



Curriculum

Module 9

Indigenous Australians

Resources

Lower – Middle Primary (Years 3-7)

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Queensland Government
Education Queensland



Independent Schools
Queensland



Earth Charter
Australia



Brisbane Catholic
Education



Queensland Catholic
Education Commission

Resources

Introduction to Brink Adventures

- **Introductory Resource sheet: A website guide**
- **Introductory Resource sheet: Journal reflections**
- **Introductory Resource sheet: A map of the route**

Indigenous Australians

- **Resource 1: The Dreaming - A Reading**
- **Resource 2: The Dreaming**
- **Resource 3: Defining Aboriginal stories**
- **Resource 4: Protocols for Working with Stories**
- **Resource 5: Spiritual narratives what do they teach us?**
- **Resource 6: Arts, Story and Ceremony**
- **Resource 7: Stimulus Images**
- **Resource 8: The Earth Charter**
 - **The 16 Values and Principles of the Earth Charter**
 - **The Earth Charter for Children**
 - **Earth Charter Children's Poster**

Resource sheet: A website guide

Go to www.brinkadventures.org . Scan the home page, known as Base Camp, and answer the following questions:

1. What does the word brink mean?

2. Click on Gallery to view photos from along the expedition route. Describe one of the photos that you like.

3. Click on Back and then click on the red and white cross in the top right hand corner of the page to close these pages and return to Base Camp.

4. Locate and click on Fact Files on the left hand side of the page. Locate the Topic box and select National Parks. On the Country box and select any country. Go to Sort and select latest date.

a) What is the name of the national park in Chile that was visited by Brink Adventures?

b) Click on the link. List six animals that are found in the national park.

Resource sheet: Journal reflections

Directions

Part A

- Go to www.brinkadventures.org .
- Locate and click on Journals on the left hand side of the home page.
- Locate the Topic box and select School Journals.
- Locate the Country box and select any country then click on Go.
- Click on San Flaviano Schoolroom and answer the following questions:

1. Read what has been written about this community and choose two things that you think are interesting and list them here.

2. How can people in Australia help children living in the San Flaviano community?

Directions

Part B

- Go to www.brinkadventures.org .
- Locate and click on Journals on the left hand side of the home page.
- Locate the Topic box and select Interviews.
- Locate the Country box and select Australia then click on Find.

1. How did Brink Adventures begin?

- Go back to the topic box and select any topic. In the Country box select Spain.
- Locate the item entitled 'Hitting the frog and toad'.

2. Read and summarise Kendon's impressions of the dock area in Gibraltar where he stayed.

Resource sheet: A map of the route



Resource 1: The Dreaming - A Reading

A paper written by Vicki Turner

The English language often lacks the plasticity to convey the meanings and understanding of Aboriginal concepts. The Aboriginal concept of purpose and existence is ineffable from non-Aboriginal terms of reference. The words Dreaming and Dreamtime are the most widely accepted explanatory terms used by people today when referring to the Aboriginal cosmology. In light of this it would be appropriate to look at the origin of the term Dreaming to understand why it has been generally accepted.

The various Aboriginal languages that have been studied to date have their own words for what we now call The Dreaming. In north-west Australia the Ngarinyin peoples use the word Ugud, when referring to this concept and the Pitjantjatjara people use the word Tjukurpa, which is also used by them in reference to the concept of dream or dreaming. We should be aware that when using the terms Dreaming or Dreamtime that we are not using them in an English literal sense. In this sense these words convey the idea of an imaginary state of mind or unconscious thoughts.

It should be obvious, but involving Aboriginal people in the decision of choosing and using an Aboriginal language word would have been more appropriate and saved a lot of misunderstanding and confusion. Too much of Aboriginal culture and history has been lumped under ethnocentric headings or categories by Europeans. Unfortunately, this method has been accepted and the diversity of Aboriginal culture has been masked by generalisations.

Many non-Aboriginal scholars have explained their theories on what they understand is the Aboriginal concept of The Dreaming or Dreamtime. Some of these theories are quoted in the following texts.

The Aboriginal concept of what is called Dreamtime is in reference to a creative era when the ancestors of Aboriginal people shaped the land and cultural traditions of Aboriginal Australia and its people. From an Aboriginal perspective there is no need to argue exactly when in history this time occurred. By using the word Dreamtime this period tends to become static and it is often interpreted as an explanation of the beginning.

The Western concept of time tends to take a linear structure of beginning to present to future, broken up into eras or periods. For example, Western cultures tend to structure time into say years, decades, centuries of BC, AD or say in Archaeological sense, pleistocene, eocene, miocene etc.

Resource 1: The Dreaming - A Reading - continued

Nancy Williams explains the Aboriginal concept of The Dreaming is circular rather than linear. Josephine Flood provides us with an Archaeological perspective. She acknowledges that Aboriginal people already know what happened in the past, this information being perpetuated by oral tradition and being handed down from generation to generation. Her concept of creation is not restricted to any one given time, rather she sees the creation of environment as a long and ever changing continuum and that due to their long occupation of Australia, Aboriginal people and their cultures have been shaped by these continuing environmental changes. We could interpret this to mean that, while ever land exists and is subject to change due to cause and effect on it, creation is continuing.

Another profound and worthy explanation or theory of what the Aboriginal concept of The Dreaming is, was made by Mr Charlesworth which is necessary to include before concluding this part. What he sees as essential to the concept of The Dreaming is the Aranda people's phrase, *Altjiranga ngambakala*, which inferred having originated out of one's own eternity.

He states

The Dreaming is the most fundamental aspect of Aboriginal life, and has nothing to do with the Western concept of dreaming as an imaginary or illusory state of consciousness.

He explains that

there is no specific concept in the various Aboriginal cultures which is translated by the English terms Dreaming or Dreamtime.

(Charles Worth 1992 page 9)

Source: *A Teacher's Handbook, accompanying Senior Syllabus in Aboriginal Studies and Torres Strait Islander Studies*, Queensland Studies Authority (2001)

Resource 2: The Dreaming

Often the term *The Dreaming* has been translated by non-Aboriginal people into being an imaginary time associated with sleep hence the English concept of The Dreaming.

It is important that students understand that **The Dreaming has nothing to do with the term Dream.**

The Dreaming has often been referred to as The Dreamtime by both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people.

The writers of this unit suggest using The Dreaming rather than The Dreamtime, as The Dreaming links the past, present and future and is occurring now. It is ***NOT a set period of time.***

It is not a reflection of real life, but is the reality of life itself.

In each Aboriginal Language the term The Dreaming has its own words.

For example:

PEOPLE	ORIGIN	THE DREAMING (ORIGINAL LANGUAGE)
Ngarinyin people	North West Australia	Ungud
Aranda people	Northern Territory	Aldjerinya
Pitjantjatjara people	Central Northern Territory	Tjukurpa
Various language groups	Broom Region	Bugari
Various language groups	North East Arnhem Land	Wongar
Kamilaroi	South West Queensland and North West New South Wales	Buurra

For The Dreaming to be understood we must consider it in the development of time. Below, three periods of time are given. All are a part of The Dreaming for Aboriginal people.

Resource 2: The Dreaming - continued

The concept of time for Aboriginal people is perceived in a different way to western concepts of time. Time in the sense of having a rigid schedule working to a clock did not exist in the traditional Aboriginal society. Many Aboriginal people believe that they are a part of a great cycle of life with The Dreaming linking the past, present and future. When something is done and how long it takes to do is not important to this Dreaming cycle. As long as it is done in the correct way, following the correct protocols and involving the correct people as the law of The Dreaming directs, the cycle would then be able to continue.

Invasion has had dramatic effects on The Dreaming of Aboriginal people. Components of the complex cycle of The Dreaming were disturbed and destroyed by many means. These in turn affected The Dreaming as a whole. However, as culture is dynamic so too the concepts of The Dreaming have survived. Beliefs in The Dreaming now are as valid as beliefs in The Dreaming 250 years ago.

There are many beliefs about The Dreaming.

When implementing units of work considering The Dreaming it is imperative that all possible options are taken to *include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the planning, implementation and evaluation processes.*

Resource 3: Defining Aboriginal stories

Oral exchange is the most fundamental communicative process of Aboriginal cultures. Concepts and beliefs about Dreaming have been passed on from generation to generation. Specific cultural practices, histories, languages, laws and family relationships have been passed on through the Oral Traditions of instruction, story-telling, direction, song, dance, art and craft making.

Oral Traditions substantiate Aboriginal perspectives about the past, present and the future.

Oral communications and histories have been translated via various mediums such as message sticks, rock and sand art, body painting, song, dance and carvings. More contemporary histories and events are being expressed through the visual and performing arts, songs, multi-media facets such as computers, CDs, radio, film, TV and literary expositions including prose, poetry, plays and other means of script writing.

There are many different types of Oral Histories. All of these relate to The Dreaming in different ways. These oral histories or “stories” fall into four categories;

1. **Collective histories** - group stories which usually relate to the history of early contact with colonists
2. **Spiritual narratives** - which tell about law, family relationships, relationships to the land and sea, food gathering etc.
3. **Cultural practices** - which have been handed down.
4. **Life histories** - biographical stories of individuals.

Some Aboriginal people separate spiritual narratives into two categories.

1. **Creation Stories; and**
2. **Dreaming Stories**

1. **Creation stories** are Dreaming stories dealing with creation and oral histories that discuss the creation of new life, landforms and people. These are not necessarily related just to the time of our ancestors but are also relevant today.

Any stories dealing with **creation** are in this category.

2. **Dreaming stories** are those oral histories that are concerned with codes of behaviour, law etc. **Both categories are Dreaming stories, however, some are specifically concerned with creation.**

Resource 3: Defining Aboriginal stories - continued

Any other stories written by **Aboriginal people would be classified as Aboriginal Stories.**

We must note that there are some stories written by Aboriginal people which do not fit in to any of the categories discussed (i.e., fiction stories written by Aboriginal people).

Oral traditions were, and are continuing to be, passed down from generation to generation in various forms.

One Dreaming story, for example, may have been passed down through storytelling, through a specific artwork, a dance **and** a song. This ensured the survival of a particular story and all its associated rules were taught.

This process also enables the learner of the story to acquire different skills of *observation, listening, mimicking, copying* and *translating*.

Arts of The Dreaming, Australia's Living Heritage by Jennifer Isaacs, provides many examples of Dreaming stories retold through various art forms, bark, sand and cave paintings as well as modern acrylics.

We have provided two ways of classifying Dreaming Stories, however, it is imperative that local Aboriginal people are asked their opinion of the *classification* and *terminology* associated with oral histories.

There are many videos available that retell Dreaming stories through dance and song..

This topic studied within an educational context provides great opportunities for **Aboriginal visual artists** and/or **Aboriginal dance and drama groups** to perform. Students could summarise the types of oral traditions presented by performers and discuss the lessons taught in the stories.

References: Barwick, D.A.M. and Stannate, R. (Eds) (1979) *Handbook for Aboriginal History*, Canberra; *Aboriginal Histories: source problems in methodology*, in *Black Voices*, Vol 3, No 1, Loos, N. and McDonald, H. (Eds) (1987) James Cook University, Townsville.

Draft P-12 Guidelines and Framework, A Teachers Handbook designed to be used with the *Trail Syllabus in Aboriginal Studies and Torres Strait Islander Studies*. Queensland Education Department, 1995.

Resource 4: Protocols for Working with Stories

The Dreaming tells of the journeys and the actions of Ancestral Beings who created the natural world. The Dreaming is infinite and links the past with the present to determine the future. It is the natural world, especially the land or *country to which a person belongs*, which provides the link between the people and The Dreaming.

The Dreaming stories carry the truth from the past, together with the code for the Law, which operates in the present. Each story belongs to a long and complex story. Some Dreaming stories discuss consequences and our future being.

When a story is a component of an Aboriginal Dreaming story and is told outside of the *country* it belongs to, then it is respected as an Aboriginal Dreaming story from that area, however, within its *country* it remains a significant, sacred Dreaming story. It is important to give recognition of the origins of The Dreaming story. Stories not acknowledged in books should not be used in class.

Some stories recorded by non-Aboriginal people over the years have lost their full translations. Attempts were made as transcriptions in some early books which resulted in crude reproductions. Some of these stories contained information dealing with sacred cultural practices. If in doubt **do not use the story**.

Seek advice from local Aboriginal people when relevant.

When facilitating Dreaming stories from the local area it is imperative for all teachers to work with students to negotiate and consult with the traditional Aboriginal Elders and/or nominated representatives from their local area language group to share their stories.

Resource 5: Spiritual narratives what do they teach us?

Each individual Dreaming story is a part of the complex teachings of The Dreaming. Many Dreaming stories and Oral Traditions combined make a complete passage of beliefs, practices and laws within Aboriginal cultures.

The Dreaming stories are designed to teach about behaviour, our environment and our spiritual world in various contexts.

RULES FOR LIVING

Dreaming stories are a major way of teaching right and wrong behaviour and a major way of teaching the laws of the society.

- sharing
- being honest
- showing respect for Elders
- good manners
- laws of marriage
- kinship and family relationships

THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Dreaming stories teach about the natural world. They explain:

- the physical characteristics of birds and animals, plants and trees
- the behaviour of the creatures around them
- the characteristics of landforms, seas, waterways and the sky

Dreaming stories also give a detailed map of our country. They help to build up an understanding and knowledge of our surroundings which enables us to travel confidently and safely around our land.

- sources of food, water and shelter
- landmarks of importance
- the location and importance of sacred sites
- language boundaries
- places we can visit and those we can't

Resource 5: Spiritual narratives what do they teach us? - continued

THE SPIRITUAL WORLD

Dreaming stories connect us with the spiritual world. They teach us about ourselves and the spirits of our ancestors.

- Dreaming stories make us aware of the Spiritual World.
- Ancestral Beings formed the land and prescribed the rules for living.
- The presence of the spirit people and beings who still exist today, watch and enforce the law and punish offenders.
- The creation of birds, animals, landforms, seas, waterways, sky and ourselves.
- Our responsibility to our environment

Source: Adapted from information given by Aunty Rose Flick, Thallon (South West Queensland)

Resource 6: Arts, Story and Ceremony

In Aboriginal language groups Art was used as a form of communication and as a teaching tool. Art was used in everyday life and played a significant role in ceremonial practices.

Art was and is evident in communities in a number of ways: as painting/drawing in various forms on bark, cave, sand and ornaments; sculptures and carvings in stone, wood, bone and other plant and animal products; and as body art in the form of ornaments, jewellery, headdresses, costume and body painting. Each language group had their own particular symbols and stories associated with these symbols.

Within a language group particular people would protect the special knowledge and skills needed to translate art symbols and stories into ceremonial objects or paintings. These would be passed on during special ceremonies. Some symbols are used only by men and some symbols only by women.

A great deal of time was spent before ceremonies preparing artworks, ornaments and bodies for ceremonies.

Ochres were collected and made into paints for use in body design. Objects were carved and painted to represent spiritual figures. Tools and instruments for use in ceremonies would also be carved and painted with sacred and special designs. In some areas burial poles were painted with symbols relating to the deceased and their family.

Due to the spiritual and ceremonial connections with The Dreaming the art of Aborigines should not be reproduced in any way unless permission is given by the artist/s involved in its development. Symbols used should not be copied as they often involve sacred and spiritual figures that are only meant to be reproduced by selected members of a language group.

Resource 7: Stimulus Images

PLEASE NOTE:

These images are reproduced for educational use only and are copyright to www.aboriginalaustralia.com For more images or information on Aboriginal Australia visit this website.

The first two images are from a re-enactment of the Seven Sisters Dreaming story commonly known across Australia.

'Wati Nyiru' ("the man called Nyiru") - Seven Sisters Dreaming (Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Media video production, 1985)

Visit www.aboriginalaustralia.com website for a full re-enactment of this Dreaming story.



The 'Seven Sisters' is a traditional Aboriginal Dreaming story common to many Aboriginal groups in Australia. The story tells of 'Wati Nyiru' ("the man called Nyiru") who pursues the Seven Sisters through, under and over the landscape, creating many landforms along the way.





Sitting around the fire and making damper from wattle and other native seeds is a great place to share stories from the day and the past.



Jennifer Inkatji, Ernabella - South Australia. Music is very important to the daily life of Aboriginal people and many young Pitjantjatjara people play in rock and country music bands. Music is a great way to tell stories particularly contemporary stories.



'Inma' (Pitjantjatjara name for dance and song), Ernabella - South Australia. The Pitjantjatjara people tell their Dreaming stories through traditional dances and songs.



The didgeridoo and songs of Aboriginal people also translate stories. Some of these stories talk about the movements and significance of the ancestors and the creators of all.

Resource 8: The 16 Values and Principles of the Earth Charter

NOTE:The complete text of the Earth Charter, including the preamble, the way forward and the sub-principles, can be found by visiting www.earthcharter.org

RESPECT AND CARE FOR THE COMMUNITY OF LIFE

1. Respect Earth and life in all its diversity.
2. Care for the community of life with understanding, compassion and love.
3. Build democratic societies that are just, participatory, sustainable, and peaceful.
4. Secure Earth's bounty and beauty for present and future generations.

ECOLOGICAL INTEGRITY

5. Protect and restore the integrity of Earth's ecological systems, with special concern for biological diversity and the natural processes that sustain life.
6. Prevent harm as the best method of environmental protection and, when knowledge is limited, apply a precautionary approach.
7. Adopt patterns of production, consumption, and reproduction that safeguard Earth's regenerative capacities, human rights and community wellbeing.
8. Advance the study of ecological sustainability and promote the open exchange and wide application of the knowledge acquired.

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC JUSTICE

9. Eradicate poverty as an ethical, social and environmental imperative.
10. Ensure that economic activities and institutions at all levels promote human development in an equitable and sustainable manner.
11. Affirm gender equality and equity as prerequisites to sustainable development and ensure universal access to education, health care and economic opportunity.
12. Uphold the right of all, without discrimination, to a natural and social environment supportive of human dignity, bodily health and spiritual well-being, with special attention to the rights of indigenous peoples and minorities.

DEMOCRACY, NONVIOLENCE AND PEACE

13. Strengthen democratic institutions at all levels and provide transparency and accountability in governance, inclusive participation in decision making and access to justice.
14. Integrate into formal education and lifelong learning the knowledge, values and skills needed for a sustainable way of life.
15. Treat all living beings with respect and consideration.
16. Promote a culture of tolerance, non-violence and peace.

Resource 8: The Earth Charter for Children



EARTH CHARTER FOR CHILDREN



We are living at a very important moment in Earth's history. Every day, the people of the world are moving closer together. We need to unite across cultures to choose our future: to protect nature; to respect human rights; to create a world where all can live together in peace and justice. We have a responsibility to care for life – both at present and into the future.

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The Earth is our home

The Earth is only a small part of the immense universe in which we live. The Earth itself is full of life, with a rich variety of plants, animals and peoples. In order to survive, we as human beings need the soil, the water, the air, the plants and the animals. It is our duty to take care of life on Earth.

The Global Situation

Today, our way of living often harms the environment. The way that we produce and consume goods depletes the Earth of its supplies of water, air and soil, endangering the lives of many plant and animal species. The growing world population continues to drain the Earth of its natural resources. At the same time, we are faced with war, famine and disease.

What can we do?

The choice is ours: we can start making changes so that we can build a better future for everyone. The *Earth Charter* gives us a path to follow – www.earthcharter.org

Everybody is responsible

To change our world, we need to be responsible for our actions, because everything that we do is interconnected – everything on our planet is woven together into the fabric of life. We need to think about the way that we use resources and the way that we care for plants and animals. We need to think about the way that we treat other people. If we all take responsibility for our own actions, we can start to work together to care for the present and future wellbeing of humanity and all living things on this planet. Together we can all share in the hope for the future.

RESPECT AND CARE FOR ALL LIVING THINGS

- 1. Respect the Earth and all living things: people, animals and plants.**
 - a. Understand the importance and the interconnectedness of all living things.
 - b. Accept all people as unique and valuable.
- 2. Care for all living things, with understanding, compassion and love.**
 - a. Use natural resources wisely, taking care not to cause harm to the Earth
 - b. Protect the rights of people and accept their differences.
- 3. Form groups of people who act justly, treat others equally and work together peacefully.**
 - a. Recognise everyone's right to be free and the right to choose how they will develop and grow.
 - b. Include all people and work towards safe, peaceful and fair communities.
- 4. Co-operate so that all people can enjoy the beauty and the fruits of the Earth.**
 - a. Act responsibly for the present, making sure not to neglect the needs of future generations.
 - b. Pass on knowledge and encourage future generations to be caretakers of the Earth.

*2002 Adaptation for young people based on the first 4 Principles of the original version of the Earth Charter.
For the complete document, see www.earthcharter.org*

Resource 8: Earth Charter Children's Poster

