Eels Project, Levels 7–10

Victorian Aboriginal Languages F–10

Sample unit of work

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Eels Project, Levels 7–10

**Overview:** Students learn about traditional practices involving eels, their uses and their unique journeys, and collaboratively create a major project on eels.

**Time allocation:** Approximately 40 hours (guide only)

**Curriculum area:** Victorian Aboriginal Languages

**Levels:** 7–10

**Content descriptions covered:**

* Engage in activities that involve collaboration, planning, organising, promoting and taking action [(VCLVC175)](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCLVC175)
* Interact in class activities that involve making suggestions, seeking clarification, praising or complimenting one another [(VCLVC176)](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCLVC176)
* Investigate and summarise factual information obtained from a range of sources on a variety of topics and issues related to the Country/Place [(VCLVC177)](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCLVC177)
* Convey information about Country/Place events, experiences or topics of shared interest, using different modes of presentation [(VCLVC178)](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCLVC178)
* Understand and apply cultural norms, skills and protocols associated with learning, using and researching Aboriginal languages [(VCLVU192)](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCLVU192)

**Relevant achievement standard extracts:**

* They use spontaneous language wherever possible to participate in activities that involve taking action, collaborating, planning, organising and negotiating.
* They use culturally appropriate norms and skills, and respect protocols when engaging with and learning from visiting respected community members.
* When interacting in the classroom, they make suggestions, seek clarification, praise or compliment each another.
* Students use language where possible to locate, analyse and summarise factual information from a range of sources such as historical documents, and respected community members.
* They demonstrate their understanding of Country/Place, for example, by explaining the origin, meaning and significance of local place names and features, or by presenting texts and stories about the Country/Place and associated social and cultural events, using language as much as possible and different modes of presentation.

| **Activities** | **Fill in language/words used** | **Advice for teachers/language teams** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Daily greeting activity*** Greet the students in language.
* Students return the teacher’s greeting.
* Students greet any guests in language.
* Students greet each other in language.
 |  | * The greeting routine should be used at the beginning of every class.

**Extension*** Where the language is available, students could converse briefly in language, enquiring after each other’s health, describing activities, etc.
 |
| **Daily revision activity*** Revise instructional words orally using Total Physical Response (TPR).
* Revise other vocabulary using electronic games created for earlier topics/units of work.
 | Language to be revised:Eat!*:* Jump! Run!: Sit!: Sleep!: Walk!:  | * Revision is critical to language learning.
* Utilise learned vocabulary and grammar as well as new vocabulary and grammar throughout this unit of work.
 |
| * Invite a senior or other knowledgeable Aboriginal community member to talk about eels and their value to Aboriginal people for food and trade. Students take notes.
* Excursion to Bunjilaka, an Aboriginal Cultural Centre (or other museums), or to Lake Condah (or another suitable locality) to see eels firsthand. Students take notes, draw diagrams and name the two species of Australian eels, in both English and language where possible.
 | Eel: Swim, to: River:Sea, ocean: | * [Gadubanud society in the Otway Ranges, Victoria: an environmental history](http://press-files.anu.edu.au/downloads/press/p74631/html/ch08.html?referer=1055&page=11)
* [Boon Wurrung](https://cv.vic.gov.au/stories/aboriginal-culture/nyernila/boon-wurrung-the-journey-of-the-iilk-iilkyawa/) – the journey of the eel
* [Gunditjmara eel season](http://www.theage.com.au/victoria/taste-of-summer-its-eel-season-for-the-gunditjmara-people-in-southwest-victoria-20150115-12ques.html)
* [Australia: The Land Where Time Began](https://austhrutime.com/eel_harvesting.htm) – eel farming
 |
| * Students prepare a project using a medium chosen by the teacher. Divide into sections, e.g. Vocabulary, Life Cycle, Breeding, Eel Farming, an area for interesting notes (such as seeing a live eel migrating over land).
* Discuss the importance of careful project planning in pairs/groups, e.g. who is undertaking what in each section by allocating jobs with an agreed timeline. Students decide on and write down their plans.
 | Smoke: Tree, blackwood: Tree, red gum:To chase:To catch:To catch or stop*:* To kill*:*  |  |
| * Students study the characteristics, size and weight of the long-finned and the short-finned eel. They collect images of the two types for use in their project.
 | River: Lake, swamp: Long-finned eel:Short-finned eel: | * [The long-finned eel](http://www.ozanimals.com/Fish/Longfinned-Eel/Anguilla/reinhardtii.html)
* [The short-finned eel](http://www.nativefish.asn.au/home/page/Short-Finned-Eel)
* [*Anguilla australis*](http://fishesofaustralia.net.au/home/species/1423)
 |
| * Visit the Melbourne Botanical Gardens, or Bunjilaka, to see some eels. Then, on an eel diagram, students fill in the words for *head, eyes, fins, tail*, etc. and pronounce in Language.
* If possible, watch an eel being caught and record its size and weight.
* Students fill in habitat words for coastal lagoons, rivers, streams, lakes and swamps on a map and practise saying the words.
* Together the class writes an eel story using as much Language as possible. After several readings a cloze exercise could be given out with blanks for students to complete.
 | Here: There: Head: Eyes: Fish spawn:Tail:  | * [Budj Bim](https://www.environment.gov.au/heritage/places/national/budj-bim)
 |
| * Students research what eels eat and when they feed, and then record their findings in the project.
* Using learned words, students create pairs of sentences in Language about eels that illustrate the use of the ergative case, e.g. what an eel eats and what predators eat eels.
 | Crayfish, fresh water: Crayfish, salt water: Insect: Bird, water fowl: At night: By day:  |  |
| * Students watch the interview about migrating eels from the ABC’s *Catalyst* program and make notes for use in their project.
* Students research elvers and answer the following questions: What are elvers? Students draw one for their project. How do elvers move away from their spawning ground to distant places? They draw a map of their area showing where eels can be found.
* Students research the use of eels as predators to preserve native species
* On a map, students draw the route/s taken by mature Australian eels when they spawn. Students research which other creatures also migrate great distances
 |  | * [ABC *Catalyst*: Eel Migration](http://www.abc.net.au/catalyst/stories/3291553.htm)
* [Kuyang: the Lake Bolac Eel Festival](http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/booksandarts/kuyang%3A-the-lake-bolac-eel-festival/7560812)
* [Eels: aquaculture prospects](http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fishing/aquaculture/publications/species-freshwater/eels-aquaculture-prospects)
* [Extreme Eels](http://www.abc.net.au/science/articles/2004/05/06/2044390.htm)
 |
| **Daily farewell activity*** Farewell the students in language
* Students return the teacher’s farewell
* Students farewell any guests in language
* Students farewell each other in language
 |  | * The farewell routine should be used at the end of every class.
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Assessment opportunities

* Participation in discussions
* Quality of research
* Presentation
* Use of target language

Sharing

* Ask students to teach their family to greet and farewell each other in language.
* Send the language information home to the family.