- Where did he come from?
- What year did he arrive at Fremantle and on what convict ship?
- What was his crime?
- What did he do while in prison?
- How did he leave the prison?
- What did he do later in life?
- What sort of man was he? (Good, bad, talented, ambitious, smart, violent, lazy etc).

PRE-VISIT ACTIVITIES

Activity

TIMELINE

Sequencing events is an important part of studying and researching history. Using the *Building the Convict Establishment* resource, direct students to sequence the completion date of each building in the prison complex into a timeline.

1. Place a timeline along the classroom wall marked from 1850 to 1886. This period covers the convict-era of Western Australia, up until Fremantle Prison was converted from an Imperial prison controlled by the British Government to a colonial prison run by the Western Australian Legislative Assembly.
2. Direct students to plot the construction of the Convict Establishment along this timeline.
3. As your students investigate convicts and convict events, they can place their findings along the timeline, building up a story of convicts in Western Australia over the course of your convict program.

Discussion point

Was there a logical reason why some buildings were completed before others? For example:

- Why were the Commissariat and the Short Jetty built first?
- Why was the ramp leading to the prison site built before any of the main buildings?
- Why were the gatehouse buildings and the perimeter wall built before the main cell block?

Activity

PICTURE ANALYSIS

The picture below shows the replica convict-era cell on show at Fremantle Prison.

1. Ask your students to analyse the picture and work out where the prisoner would have gone to the toilet (the bucket under the hammock).
2. Provide your students with the question sheet.



Reconstructed Convict Cell in Fremantle Prison 2009
Fremantle Prison Collection

The questions which follow are designed to encourage your students to think about what daily life would have been like for the convicts.

- What furniture can you see in the cell?
- There is a toilet somewhere in this cell. Can you find it?
- What things in the photo are there to stop the prisoner from escaping?
- The convict cells were only seven feet long by four feet wide, most likely smaller than the bathroom in your house. What do you think it would have been like to live in a room that small for months or maybe years?
- The convicts had no books, personal belongings or spare clothes. But some clever prisoners were able to hide things in their cell. Where could you hide something if this was your cell?
- If you could hide one personal item in your cell, what would it be?
- What does the cell tell you about life for convicts in the Convict Establishment?

PRE-VISIT ACTIVITIES

Activity

FREMANTLE PRISON PICTURE COMPARISON

Over the course of time, some things change while others stay the same. Paintings and photographs can show how places change over time.

The watercolour below was painted by Henry Wray in 1859 and shows the prison soon after construction was completed.



Convict Prison, Fremantle 1859, Henry Wray (1824-1900)
National Library of Australia

The photograph below shows the same view of Fremantle Prison in 2008, 149 years later.



Main Cell Block 2008
Fremantle Prison Collection

Ask your students to look closely at the two images and identify what has changed over the course of 149 years, and what has stayed the same.



PRE-VISIT ACTIVITIES

Activity

INVESTIGATION: CONVICT DAILY LIFE

This activity helps students learn more about daily life for convicts in Western Australia between 1850 and 1886.

1. Divide students into groups of three or four.
2. Allocate or have students select at random the investigation topics listed on the next page.
3. Using a Five Ws and an H sheet, help students develop questions about their topic to guide their investigation.
4. Instruct your students to include one or more questions which they can ask the tour guide during the Convict History tour at Fremantle Prison.
5. Help students locate sources of information, including the *Daily Life* resource provided, school library, public library, Internet etc. A lot of information about the convict experience in the eastern states has been published, less so of the convict experience in Western Australia. While many of the daily experiences of convicts in the New South Wales and Swan River colonies were similar, the *Daily Life* resource has specific information about Swan River Colony convicts.
6. Explain the difference between primary and secondary sources. Students can use the primary and secondary source checklist to identify whether the information they find is primary or secondary.
7. Help students organise the information they gather into a meaningful form. If you plan on holding a convict debate, students need to be gathering evidence to support their debate arguments. If you plan on running convict role plays, students should be searching for information to authenticate their 'performance'. The Letter Back Home activity is a simple way to synthesise this information in a written form.

Name:

My Investigation: PUNISHMENT

What Do I Want to Know? (Focus Questions)

What?	What punishments were used at the Convict Establishment?
Who?	Who received punishments and who handed them out?
When?	When did punishments take place?
Where?	Where were punishments used?
Why?	Why were punishments given out?
How?	How did they take place?

Write a question you can ask the tour guide on your trip to Fremantle Prison

Which punishment was for the worst crimes?

Investigation topics

- Rules
- Daily routine
- Prisoner cells
- Clothing
- Food
- Punishment
- Work
- Religion
- Ticket of leave and conditional pardons



PRE-VISIT ACTIVITIES

PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SOURCES

Historians investigate people and events from the past by finding sources of information. There are two main types of information that are useful to historians - primary sources and secondary sources.

Primary Sources are written or created at the time of an event, or very soon after something has happened. A primary source is written by someone who has direct or contemporary experience of an event. All of the following can be primary sources:

- Diaries
- Letters
- Photographs
- Maps
- Sound recordings
- Interviews
- Newspaper articles
- Published first-hand accounts, or stories

Secondary Sources are documents that describe events in the past. They use primary sources to help tell their story. For example, someone writing a history book about the Second World War gathers information by researching the war. They look to other books, photographs, diaries and memoirs, letters and official documents for information. They cannot rely on their own memories if they were not in the war themselves. All of the following can be secondary sources:

- History textbooks
- Biographies
- TV documentaries
- Articles in encyclopaedias or on the Internet
- Published stories
- Movies of historical events

Primary sources:

Secondary sources:

<i>when</i>	created at the time of an event, or very soon after	created after event; sometimes a long time after something happened
<i>who</i>	created by someone who saw or heard an event themselves	created by someone who did not see the event for themselves
<i>how</i>	created from observations	created from investigation - often uses primary sources as examples
<i>what</i>	letters, diaries, photos and newspapers	history text books, historical movies and biographies

TOUR INFORMATION & ON-SITE ACTIVITIES

To book a Convict History Tour for your class call Fremantle Prison on 9336 9210 or email schoolbookings@fremantleprison.com.au

Bookings for student groups are essential. Cost: \$6.50 per student, one adult supervisor per 10 students free of charge. Let the Bookings Officer know if your students have special needs. *Prices are correct at the time of publication and are subject to change.*

A sheltered lunch area is available. School bags can be stored in this area.



Convict History Tour, Main Cell Block 2008
Fremantle Prison Collection

Convict History Tour

The Convict History Tour allows students to explore the buildings and cells of Fremantle Prison and discover what life was like for the convicts transported to the Swan River Colony. Students learn about famous convicts such as Moondyne Joe and famous convict escapes such as the *Catalpa* Escape.

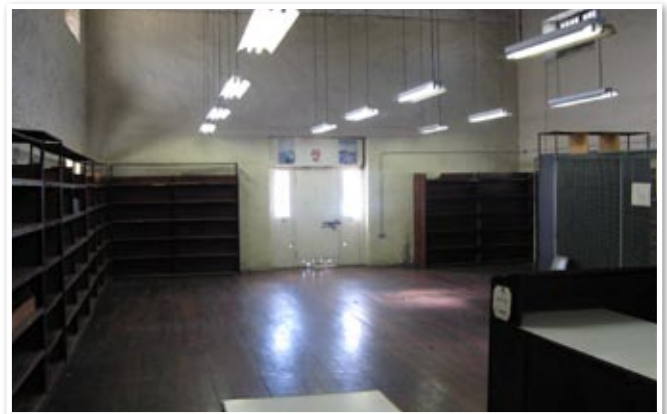
The Fremantle Prison tour guides are knowledgeable about all aspects of convict history in Western Australia and students have the opportunity to ask questions specific to their own interests and investigations.

Fremantle Prison Library

Fremantle Prison's Library was located in one of the original convict Association Wards, a communal living space shared by low-risk convicts. This room is available for teachers wanting to supplement the tour with learning activities at the prison site.

The Library is an ideal space to hold student debates, role plays or other activities, where students are surrounded by the physical reminders of the convict-era.

If you require use of the Library, inform the Bookings Officer at the time of your booking.



Fremantle Prison Library 2008
Fremantle Prison Collection

POST-VISIT ACTIVITIES

Activity

LETTER BACK HOME

Ask students to write a letter back home describing their daily life as a convict, as well as a description of an interesting event they witnessed or were involved in. They could include a sketch of convict life.

A day in the life of a convict – letter to a friend back home

- What year is it?
- How long have you been in prison?
- What was your crime?
- Describe your day.
- Describe your cell.
- What did you eat?
- What did you do at work?
- Describe an event – escape attempt, punishment etc.
- What do you want to do when you get out of prison?

Activity

ROLE PLAY

Role play is a form of unscripted drama that can help students become more interested and involved in history studies. Students can actively engage with knowledge in creative ways through simulated scenarios. Role playing helps students develop skills of initiative, communication, problem-solving, self-awareness and working cooperatively in teams.

The role play activity should help your students process the information they have learnt about convict life and express their new knowledge. Students should play the roles of the people they investigated in the convict profile investigation activity.

1. Decide whether you want to run an all-class role play or a series of small group role plays that are watched by the rest of the class.
2. Choose a role play scenario that relates to the topics your students have investigated.
3. Decide where you will hold the role plays; at school or at Fremantle Prison.
4. Brief your students about the role play scenario and about what is expected of them. Give them a clear explanation of the role play rules provided.
5. Allow students time to prepare.

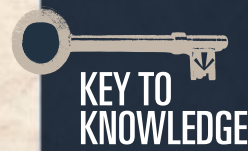
6. Run the role play. Set a time limit and only interject if you need to move the action in the desired direction. Otherwise allow your students to enjoy themselves, be creative, and see where the action leads them.
7. After the role play is completed, debrief your students about what took place. Hold a class discussion about what happened and what students learned from the activity.

Role play scenarios

- **Work party** – convicts in a work party have to organise an escape without their guards knowing. Convicts are wearing leg irons. If they can distract the guards for long enough they can plan, and maybe even execute their escape.
- **Governor's visit** – Governor Hampton comes to inspect the prison. He sees convicts in cells or at muster in the parade ground. Convicts have the chance to tell him about the bad prison conditions. Do the warders allow them to talk? Does the Governor care what they say?
- **Punishment** – a convict is flogged for attempting to escape. The other convicts and prison staff are forced to watch this brutal act. What do they say to each other?
- **Debate** – convicts have the opportunity to meet with the Comptroller-General and Superintendent and air their grievances. What do the warders say in their own defence? Does the administration choose to listen or to ignore the convicts' complaints?

Role play rules

- **Stay in character** – students need to be caught up in the scenario for the role play to be effective and real.
- **Be polite** – students must always treat each other with respect even if they disagree with each other.
- **Don't interrupt or talk over people** – role plays can quickly become muddled if more than one person is talking at any one time (unless the scenario requires simultaneous conversations).
- **Always be honest** – character deception in a role play makes the action too confusing and complex to be effective. Students need to be able to assume that other students are telling the truth and are backing up their statements with real evidence.



POST-VISIT ACTIVITIES

Activity

CONVICT DEBATE

Debating is a formal method of interacting that helps students develop a range of communication and information processing skills. Students learn skills of logic, factual argument, persuasion, and the use of evidence and rhetoric to support a point of view. All of these skills are fundamental to the art of historical investigation which is as much an interpretive as it is a factual act.

By the time your students have investigated convicts and visited Fremantle Prison, they should have enough information to participate in a debate about the positive and negative aspects of the transportation of convicts to Western Australia.

The debates can be held at Fremantle Prison as part of your class visit or back in the classroom post visit.

The debates can follow a formal debate structure or can be as informal as a general classroom discussion. It is important however that your students:

- choose or are allocated a position either for or against
- use persuasive argument to move others to their point of view
- use evidence to back up their arguments.

1. Choose the debate topic.
2. Divide students into debate teams, half for and half against the topic.
3. Teach the debate format.
4. Give your students time to organise their arguments. Their arguments should be backed up with evidence taken from information they have investigated over the course of their convict program.
5. Run the debates.

Convict Debate Topics

The following is a list of possible debate topics:

- The transportation of convicts was essential to the survival of the Australian colonies.
- Modern Australians should be ashamed of their convict ancestors.
- The transportation of convicts to the Australian colonies was cruel and unusual punishment.
- If not for the introduction of convicts, the Swan River Colony would have failed.
- Transportation was the best solution to overcrowding in English gaols.
- The convicts were very important people in Australian history.

Or alternatively ask your students to come up with their own debate topic.

Debate format

CHAIRPERSON	Announces the topic Introduces each speaker in turn
1. FIRST AFFIRMATIVE SPEAKER	Defines the topic Presents a major argument supported with evidence
2. FIRST NEGATIVE SPEAKER	Defines the topic from their point of view Rebuts (which means to argue against) the first affirmative speaker's arguments Presents a major argument supported with evidence
3. SECOND AFFIRMATIVE SPEAKER	Rebuts the first negative speaker's arguments Presents one or two major arguments, supported with evidence
4. SECOND NEGATIVE SPEAKER	Rebuts the second affirmative speaker's arguments Presents one or two major arguments, supported with evidence
5. THIRD AFFIRMATIVE SPEAKER	Rebuts the second negative speaker's arguments Close the affirmative case by presenting a final argument Summarises the team's arguments
6. THIRD NEGATIVE SPEAKER	Rebuts the third affirmative speaker's arguments Close the negative case by presenting a final argument Summarises the team's arguments