



Theme: Community

Teacher guide

These resources accompany films, videos, transcripts, and vignettes that were created in, by and with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island communities.

The resources are designed to help teachers use the media in their classrooms, to develop all children’s understanding and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander: identity, communities (traditional and contemporary), history, Culture, Country, and the integral part they play in Australian history and life in general.

The resources include:

- Media (listed below)
- Teacher guide (including suggestions for activities)
- BLMs (to support activities)
- Background information for teachers (addresses issues from all three themes)

Media for this theme

Films and transcripts

Title	Community	Place	Theme
<i>Djulpan</i>	Yolngu	Elcho Island, NT	Culture & Community
<i>Miiku and Tinta</i>	Umpila	Lockhart River, Cape York, QLD	Culture, Country & Community
<i>The Story of Girbar</i>	Saibai Thabu Clan	Saibai Island in Torres Strait	Community, Culture & Country

Videos of childrens’ stories

Title	Child’s name	State	Theme
<i>Dhuwa Yirritja</i>	Charlotte	Elcho Island, NT	Community
<i>My Karajarri People</i>	Wynston	Bidyadanga, WA	Community
<i>Thunderman</i>	Cyril	Elcho Island, NT	Culture & Community

Thunderman is also explored in the Culture theme.

Vignettes (videos and text)

Person	State	Theme
Sunno Mitchell	Wilcannia, NSW	Culture

Aspects of Aboriginal community explored in this theme

- Importance of Language – Language loss
- History
- Moieties
- Strength of community and Country
- Transmission of Culture: story, art.
- Educating children through art, as an aspect of cultural transmission: story telling, art including: painting, craft works, dance/performance, music ...
- Identity
- Reconciliation

These resources align with the following areas of the Australian Curriculum

English

Year 5

(ACELT1608)

Identify aspects of literary texts that convey details or information about particular social, cultural and historical contexts

(ACELY1700)

Plan, rehearse and deliver presentations for defined audiences and purposes incorporating accurate and sequenced content and multimodal elements

Year 6

(ACELY1709)

Participate in and contribute to discussions, clarifying and interrogating ideas, developing and supporting arguments, sharing and evaluating information, experiences and opinions

Year 7

(ACELY1728)

Use a range of software, including word processing programs, to confidently create, edit and publish written and multimodal texts

Year 8

(ACELA1548)

Investigate how visual and multimodal texts allude to or draw on other texts or images to enhance and layer meaning

(ACELT1806)

Explore the interconnectedness of Country and Place, People, Identity and Culture in texts including those by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander authors

(ACELY1735)

Explore and explain the ways authors combine different modes and media in creating texts, and the impact of these choices on the viewer/listener

(ACELY1736)

Create imaginative, informative and persuasive texts that raise issues, report events and advance opinions, using deliberate language and textual choices, and including digital elements as appropriate

Year 10

(ACELY1756)

Create sustained texts, including texts that combine specific digital or media content, for imaginative, informative, or persuasive purposes that reflect upon challenging and complex issues

Geography

Year 2

(ACHGK011)

The ways in which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples maintain special connections to particular Country/Place

Year 3

(ACHGK015)

The many Countries/Places of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples throughout Australia

History

Year 3

Historical Knowledge. Community and Remembrance

(ACHHK060)

The importance of Country and Place to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples who belong to a local area. (This is intended to be a local area study with a focus on one Language group; however, if information or sources are not readily available, another representative area may be studied)

Year 4

Historical Knowledge and Understanding. First Contacts

(ACHHK077)

The diversity and longevity of Australia's first peoples and the ways Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples are connected to Country and Place (land, sea, waterways and skies) and the implications for their daily lives.

Year 9

Making a nation

(ACDSEH020)

The extension of settlement, including the effects of contact (intended and unintended) between European settlers in Australia and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples)

Suggestions for viewing all films

You may choose to view:

- each film, and complete its activities, before moving onto the next;
- all films (on separate days) before beginning the activities; or
- a film about a particular community, if you prefer to focus on just one of them.

Stories from the films: *Djulpan*, *The Story of Girbar*, and *Miiku and Tinta* are told in *Sharing Our Stories 2*, a set of books by Liz Thompson and published by Pearson.

Films to View

Can be found at <http://sharingstories.org/our-stories/films-by-location/>

Use the map on this site (and your atlases for precise location) to find:

- Elcho Island, NT, then click to watch *Djulpan*;
- Lockhart River, Cape York, Qld, then click to watch *Miiku and Tinta*; and
- Saibai Island, Torres Strait, then click to watch *The Story of Girbar*.

Transcripts of the films

Parts of some transcripts (provided as BLMs) aren't verbatim; rather they provide a general overview of the film.

Suggestions for using them:

- Use as background information for teachers.
- Make copies for students, and:
 - Read and discuss prior to viewing the film.
 - Ask students to find particular information as they watch the film, such as suggestions provided below.
 - Read and discuss after viewing the film to help answer focus questions.

First viewing

After watching a film, focus questions/statements for class discussion include:

- Recap what the film tells you.
- Why do you think the person/people, and their community, wanted to make the film?
- What are the names of the people in the film?
- What is the community's name?

Follow-up viewing/s

Students may need to view the film again, and to read the transcript, to check answers for the questions discussed.

Before viewing, in addition to checking their answers, you may like to ask students to focus on further questions, such as:

- Are any totems or moieties mentioned? What are they?
- Are there any specific dances or songs mentioned? What are they? (Shake a leg/*Djulpan*/*Ragaragu*)
- Are there any particular animals or people mentioned in the Dreaming stories you learn about? (*Djulpan* – *Waramirri Man*/*Yulu's Coal* – *Yulu the Kingfisher Man*/*Thunderman*)
- What is the main message of the film?

- Are there any other messages as well?
- What questions does the film raise?

Discuss students' answers, and view the film a third time if necessary.

Related tasks

Select from the following activities, adapting them as necessary to suit your students' needs, or use your own ideas.

Using the BLM: Map of Australia, accurately mark on the map the communities whose stories you've viewed, and any other places mentioned in the films. Mark in your own community, other places that are important to you.

Use digital mapping tools and/or atlases ... Explore Geoscience Australia's online tools in particular, as there is data for all locations around Australia. Various states and territories also have gazetteers and other location mapping services. Geoscience Australia's *As the Cocky Flies* distance calculator tool is useful to work out how far the community is from your own, from the closest capital city, and from other communities.

Visit communities' websites. List any community names, moieties, totems, stories, and activities, artworks that are mentioned/discussed on the sites. Communities may have separate arts and cultural centre sites that display samples of works, and also explanations of stories on which the works are based. Choose an artwork, which has no explanation, and write a story it 'tells' you.

Write a short description of the one of the communities using the data collected, including images and/or maps. Prepare a presentation in one of these forms:

- PowerPoint;
- slide show – with written description of images from the community, including free downloadable images if available;
- report (project);
- oral presentation; or
- other form of choice.

Prepare and conduct an interview with an Elder from your own community, a family member, or a prominent community figure. Ask them to tell a cultural story of the community. The interview may be videoed or recorded and presented to the class.

Gather, write and present a story from your community. This may be in a form of choice, e.g. poem, play, dance, painting... It may be a cultural, traditional or contemporary story.

Photograph interesting aspects of your community and use these as the basis for artwork (e.g. reference for painting, collage, craft items)

Discussion points and student activities for individual films

<i>The Story of Girbar</i>	Saibai Thabu Clan	Saibai Island in Torres Strait	Community, Culture & Country
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After viewing you may like to hold class/group discussions focusing on questions or statements like these:

- Where is Saibai Island where Dana Ober, the narrator in the film, appears?
- What does he tell us his Country like?
- Which people does he tell us live there, and how many clans are there?
- Dana says ‘... *We don’t have a Dreaming in our cosmology. We believe in Ancestral spirits, because we believe they still look after us even though they’ve passed away.*’ Does this differ from what you’ve learnt from Creation ancestors in some of the other stories, like Yulu and Bunjil? Explain how.
- Which traditional story does Dana share with us?
- Where did the Madhubal take Girbar and what did they give her?
- Planting the crops, which Girbar returned to Saibai, is relevant to Saibai Islanders being an agricultural community. How does this differ to practices of mainland Aboriginal communities?
- What do you think James Akiba Junior might be doing in the Madhubal dance you can see at the end of the film?
- What does the story tell us about new religious influences arriving in the community?
- Discuss ways you think these new influences might impact on traditional community beliefs.

Research the difference between Melanesian and Aboriginal people.

Write a description of each, to explain about the people who live in Saibai, so a visitor would understand their origins. In groups, discuss your descriptions.

Photo Gallery

Use the photo of Saibai Island provided at <http://sharingstories.org/content/photo-gallery> to illustrate a report about Saibai Island. Include information you’ve learned about Saibai Island, its location (you may include a map), its community, and other information you’ve found through your own research.

After viewing you may like to hold class/group discussions focusing on questions or statements like:

- Where is Lockhart River where Patrick lives?
- What's his Country like?
- What does he mean by 'language groups'?
- Patrick says: '*... that is very important to me as a young Umpila man, passing this knowledge onto my children and in doing so they will do the same to their children and their children's children.*' What ways does he say his community can pass on this knowledge? Can you think of other ways, too?
- Why does Patrick say it's time for Indigenous people to share their stories with all Australians?
- How do you think he feels about Australia?
- How do you know this?

Retell the story of the parrot sisters. If you need to, Google it and read it together. Has it a message? If so, what is it?

Interview or record a story/dance/song that's important to your community and make a film or slide show about that.

Discuss dance as an art form practised by communities, through which to tell a story. And, that continuing to share it ensures this aspect of their Culture is passed on to future generations. Use the photo of 'Shake a leg dance' found at <http://sharingstories.org/content/photo-gallery> to illustrate your story.

In the film *Miiku and Tinta* Patrick Butcher says:

And it's about time we, the Indigenous people, share our stories with Europeans again you know, because they are Australians no matter what nationality they are they are Australians ...
and

They say Australia is the most multicultural nation in the world, well, bring it on. Australia let's do it! Each of us has a role to play, you know, with this big beautiful Country of ours.

These quotes show us Patrick has a different view of reconciliation which is often seen as an initiative of non-Indigenous Australians towards Indigenous Australians. His view is more in keeping with Reconciliation Australia's goal of 'Building relationships for change between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and other Australians'.

He wants his stories and all Indigenous stories to become an integral part of the Australian social fabric, heard, acknowledged and respected as making a rich and important contribution to Australian cultural heritage. Discuss Patrick's view of reconciliation, and why he thinks it is important for both his community and the broader Australian community.

Does your school, your local council, or other local institutions, have a RAP (Reconciliation Action Plan) in place? Find out more about these here:

<http://www.reconciliation.org.au/home/reconciliation-action-plans>

Perhaps your class could discuss initiating a RAP, with your teacher.

After viewing you may like to hold class/group discussions focusing on questions or statements like these:

- What are Cyril's and Jessica's totems and moieties?
- What does totem mean, to an Aboriginal community?
- What does moiety mean, to an Aboriginal community?
- Jessica's uncle told a story. What was it?
- What is Djulpan?
- Who is Waramirri and what did he do?
- Find the story of Djulpan and Waramirri, listen to it and discuss the message it brings to the Yolngu community.

Children's stories

Explain you're going to show videos of children telling stories about their communities. Transcripts of these are provided as BLMs.

View the video: <http://sharingstories.org/content/Culture>

This video created by students in Galiwinku in Elcho Island tells of the two Yolngu moieties, Yirritja and Dhuwa, and how people, every animal and all things belong to one or the other.

Read the 'About me' text. To find this, type 'Charlotte' into the search engine, see if you can find her profile, and read her 'About me' text.

Follow up focus points, and things to do:

- Research and write about the significance of moieties to Aboriginal people.
- List things that are Dhuwa, and things that are Yirritja.
- The video shows some ways the children have made images of some things mentioned, ask students to choose one, write its name and moiety, and depict it in some way, e.g. painting on a tile, a model, a craft piece ...
- If students live in an Aboriginal community, they may research their own communities' moieties, write about them and find a way they'd like to depict them.
- Discuss the term 'moiety' and its meaning for their community.

View the video: <http://sharingstories.org/content/community>

This video created by Wynston who lives in Bidyadanga community in the Kimberley tells of the experience of the Mowla Bluff Massacre from an Aboriginal perspective, and of the pride Wynston has for his people, their resilience and culture.

Read the 'About me' text. To find this, type 'Wynston' into the search engine, see if you can find his profile, and read his 'About me' text.

Follow up focus points, and things to do:

- Wynston says there's a strong sense of community in his Country, and he says he's proud of his family. Describe his family.
- Wynston's grandfather wrote, *Ragaragu*, a song about a traumatic event in the Karajarri people's past. Explain where the song came from and how it came to his grandfather.
- Tell the story the song tells us, in your own words.
- Find out if students' own community has any songs telling of events that have happened.

Students may write a song or poem about something in their own lives, happy or sad.

Thunderman is also explored in the Culture theme.

View the video: <http://sharingstories.org/content/Culture>

This story is made by Cyril who lives in Galiwinku on Elcho island. The story is about the Thunderman that his mother Mavis Ganambarr makes as weavings, and sells at the Cultural Centre. It tells of how the Thunderman spirit brings rain to Elcho Island.

Follow up focus points, and things to do:

Retell and illustrate the story of the Thunder Man, explaining how it affects the community.

Research any other groups who have stories to explain the weather.

Use illustrations and models in the story to inspire different creations from either the story or students' own communities.

Summarise what communities in each of the three stories are like, as well as their own. Discuss similarities and differences.

Vignettes – videos and transcripts

Sunno Mitchell

NSW

Culture

This vignette is also discussed in the Country theme.

View the video: <http://sharingstories.org/content/community>

Sunno Mitchell says some profound things about his language, Paakantji, and his community. He then explains these things relate not only to his community, but to all other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities as well

Discuss these quotes:

Our Culture and our language ... the language was taken away because the government didn't want the people speaking their language.

... A lot of our language and Culture taken away. Not only us Paakantji people but Aboriginal people all over Australia.

Ask students to try to put themselves in the situation described. Ask them to try to describe how they would feel if this happened to them and the language they and their community speaks today.

If people lose their language they're a lost people and there'll be a lot of conflict. I think it's a good thing to have your language to know where you from, know where you are and where you going. You need to have your language to know who you are.

Discuss this statement, in groups, asking a scribe to write down reasons, the group decides, that language is an integral part of identity and community. Report back and discuss as a class.

Ask students to gather additional information about language loss and its implications using the sites links provided and have a class discussion on what people have learnt.

<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/Culture/themes/endangered-languages/>

<http://www.unesco.org/Culture/languages-atlas/>

<http://travel.nationalgeographic.com.au/travel/enduring-voices/>

Student activity

Aboriginal Art forms

Key information:

The term 'art forms' encompasses all aspects of art: painting, story, crafts, dance, music, ... which are all integral to the transmission of Culture from one generation to the next. Further information is provided in the 'Background information for teachers' resource.

Student task:

List and discuss all art forms in the films and videos. Write next to each the title of the story told in the artwork – or describe it in a sentence. Some examples of artwork in the media supplied include: Mavis' weaving in *Thunderman*; kids' paintings in *Djuplan*; rock art in the *Yulu's Coal* film; body painting in *Miiku and Tinta* and Wynston's *My Karrajarrri* story ...

We need to guide students to an understanding of what art (as used here this term refers to all art forms) means to Aboriginal people, how it's embedded in community life, and how it inspires people to create a wide range of artworks. Different Language groups (communities) create artworks focusing on aspects of their own Cultures, communities, and spiritual beliefs linked to The Dreaming.

Prior to beginning their own artwork, it's important that students view, and learn to interpret, a range of Aboriginal paintings, including those they've encountered in the media provided.

Student task:

Many communities have cultural centres, and web sites, which display art forms and techniques of the area. With these artworks, they often tell the stories of particular pieces of art (including craft, dance and paintings). Use the links below, or find others to explore the wealth of artworks on them. If you're focusing on particular areas or communities, check whether they have a cultural centre. Some communities' websites are:

http://www.indigitube.com.au/index.php?ictvId=902&option=com_ictv&task=view

<http://lockhartriverart.com.au/>

<http://www.marthakal.org/elcho-island-arts-centre.htm>

<http://djilpinarts.org.au/>

Student task:

Retell (in writing, orally or pictorially) stories depicted in one (or more) of the artworks you explored. Stories may be told in a few sentences, or be more complex, with images to enhance them (on paper or electronically).

Class/group discussions about individual artworks should address possible reasons artworks may have been created (to inform, to teach, to record ...) and why these reasons may be important to the community, and to the artist.

The place of art in Aboriginal Culture and Communities

The following list identifies some aspects of Aboriginal life and Culture that may be depicted in an artwork. These works play an important part, not only in recording and expressing aspects of life and Culture, but also in teaching children about heritage, the Dreaming, and Country and community responsibilities.

The following statements suggest discussion points and/or research topics about the place of art in Aboriginal Culture, and how it's used in communities. Adapt them to suit your students.

- For all Aboriginal people, The Dreaming is the basis for all life, and the focus for much of their art.
- Paintings and other artforms often depict Dreaming stories that tell of creation of the world, including aspects like: landforms; watercourses; fire; animals and their features; stars and the heavens ...
- Dreaming stories may also teach each generation about life and Culture, for example: relationships in communities; kinship; respect; laws; behaviour; hunting and gathering ... Symbols depicting aspects of these often appear in artworks.
- Aboriginal paintings usually tell stories about the artist's Country, communities and people; provide historical records; and many also pay homage to aspects of The Dreaming.
- We must be sensitive to, and respect, the spirituality and complexity of traditional Aboriginal art, as aspects may be sacred.

The art activity (BLM 'Procedure for art stories') focusses on painting and provides students with an experience of creating a piece of art that tells a meaningful story for them and their community. You may like to extend this by helping students create a piece of craft, a dance or any other artform, using the same principles.

Before beginning, you need to discuss important considerations for creating artworks using techniques of traditional Aboriginal people, such as:

- Many symbols used in Aboriginal art are a way to record sacred/secret events and may only be used by the Language group to which the artist belongs – sometimes only the men, or in other cases only the women. These symbols may not be re-produced and used by non-Aboriginal people.
- Commonly recognised symbols, used in stories for Aboriginal children, depicting everyday events (eg tracking, campsites, water courses, bush tucker ...), may be used in classrooms, and by the general public. But, if you use these general symbols, don't paint them in the sacred ochre colours. Samples of general symbols are provided as the BLM: 'Symbols in Aboriginal art'.
- Different Aboriginal groups may use similar symbols in a variety of ways with various interpretations (eg concentric circles and squares).
- If you're in doubt about using particular symbols, it's advisable to check with local Aboriginal Elders.
- More recent Aboriginal artworks are often a blend of traditional and contemporary techniques. (note: This is clearly shown in some of the children's paintings in the accompanying resources.)

When students create symbols for their paintings they should be mindful of the above. The story they choose to represent in their painting, ideally should be about something important in their community (school, meeting places, shopping precinct, residential areas, sporting facilities, rules for harmonious living).

The BLM: 'Procedure for art stories' outlines steps to follow when creating their paintings.

Resource created by Alwyn Evans and Liz Thompson.

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