Symbols and storytelling

Levels 3 to 6,   
Victorian Aboriginal Languages,   
sample unit of work



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Contents

[Introduction 4](#_Toc75536569)

[Overview of the unit of work 4](#_Toc75536570)

[Teaching Victorian Aboriginal Languages F–10 6](#_Toc75536571)

[Learning activities 13](#_Toc75536572)

[Learning activity 1: Introducing symbols 13](#_Toc75536573)

[Learning activity 2: Storytelling stones 18](#_Toc75536574)

[Learning activity 3: Symbols in Aboriginal art(optional) 22](#_Toc75536575)

[Learning activity 4: Understanding Aboriginal stories 24](#_Toc75536576)

[Learning activity 5: Writing stories 31](#_Toc75536577)

[Appendices 34](#_Toc75536578)

[Appendix 1: Learning activity 1 words and phrases 34](#_Toc75536579)

[Appendix 2: Learning activity 1 assessment grid 36](#_Toc75536580)

[Appendix 3: Learning activity 2 words and phrases 37](#_Toc75536581)

[Appendix 4: Learning activity 2 assessment grid 38](#_Toc75536582)

[Appendix 5: Learning activity 3 assessment grid 39](#_Toc75536583)

[Appendix 6: Learning activity 4 words and phrases 40](#_Toc75536584)

[Appendix 7: Learning activity 4 assessment grid 42](#_Toc75536585)

[Appendix 8: Learning activity 5 words and phrases 43](#_Toc75536586)

[Appendix 9: Learning activity 5 assessment grid 44](#_Toc75536587)

[Appendix 10: Symbol cards – template 45](#_Toc75536588)

[Appendix 11: Symbols concentration game 46](#_Toc75536589)

[Appendix 12: Giant symbol matching game 47](#_Toc75536590)

[Appendix 13: Symbol storytelling stones 48](#_Toc75536591)

[Appendix 14: Symbol scavenger hunt 49](#_Toc75536592)

[Appendix 15: Symbols memory game 51](#_Toc75536593)

Introduction

Overview of the unit of work

This sample unit of work is designed to support teachers implementing the Victorian Curriculum F–10: Victorian Aboriginal Languages and to demonstrate how the Levels 3 to 6 content descriptions and achievement standard may be addressed. It supports teachers in providing opportunities for students to gain language skills, knowledge and understanding in their local context. Students explore local and other Aboriginal symbols and stories used in a range of contexts and use this knowledge to build and tell their own simple stories.

Teachers of Victorian Aboriginal Languages may wish to use this sample unit of work as a model from which they can develop their own unit of work.

Further advice on implementing the Victorian Aboriginal Languages curriculum in schools is available in the [Victorian Aboriginal Languages](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/curriculum/foundation-10/resources/languages/victorian-aboriginal-languages/Pages/default.aspx) section of the VCAA website.

Links to the Victorian Curriculum F–10

This unit of work is linked to Levels 3 to 6 of the Victorian Curriculum F–10: Victorian Aboriginal Languages. A list of all relevant content descriptions plus relevant extracts from the achievement standard is included at the start of each learning activity in this document.

Cross-curriculum links

| **Curriculum area** | **Levels 3 and 4** | **Levels 5 and 6** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Drama | Use voice, body, movement and language to sustain role and relationships and create dramatic action with a sense of time and place [(VCADRD026)](https://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCADRD026) | Perform devised and scripted drama that develops narrative and uses performance styles and design elements to engage an audience [(VCADRP031)](https://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCADRP031) |
| English | Use comprehension strategies to build literal and inferred meaning and begin to evaluate texts by drawing on a growing knowledge of context, text structures and language features [(VCELY257)](https://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCELY257) – Level 3  Use comprehension strategies to build literal and inferred meaning to expand content knowledge, integrating and linking ideas and analysing and evaluating texts [(VCELY288)](https://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCELY288) – Level 4  Create imaginative texts based on characters, settings and events from students’ own and other cultures including through the use of visual features [(VCELT264)](https://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCELT264) – Level 3  Create literary texts by developing storylines, characters and settings [(VCELT297)](https://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCELT297) – Level 4  Understand that languages have different written and visual communication systems, different oral traditions and different ways of constructing meaning [(VCELA270)](https://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCELA270) – Level 3  Listen to and contribute to conversations and discussions to share information and ideas and negotiate in collaborative situations and use interaction skills, including active listening and clear, coherent communications [(VCELY275)](https://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCELY275) – Level 3  Interpret ideas and information in spoken texts and listen for key points in order to carry out tasks and use information to share and extend ideas and use interaction skills [(VCELY307)](https://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCELY307) – Level 4 | Understand how texts vary in purpose, structure and topic as well as the degree of formality [(VCELA309)](https://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCELA309) – Level 5  Plan, draft and publish imaginative, informative and persuasive print and multimodal texts, choosing text structures, language features, images and sound appropriate to purpose and audience [(VCELY329)](https://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCELY329) – Level 5  Plan, draft and publish imaginative, informative and persuasive texts, choosing and experimenting with text structures, language features, images and digital resources appropriate to purpose and audience [(VCELY358)](https://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCELY358) – Level 6  Use a range of software including word processing programs to construct, edit and publish written text, and select, edit and place visual, print and audio elements [(VCELY332)](https://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCELY332) – Level 5  Use a range of software, including word processing programs, learning new functions as required to create texts [(VCELY361)](https://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCELY361) – Level 6  Present a point of view about particular literary texts using appropriate metalanguage, and reflecting on the viewpoints of others [(VCELT336)](https://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCELT336) – Level 5 |
| Intercultural Capability | Describe what they have learnt about themselves and others from intercultural experiences including a critical perspective on and respect for their own and others cultures [(VCICCB006)](https://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCICCB006) | Explain how intercultural experiences can influence beliefs and behaviours, including developing a critical perspective on and respect for their own and others cultures [(VCICCB010)](https://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCICCB010) |
| Visual Arts | Explore ideas and artworks from different cultures and times as inspiration to create visual artworks ([VCAVAE025](https://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCAVAE025)) | Create and display artwork considering how ideas can be expressed to an audience ([VCAVAP031](https://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCAVAP031)) |

Other cross-curriculum opportunities

This unit of work can also be linked to the cross-curriculum priority of [learning about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures](https://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/overview/cross-curriculum-priorities). Students begin to understand the uniqueness of these cultures and the wisdom and knowledge embedded in them.

Teaching Victorian Aboriginal Languages F–10

Protocols

**Victorian Aboriginal Languages can only be taught after permission has been granted by the language’s Traditional Owners.**

Read the [Victorian Curriculum F–10: Victorian Aboriginal Languages](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/languages/victorian-aboriginal-languages/introduction/rationale-and-aims) carefully and ensure that you follow the Department of Education and Training’s [Koorie Cross-Curricular Protocols](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/teachingresources/multicultural/Pages/koorieculture.aspx) for Victorian government schools. Catholic and independent schools may also wish to refer to this resource. These are complemented by the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Inc.’s (VAEAI) [Protocols for Koorie Education in Victorian Primary and Secondary Schools](http://www.vaeai.org.au/wp-content/uploads/delightful-downloads/2020/01/Protocols-for-Koorie-Education-in-Victorian-Primary-and-Secondary-Schools-2019.pdf).

The protocols encourage respect and trust between Aboriginal communities and schools. A school should not commence Aboriginal language classes without agreement and support from appropriate local Aboriginal people (ideally through the [Local Aboriginal Education Consultative Group](http://www.vaeai.org.au/local-aboriginal-education-consultative-groups/); for more information, contact [VAEAI](https://www.vaeai.org.au/templates/contact/)) and the [Traditional Owners](https://achris.vic.gov.au/weave/wca.html) of the land on which the school stands. In order to establish an Aboriginal language school program in Victoria, approval should also be sought and received from the school council or similar.

Local Aboriginal communities will retain cultural and intellectual property rights when they contribute content to a school’s local Aboriginal language program. Material contributed by Aboriginal community members to Aboriginal languages programs for schools should be provided through consultation and with consent, for the purposes of supporting schools. Where schools, teachers or consultants involved in the program wish to use the material for any other purpose, further consents will be required from the relevant local Aboriginal community.

Key information – general

Learning in Victorian Aboriginal Languages

Before the arrival of Europeans, Koorie people often learnt multiple languages, including the language of the Country where their family was located and the languages of neighbouring Countries. Each language contained sacred, cultural and scientific information, which was passed orally from generation to generation.

There are at least 44 Victorian Aboriginal languages. All Victorian Aboriginal languages are revival languages.

[Victorian Curriculum F–10: Victorian Aboriginal Languages](https://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/languages/victorian-aboriginal-languages/introduction/learning-in-victorian-aboriginal-languages) provides opportunities for students to study Victorian Aboriginal languages that are being revived by their owners, and to become more richly connected to the Countries of the First Peoples. The amount of vocabulary and variety of language structures available for teaching and learning will be influenced by the current progress of language revival for a particular language.

Consultation with the appropriate Traditional Owners is always essential. Respectful engagement extends to visits, excursions to the Country or Place, and use of cultural material as part of the teaching and learning program.

Language Team

It is very important that students understand the relationship between Language, Country and Community. Victorian Aboriginal Language programs have different needs to other language programs. Currently, Victorian Aboriginal languages are not often used on a daily basis, and each is at a different stage of revival. There are very few books or teaching materials available for most Victorian Aboriginal languages.

To ensure appropriate resources are sourced, developed and taught, schools are advised to establish a Language Team. Where possible this team should include an Aboriginal Language authority or custodian from the Community, an Aboriginal Language teacher or assistant, a linguist and possibly a qualified language teacher. The Language Team can be further supported by a [Koorie Education Coordinator (KEC) and/or a Koorie Engagement Support Officer (KESO)](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/contact/Pages/marrungregional.aspx) and a [Local Aboriginal Education Consultative Group (LAECG)](https://www.vaeai.org.au/local-aboriginal-education-consultative-groups/)representative.

The Aboriginal members on the school’s Language Team will assist staff and students in learning about Aboriginal ways of ‘knowing, being, doing, valuing and learning’ (Yunkaporta, 2010). This Aboriginal language pedagogy will strengthen and complement common language teaching methodology such as repetition and systematic building of vocabulary and language structures.

Dictionaries, databases and applications

Traditional language custodians, often in conjunction with a linguist, can provide an understanding of the range and variety of language already documented. An agreement with Traditional Owners about the most appropriate source dictionary and/or word lists to use is essential. For some languages, simple databases and word-learning applications exist. Permission must be sought prior to using such tools and materials. Any words or constructions required for the purpose of teaching a Victorian Aboriginal language must come from the local Aboriginal community. Further resources for Victorian Aboriginal languages are available from the [Victorian Aboriginal Corporation for Languages (VACL)](https://www.vaclang.org.au/).

Word formation and spelling

All Victorian Aboriginal languages are reclamation and revival languages. Their reclamation relies heavily on language found in historical records, and certain words and grammatical structures may have not been recorded or understood by non-Indigenous people recording language or did not exist at the time language information was being recorded. **The formation of new words should always be done in consultation with, and with the support of, your local Aboriginal community** as these words may already be known and in use. Teachers and students need to be guided by the Language Team when creating new words and phrases for use in the school program. Strategies can include using known word-formation processes for local and neighbouring Aboriginal languages, and borrowing words from other related Aboriginal languages with permission and acknowledgement.

Aboriginal languages were not traditionally written, and colonists who recorded Aboriginal languages were often unable to hear or distinguish unfamiliar sounds and used inconsistent and varying spelling systems influenced by their own languages. The Victorian Aboriginal language specialist should be consulted for Community’s preferred spelling conventions.

All languages change over time and meanings of words can change over time too. For example, a ‘mouse’ is a live animal but now the word also means a computer tool. How are these meanings related? The computer mouse looks like the live mouse, with a rounded body and a long tail, or perhaps the computer mouse makes the cursor on the screen move quickly like a live mouse. This is how Aboriginal people in the 1800s connected ideas together to create new words in their language. Over time, old words began to adopt new meanings. For example, in Woiwurrung, *wilam* means hut or shelter, and can now be used to mean house, tent or shed.

Old words can also be combined to create new meanings. Two examples of how Woiwurrung speakers used this process are:

* corroboree 🞧 shelter 🡺 church
* message stick 🞧 fast 🡺 phone message or text message.

Pronunciation

Teachers are encouraged to become familiar with the local language sounds that do not occur in English prior to teaching a Victorian Aboriginal language. Stress patterns are also different from those in English. Teachers should do this in consultation with their Language Team and/or the designated language custodian. If teachers have not previously spoken or taught this language, they will need to practise these sounds until they are comfortable both pronouncing them as individual sounds, and in words and phrases, with the correct stress patterns. Teachers are strongly encouraged to program regular visits from knowledgeable Community members who can model pronunciation. Where possible, programs should also include audio and/or video recordings of Community speakers pronouncing the local language sounds and speaking in the local language.

Sign language and gestures

Sign language, including hand signing, is a common characteristic of many Australian Aboriginal languages. These ‘alternate sign languages’ (Kendon, 1988) are not related to language for the deaf and are not a primary means of communication. They appear to have been developed to be used when spoken communication was not practical (for example, to communicate over distances, such as when hunting), not permitted (for example, during rituals related to mourning, initiation, kinship relationships) or during ceremonies, dancing and children’s play. In some parts of Australia, hand signs are still commonly used. In many parts of Australia, including Victoria, body, face and eye movements also have specific meanings, and are used to communicate instead of speaking.

Before using any sign language or gestures, it is essential to talk to your local Language Team about whether there is existing sign language from the local language in use. If not, they may approve using borrowed sign language from another Aboriginal language or adapted from Australian Sign Language (Auslan), following appropriate protocols.

Grammar

The way sentences are structured in Aboriginal languages is different from in English. There is a wide variety of suffixes with a great range of functions. For example, suffixes can express how many people you are talking to or about, and if an action happened in the past or in the present. Teachers should consult the Language Team or designated language custodian for further explanation of grammar rules. If your local language group is unsure of sentence structures and grammar patterns or rules, you may be able to be guided by or borrow a neighbouring language group’s grammar rules or language structures.

Key resources – general

Background resources for teachers

* Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority 2018, ‘Yarning circles’, [www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/about/k-12-policies/aboriginal-torres-strait-islander-perspectives/resources/yarning-circles](http://www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/about/k-12-policies/aboriginal-torres-strait-islander-perspectives/resources/yarning-circles)
* Research Unit for Indigenous Language, ‘The sounds of Australian Aboriginal Languages’ video series, Faculty of Arts, University of Melbourne, <https://arts.unimelb.edu.au/research-unit-for-indigenous-language/training/australian-indigenous-languages/sounds-of-aboriginal-languages>
* Yunkaporta T 2010, ‘Our ways of learning in Aboriginal languages’, in J Hobson, K Lowe, S Poetsch & M Walsh (eds), *Re-awakening Languages: Theory and Practice in the Revitalisation of Australia’s Indigenous Languages*, Sydney University Press, Sydney, 37–49, [https://ses.library.usyd.edu.au//bitstream/2123/6914/1/RAL-chapter-3.pdf [PDF – 277KB]](https://ses.library.usyd.edu.au/bitstream/2123/6914/1/RAL-chapter-3.pdf); see also [www.8ways.online](https://www.8ways.online/)

Additional resources for teachers

The following resources may be helpful for those wanting to know more about the teaching and learning of Aboriginal languages.

Sounds and spelling

* Jones C, Chandler P and Lowe K 2010, ‘Sounds, spelling and learning to read an Aboriginal language’, in J Hobson, K Lowe, S Poetsch & M Walsh (eds) *Re-awakening Languages: Theory and Practice in the Revitalisation of Australia’s Indigenous Languages*, Sydney University Press, Sydney, 281­–292, [https://ses.library.usyd.edu.au/bitstream/handle/2123/6956/RAL-chapter-24.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y [PDF – 160KB]](https://ses.library.usyd.edu.au/bitstream/handle/2123/6956/RAL-chapter-24.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y)
* Victorian Aboriginal Corporation for Languages (VACL), ‘Language fact sheets’ (including 2. Language Sounds; 3. Spelling; 4.Spelling decisions – consonants; 5. Spelling decisions – vowels), <http://www.vacl.org.au/> (Resources tab)
* Webb, T 2020, ‘Changing the ABC’s pronunciation guidance on Indigenous words’, ABC News, [www.abc.net.au/news/about/backstory/2020-06-04/tiger-webb-abc-pronunciation-guide-indigenous-languages/12317822](http://www.abc.net.au/news/about/backstory/2020-06-04/tiger-webb-abc-pronunciation-guide-indigenous-languages/12317822)

Sign language

* ABC News 2019, ‘Bentley James explains Yolngu Sign Languages’ video, [www.abc.net.au/news/2019-04-15/bentley-james-explains-yolngu-sign-language/11006870?nw=0](https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-04-15/bentley-james-explains-yolngu-sign-language/11006870?nw=0) (video explaining use and significance of signs, explaining metalanguage and demonstrating Yolngu signs)
* Colin Jones, Queensland Rural Medical Education Limited 2013, ‘What is the importance of body language and sign language in communication?’ video, YouTube, [www.youtube.com/watch?v=03bPHQktqiI](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=03bPHQktqiI) (Note: The statement in this video that ‘we had one sign language which we used over the whole continent before Europeans arrived here’ is contested in Victoria.)
* Iltyem-iltyem, Sign Languages in Central Australia, <https://iltyemiltyem.com/sign/> (online resource containing several hundred video clips of Central Australian uses of sign languages for public viewing)
* Kendon, A 1988, *Sign Languages of Aboriginal Australia: Cultural, Semiotic and Communicative Perspectives*, Cambridge University Press, Melbourne
* Living Tongues Institute for Endangered Languages 2010, ‘Clifton Bieundurry – traditional hand signs (Australia)’ video, YouTube, [www.youtube.com/watch?v=qLwf2b4kWKo](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qLwf2b4kWKo) (Wangkajunga, north-western Australia)
* Miller, M 2017, *Auslan and Yorta Yorta language*, in consultation with Yorta Yorta Nations Aboriginal Corporation and Yalca Loitjiba (for more information, contact [VAEAI](https://www.vaeai.org.au/administration))

Key information – Symbols and storytelling

In many cultures around the world, symbolism and storytelling have always been an integral part of the keeping and passing on of information and knowledge. For Aboriginal people, this has also been the case.

It is important to acknowledge that some of the deep knowledge of symbols and stories has been lost, particularly in Victoria and south-east Australia where language and cultural knowledge have been more affected by colonisation and subsequent policies.

The use of symbols is a way to document stories or events of the past. Using symbols can also add another layer to oral storytelling, or it can be an alternative way to tell stories. Traditional Aboriginal cultures were oral-based cultures and symbols were used to represent and document stories and events of significance. Although there are great and noticeable differences from language group to language group and clan to clan in terms of language and culture, it may seem that the majority of the most common symbols used across Australia were the same. Exceptions include certain symbols that depict local landscape features and local animals (for example, not all Countries had hills or mountains and not all Countries had emus or sea turtles).

Storytelling has long been and still is essential to Aboriginal cultures for a number of reasons (see list below). Being told stories or having stories disclosed to you starts from a young age. Through the different stages of initiation and levels of responsibility or maturity, stories become more detailed; more knowledge is shared if and when the person is judged to be ready for it.

Traditional stories in Aboriginal cultures are often referred to as ‘Creation’, ‘Dreaming’ or ‘Dreamtime’ stories. These English words do not adequately translate the complexity of this concept. These stories are very specific in meaning and importance to the area that Aboriginal people belong to, and are custodians of. It is important to talk to your local Aboriginal community about what stories are appropriate for the purposes of teaching in schools.

Storytelling and symbolism in Aboriginal Australia remain significant and have a number of important uses in Aboriginal cultures. Symbols were traditionally used:

* as a way of keeping records of events (for example, ‘Creation’, ‘Dreaming’ or ‘Dreamtime’ stories, ceremony, war, change in landscapes)
* in traditional mapping of the land and stories (for example, in painted incisions on possum skin cloaks)
* in rock paintings depicting stories or real-life events (where appropriate)
* in ceremonial or war body paint and clothing
* on weaponry and tools (for example, shields, bullroarers, message sticks).

Symbols are still used in some of these ways by Aboriginal people today and they are also commonly used in contemporary dance, art, fabrics, clothing and jewellery, on flags and in ceremonies.

In Aboriginal cultures,stories are passed on orallyand also through dance and song. Storytelling, no matter in what form, continues to be used often as an educational tool for the passing on of:

* history
* ‘Creation’, ‘Dreaming’ or ‘Dreamtime’ stories
* the importance or creation of significant animals, landmarks, waterways and constellations (and their connection to one another)
* values, morals, sustainable use of and caring for Country, and safety on Country
* cultural information, practices, roles and responsibilities (of people, animals, water, sky, land)
* Women’s or Men’s business.

Schools are advised to follow protocols when using any Aboriginal symbols and stories, including seeking advice and approval from the local Aboriginal community. Develop relationships with the local Aboriginal community to understand what protocols you should follow and for approvals on what can and cannot be used. In addition, refer to the [Protocols](#Protocols) section in this document.

Key resources – Symbols and storytelling

* McLeod, Pauline E, Jones, Francis Firebrace and Barker, June E 2001, *Gadi Mirrabooka: Australian Aboriginal Tales from the Dreaming*, ed. H McKay, Libraries Unlimited (authentic Aboriginal stories from around Australia told by Aboriginal storyteller custodians and cultural educators; story outlines and beginnings are available on the Aboriginal Stories page of the Gadi Mirrabooka – Aboriginal stories book website, [www.gadimirrabooka.com/aboriginal-stories](https://www.gadimirrabooka.com/aboriginal-stories))
* *Indigenous Creation Stories of the Kulin Nation* 2010, Arts Victoria, Victorian Aboriginal Corporation for Languages (VACL) (a collection of four stories: Boonwurrung, Carolyn Briggs; Wathaurong, (the late) David Tournier; Wurundjeri, Doreen Garvey-Wandin; and Taungurung, Lee Healy)
* *Nyernila – Listen continuously: Aboriginal Creation Stories of Victoria* 2014, Arts Victoria and Victorian Aboriginal Corporation for Languages (VACL), Bambra Press; reprinted in 2015, Creative Victoria and VACL, <https://cv.vic.gov.au/media/3046/nyernila-listen-continously-2015.pdf>
* Sharing Stories Foundation, <https://sharingstoriesfoundation.org/>
* ‘The Dreaming’ 28 January 2021, Common Ground, [www.commonground.org.au/learn/the-dreaming](https://www.commonground.org.au/learn/the-dreaming); also First Nations Bedtime Stories videos, Common Ground, [www.commonground.org.au/firstnationsbedtimestories](https://www.commonground.org.au/firstnationsbedtimestories) (Note: The stories in these videos contain language and culture from Central Australia and may not be appropriate; please check with your local Aboriginal community.)
* Wunungu Awara: Animating Indigenous Knowledges, Monash University, story animations from Victorian and other Australian Indigenous communities, [www.monash.edu/arts/monash-indigenous-studies/wunungu-awara/animations](https://www.monash.edu/arts/monash-indigenous-studies/wunungu-awara/animations). Victorian stories include Taungurung – Yagun Gulinj Wiinj (How Man Found Fire); Dhauwurd wurrung *– Mayapa-u Budj Bim* and Pitthirrit (The Plover); Tati Tati, Mutti Mutti, Latji Latji and Wadi Wadi – *Wangilatha Wangu nga Kiyawatha* (Singing Songs and Telling Stories).

Learning activities

The following sample learning activities were designed to cover elements of Levels 3 to 6 of the Victorian Curriculum F–10: Victorian Aboriginal Languages. All parts of the sample learning activities would need to be delivered in some form to ensure the content descriptions listed are explicitly covered.

**Before beginning a unit of work, review all resources and activities and discuss with the Language Team to ensure that everyone is comfortable to proceed. If not, make adjustments where necessary.**

Learning activity 1: Introducing symbols

**Timing (approximate):**  2 × 1-hour sessions

**Learning intentions – Session 1:**  Know the context of how, where and why symbols were/are used by Indigenous people and/or, more specifically, by the local community

Understand that Aboriginal symbols should be used respectfully, following protocols

**Learning intentions – Session 2:**  Be able to recognise and saylanguage names for a number of symbols in local language

**Content descriptions (extracts):** Interact with peers, the teaching team and visiting respected community members … [(VCLVC152)](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCLVC152)

Participate in guided tasks that involve following instructions, … cooperating with peers … [(VCLVC153)](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCLVC153)

Participate in everyday classroom activities and routines, such as responding to questions and requests, asking permission, requesting help [(VCLVC154)](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCLVC154)

… recognise and use simple language structures [(VCLVU164)](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCLVU164)

Understand that texts such as stories, paintings, songs and dances have distinct purposes and particular language features [(VCLVU165)](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCLVU165)

**Achievement standard (extracts):** By the end of Level 6, students … interact appropriately with respected community members and community speakers, and apply principles and protocols of cultural safety when interacting with Country/Place and engaging with cultural material … Students ask and respond to simple questions, request help, repetition or clarification, … Whenever possible they use the language to interact and collaborate in games and other activities, including the use of hand signs as appropriate.

Students know that the language has its own pronunciation, spelling and grammar. They apply this knowledge to predict the sound, spelling and meaning of new words.

Preparation

* Review the lists of resources (see [the background resources for teachers](#BackResources) and [the list of resources](#Resources1) for this learning activity).
* Consult with the Language Team regarding which local symbols can be used in a school program and whether any more broadly used Aboriginal symbols are appropriate to be included. Ask your Language Team if they can provide any relevant links or resources regarding local symbols. **Always seek approval before using symbols from any Indigenous community**.
* Talk to local Community members about common local symbols.
* Invite an Elder/respected Community member to visit the class to talk about local symbols.
* Prepare the Learning activity 1 words and phrases list (see [Appendix 1](#Appendix1)) with the Language Team.
* Develop a template for a word wall of language and organise where it will be placed in the classroom.
* If you will be taking students outside, find a quiet, safe outdoor space, away from traffic and noise.
* Prepare resources for students to make individual symbol card sets (see [Appendix 10](#Appendix10)).
* Create your own A4-size flashcard set of the symbols you will be using. Laminate them so they can be stuck on the board or wall as needed. Make sure any images you use are approved by the Language Team.
* Read the instructions for the symbols concentration game (see [Appendix 11](#Appendix11)).
* Prepare the giant symbol matching game (see [Appendix 12](#Appendix12)) with the Language Team, including the A4-size or larger laminated images to be stuck on the board or walls.
* Conduct any pre-assessment of student knowledge (see an example in [Assessment ideas](#Assessment1)).

Session 1

Activity 1: Aboriginal symbols – what, where and why

* Sit in a yarning circle inside or outside and greet any visitors and each other in the local language.
* Students briefly share their knowledge of important symbols from their cultural backgrounds, as well as the uses, importance and meanings of those symbols.
* Students share knowledge of any Aboriginal symbols they are familiar with.
* Display, or ask an Elder to display, selected Aboriginal symbols **used with permission**. For example, you could display symbols on flashcards, in online images, in storybook pictures or on objects. The objects could include message sticks, clothing (for example, a possum skin cloak), coolamon, weaponry, tools, ceremonial body symbols, or sand, cave, rock, bark or modern paintings.
* Give students time to look at the symbols and then initiate, or ask an Elder to initiate, discussion about the use and importance of symbols in Aboriginal cultures.

**Tips:**

* If an Elder or respected Community member is visiting, they may prefer to focus entirely on locally used symbols.
* If an Elder or respected Community member is visiting, they can display their choice of symbols and they may wish to lead the discussion. Make sure introductions are made in the local language.
* Encourage all students to be part of the discussions in some way.

**Discussion prompts:**

* Are you familiar with any of these Aboriginal symbols? Where have you seen them? What do you think they mean? Why are they used?
* How could you find out what the common symbols are for your local area or region and where they appear?
* Why would there be some common symbols used throughout larger regions but also some specific local symbols?
* Why do we need to be careful talking about and especially using Aboriginal symbols?

Activity 2: Symbols vocabulary

* Following the discussion, show the symbols from Activity 1 again and ask if the students know any local language words for these symbols (for example, students might remember or have been taught the local language word for ‘camp’, or they may know ‘water’ but not ‘waterhole’).
* Model language for keynew words and remind students of the link between pronunciation and spelling, particularly for ‘tricky’ non-English sound-spelling combinations. Model any appropriate hand signs.
* Practise all words by repeating aloud, chanting and/or rapping.
* Note new language words (see [Appendix 1](#Appendix1)) on the board or a word wall next to symbol images. Use this opportunity to prompt and remind students of local language sounds and spelling rules.
* Give students the template for symbol cards (see [Appendix 10](#Appendix10)). In the first column, students draw the symbol, in the second column they copy in the matching language word, and in the third column they write the meaning (in English).

**Tips:**

* If there is limited time, add approved symbols to the first column before printing.
* Begin to laminate sheets (or ask students to laminate the sheets, if allowed) so cards can be re-used in other activities.

**Extension:**

Students with more advanced knowledge or skills can write the words for the word wall of language.

Activity 3: Reflection and farewell

* Students reflect on what they have noticed and learnt in Session 1.
* Farewell students in local language, using hand signs or gestures where appropriate. Students reply in language.

**Tips:**

* During the reflection, students can be asked to share in pairs to ensure every student has an opportunity to reflect and share.
* Some students may prefer to record their reflection in written form. Other students may prefer to draw their reflection.

Session 2

Activity 4: Recognising symbols and practising vocabulary

* Sit in a yarning circle. One student in the circle greets the person to their right, using hand signs or gestures where appropriate. The person responds and then greets the person to their right, and so on. Continue around the circle until everyone has had a turn.
* Point to large symbol images (located on the wall or as flashcards) and prompt students to provide meanings for the symbols and any local language words they remember.
* The class repeats, chants or raps all language words for the symbols they have learnt. Focus on students’ pronunciation of non-English sounds.
* In pairs, students take it in turns to say as many symbol words as they can remember in the local language. If they are confident with all the symbols, they can record how long it takes to say all the symbol words and then try to say them faster a second time.

Activity 5: Symbols concentration game

* Select three students to demonstrate how to play each of the three starter levels of the symbols concentration game (see [Appendix 11](#Appendix11)).
* In pairs, using one set of cards, students play at least one round of the game at one of the starter levels.
* Next, select three advanced students to demonstrate the three advanced levels (see [Appendix 11](#Appendix11)).
* In the same or different pairs, students play at least one round of the game at one of the advanced levels.

**Tips:**

* More advanced students or classes may begin immediately with the advanced levels.
* This activity provides an opportunity to practise language for instructions with the class. Use as much local language as possible when giving instructions, clarifying or helping students.

Activity 6: Giant symbol matching game

* Place laminated A4-size or larger symbol images randomly around the classroom or in a safe space outside.
* Explain the ‘Find your partner’ version of the giant symbol matching game (see [Appendix 12](#Appendix12)).
* Using the card sets created in Activity 2, distribute random cards for local language and English meanings. Each student should get at least one card.
* Students play the game (see [Appendix 12](#Appendix12)).
* As a group, briefly remind students how to pronounce any words you have heard being said incorrectly and get them to repeat the words aloud.
* Collect all cards and explain the ‘Find your way to the symbol’ version of the game (see [Appendix 12](#Appendix12)). Distribute a new card to each student and play the game as a class.

**Tips:**

* Ask students with more confidence to perform an action in the local language using appropriate hand signs or gestures.
* Whenever possible, remind students of the correct pronunciation of ‘tricky’ sounds and reinforce with repetition, chanting or rapping.

Activity 7: Reflection and farewell

* Students reflect on what they have noticed and learnt in Session 2.
* Encourage students to say the language word for their favourite symbol to a classmate, in the group or as they leave and before they farewell you.
* Farewell each other in local language.

Assessment ideas

Pre-assessment

Ask students if they know any local or other Aboriginal symbols and any local language to talk about symbols.

Ongoing assessment

Students begin by mainly observing, repeating individual modelled words and showing understanding by answering questions, following simple instructions and behaving respectfully. Then they progress to answering questions with some detail, repeating phrases that are modelled several times, contributing occasionally to discussions, behaving respectfully and showing understanding of protocols. Finally students provide detail in answers, say words and phrases without prompting, contribute regularly and thoughtfully to discussions, encourage others to behave respectfully, and show knowledge of key Aboriginal concepts discussed.

The teacher can use the table in [Appendix 2](#Appendix2) as a guide when observing students’ interactions in the language; participation in class activities, discussions and games; answers to questions; following of instructions; respect for language, culture and Country; and reflection on learning.

Resources

Resources used in Sessions 1 and 2

* Symbol cards template (see [Appendix 10](#Appendix10))
* Symbols concentration game (see [Appendix 11](#Appendix11))
* Giant symbol matching game (see [Appendix 12](#Appendix12))
* Learning activity 1 words and phrases list (see [Appendix 1](#Appendix1))

Learning activity 2: Storytelling stones

**Timing (approximate):**  2 × 1-hour sessions

**Learning intentions – Session 1:**  Be able to match familiar symbols to known language

Be able to use symbols respectfully, following protocols

**Learning intentions – Session 2:**  Know how to pronounce familiar symbols vocabulary

Be able to use familiar symbols vocabulary and modelled sentence patterns to create a simple story

Be able to use some tenses and suffixes appropriately in a simple story

**Content descriptions (extracts):** Interact with peers, the teaching team and visiting respected community members about aspects of personal worlds, such as … activities [(VCLVC152)](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCLVC152)

… recognise and use simple language structures [(VCLVU164)](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCLVU164)

Understand that texts such as stories, paintings, songs and dances have distinct purposes and particular language features [(VCLVU165)](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCLVU165)

Understand that the use of stories and names in Aboriginal languages are culturally determined [(VCLVU170)](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCLVU170)

Identify available … protocols to be followed when building language [(VCLVU172)](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCLVU172)

**Achievement standard (extracts):** By the end of Level 6, students use familiar language and modelled sentence patterns to share information … [Students] apply principles and protocols of cultural safety when … engaging with cultural material such as artefacts, works of art, …

Students use simple, formulaic language to retell excerpts from stories and to create new … stories …

Students know that the language has its own pronunciation, spelling and grammar. They apply this knowledge to predict the sound, spelling and meaning of new words … Students know that the language is primarily oral and explain the importance of story and story-telling in transmitting language and culture.

Preparation

* Review the [list of resources](#Resources2) for this learning activity.
* Prepare the Learning activity 2 words and phrases list (see [Appendix 3](#Appendix3)) with the Language Team.
* Prepare the resources for the symbol storytelling stones activity (see [Appendix 13](#Appendix13) for resources required and for tips when painting the stones) with the Language Team.
* Make your own set of at least three to five storytelling stones.
* With the Language Team, prepare a very simple story based on symbols from Learning activity 1 and your set of storytelling stones.
* Prepare resources for the symbol scavenger hunt (see [Appendix 14](#Appendix14)) with the Language Team.
* Find a quiet, safe outdoor space, away from traffic and noise, for the Symbol scavenger hunt.
* Conduct any pre-assessment of student knowledge (see an example in [Assessment ideas](#Assessment2)).
* Prior to Session 1, put out stones, paint and other supplies for students.

**Tip:** Consider how many storytelling stones you will need for class activities. If time is short for painting, students may borrow stones from each other to have a larger set when they are telling their story.

Session 1

Activity 1: Symbol storytelling stones

* Sit in a yarning circle, inside or outside. Students greet and respond to each other in local language.
* Show students three to five painted symbol storytelling stones and check that students remember the local language word for those symbols (or teach any new words).
* Tell students a very simple story in the local language using the three to five symbol stones. Students perform an action or gesture – for example, nod, raise their hand or clap – every time they hear the word for one of the symbols.
* Explain the symbol storytelling stones activity (see [Appendix 13](#Appendix13)) and discuss protocols.
* Encourage students to refer to symbols from the previous activity ([Appendix 12](#Appendix12)).
* Students paint their own full set of symbol stones: one for each symbol that has been focused on in previous sessions.

**Tip:** Encourage students to use a variety of symbols to ensure greater variety in storytelling.

**Extension:** New symbols can be introduced with a more advanced group; however, leave time to explain their meaning and use, and for students to practise repeating vocabulary aloud.

Activity 2: Symbols scavenger hunt

* Give students instructions, put them in pairs and conduct the scavenger hunt (see [Appendix 14](#Appendix14)). If students will be focusing on numbers as well as symbols, briefly revise numbers before starting.

**Tips:**

* The scavenger hunt can be easily used to revise numbers. Hide more than one of each item that students are ‘hunting’ for and add numbers to the scavenger hunt checklist.
* The scavenger hunt can also be used to revise any other previously learnt vocabulary.

Activity 3: Reflection and farewell

* Students reflect on what they have noticed and learnt in Session 1, saying aloud language words for the symbol stones and for the items they collected in Activity 2.
* Farewell each other in local language, using appropriate hand signs or gestures.

Session 2

Activity 4: Symbols memory game

* Sit in a yarning circle, inside or outside. Students greet and respond to each other in local language.
* Play one of the versions of the symbols memory game (see [Appendix 15](#Appendix15)).

Activity 5: Using symbol stones to build a story

* Explain that students will practise using their symbol stones to tell a story.
* Revise ways of talking about the past in the local language using common sentences, for example ‘the woman sat at the camp’, ‘I saw …’ and ‘The bird flew …’
* Pick a set of story stones made by a student in the previous session. Show each stone, one by one, to the class. Students take turns to identify each symbol by saying its local language name and giving a short description of what the symbol means.
* Demonstrate how to create the beginning, middle and end of a story by modelling common phrases out loud and writing them on the board. Place symbol stones where they can be clearly viewed as you build the story.
* In pairs or individually, students invent a story of at least six sentences using the symbol stones displayed and practise aloud. They tell another person or pair their version of the story and note similarities and differences in their stories.

**Tips:**

* Students can change the order of the symbol stones if that suits their story better.
* This activity provides an opportunity to revise knowledge of tenses with the class.

Activity 6: Using symbol stones to tell a story

* Using their own painted symbol stones, students map out a storyline and create a list of words and phrases they would like to use in telling their story.
* One or two confident students show their chosen symbol stones to the class and tell a simple story, using present and/or past tense as appropriate. Encourage students to ask questions in language or in English to find out more details.
* Students sit in smaller yarning circles that are separated from each other and, one by one, they use their symbol stones to tell their story.

**Tip:** Students can be prompted by others in their smaller yarning circle if they forget words or phrases.

**Extension:** Encourage confident students to check the group knows what their symbols mean and how to pronounce their symbol names as they show their symbol stones.

Activity 7: Reflection and farewell

* Students reflect on what they have noticed and learnt about using story symbols to build and tell a story.
* Farewell each other in local language.

Assessment ideas

Pre-assessment

Ask students if they have used symbols to tell stories. Check if they remember symbol meanings and vocabulary from the previous learning activity.

Ongoing assessment

Students begin by understanding andusing very familiar words, repeating modelled phrases, following some simple instructions, behaving respectfully and knowing about protocols related to symbols and storytelling.They then progress to repeating longer modelled phrases and sentences, understanding andusing familiar words and some phrases, following simple instructions, behaving respectfully and showing understanding of protocols related to symbols and storytelling.Finally students will say longer phrases and sentences without prompting, follow instructions, provide detail in answers, model respectful behaviour to others and apply protocols related to symbols and storytelling.

The teacher can use the table in [Appendix 4](#Appendix4) as a guide when observing students’ interactions in the language; following instructions; participation in class activities and storytelling; answers to questions; and reflection on learning.

Resources

Consult with the Language Team regarding which local symbols can be used in a school program and whether any more broadly used Aboriginal symbols are appropriate to be included.

* Symbol storytelling stones (see [Appendix 13](#Appendix13))
* Symbol scavenger hunt (see [Appendix 14](#Appendix14))
* Yulunga Traditional Indigenous Games, <https://www.sportaus.gov.au/yulunga/how_to_use_the_cards> (for example, ‘Walbiri’ game card, pp.127–8)
* Learning activity 2 words and phrases list (see [Appendix 3](#Appendix3))

Learning activity 3: Symbols in Aboriginal art(optional)

**Timing (approximate):**  1 × 1-hour session

**Learning intentions:**  Know the cultural importance of symbolism, both past and present

Understand and demonstrate respectful behaviour towards visitors and their culture

Be able to say words and phrases related to symbols used in art

**Content descriptions (extracts):** Interact with peers, the teaching team and visiting respected community members about aspects of personal worlds, such as … interests and activities [(VCLVC152)](https://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCLVC152)

Create and present real … texts suitable for a particular audience, using familiar expressions and modelled language [(VCLVC158)](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCLVC158)

**Achievement standard (extracts):** By the end of Level 6, students … interact appropriately with respected community members and community speakers and apply principles and protocols of cultural safety when interacting with Country/Place and engaging with cultural material such as artefacts, works of art ... They create their own texts and works of art to tell a story, incorporating illustrations and… significant symbols and techniques appropriate to Country/Place.

… [They] describe different ways of communicating in Aboriginal languages, for example, through … artistic expression.

**Note:** Learning activity 3 is optional and can be undertaken at another stage of the unit of work or school year.

Preparation

* Prepare any additional words and phrases that will be required to talk about artworks
* Organise a local Aboriginal artist to visit the school to talk about and show how they (and possibly other Aboriginal artists they know) use symbolism in their artwork.
* As an alternative, organise a visit to the local Aboriginal art centre or gallery (if this is an option) for a tour by an Indigenous art expert.
* Liaise with the school’s Art teacher to organise any materials that will be needed, either by the artist or by students if they are to create an artwork based on symbols.
* Conduct any pre-assessment of student knowledge (see an example in [Assessment ideas](#Assessment3)).

Session

Activity 1: Setting the scene

* Sit in a yarning circle with students. Students welcome the Aboriginal artist appropriately in language and tell the artist what they have been learning.
* The artist can present their view of using symbols in Aboriginal culture, particularly art.
* The artist can share some of their work (if they are comfortable to do so) and/or other Aboriginal artworks that show how symbols are used. They can talk about particular techniques and approaches that come from their culture.

Activity 2: Creating a simple artwork

* The artist and students contribute to a shared artwork (for example, an artwork on canvas or bark) or individual students create a piece of art (for example, on a headband, T-shirt, paper or canvas), which incorporates symbols to tell a brief story.
* Students share words and phrases with the artist, or the artist can teach some new words and phrases to the students. Students add new words or phrases to the word wall and, if appropriate, can incorporate some of this language into their artwork

Activity 3: Reflection and farewell

* Students reflect on what they have noticed and learnt. If students have created their own individual artworks, they present their artwork briefly to the class, using as much local language as possible to describe the symbols on their artwork.
* Students thank and farewell the visitor in local language, using appropriate hand signs or gestures.

Assessment ideas

Pre-assessment

Ask students if they have seen any Aboriginal artworks, particularly ones that use symbols. Check if they know the names of any Aboriginal artists or know any Aboriginal artists personally. Check if they remember symbol meanings and vocabulary from previous learning activities in this unit.

Ongoing assessment

Students begin by mainly using familiar modelled language and gestures, answering simple questions, following instructions and contributing occasionally to discussions, and they show understanding of appropriate protocols when looking at and creating artworks. They then progress to more actively interacting with others, repeating longer phrases and sentences that are modelled several times, asking modelled questions in language, contributing more frequently to discussionsand, with support, using appropriate protocols when looking at and creating artworks. Finally students will say longer phrases and sentences without prompting, provide more detail in answers, contribute regularly and thoughtfully to discussions, show understanding of key Aboriginal concepts and techniques discussed and use protocols when looking at and creating artworks.

The teacher can use the table in [Appendix 5](#Appendix5) as a guide when observing students’ interactions in the language; participation in class activities and games; answers to questions; following of instructions; respect for language, culture and Country; and reflection on learning.

Resources

* Learning activities 1 and 2 words and phrases lists (see [Appendix 1](#Appendix1) and [Appendix 3](#Appendix3))

Learning activity 4: Understanding Aboriginal stories

**Timing (approximate):**  2 × 1-hour sessions

**Learning intentions – Session 1:**  Understand the importance of storytelling for Aboriginal people

Understand protocols for sharing and retelling Aboriginal stories

Be able to demonstrate listening comprehension by drawing images or symbols

Know how to predict a story from the pictures accompanying the story

Be able to use known vocabulary to translate words from English to target language

**Learning intentions – Session 2:**  Know how to extract important information from a story, for example context and meaning such as morals, values and safety lessons

Know the importance of sequencing in stories and understand how to analyse sequencing

Understand that important storytelling information is shared through images, body language and gestures

Be able to use body language, gestures and props to convey meaning

**Learning intentions – Session 3:**  Understand that meaning in stories can be shown in gestures, actions, props and use of body, face, voice or sounds

Be able to recognise familiar words and phrases in unfamiliar spoken texts

**Content descriptions (extracts):** Interact with peers, the teaching team and visiting respected community members about aspects of personal worlds, such as experiences at school, home, everyday routines, interests and activities [(VCLVC152)](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCLVC152)

Convey information on specific topics using formats such as oral or digital presentations … [(VCLVC156)](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCLVC156)

Listen to, read and view different real and imaginative texts, identifying and making simple statements about key elements, characters and events, and interpreting cultural expressions and behaviours [(VCLVC157)](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCLVC157)

Translate simple texts from the language to English and vice versa, identifying elements which require interpretation rather than translation and involve cultural references [(VCLVC159)](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCLVC159)

Understand that the use of stories and names in Aboriginal languages are culturally determined [(VCLVU170)](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCLVU170)

**Achievement standard (extracts):** By the end of Level 6, students … interact appropriately with respected community members and community speakers, and apply principles and protocols of cultural safety when interacting with Country/Place and engaging with cultural material such as … texts and performances … Students listen to, read and view a range of resources in the language, such as … stories, photos, images … and demonstrate understanding of content by … interpreting key words and phrases, and locating key points of information … [Students] demonstrate understanding of stories … and performance …

Students use simple, formulaic language to retell excerpts from stories and to create new … stories, understanding their role in helping to build a community of learner-speakers who use the language. They apply their knowledge of grammar and vocabulary to translate short texts, such as word lists, labels, songs and historical texts, explaining culture-specific concepts and expressions that do not translate easily into English …

Students know that the language is primarily oral and explain the importance of story and story-telling in transmitting language and culture.

Preparation

* Review the lists of resources (see [the background resources for teachers](#BackResources) and [the list of resources](#Resources4) for this learning activity).
* If possible, organise for an Elder or other local Aboriginal community member(s) who enjoys storytelling and acting to visit for Session 1 and possibly Session 3. They can also talk to students about protocols for retelling and sharing stories.
* If a storyteller from Community is not able to visit, with the Language Team:
* review the [‘Baranjuk: Creation stories’ video](https://cv.vic.gov.au/stories/aboriginal-culture/land-and-spirit/baranjuk-creation-stories/)(with Yorta Yorta Elder Uncle Wally Cooper) or find an alternative to this video to introduce the importance of storytelling to Aboriginal communities
* select three or four Aboriginal stories to use (see the [list of resources](#Resources4) for this learning activity for ideas and links):
  + one story that can be easily represented by symbols (if possible re-using some symbols and language from previous activities)
  + one illustrated storybook with repetitive language suitable for simple translations
  + one story that is suitable for sequencing and role-play activities
  + one story that can be told aloud, initially using only gestures, actions, tone and possibly props and sound effects; this story should be exciting and have clear characters and repetition of structures and vocabulary (this story is for the optional Session 3).
* Identify language structures you will revise with students or need to teach explicitly.
* Identify words that contain ‘tricky’ sounds and sound-spelling combinations that you want to practise with the students.
* For Session 2, identify all parts/characters in the story that will be role-played, including a narrator. Also identify useful language and possible small props and body language.
* If you will be conducting Session 3 and telling a story, practise language, actions and gestures, and organise any props you will need. Consider which words and phrases you wish students to add to their active vocabulary.
* Conduct any pre-assessment of student knowledge (see an example in [Assessment ideas](#Assessment1)).

Session 1

Activity 1: Stories retold using symbols

* Sit in a yarning circle with students. Introduce or reinforce to students the importance of storytelling to Aboriginal people, particularly the information that stories give about Country/Place, animals and people. Discuss protocols for respectful listening, viewing and sharing of Aboriginal stories. If possible, an Elder or community member can lead the yarning with the students. Alternatively, students can watch a video such as ['Baranjuk: Creation stories'](https://cv.vic.gov.au/stories/aboriginal-culture/land-and-spirit/baranjuk-creation-stories/) and note the importance of stories in giving information about Country/Place.
* The Elder or community member tells a story, or students listen to or watch a Victorian Aboriginal story. They draw their own symbols while listening, to help them remember each part of the story.
* Note key vocabulary on the board and remind students of the pronunciation of ‘tricky’ words.
* In pairs, students take turns to retell the story, using their symbols as memory prompts and as much local language as possible.
* As a class, discuss any questions students have about the story, whether the symbols were helpful as memory triggers and what they have learnt.

**Extension:**

* Any local Koorie students may wish to help with interpreting hand signs or gestures, and students who are very confident in the local language can help with recording new words.
* Students with advanced skills may choose to map any sites, landforms and other features of Country/Place that are mentioned in the story, if this is appropriate. This would require a map of the area of the story.

Activity 2: Story preparation – predict and translate

* Using an unfamiliar illustrated storybook with the text covered up, take students on a ‘picture walk’ through the story and ask them to predict what the story will be about.
* As you turn the pages, ask relevant who, what, when, where, why and how questions, in language where possible. At this stage, do not confirm whether student responses are correct.
* After the ‘picture walk’, go through the story again and check if students remember any language words, for example colours, animals, plants, natural features or symbols. Prompt students with words they have learnt previously and note all known words on the board.
* Revise any language structures that are repeated throughout the story, for example tenses and suffixes.
* Briefly discuss and demonstrate ways of translating words and phrases with students, for example, using word lists or dictionaries, using synonyms, simplifying and borrowing from other languages with permission.
* With students, identify a number of words and phrases to translate from English to local language (or vice versa). Briefly revise any language structures that are needed. Discuss any culture-specific concepts and expressions that do not translate easily into English.
* Cover the English words with the local language translations (for example, use removable masking tape on the storybook pages, with the language words written on the tape, or mark this up electronically on a projected version of the pages).
* If there is other new vocabulary to be taught, use the pictures in the storybook to teach the new words before reading the story.

**Tip:** It is important to work with the Language Team when building new language, incorporating or developing sign language, or adding culturally appropriate gestures into your program. It is also important to share with students how words were created and to remind students about following local protocols, especially if there are no language custodians present.

Activity 3: Read and analyse a story

* Read the storybook from Activity 2 aloud, including the language words students know and new language that was translated.
* Analyse the storyline, asking who, what, when and where questions, in language where possible. Encourage students to use language words in their responses.
* Analyse the general meaning of the story, asking how and why questions.
* Go to any individual pages of the story you think are worth looking at more deeply and ask specific questions to draw out what students have observed and understood in the story.
* If there is time, students recreate the story (or their favourite part of the story) through a simple drawing. They incorporate some symbols and language they have learnt.
* Review new vocabulary and add to the word wall before farewelling the students in language, using appropriate hand signs or gestures.

Session 2

Activity 4: Story sequencing

* Sit in a yarning circle. Students greet and respond to each other in local language.
* Divide the class into groups of two or three. Give each group a bag containing up to eight images from the previous activity’s storybook and up to eight slips with words, phrases or sentences that match the images.
* Give students a set time (for example, five minutes) to sort the images into the correct order and match the text to the right image. The first group that correctly matches all images with the correct text and in order reads the story aloud, holding up the matching images as they progress.
* Students complete a similar sequencing activity as a class with a new, unseen story.
* In random order, stick onto the board or wall six to eight pre-prepared A4-size images from an unseen story.
* Give six to eight student volunteers a slip of paper with a word, phrase or sentence in the local language that they have seen previously (not necessarily in this unit).
* One after the other, each volunteer reads their word, phrase or sentence aloud and sticks it next to the appropriate image. Students can ‘phone a friend’ if they are unsure of the meaning.
* Another student volunteer arranges the images in the correct order with their matching labels. Other students can help them if needed.
* Another student volunteer leads the class in reading the sequence of text aloud in the correct order.
* Read the new story to the class. Students raise their hand or perform another gesture when they hear phrases from the sequencing activity.
* Discuss the characters and possible meanings of the story.

**Extension:** In the first sequencing activity (using the familiar story), the images can be left out – that is, the students can be given just the slips of paper with words, phrases or sentences to put in order.

Activity 5: Story role-play

* Explain that students in small groups will role-play several pages of the story introduced in Activity 4 and that each student in the group will take on a role.
* Outline the characters/roles (including the narrator of the story, if not the teacher) to be played and discuss or give ideas for simple props students can use.
* Revise ‘tricky’ words from the story. Remind students of correct pronunciations and ask them to practise aloud.
* Divide students into small groups according to the number of roles and ask for volunteer group leaders.
* Give each small group a different section of the story, providing copies of the section for each student.
* Individual students highlight information and language related to their role/character on their copies.
* In their small groups, students read the text aloud and consider ways they can use their body language or language words and any easily available props to play out the text.
* As a small group, they practise their role-play actions, language and pronunciation.
* When the small groups are ready, students come together and perform the whole story as a larger group.

Activity 6: Reflection and farewell

* Students reflect on what they have noticed and learnt in Session 2.
* Farewell students in local language, using hand signs or gestures where appropriate. Students reply in language.

Session 3 (optional)

Activity 7: Storytelling – non-verbal

* Sit in a yarning circle and greet each other and any visitors in language.
* You or visitor(s) tell students an exciting short story using only local Aboriginal language. Be very theatrical when telling the story, using actions, gestures and props. Make sure you repeat key words and phrases clearly, accompanied by the same action or gesture, and vary your voice for emphasis.
* Once the story is finished and before it is translated into English, ask questions to see what students understood:
  + What do you think the story was about?
  + How do you know that?
  + Did you pick up meaning through body language? Props? Tone? Sound effects (if used)?
  + Did you recognise any of the words or phrases I used in the story?
* Also ask questions about specific actions.
* Tell the story again slowly, stopping where appropriate to get students to note language and reflect on possible meaning. Discuss active and passive vocabulary with students and add new active words and phrases to the word wall.
* Acknowledge language and meanings that students noticed and explain any further interpretations.
* Retell the story and involve students by asking them to perform the actions while telling the story.

Activity 8: Symbol storyline

* In groups, students summarise the story from Activity 7 by sketching symbols, labelling them with a word or phrase in local language, and noting matching actions or gestures. They can do this on paper or digitally.
* When they are finished, one student in the group begins to retell the story, using their labelled symbols as prompts. Other students take turns to tell the rest of the story, making sure each group member has a chance to contribute.

**Tip:** If the storytelling student is hesitant, other group members can prompt with words or phrases.

Activity 9: Reflection and farewell

* Students reflect on new language and the importance of storytelling for Aboriginal people in passing on language and culture.
* Farewell each other, including any visitors, in language.

Assessment ideas

Pre-assessment

Ask students if they know any local or other Aboriginal stories and what techniques and devices they know for storytelling. Check they remember symbol meanings and vocabulary from previous learning activities in this unit.

Ongoing assessment

Students begin by mainly listening, observing, using familiar modelled language and gestures, answering simple questions, contributing occasionally to discussions and showing understanding of appropriate protocols when interacting with Aboriginal people, stories and culture. They then progress to more actively interacting with others, repeating longer phrases and sentences that are modelled several times, occasionally asking questions in language, contributing more frequently to discussions and, with support, using appropriate protocols when interacting with Aboriginal people, stories and cultures. Finally students will say longer phrases and sentences without prompting, ask questions with minimal prompting, provide more detail in answers, contribute regularly and thoughtfully to discussions, show understanding of key Aboriginal concepts discussed, and show and use appropriate protocols when interacting with Aboriginal people, stories and cultures.

The teacher can use the table in [Appendix 7](#Appendix7) as a guide when observing students’ interactions in the language; participation in class activities, discussions, storytelling and role-plays; answers to questions; and reflection on learning.

Resources

Resources used in Session 1

* ‘Baranjuk: Creation stories’ video, Culture Victoria, <https://cv.vic.gov.au/stories/aboriginal-culture/land-and-spirit/baranjuk-creation-stories/> (Yorta Yorta Elder Uncle Wally Cooper talks about Creation Stories)
* Learning activity 4 words and phrases list (see [Appendix 6](#Appendix6))

Resources used in Sessions 2 and 3

* See the [Key resources – Symbols and storytelling](#KeyResSymbStory) section in this document for compilations of stories and advice, mainly from Victoria

Additional stories

* ‘How the Great Fish Goodoo Created the Murray River - Mr Francis Firebrace’ video, Southern Cross 2015, YouTube, [www.youtube.com/watch?v=cYQw2Pd4a78](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cYQw2Pd4a78)
* ‘How the Murray River was made – Dreamtime Creation Story’ video, Aboriginal Dreamtime & Stories 2014, YouTube, [www.youtube.com/watch?v=TgjY27Sy48g](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TgjY27Sy48g) (Bangerang Creation Story)
* ‘Living stories of the Dungala Kaiela’ video, Kaiela Arts Shepparton, ICTV Play, <https://ictv.com.au/video/item/4865>
* *Po-bonk-l Bunyma Bapalwa* (Po-Bonk creates a flood), Sharon Atkinson, Lyn Loger and Philippa Schapper; text and audio for download at WCC Language Program, [www.wcclp.com.au/yorta-yorta/](http://www.wcclp.com.au/yorta-yorta/)
* ‘Star Stories’ video, Victorian Aboriginal Corporation for Languages (VACL), Vimeo, <https://vimeo.com/146605413>
* *The Barmah Bunyip (and other local stories)*, Sue Briggs-Pattison and Bev Harvey 1998, Scholastic

Learning activity 5: Writing stories

**Timing (approximate):**  1 × 1-hour session

**Learning intentions:**  Know the importance of storytelling to Aboriginal people in passing on their culture and language

Understand and apply protocols for retelling and sharing of stories

Understand how to plan and write a story

Be able to write a bilingual story combining ideas, language and symbols from the unit

**Content descriptions (extracts):** Convey information on specific topics using formats such as oral or digital presentations, displays, diagrams [(VCLVC156)](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCLVC156)

Create and present … imaginative texts suitable for a particular audience, using familiar expressions and modelled language [(VCLVC158)](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCLVC158)

Create bilingual texts for the classroom and the school community, such as … captions for images and … photo stories [(VCLVC160)](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCLVC160)

Understand that the use of stories and names in Aboriginal languages are culturally determined [(VCLVU170)](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCLVU170)

**Achievement standard (extracts):** By the end of Level 6, students present information they have obtained that relates to language, culture, … using short sentence structures, familiar vocabulary, photos and concrete materials … They create their own texts … to tell a story, incorporating illustrations and visual props, significant symbols and techniques appropriate to Country/Place …

[Students] create bilingual texts for the classroom and school community that explain words and associated cultural ideas …

Students know that the language is primarily oral and explain the importance of story and story-telling in transmitting language and culture.

Preparation

* Review the [list of resources](#Resources5) for this learning activity.
* Talk to local Aboriginal community members about protocols for retelling and sharing stories; with permission, record these talks.
* Prepare any resources that students will need for planning and writing their story, for example:
* butcher’s paper and pens for brainstorming, or an online brainstorming tool
* paper to fold into a small storybook or an empty paper or digital storyboard where students can draw illustrations and add local language, or a digital program to create an illustrated story.
* Make sure students can easily access the word wall, or prepare words and phrases lists for each student and a list of symbols used throughout the unit labelled in language.
* Stories can be collected at the end of Activity 2 and collated into a book to be used as a resource for future sessions (for younger students) or published (with permission), for example, on a local language noticeboard or in the school’s newsletter or online digital platform. You could also organise for students and interested members of the local Aboriginal community to get together, with students reading and/or acting out their stories for them.
* Conduct any pre-assessment of student knowledge (see an example in [Assessment ideas](#Assessment5)).

Session

Activity 1: Planning a story

* Sit in a yarning circle and greet each other in language.
* Explain the bilingual story writing activity using symbols.
* Remind students of general and local Aboriginal community protocols for retelling and sharing stories.
* As a class, students consider the process and reflect on the following:
* ideas/topic for the story – for example, reworking one of the stories from the unit or using their own ideas
* organising ideas – for example, using a series of symbols, a storyboard, a mind map or another planning device
* sequencing – usually stories have a beginning, middle and end and the progression is clearly linked
* characters – where possible characters can be given language names
* symbols – including the symbols used during the unit or from their own knowledge
* language – using the word wall, available word lists, dictionaries or grammars, or language from Community members to develop their story
* message/moral of the story – for example, water safety, to be nice to people, snake safety, caring for Country, respecting older people.

**Note:** Teacher and students can discuss the above process as a class, using local language where possible.

Activity 2: Writing a bilingual story

* Individual students create a storyline using a technique from this unit, for example, sequencing symbols (story stones) in a line or using a storyboard.
* Students write their story in English and in local language, checking language with word lists or dictionaries or with the teacher as they progress. They illustrate their story using appropriate symbols and other images.
* Once students have finished their story and illustrations, they can share their stories with others in the class. They may also wish to share their stories with others in the school and/or local Aboriginal community.

**Tips:**

* Students who need more support can be given a story template to use or an Aboriginal story in a book or online to base their story and language on.
* Advanced students can explain words and associated cultural ideas to others in the class.

Activity 3: Reflection and farewell

* Students reflect on what they have learnt in the unit about Aboriginal symbols and storytelling, including language and the importance of storytelling for Aboriginal people in passing on language and culture.
* Farewell each other in local language, using appropriate hand signs or gestures.

Assessment ideas

Pre-assessment

Ask students if they remember Aboriginal or other techniques for creating storylines. Check they remember vocabulary and language structures that they will need and protocols for using Aboriginal stories, word lists and dictionaries.

Ongoing assessment

Students begin by mainly using familiar modelled language and gestures, answering simple questions, following instructions, contributing occasionally to discussions, and showing understanding of appropriate protocols when creating texts. They then progress to more actively interacting with others, repeating longer phrases and sentences that are modelled several times, asking modelled questions in language, contributing more frequently to discussionsand, with support, using appropriate protocols when creating texts. Finally students will say longer phrases and sentences without prompting, provide more detail in answers, contribute regularly and thoughtfully to discussions, show understanding of key Aboriginal concepts discussed and use protocols when creating texts.

The teacher can use the table in [Appendix 9](#Appendix9) as a guide when observing students’ active use of the language; participation in class activities and discussions; answers to questions; and reflection on learning.

Resources

* Learning activities 1−4 words and phrases lists
* Learning activity 5 words and phrases list (see [Appendix 8](#Appendix8))
* Official word lists, dictionaries and grammar information, approved for school use by a local Aboriginal language custodian

Appendices

Appendix 1: Learning activity 1 words and phrases

**Note:** Prepare the words and phrases list with the Language Team. Some suggestions have been included that may not be relevant or appropriate but you can add additional language that you think is relevant. This additional language may include words and phrases you can use to expose students to more language (without explicit explanation) and gradually build students’ passive understanding.

**Make sure you include all the symbols you will be showing students in this learning activity.**

| **Learning activity 1, Sessions 1 and 2 words and phrases list** | | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **English** | **Local language** | **Hand signs or gestures (where relevant)** |
| hello |  |  |
| goodbye |  |  |
| symbol |  |  |
| camp |  |  |
| water |  |  |
| waterhole |  |  |
| woman |  |  |
| man |  |  |
| person |  |  |
| kangaroo track |  |  |
| emu track |  |  |
| river |  |  |
| sand |  |  |
| rock/stone |  |  |
| cave |  |  |
| bark |  |  |
| possum skin cloak |  |  |
| body |  |  |
| ceremony |  |  |
| shield |  |  |
| message stick |  |  |
| What? |  |  |
| Where? |  |  |
| That is … |  |  |
| This is … |  |  |
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Appendix 2: Learning activity 1 assessment grid

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **By the end of Level 2 (achievement standard extracts)** | **Progressing to Level 6** | **By the end of Level 6 (achievement standard extracts)** |
| *­­­­*[Students] use appropriate protocols when interacting with respected community members and community speakers, such as appropriate forms of address, terms of respect and behaviour. | With support, students interact appropriately with respected community members and community speakers and understand principles and protocols of cultural safety when interacting with Country/Place and engaging with cultural material. | [Students] interact appropriately with respected community members and community speakers and apply principles and protocols of cultural safety when interacting with Country/Place and engaging with cultural material … |
| [Students] participate in guided group activities … [Students] interact in familiar classroom exchanges, using routine classroom language, movement, gesture and action, for example when … responding to simple questions, following instructions. | Students ask and respond to simple questions, request help, repetition or clarification. With support, they use the language to interact and collaborate in games and other activities, including the use of hand signs as appropriate. | Students ask and respond to simple questions, request help, repetition or clarification, … Whenever possible they use the language to interact and collaborate in games and other activities, including the use of hand signs as appropriate. |
| Students are familiar with most sounds in the target language and can link these to written symbols and writing conventions. | Students know that the language has its own pronunciation, spelling and grammar. With support, they apply this knowledge to predict the sound, spelling and meaning of new words. | Students know that the language has its own pronunciation, spelling and grammar. They apply this knowledge to predict the sound, spelling and meaning of new words. |

Appendix 3: Learning activity 2 words and phrases

**Notes:**

* Prepare the words and phrases list with the Language Team. Some suggestions have been included, based on the activities, but you can also add additional language that you think is relevant. This additional language may include words and phrases you can use to expose students to more language (without explicit explanation) and gradually build students’ passive understanding.
* Confirm any local language phrases for beginning, continuing or ending stories.

| **Learning activity 2, Sessions 1 and 2 words and phrases list** | | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **English** | **Local language** | **Hand signs or gestures (where relevant)** |
| story |  |  |
| stone |  |  |
| paint |  |  |
| storytelling/yarning |  |  |
| I saw |  |  |
| S/he saw |  |  |
| They saw |  |  |
| S/he went |  |  |
| They went |  |  |
| S/he ate |  |  |
| They ate |  |  |
| S/he sat down |  |  |
| They sat down |  |  |
| S/he stopped |  |  |
| They stopped |  |  |
| beginning/start/front |  |  |
| middle/continue/ centre |  |  |
| end/finish/behind |  |  |
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Appendix 4: Learning activity 2 assessment grid

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| **By the end of Level 2 (achievement standard extracts)** | **Progressing to Level 6** | **By the end of Level 6 (achievement standard extracts)** |
| [Students] interact with the teaching team and respected community members to talk about themselves and family, using familiar modelled language and gestures. | With support, students use familiar language and modelled sentence patterns to share information and tell very simple stories. | … students use familiar language and modelled sentence patterns to share information … |
| *­­­­*[Students] use appropriate protocols when interacting with respected community members and community speakers, such as appropriate forms of address, terms of respect and behaviour. | Students understand principles and protocols of cultural safety when interacting with Country/Place and engaging with cultural material. | [Students] apply principles and protocols of cultural safety when .. engaging with cultural material such as artefacts, works of art, ... |
| [Students] demonstrate their understanding by … retelling/describing elements of images, performances or stories. | With support, students use simple, formulaic language to retell excerpts from stories and to create new stories. | Students use simple, formulaic language to retell excerpts from stories and to create new … stories … |
| Students are familiar with most sounds in the target language and can link these to written symbols and writing conventions. | Students know that the language has its own pronunciation, spelling and grammar. With support, they apply this knowledge to predict the sound, spelling and meaning of new words. | Students know that the language has its own pronunciation, spelling and grammar. They apply this knowledge to predict the sound, spelling and meaning of new words. |
| [Students] understand that messages in Aboriginal languages can be communicated in a number of ways, such as respected community members’ story-telling … | Students know that the language is primarily oral and recognise the importance of story and story-telling in their local and other Aboriginal communities. | Students know that the language is primarily oral and explain the importance of story and story-telling in transmitting language and culture. |

Appendix 5: Learning activity 3 assessment grid

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| **By the end of Level 2  (achievement standard extracts)** | **Progressing to Level 6** | **By the end of Level 6 (achievement standard extracts)** |
| [Students] use appropriate protocols when interacting with respected community members and community speakers, such as appropriate forms of address, terms of respect and behaviour. | Students interact appropriately with respected community members and community speakers and, with support, apply principles and protocols of cultural safety when interacting with Country/Place and engaging with artefacts and works of art. | [Students] interact appropriately with respected community members and community speakers and apply principles and protocols of cultural safety when interacting with Country/Place and engaging with cultural material such as artefacts, works of art … |
| [Students] respond to texts such as … visual art through singing, miming, play-acting, drawing, action and movement. | Students create their own simple works of art that include illustrations and symbols that are appropriate to Country/Place. | [Students] create their own texts and works of art to tell a story, incorporating illustrations and … significant symbols and techniques appropriate to Country/Place. |
| [Students] understand that messages in Aboriginal languages can be communicated in a number of ways, such as … through … visual design. | Students recognise the importance of visual design and other artistic expression to communicate messages. in their local and other Aboriginal cultures. | Students describe different ways of communicating in Aboriginal languages, for example, through … artistic expression. |

Appendix 6: Learning activity 4 words and phrases

**Note:** Prepare the words and phrases list with the Language Team. Some suggestions have been included, based on well-known Aboriginal stories, but you will need to adapt the list and include language that is relevant to the stories you are using in class. This additional language may include words and phrases you can use to expose students to more language (without explicit explanation) and gradually build students’ passive understanding.

| **Learning activity 4, Sessions 1, 2 and 3 words and phrases list** | | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **English** | **Local language** | **Hand signs or gestures (where relevant)** |
| deep listening |  |  |
| loud |  |  |
| soft/quiet |  |  |
| fire |  |  |
| fire stick |  |  |
| smoke |  |  |
| burn |  |  |
| cook |  |  |
| digging stick |  |  |
| spear |  |  |
| men hunt |  |  |
| women dig |  |  |
| yams |  |  |
| fish |  |  |
| eel |  |  |
| bird flies |  |  |
| eagle |  |  |
| crow |  |  |
| snake/serpent |  |  |
| hole |  |  |
| hill |  |  |
| lake |  |  |
| earth/ground |  |  |
| (in the) sky |  |  |
| star/s |  |  |
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Appendix 7: Learning activity 4 assessment grid

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| **By the end of Level 2  (achievement standard extracts)** | **Progressing to Level 6** | **By the end of Level 6 (achievement standard extracts)** |
| [Students] use appropriate protocols when interacting with respected community members and community speakers, such as appropriate forms of address, terms of respect and behaviour. | Students interact appropriately with respected community members and community speakers and, with support, apply principles and protocols of cultural safety when interacting with Country/Place and engaging with cultural material such as texts and performances. | [Students] interact appropriately with respected community members and community speakers and apply principles and protocols of cultural safety when interacting with Country/Place and engaging with cultural material such as … texts and performances. |
| [Students] identify key information about Country/Place … [Students] use simple statements, gestures and written captions to demonstrate their understanding of Country/Place … | Students listen to, read and view a range of resources in the language, such as stories, photos and images, and show their understanding of content by locating key points of information. | Students listen to, read and view a range of resources in the language, such as … stories, photos, images … and demonstrate understanding of content by … interpreting key words and phrases, and locating key points of information. |
| [Students] respond to texts such as stories … [Students] demonstrate their understanding by identifying key animals, birds and other characters or by retelling/describing elements of images, performances or stories. | Students demonstrate understanding of stories by identifying key characters and by saying or writing language words they have heard several times. | [Students] demonstrate understanding of stories …and performance … |
| [Students] demonstrate their understanding by … retelling/describing elements of images, performances or stories. | With support, students use simple, formulaic language to retell excerpts from stories and to create new stories, | Students use simple, formulaic language to retell excerpts from stories and to create new … stories, understanding their role in helping to build a community of learner-speakers who use the language. |
| [Students] translate and explain the meaning of symbols, words, simple phrases and gestures used in everyday contexts and situations. | With support, students apply their knowledge of grammar and vocabulary to translate expressions, sentences and short texts, occasionally noting culture-specific concepts and expressions that do not translate easily into English. | [Students] apply their knowledge of grammar and vocabulary to translate short texts, such as word lists, labels, songs and historical texts, explaining culture-specific concepts and expressions that do not translate easily into English. |
| [Students] understand that messages in Aboriginal languages can be communicated in a number of ways, such as respected community members’ story-telling … | Students know that the language is primarily oral and recognise the importance of story and story-telling in their local and other Aboriginal communities. | Students know that the language is primarily oral and explain the importance of story and story-telling in transmitting language and culture. |

Appendix 8: Learning activity 5 words and phrases

**Note:** Prepare the words and phrases list with the Language Team. Some suggestions have been included, based on the activities, but you can also add additional language that you think is relevant. In this learning activity, this may include language structures commonly used in the local Aboriginal language for storytelling and time expressions. This additional language may also include words and phrases you can use to expose students to more language (without explicit explanation) and gradually build students’ passive understanding.

| **Learning activity 5 words and phrases list** | | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **English** | **Local language** | **Hand signs or gestures (where relevant)** |
| message/meaning |  |  |
| safe |  |  |
| be kind |  |  |
| care for Country |  |  |
| respect |  |  |
| older people / Elders |  |  |
| a long time ago |  |  |
| later |  |  |
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Appendix 9: Learning activity 5 assessment grid

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| **By the end of Level 2  (achievement standard extracts)** | **Progressing to Level 6** | **By the end of Level 6 (achievement standard extracts)** |
| [Students]use simple statements, gestures and written captions to demonstrate their understanding of Country/Place. | With support, students present cultural and language information using familiar vocabulary, simple sentence structures and photos and concrete materials. | [Students] present information they have obtained that relates to language, culture, … using short sentence structures, familiar vocabulary, photos and concrete materials. |
| [Students] use familiar words, patterns and support materials to create and present shared stories, songs and performances. | With support, students create their own texts to tell a story, incorporating illustrations, visual props and significant symbols. | [Students] create their own texts … to tell a story, incorporating illustrations and visual props, significant symbols and techniques appropriate to Country/Place. |
| [Students]create simple bilingual texts for the classroom environment. | With support, students create bilingual texts for the classroom and school community. | [Students]create bilingual texts for the classroom and school community that explain words and associated cultural ideas. |
| [Students]recognise that many different languages are spoken at their school, in their local community, and in other parts of Australia. | Students know that the language is primarily oral and recognise the importance of story and story-telling in their local and other Aboriginal communities. | Students know that the language is primarily oral and explain the importance of story and story-telling in transmitting language and culture. |

Appendix 10: Symbol cards – template

**Tips:**

* Amend the template so it has the same number of rows as the number of symbols your students will be drawing, for example 9 rows = 9 symbols.
* Print the template single-sided. Symbols are drawn only on one side; the back side of the sheet is left blank.
* Cards can be laminated before they are cut into sets so they can be re-used frequently throughout the unit and beyond.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Symbol** | **Local language** | **Meaning (English)** |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
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Appendix 11: Symbols concentration game

**Learning intention:** To practise symbol recognition and symbol vocabulary

**Playing area:** Quiet area with room for each pair to spread out cards

**Equipment (per pair or small group):** Set of symbol cards – symbol image and matching language and English meaning cards (see [Appendix 10](#Appendix10) for instructions)

**Tips:**

* Make sure sets of cards are collected and stored at the end for use in future activities.
* Display your previously prepared A4-size or larger symbol images on the board or wall for the demonstration.

**Gameplay and basic rules:**

The symbol cards can be used as a concentration or memory game at several levels.

**Starter levels**

Level 1 Use only the image and English meaning cards. Cards are shuffled and then faced up. Students take turns to pair two cards. Continue until all cards are paired.

Level 2 Use only image and language cards. Cards are shuffled and then faced up. Students take turns to pair two cards. Continue until all cards are paired.

Level 3 Use all three types of cards – image, language and English meaning cards. Cards are shuffled and then faced up. Students take turns to put three cards in a matching group (image, language and English meaning). Continue until all cards are matched.

**Tip:** You or another student can prompt if students get stuck.

**Advanced levels**

Level 1 Use only image and English meaning cards. Cards are shuffled and then faced down. Students take turns to flip two cards. If the cards match, they keep the pair and have another turn; if not, their partner takes a turn. Continue until all cards are collected.

Level 2 Use only image and language cards. Cards are shuffled and then faced down. Students take turns to flip two cards. If the cards match, they keep the pair and have another turn; if not, their partner takes a turn. Continue until all cards are collected.

Level 3 Use all three types of cards – image, language and English meaning cards. Cards are shuffled and then faced down. Students take turns to flip three cards. If the cards match, they keep the set and have another turn; if not, their partner takes a turn. Continue until all cards are collected.

At the end of each round, students have to present their cards and the symbols they collected (by showing the symbol, saying its language name and the English meaning of the symbol).

Appendix 12: Giant symbol matching game

**Learning intention:** To practise symbol recognition and related words and phrases

**Playing area:** Display area for A4-size or larger images of symbols and room for students to move around. If outside, ensure the area is safe and quiet.

**Equipment (per pair or small group):** Local language and English meaning cards from the student sets of symbol cards (see [Appendix 10](#Appendix10))

A4-size or larger images of the corresponding symbols

**Gameplay and basic rules:**

1. Show students local language words for the symbols. Check students remember how to pronounce the words correctly by asking them to repeat them aloud.
2. Give each student one card – either a local language or English meaning card.
3. There are two versions of the game. Play either game, or play one after the other.

**Version 1: Find your partner**

Students with the language name card for a symbol have to find the student who has the card with the matching English meaning.

* The pair needs to come together to stand or sit near the large symbol that matches their language word and English meaning.
* Ask each pair to say what the symbol is, in language, and what the meaning is, in English.
* The student with the language name card points at the picture of the symbol and says in language, ‘This symbol is …’
* The student with the English meaning card reads the meaning out to the rest of the class.
* Go around the class until all symbols are covered.

**Version 2: Find your way to the symbol**

Students have to identify which symbol their card belongs with.

* Students go and stand or sit near the symbol they think matches their card.
* Ask each group to say what the symbol is, in language, and what the meaning is, in English.
* The student with the language name card points at the picture of the symbol and says in language, ‘This symbol is …’
* The student with the English meaning card reads the meaning out to the rest of the class.
* Continue around the class until all symbols are covered.

**Tips:**

* If students are not confident about the meaning of the symbols, before beginning the game show the class each symbol card, ask students to tell you the meaning, say the local language name again and get the class to repeat, chant or rap each word aloud.
* In Version 1, students who are less confident can be given the English meaning cards and students who are more confident can be given the language cards.

Appendix 13: Symbol storytelling stones

**Learning intention:** To practise recognising and creating symbols and saying the language names for symbols

**Activity area:** Large area that is suitable for painting, near sinks and with room to spread out students’ painted stones to dry

**Resources required:** Clean and smooth stones (big enough for symbols to be clearly visible)

Paint (in a variety of colours that will work well on the stones)

Thin paintbrushes

Paint dishes

Newspaper or butcher’s paper (to lay down to protect furniture or floor)

Previously prepared A4-size or larger images of symbols, to be displayed in clear, visible places (for students to refer to)

**Activity tips:**

* Ensure enough materials are available for everyone.
* Make sure there is space to spread out the stones to dry safely.
* Give clear instructions for use of all materials. Use local language where possible.
* Encourage students to repeat the word for each symbol as they are painting it or make up a song to help them remember all of their symbols.
* Leave enough time for clean up.

Appendix 14: Symbol scavenger hunt

**Learning intention:** To reinforce recognition of symbols and saying previously learnt vocabulary

**Playing area:** Large but defined area, for example school grounds (check for safety and set rules with students)

**Equipment:** Items or images to be ‘collected’

Scavenger hunt collection check sheet (including items such as symbols used so far in this unit)

**Preparation:**

* Prepare a scavenger hunt collection sheet with a checklist for students (one collection sheet per pair).
* Use the symbol storytelling stones as the items to be found, as well as your symbol flashcards or symbol cards from the sets that students made in Learning activity 1 Activity 2. Other items can also be added, for example, figurines of animals or pictures of other items.
* Distribute all items to be found before beginning the activity. If revising numbers in language, make sure you prepare enough items or images to hide.

**Tips:**

* This activity provides an opportunity to use some vocabulary from previous lessons, for example numbers, colours, direction words and location words.
* Differentiate checklist sheets or expectations to cater for different student levels, for example, some students could have fewer or more symbols to check off. In addition, more advanced students might have numbers as well as symbols to check off, might need to use some words in a phrase or sentence and/or might need to use all words in phrases or sentences
* To make the activity competitive, announce that the first pair to collect all items and tell the teacher the correct language words for each item wins. Use a ‘handicap’ system in groups with mixed ability, by giving more advanced students more items to collect or allowing less confident students to start earlier.
* So you can re-use them, laminate the collection sheets and get students to check things off with a whiteboard marker.

**Activity instructions:**

1. Students look at the checklist of symbols showing what they will collect on the scavenger hunt. They repeat the language words for each item aloud as a class.
2. In pairs, students work together to ‘collect’ all of the items (by checking them off their checklist and noting where they found each item).
3. Once items are ‘collected’, students go through the checklist and practise the language words of the symbols with their partner.
4. Pairs return and tell the teacher the language words for the items they found (and, if quantity is used, the numbers in language).
5. The teacher listens to each pair saying the words for the symbols.
6. The teacher tells the pair which symbols words are right and which they got wrong.
7. Students talk through the ones they got wrong, refer to the word wall or their word lists, and tell the teacher their improved answers. If the teacher is listening to another pair, students must wait until the other pair is finished before they can provide their improved answers.

Appendix 15: Symbols memory game

**Learning intention:** To practise symbol recognition and vocabulary and to train memory

**Playing area:** Quiet area with room for each pair to spread out cards

**Equipment (per pair or small group):** Large symbol stones (or an image of a set of symbols to project)

Paper and pencils

Tray and covering cloth, if using symbol stones

**Gameplay and basic rules:**

1. Place symbol stones on a tray (or project an image of a set of symbols). Quickly check that students remember the language names of the symbols.
2. Give students one minute to study the symbols being shown.
3. Students close their eyes while you cover the tray (or hide the projection) and remove a number of symbol stones (or project a second image of the set of symbols with some symbols missing).
4. Students open their eyes and, in silence, look at the tray (or the new projected image).
5. Starting level – Going around the circle, students say the language word for one symbol that is missing. If they do not know the word or do not remember any missing symbols, the next student has a turn.
6. Intermediate level – Students say or write down all symbols that are missing, using as many language words as possible.

Advanced level – *Before* looking at the tray (or projected image with symbols removed), each student writes down as many symbols and matching language words or phrases as they can remember. Then uncover the tray. Students compare their list and the tray. They say or write down the symbols that are missing, using as many language words as possible.

**Tips:**

To make the game easier:

* use fewer symbols
* swap two symbols instead of removing them
* remove only one or two symbols
* give students a checklist of all symbol images and language labels
* give students a checklist of all symbol images.

To make the game harder:

* use more symbols
* move symbols around on the tray (or the projected image) as well as removing some symbols
* remove a large number of symbols at once
* give students a list of language words for the symbols.

**Note:**  An alternative memory-testing game is sometimes called Walbiri. It is often played outdoors. Objects (large symbol cards or stones) are placed around a large circle. Students stand in a row around the circle and observe the symbols carefully. They all turn their backs on the circle and one player calls out a symbol name and continues to call symbols in order around the circle. If they get one wrong, the next student continues. See more details at [Yulunga Traditional Indigenous Games, pp. 127–8 (PDF download)](https://www.sportaus.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0009/704916/walbiri.pdf).