



My Mob

Victorian Aboriginal Languages Levels 7-10

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# Introduction

This unit focuses on the identification of family and community members, the use of appropriate greetings and farewells, and the ability to follow classroom instructions in Language. It also provides a general overview of Victorian Aboriginal Languages, the people and their land for students beginning Year 7. Communities will have their own orthography for their Language, and this should be used in the Language program. Available words will vary from Language to Language.

The topics are:

* Topic 1: Greetings and Farewells
* Topic 2: Aboriginal Words in Australian English
* Topic 3: Family and Kinship
* Topic 4: Cultural Connections

Appropriate consultations with relevant Aboriginal communities are always central to the development of curricula and the provision of learning programs in schools. Victorian government schools are required to act in accordance with the*[Koorie Cross-Curricular Protocols for Victorian Government Schools.](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/teachingresources/diversity/Pages/koorieart.aspx)* The[*Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Inc*](http://www.vaeai.org.au/)(VAEAI) has produced a guide,[*Protocols for Koorie Education in Victorian Primary and Secondary Schools*](http://www.vaeai.org.au/support/dsp-default.cfm?loadref=126)*,* to assist schools to provide a welcoming environment for Aboriginal community members and how to work respectfully with the Koorie community to enrich schools' teaching and learning programs.

For assistance in identifying the appropriate people to consult, please contact [*VAEAI*](http://www.vaeai.org.au/)*.* Government schools can also seek assistance from the Department of Education and Training’s[*Koorie Education Workforce*](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/contact/Pages/wannikregional.aspx)*,* and Catholic schools can contact the Education Officer for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in their relevant diocese. The[*Victorian Aboriginal Corporation for Languages*](http://www.vaclang.org.au)(VACL) can also provide assistance.

# Establishing the Learning Environment

* The Language being reclaimed, rather than English, should be used wherever and whenever possible.
* A Welcome to Country or Acknowledgement of Country, whichever is appropriate, should be made at the beginning of class.
* Cards/posters with Language words can be put around the room, with an appropriate picture/drawing. Laminated cards, both small and large, can be utilised in many activities.
* Free teaching resources can be borrowed from the [Languages and Multicultural Education Resource Centre (LMERC)](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/studentlearning/programs/lmerc/catalogue.htm). Pictures could be sourced from the [Koori Mail](http://www.koorimail.com/) or similar Aboriginal publications.
* Victorian Aboriginal Language materials can be obtained by contacting the Victorian Aboriginal Corporation for Languages, or by going to [www.vaclang.org.au](http://www.vaclang.org.au).
* Parents and community members should be encouraged to participate in the lesson, and students could take their portfolio of work home to share with others, to aid the reclamation process in the community.
* Each student could take home a sheet of paper with the new words from each lesson to share. Alternatively, a sound file containing the new words could be emailed to parents and community members, or given to each student on an MP3 player/recorder to take home.
* Sharing information and resources with other schools teaching the same Language is encouraged. In cases where this involves a primary school and a secondary school, a mentoring program could be undertaken.
* Information about Victorian Aboriginal Languages in school programs can be found on the [Aboriginal Languages, Cultures and Reclamation in Schools website](http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/alcv/about.htm).
* Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural events should be celebrated throughout the year. It would be valuable for the entire school to be involved in these celebrations.
* It is suggested that the Language team liaise with any teacher involved in these areas of study when delivering this unit, to ensure a whole school approach.

**Information for Language Teams**

It is important to understand and be sensitive to the fact that Victorian Aboriginal Languages are revival Languages. This means that, initially at least, there may be gaps in the Language that prevent students and teachers from utilising standard languages methodology. For example, in a Language classroom, students are routinely taught how to say *I like* or *I don’t like* in the language they are studying, but, in all probability, this will not be possible in most Victorian Aboriginal Languages, particularly those in the early stages of reclamation. This may be due to the amount of Language that was retained in the community and/or recorded in the old sources, or it may be that this was not a concept adopted by Aboriginal people in the days of colonisation. This is not to say that the concept cannot be expressed. It may be that a construction like *that is good* or *that is not good* will be used to convey the same message.

However, it is critical that Language team members and school staff ask the local Aboriginal community to provide a suitable construction via the accepted protocols. An early discussion on this topic is recommended, inclusive of some realistic examples that are likely to be needed in the classroom.

An agreement about the most appropriate source dictionary or wordlist to use is essential to a full understanding of the range and variety of Language already documented. Any words or constructions required for the purpose of teaching in the reclamation classroom **must** come from the local Aboriginal Community.

Language reclamation is an important endeavour, and all concerned, including teachers, school principals and other education community partners, need to respect the agreed protocols and conventions at all times. The recommended channel for seeking information about Language is through the Aboriginal community members on the school’s Language team. They will have been chosen by the community as their representatives and, as such, should be able to ascertain whether or not there is a Language construction sanctioned by the community; or, should the community decide that there is a need to develop such a construction, they will work with the community to develop it.

Should any member of the teaching team or education community fail to respect the agreed protocols, it could have an impact on the program ranging from a reminder that protocols have not been followed to cessation of the program. For information on the protocols relating to the establishment and implementation of Aboriginal Language programs, please see the ‘Getting Started’ section on the [ALCV website](http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/alcv/vels.htm).

# Victorian Curriculum F-10: Victorian Aboriginal Languages

For an explanation of the new Victorian Curriculum and the terminology used therein, see the [Victorian Curriculum Overview](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/overview/navigation-and-terminology).

The **achievement standards** for Victorian Aboriginal Languages describe what students should be able to understand and do by the end of Level 10. The **content descriptions** for Victorian Aboriginal Languages explain what has to be taught to the students between Levels 7-10.

Each achievement standard relates to at least one content description, for example, the achievement standard

*students use the language to initiate, sustain and extend interactions, and to exchange information about interests, experiences and aspirations*

(what they must be able to do) relates to the content description

*engage with peers, the teaching team and visiting Elders/community members to exchange information about interests, experiences, plans and aspirations* (ACLFWC174)

(what you need to teach the students to do).

The [Curriculum Mapping Template](http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Pages/foundation10/viccurriculum/languages.aspx) has been designed to support language teams to identify, and keep track of, the content descriptions and achievement standards addressed by the content of your lessons. It is recommended that you read the Curriculum Mapping Instructions provided on the site.

## Victorian Aboriginal Languages Sample Units

There is no set order for the sample units on this website. Schools should order the units to suit their needs, students and other school programs.

Each sample unit presents a wide range of possible topics and activities that teachers may use in short or extended learning programs, depending on the age and interests of the students and language availability for particular topics.

**Community language and cultural input** is an assumed aspect of the development of each topic. It is expected that students will have opportunities for community input into their study of the topic of between 40 – 60 minutes across the unit. This will vary depending on the time allocated to each topic.

Each unit includes **language development** and revision exercises. Language activities may be distributed throughout the course of the unit. Each unit has been designed to involve 40 – 60 minutes of teaching and learning associated with language reinforcement and the acquisition of new language, including grammar, vocabulary and language specifically related to the topic.

Each topic involves a **cultural investigation**. There are many opportunities for student to engage with culture, language and the community through the investigations. Students may undertake some or all of the activities presented in the topic. Students use appropriate extended language to describe their findings, with emphasis on the development of extended text production (oral or written) in the language. Each unit has been designed to involve cultural investigation of between 30 – 120 minutes, depending on the age and level of language learning of the students.

Each topic provides **activities** that encourage students to apply their understanding of language, knowledge, culture and identity. Activities may be chosen as class activities or students may be encouraged to pursue their own interests from the range of activities provided. It is expected that students create a product or performance that can be shared with others and the community and demonstrate the use of language to describe their product or performance. Each activity has been designed to take 50- 60 minutes, but this will vary depending on the complexity of the activity and the extent of student engagement. Activities are generally linked to one or more aspects of the cultural investigation.

## Assessment

Before beginning an activity, assess the existing level of students’ knowledge. A range of strategies can be used for assessment, for example, if you greet the students in Language, the responses may range from familiarity with the greeting to no understanding at all. Alternatively, you could examine previous assessments.

Each unit includes activities that can be adapted for a range of student abilities. For example, with new students modelling would be appropriate; but for students with an existing knowledge, it may be more appropriate to ask them to lead the activity or to support beginners.

Each unit includes both language and culture. The language activities can be modified to cater for different student abilities. It is also possible to extend the cultural activities.

Additional information is provided on the [Victorian Curriculum Overview](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/overview/navigation-and-terminology) page. The [achievement standards for Victorian Aboriginal Languages](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/languages/victorian-aboriginal-languages/introduction/scope-and-sequence) can be found on the Victorian Curriculum website.

When assessing student achievement, assessment criteria can be developed from relevant achievement standards and associated tasks or activities, including teacher observations and records of students’ skills. Possible assessment methods are given in the last row of each topic.

Further information on these can be found in the [Revised curriculum planning and reporting guidelines](http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/documents/auscurric/f-10curriculumplanningreporting.pdf).

# Teaching, Learning and Assessment Activities

*Note: This unit has been developed specifically for students learning an Aboriginal Language, and should be taught in line with the protocols in the* [Victorian Curriculum F-10– Victorian Aboriginal Languages](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/languages/victorian-aboriginal-languages/introduction/rationale-and-aims) and the[*Koorie Cross-Curricular Protocols for Victorian Government Schools*](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/teachingresources/diversity/Pages/koorieart.aspx)

**My Mob Levels 7-10**

## Topic 1: Greetings and Farewells

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Overview** | **Suggested Student Activities** | **Insert words and grammar in target Language** | **Comments/resources for the Language Team and Aboriginal Teacher** |
| Greetings | * Greet the students in Language
* Students return the teacher’s greeting
* Students greet any guests in Language
* Students greet each other in Language
 | Greeting:  | Use this greeting activity at the beginning of every session and elsewhere if possible. |
| Farewells | * Farewell the students in Language
* Students return the teacher’s farewell
* Students greet any guests in Language
* Students greet each other in Language
 | Farewell:  | Use this farewell activity at the end of each session and elsewhere if possible. |
| Revision | * Ask students if they are familiar with the target language or any other Aboriginal languages.
 |  |  |
| The purpose of greetings and farewells, and how they vary from group to group | * Introduce yourself to the class in Language. Ask other adults to introduce themselves to the class.
* Discuss the purpose of greetings and farewells, how they vary from group to group.
* Role-play greetings face to face. Each student should greet everybody in the class.
 | **Hello (formal):** **Hi (informal)**: **My name is:****What is your name?** **Goodbye (formal):** **Bye (informal):** | * You will need to discuss the appropriate form of greeting used with the local community.
* Greetings and farewells should be a standard beginning and end to every lesson.
 |
| Learning Aboriginal Languages  | * Discuss the importance of teaching and learning an Aboriginal Language.
* Why learn the Language? Create a blog for students to upload their reasons for wanting to learn the Language, and what they hope to achieve.
 |  |  |
| Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country | * Invite a senior Traditional Owner to perform a Welcome to Country if available. Emphasise the strict protocols around the Welcome to Country.
* Discuss the cultural importance of a Welcome to Country and an Acknowledgement of Country, and the difference between them.
* Students study to understand the words and meanings in the Welcome to Country, or Acknowledgement of Country
 |  | * See the DET publication, [Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/teachingresources/diversity/Pages/wanniklearning.aspx)
* See also [Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country](https://www.creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/spirituality/welcome-to-country-acknowledgement-of-country)
 |
| Farewell the students in Language | * Farewell the students in Language
* Students return the teacher’s farewell
* Students farewell any guests in Language
* Students farewell each other in Language
 |  | * This farewell routine should be used every day.
 |
| Students teach their family to greet and farewell in Language and tell them about the Welcome to Country and the Acknowledgement of Country | * Practise greetings and farewells
 |  |  |

## Topic 2: Aboriginal Words in Australian English

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Overview** | **Suggested Student Activities** | **Insert words and grammar in target Language** | **Comments/resources for the Language Team and Aboriginal Teacher** |
| Greeting routine |  |  | See Topic 1. |
| Farewell routine |  |  | See Topic 1. |
| Revision | * Revise any known Language using flash cards
 |  |  |
| Thinking about Language as a living organism, growing and changing just as people do.  | * Discuss how English has impacted on Aboriginal Languages and how Aboriginal Languages have left their mark on the English used in Australia today, e.g. in vast numbers of Aboriginal place names, plants, animals, etc.
* Students develop a dictionary of their own, which could include photos and pronunciation (sound files).
* Find Aboriginal words which are used in Australia today, e.g. wordslike *Mallee.* Add these to both the class wordlist and the students’ personal wordlists.
* Create a crossword puzzle online - find local examples of place and street names derived from Aboriginal languages, and use their meanings as clues, e.g. Banyule (=hill) Nillumbik (= bad ground) (both Woiwurrung) Mernda (thunder) (Murrndarr in Wergaia; Murrndabil (thunder-having in Boon Wurrung). Yarraville fuses Aboriginal and French!
 | **Mallee:** **Yabbie:**  | * *Yabbie* comes from the word for ‘small crayfish’, which is y*apith, yapi, yapity, yapityi* in various Kulin Languages.
* *Mallee* in English is taken from the Wergaia (and other Languages) word *mali,* which is their name for a particular type of bush growing in that area.
* Choose a program that allows photos, sound files, eg, Miromaa, [Smile Box](http://www.smilebox.com/), or Word Dynamo’s [*Make a Wordlist*](http://dynamo.dictionary.com/make).
* [Aboriginal Placenames of Victoria](http://www.vaclang.org.au/item/88-aboriginal-placenames-of-victoria.html)
* Hint: Think about how the word sounds, not how it is spelt. Also, use the traditional Language of the country the place is on.
 |
| Introduce some instructional words in Language  | * Total Physical Response (TPR) with command verbs. Learn words such as *stand up, sit down, listen*, and *be quiet*, then practise with a TPR session where the teacher gives the commands. Once the students know the formula, they might replace the teacher in turns.
* Participate in a role-play where greetings and the instructional words are incorporated.
* Briefly discuss the patterns behind singular and plural verbs forms.
 | **Quiet!**: (singular), (plural)**Sit!**: (singular), (plural)**Stand!:** (singular), (plural)**Speak! (intransitive):** (singular), (plural)**Say (your name)!:** (singular), (plural) **(transitive)****Come on**!: (singular), (plural) | * [[Total physical response (TPR).](https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/total-physical-response-tpr)](https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/total-physical-response-tpr)
* Verbs in Aboriginal Languages typically have different endings for tense, eg, past, present and future; and for person, eg, I, you, we (including you), we (not including you), two of us, we all. Click the links below for more information on [number](http://www.grammar-monster.com/glossary/number.htm); and/or [clusivity.](http://research.omicsgroup.org/index.php/Clusivity)

Choose the most appropriate forms for the classroom.* Note that some Aboriginal Languages have both a word for *speak* (an intransitive verb) and another word for *say*, *tell someone* or *speak to someone* (a transitive verb.)
 |
| Oral communication and hearing the right message | * Students who speak another language take turns to say a new word from that language, which the other students write down. The various spellings are put on the board so that students can compare their spellings. This activity shows how difficult it is to write down a word from another Language (as the colonists did with Aboriginal Languages), especially if it contains sounds not found in English.
* Songs are a great way to teach Language. Teach the class a song in Language using a well-known tune, eg *Heads and Shoulders*.
* Most Aboriginal Languages share common sounds. Listen to the sounds of an Aboriginal Language from a website and find several that are different to English, then discuss sounds you can make and those you find difficult.
* Word Wall Display - Collect similar sounding words in Language and write them on coloured paper. Add words as they are learnt.
* Students use [Matching Game Maker](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/languagesonline/games/matching/index.htm) to create a game where they match sounds they record themselves to words or letters.
 |  | * This is a variation of Tamsin Donaldson’s game in [Paper and Talk](http://aiatsis.gov.au/publications/products/paper-and-talk-manual-reconstituting-materials-australian-indigenous-languages/paperback).
* As Australian Aboriginal Languages share many sounds in common, see the explanation in the [Sounds and Writing Systems of Aboriginal Languages](http://ab-ed.bostes.nsw.edu.au/go/aboriginal-languages/practical-advice/the-sounds-and-writing-systems-of-aboriginal-languages), [Transcription of Australian Aboriginal Languages](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Transcription_of_Australian_Aboriginal_languages), [Aboriginal Languages](http://www.clc.org.au/articles/info/aboriginal-languages/), or [The Phonetics and Phonology of Australian Aboriginal Languages](http://clas.mq.edu.au/speech/phonetics/phonology/aboriginal/) (a technical, linguistic description).
* The following link to the sounds in the [Pitjantjatjara Language of SA](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pitjantjatjara_language) is a useful resource for pronunciation. If you scroll down the page you will come to a table identifying the sounds used in the Pitjantjatjara Language. Click on a sound and it will take you to a page that explains the sound in linguistic terminology. On the right hand side you will find a sound sample, click to hear the sound. Most of the sounds are the same as those in Victorian Languages.
* You can also listen to songs in Language, such as those by Gurrumul or Yothu Yindi. This helps students to recognise new sounds, particularly if they can follow the written forms.
 |
| **Assessment:** observation, quizzes, role-play, contribution to class discussions, written work, oral presentation, display of artwork (**delete those not applicable**)  |

## Topic 3: Family and Kinship

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Overview** | **Suggested Student Activities** | **Insert words and grammar in target Language** | **Comments/resources for the Language Team and Aboriginal Teacher** |
| Greeting routine |  |  | See Topic 1. |
| Farewell routine |  |  | See Topic 1. |
| Revision | * Ask students to write down three words they learnt in their last lesson.
 |  |  |
| FamiliesAunties and Uncles  | * Show pictures of diverse families, e.g., nuclear, single-parent, step-family, etc. To avoid issues the teacher should find out each child’s family situation before this topic.
* Learn vocabulary and ask students to create an online game featuring kinship terminology.
* Students create their family tree, putting people’s real names next to the kinship term.
* Students listen to a story about family members. Students repeat, then act out the story heard, using Language words for family members.
* Discuss the use of the terms ‘Aunty’ and ‘Uncle’ as terms of respect. Talk about the importance of the role these respected individuals play in Aboriginal communities.
 | **Father**: **Mother**:**Older brother**: **Younger brother**: **Older sister**: **Younger sister**: **Mother’s mother**: **Father’s mother**: **Mother’s father**: **Father’s father**: **Mother’s sister**: **Father’s sister**: **Mother’s brother**: **Father’s brother**: **Cousin:** **Aunty:** **Uncle:** | * The Languages Online

[Gamemaker](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/languagesonline/) could be used to create the games.* You may want to introduce Aboriginal kinship here. Note that the word for ‘mother’ is used for your biological mother and all of her sisters, and ‘father’ is used for your biological father and all of his brothers. See [Kinship module – teaching and learning framework](http://sydney.edu.au/kinship-module/learning/teaching-learning-framework.shtml), and [Understanding Kinship](http://www.nlc.org.au/articles/info/understanding-kinship/)
* If reciprocal terms are available in the Language, they could be included, eg, in Koorie English ‘grannie’ is used by both a grandmother and her grandchild when addressing each other.
* Note that *Auntie (Aunt), Uncle (Unc)* and *Cousin (Cuz)* have a broader definition in Koorie English than in general Australian English.
 |
| Communicating | * Ask an appropriate community person to tell a story with greetings and commands. Students repeat and act out the story heard.
* Students ask each other’s name using culturally appropriate Language words.
* Role-play – one sibling gives another an instruction which the other mimes, then reverse roles.
 | **Camp**: **My camp***:* **To sleep**: **I sleep***:* **To eat**: **I eat***:* **Water:** **To drink***:* **I drink***:* **What is this:** **This is:** **Here is:**  | * The role-play involves understanding that there are different terms for older and younger siblings.
 |
| * **Assessment:** observation, quizzes, role-play, contribution to class discussions, written work, oral presentation, display of artwork (**delete those not applicable**)
 |

## Topic 4: Cultural Connections

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Overview** | **Suggested Student Activities** | **Insert words and grammar in target Language** | **Comments/resources for the Language Team and Aboriginal Teacher** |
| Greeting routine |  |  | * See Topic 1.
 |
| Farewell routine |  |  | * See Topic 1.
 |
| Revision | * Using cards or pieces of paper, write known Language words and put the cards/papers in a container. Students choose one card/paper and have to translate the word into English.
 |  |  |
| Aboriginal peoples’ relationship with their country | * Discuss Aboriginal peoples’ relationship with their country. Ask community members for examples of their understanding of why the land is so significant.
* Listen to a community member talk about their Ancestors and the Creation of the land based on evidence in the local area.
* Ask students to write a short piece about country and its meaning to Aboriginal people.
 | **Country:**  | * [Culture Victoria](http://www.cv.vic.gov.au/stories/aboriginal-culture/)
* [Creative Spirits](http://www.creativespirits.info/)
 |
| Aboriginal Games  | Aboriginal games, both old and new, can assist with cultural understanding:* Teach and practise some Aboriginal games.
* Compare the types of Aboriginal games played today or in the past, eg, marngrook.
* Organise an Aboriginal Games lunch hour, to promote understanding of different cultures.
 |  | * See the [Traditional Aboriginal Games and Activities](http://www.creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/sport/traditional-aboriginal-games.html) site for some ideas.
* [Marngrook](http://www.network-ed.com.au/marngrook) by Titta Secombe
* [Yulunga Traditional Indigenous Games](http://www.ausport.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0017/402191/SP_31864_TIG_resource_FINAL.pdf)
 |
| * **Assessment:** observation, quizzes, role-play, contribution to class discussions, written work, oral presentation, display of artwork (**delete those not applicable**)
 |

# Unit Resources

## Websites

At the time of publication the URLs (website addresses) cited were checked for accuracy and appropriateness of content. However, due to the transient nature of material placed on the Internet, their continuing accuracy cannot be verified. Teachers are strongly advised to prepare their own indexes of sites that are suitable and applicable to this unit of work, and to check these addresses prior to allowing student access.

For information on the [Department of Education and Training’s Principles of Learning and Teaching (PoLT)](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/studentlearning/teachingprinciples/default.htm) follow this link.

## Teacher resources

A comprehensive list of teacher resources is available under the resources tab on the [Aboriginal Languages and Cultures Victoria](http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/alcv/about.htm) website. This site provides links to other states’ Language programs, and to a wide range of resources.

[Victorian Curriculum F-10 – Victorian Aboriginal Languages](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/languages/victorian-aboriginal-languages/introduction/rationale-and-aims)

[Victorian Aboriginal Languages Resources](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/languages/victorian-aboriginal-languages/introduction/resources)

## Student resources

A comprehensive list of student resources is available under the resources tab on the [Aboriginal Languages and Cultures Victoria](http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/alcv/about.htm) website. This site provides links to other states’ Language programs, and to a wide range of resources.