



## What was life like for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples before the arrival of the Europeans?


### KEY IDEAS

- Who we are, who came before us, and traditions and values that have shaped societies
- How societies and economies operate and how they are changing over time
- How people exercise their responsibilities, participate in society and make informed decisions

### INQUIRY AND SKILLS

Questioning, Researching, Analysing, Evaluating and reflecting, Communicating

### CONTENT DESCRIPTION

The diversity of Australia's first peoples and the long and continuous connection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples to Country/Place (land, sea, waterways and skies) (ACHASSK083) 

### HISTORICAL CONCEPTS

Significance, Continuity and change, Cause and effect, Place and space, Interconnections, Perspectives and action, Sources, Empathy

### GENERAL CAPABILITIES

Literacy, Numeracy, Information and communication technology (ICT) capability, Critical and creative thinking, Personal and social capability, Ethical understanding, Intercultural understanding

### OBJECTIVE

The aim of this unit is to identify and develop an understanding of the spiritual beliefs of Australia's Indigenous population before European colonisation.



## Text card

### FRONT

Read through the text with the whole class. Identify and highlight any words which need explanation and use the glossary provided on page # to clarify any unfamiliar language.

Scan the QR code for more information about the Indigenous people's spiritual connection to the land.

#### Understand

Read through the comprehension questions and discuss the answers. Note key points for later reference.

#### Write

Watch the video of the 'Rainbow Serpent Story'.

Discuss geographical features in your area (waterways and rocky feature) which could be attributed to the Rainbow Serpent. Direct students to Google Maps™ to draw a map showing the locations of these feature.

#### Investigate

Tagai is associated with Torres Strait Islander culture. This activity provides an opportunity to learn more about Torres Strait Islander spirituality.

### Answers

#### Understand

1. Rainbow Serpent, Mimi Spirits, Tagai
2. Answers will vary.
3. Teacher check.

#### Write

Answers will vary according to location.

#### Investigate

Tagai was a fisherman who got angry with his crew, killed them all and set them as stars in the northern sky. They can be seen as constellations: Pleiades star cluster and Orion.

Tagai can be seen in the southern skies, standing in a canoe in the Milky Way. His left hand is the Southern Cross holding a spear. His right hand is a group of stars in the constellation Corvus holding a fruit called Eugina. He is formed by the stars of Scorpius.

Torres Strait Islander culture is linked to Tagai.

Tagai directs Islander laws, customs and practices that are recorded and handed down story, song, dance, ceremony and artefacts.

### BACK

The info graphic shows an overview of the cultural and spiritual heritage created during the Dreaming. It is a complex system of relationships and connections providing Aboriginal people with everything they need to thrive and survive.

#### Write

Dreaming tracks are an essential component of Aboriginal culture and spirituality. They link to sacred sites, ceremonies, law and stories.

Watch the video 'What are songlines?'

#### Research

Discuss how the Indigenous people had respect for each other's differences. Remind students that in the previous units, they learned that each Country had its own language, laws and beliefs; yet they were still able to trade resources, stories and knowledge with each other in a respectful way.

Discuss other religious teachings and some of their features. Revision from Year 3 work.

### Answers

#### Write

Dreaming tracks are also called songlines.

They were created by ancestral beings during the Dreaming.

The routes of the songlines are recorded in traditional songs, stories, dance and painting and passed along from one generation to the next.

Songs describing the location of landmarks, waterholes and other natural phenomena are often sung while traversing the pathway.

Australia is crossed with an extensive system of songlines, some of which are a few kilometres long, whilst others traverse hundreds of kilometres through lands of many different Countries.

Songlines lead to significant sites where ceremonies and trades often take place.

#### Research

Answers will vary.



## Belonging

### STARTER CARD

- With students, create a list of words to describe how it feels when they do and don't have a sense of belonging.
- Students record and share places or situations where they feel a sense of belonging.

### WORKSHEET

Watch the YouTube™ video, Noel *Nannup – A Nyaongar perspective on spirituality* with the students and display the infographic on the reverse of the text card.

Discuss with students the similarities and differences of viewpoints between the Indigenous Elder in this clip and the Indigenous Elder in the clip the students watched previously. Different Indigenous groups have different stories to tell; however, they all share a basic understanding of connectedness to the land, plants, animals and other people.

Question 1: Indigenous Australians have everything around them as set out in the Dreaming. Discuss the connections.

### Answers

1. Teacher check, must include all aspects shown on the Text card – The Dreaming.

### Additional activities

- Students could create their own info graphic to show how they are connected to their world, their environment, their community and their family.
- Take a photograph of each student and glue in the centre of an A3 sheet of paper. Students then create a web of connections around their own photograph.
- Display these charts for everyone to see.
- Discuss any similarities and differences between the connections each student has.



## Creation stories

### STARTER CARD

- The focus of this card is to assist students with identifying differences between different cultures/religions in terms of creation stories.
- Read through the introductory text and the activity with the students.
- Asking students to share stories from their own cultural/religious background can be quite personal. Students will not feel they can share this knowledge if they don't feel safe. Remind students to be respectful of each other's ideas and knowledge.
- Discuss how all the stories have the commonality that they are about the beginning of life, but they each have their own variations in the details.

### WORKSHEET

Borrow a selection of Indigenous stories from the library to share with the class and source some from the Internet. Discuss similarities and differences among the many stories about creation.

Question 1: Students choose a creation story they enjoy and complete the information in the table.

### Answers

1. Teacher check all information has been clearly provided.

### Additional activities

- As an extension to what the students have completed by filling out the table on the worksheet, students may like to take it a step further by either:
  - acting out the story in a small group. They can use props and sound effects to enhance their retelling of the story.
  - create an artwork based on their creation story. Students may like to attempt using the same techniques as Indigenous artists.
  - create their own video retelling the story.
  - create a comic strip or book retelling their story. Both of these will incorporate the use of text as well as illustrations.
- Discover more about Tagai and the constellations.
- Study Indigenous artworks featuring songlines/Dreaming tracks.



## Beliefs

### STARTER CARD

- Asking students to share beliefs from their own cultural/religious background can be quite personal. Students may not wish to share this knowledge. Remind students to be respectful of each other's ideas and knowledge.

### WORKSHEET

Explain that beliefs vary slightly from group to group; however, the basis is the same. Following the Dreaming and all of the connections, rules and laws it laid down for the people at the beginning of time.

Question 1: Students may need to undertake further research to complete this activity.

Question 2: The website suggested has several videos and also sound bites of the language which will enhance the students' understanding of the Country and its people, as well as why Uluru is so important.

### Answers

- (a) past, present, future
  - (b) no
  - (c) art, songs, stories, dance
  - (d) no
  - (e) yes
- (a) It is believed to have been created by ancestral beings who laid down the foundation for life in the area.
  - (b) Tjukurpa
  - (c) Connections to the land, animals and plants. Men and women's law as well as rituals to follow. Foundation of life and society. Relationships between people including marriage and kinship. Information about the plants and animals and how to care for the land.
  - (d) Tjukaritja
  - (e) people, plants and animals
  - (f) iwara

### Additional activities

- Students may like to find out more about the ancestral spirits associated with Uluru. Visit the website 'Indigenous Australia'. Use the drop down menu > The Dreaming > Rock Legends to locate the seven rock legends associated with Uluru.
- Students may like to work in groups show these legends in artworks to display within the classroom.



## Spirit ancestors

### STARTER CARD

- Asking students to share information about deities or spiritual ancestors from their own cultural/religious background can be quite personal. Students may not wish to share this knowledge. Remind students to be respectful of each other's ideas and knowledge.
- Discuss any similarities and differences between deities shared. Students may be surprised to find that different belief systems have different deities for the same purpose.

### WORKSHEET

Visit the Australian Government website and read the information about the Rainbow Serpent.

Borrow a selection of Indigenous stories about the Rainbow Serpent from the library to share with the class and source some from the internet.

Question 1: Students choose a story about the Rainbow Serpent to complete the 'Rainbow Serpent'. When complete share the stories with the class.

### Answers

1. Teacher check.

### Additional activities

- Observe artwork showing the Rainbow Serpent on the Internet or in books.
- Students create their own artwork of the Rainbow Serpent replicating Indigenous techniques.
- Display artworks within the classroom or the school library.
- Show the location of the Country of origin on a map of Australia. See The AIATSIS map of Aboriginal Australia.