

LINKS TO:

Stage 2, Module 3

Learning Object 4: My favourite day

Exercise 1

Do some research into school assemblies in Indonesia.

School assemblies in Indonesia are called *upacara bendera*, and are in the style of a formal parade with a flag-raising ceremony. They occur weekly, on Monday mornings, in every Indonesian school. Assembly usually starts with the singing of the National Anthem, called the *Indonesia Raya*, followed by reciting the *Pancasila* — the Five Principles of the national philosophy — as well as prayers.

These elements appear to be the central focus of Indonesian school assemblies.

Exercise 2

What aspects of Indonesian school assemblies stand out as being particularly important?

Singing the National Anthem and reciting the *Pancasila* are important elements of assemblies because they would remind students about the national philosophy of their country, and the values that the philosophy promotes. One of the five principles of the *Pancasila* is national unity, and the *upacara bendera* can be seen as an expression of this principle. Saying prayers might help students to remember their personal role in upholding these principles. It also demonstrates the importance of religion in Indonesia.

Exercise 3

How do Indonesian school assemblies differ from assemblies at your school?

The Indonesian flag-raising ceremony follows the same format in all schools across the nation, and is more formal than most Queensland high school assemblies.

In Queensland high schools, assemblies can be held any day of the school week and might not always include a flag-raising ceremony or singing of the national anthem. My school assembly consists of announcements and class roll-call. In Queensland, flags and anthems seem to be more common inclusions in primary school assemblies. Praying is not very usual, although some primary schools may have a school prayer.

Exercise 4

How do you interpret the difference (or the similarity) in the way an assembly is conducted at your school compared to those at Indonesian schools?

Even though both Australians and Indonesians have a strong sense of national pride, the Indonesian flag-raising ceremony is probably more formal because it helps commemorate Indonesia's independence, won after a war between 1945 and 1949. The formal nature of the assembly also creates a sense of discipline in the students, who are encouraged to be respectful of their nation and of those who struggled for independence.

In Australia, although we don't have formal ceremonies at school every week, we still have a strong sense of national pride. We celebrate this in other ways, such as on Australia Day and Anzac Day. Assemblies in our school are also more informal gatherings rather than the formal commemorations that Indonesian assemblies are.

Exercise 5

How would you feel about attending a school assembly in Indonesia?

I would probably feel comfortable attending an Indonesian school assembly. Assemblies at my high school are not as formal as Indonesian assemblies, nor do we have prayers, but I recall the assemblies held at my primary school, which included a flag-raising ceremony and a prayer. I think it would also be very interesting to see how another country celebrates and encourages national pride.

Exercise 6

6.1 Find information about Indonesian junior high school subjects.

In Indonesian junior high schools, students study Religion, Citizenship, Health and Physical Education, Information Technology, Indonesian, English, Regional Language (for example, Javanese in Java, or Balinese in Bali), a foreign language, Mathematics, Science (Physics, Chemistry and Biology), History, Social Science (Geography and Economics), and Visual Arts.

6.2 Are there any subjects that are part of the Indonesian curriculum that are not offered in your high school?

Religion, Citizenship and Regional Languages are not studied in my school. In Indonesian schools, Citizenship is the study of the *Pancasila*, which is the moral code based on five principles. Students learn how to apply these principles to their lives as Indonesian citizens.

6.3 What does this tell you about what is considered important for Indonesian students to learn?

Religious Studies are an integral part of the curriculum. The fact that Religion is a school subject, even in government schools, indicates that religion plays an important role in Indonesian life. In Indonesia all citizens are required to belong to one of the five officially recognised religions. Consequently it is important that Indonesian students study religion at school.

From primary school, all Indonesian students have two or three lessons each week in *PPKn* (*Pelajaran Pendidikan Kewarganegaraan*), or Citizenship Studies. This subject is largely based on the national philosophy of *Pancasila*, incorporating the Five Principles. These include the belief in one God; just and civilised humanity; national unity; social justice; and democracy guided by consensus. Moral behaviour is considered desirable for all Indonesians, and the teaching of *PPKn* perhaps reflects a general expectation that such behaviour ensures some degree of national unity.

Exercise 7

What other aspects of school life in Indonesia can you find that are different from your school?

Indonesian children attend school on Saturdays. In Indonesian schools, the scouting movement is an important part of school life. On Fridays or Saturdays students wear a brown uniform for *pramuka* activities. *Pramuka* is similar to the Scouting and Guiding movement in Australia. In Indonesia all students must participate in these activities as part of their schooling.

On Fridays, school usually finishes early to allow Muslim students to attend Friday prayers.

Exercise 8

How would you feel about attending school in Indonesia?

I think attending school in Indonesia would be a little strange at first, especially having to go to school on Saturday. But, on the whole, I don't think it would be very different from attending my own school. Most of the subjects studied are the same, and even the formal assembly is not completely strange to me, having experienced formal assemblies in primary school.