Aboriginal People and the Environment, Levels 7–10

Victorian Aboriginal Languages F–10

Sample unit of work

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Aboriginal People and the Environment, Levels 7–10

**Overview:** Students learn about Aboriginal people’s relationships with the land and each other.

**Time allocation:** Approximately 20 hours (guide only)

**Curriculum area:** Victorian Aboriginal Languages

**Levels:** 7–10

**Content descriptions covered:**

* Investigate and summarise factual information obtained from a range of sources on a variety of topics and issues related to the Country/Place ([VCLVC177](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCLVC177))
* Convey information about Country/Place events, experiences or topics of shared interest, using different modes of presentation ([VCLVC178](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCLVC178))
* Investigate how the kinship system functions to integrate personal and community histories and relationships ([VCLVU188](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCLVU188))
* Reflect on how ways of using language are shaped by communities’ ways of thinking, behaving and viewing the world, and the role of language in passing on knowledge ([VCLVU193](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCLVU193))

**Relevant achievement standard extracts:**

* Students use language where possible to locate, analyse and summarise factual information from a range of sources such as historical documents, and respected community members.
* They demonstrate their understanding of Country/Place, for example, by explaining the origin, meaning and significance of local place names and features, or by presenting texts and stories about the Country/Place and associated social and cultural events, using language as much as possible and different modes of presentation.
* Students explain the importance of the kinship system in regulating relationships and behaviour in Aboriginal communities.
* They identify the role of language in passing on knowledge, and explain how communities’ ways of thinking, behaving and shaping worldviews influence how language is used.

| **Activities** | **Fill in language/words used** | **Advice for teachers/language teams** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Daily greeting activity**   * Greet the students in language. * Students return the teacher’s greeting. * Students greet any guests in language. * Students greet each other in language. |  | * The greeting routine should be used at the beginning of every class.   **Extension**   * Where the language is available, students converse briefly in language, enquiring after each other’s health, describing activities, etc. |
| **Daily revision activity**   * Write key word/s in Language on the board and ask students to write a sentence using that word. * Sentences should be written in Language wherever possible. | Language to be revised: | * Revision is critical to language learning. * Utilise learned vocabulary and grammar as well as new vocabulary and grammar throughout this unit of work. |
| * Students speak to members of the community or conduct research on the internet for examples of local or regional Aboriginal perceptions and environmental wisdom. They make notes on their findings. * Students visit a Heritage Centre or a Heritage Trail, and write an article for the school newsletter entitled, ‘The day I went to …’. They should tell of their experience and its effect on them. * Students research and then discuss Aboriginal kinship as a sustainable social system. * Students create a presentation for other students to show how Aboriginal people kept the land and food supplies safe, contrasting this with today’s methods. * Students create a diagrammatic representation of Aboriginal kinship systems. | Red gum tree:  Native cherry tree:  Twig used in possum hunting:  Meat food:  Vegetable food:  Fire:  To hunt on the ground:  To hunt in trees:  To eat:  Egg: | * It is important to motivate students to see the link with the past and the oral Language tradition. * [Connection to Country](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/nswcultureheritage/Biodiversity.htm) * [Healthy Country Healthy People](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bWdNvj4fjOY) – a short film about the links between Indigenous health and wellbeing and working on Country * [Koorie Heritage Trust](http://www.koorieheritagetrust.com/) * [Brambuk](http://www.brambuk.com.au/) * [Bunjilaka](http://museumvictoria.com.au/bunjilaka/) * [Caring for Country: Aboriginal culture offers environmental wisdom](http://novaholisticjournal.com/stories/caring-for-country-aboriginal-culture-offers-environmental-wisdom) * [Indigenous kinship with the natural world](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/nswcultureheritage/IndigenousKinshipNaturalWorld.htm) report (for teacher research) |
| * How does a spiritual belief draw the community together and promote life? Students find an example in their area. * Research how water is found in this often hot, dry climate. Make notes. * Discuss the use of fire to regenerate growth. How was it done traditionally, and how is it done today? | Water:  Waterhole*:*  Yam:  Honey:  To gather: | * [Spiritual Song of the Aborigine](http://www.focalpoint.org.au/archive-worawaabout.php) by Hyllus Maris (two versions: one in Yorta Yorta and one in English) |
| * Discuss the food cycles that the ancestors would have followed, and list the foods still eaten today. For example, what was used to make a traditional damper? * Make posters in groups to show how foods were cultivated and harvested, e.g. yams, honey etc. Label in language where possible. |  | * [R Brough Smyth, Volume 1](http://archive.org/details/aboriginesofvict01smyt) (an historical account of Aboriginal life) * [Aboriginal Plant Use Trail](http://www.anbg.gov.au/gardens/visiting/exploring/aboriginal-trail/), Australian National Botanic Gardens, Canberra * [Aboriginal Plant Use](https://www.anbg.gov.au/aboriginal-resources/index.html), Australian National Herbarium * [Aboriginal Plant Use in South-eastern Australia, Australian National Botanic Gardens, Canberra](https://www.anbg.gov.au/gardens/education/programs/Aboriginal-plantuse.pdf) |
| **Daily farewell activity**   * Farewell the students in language. * Students return the teacher’s farewell. * Students farewell any guests in language. * Students farewell each other in language. |  | * The farewell routine should be used at the end of every class. |

Assessment opportunities

* Quality of research
* Oral or written presentation of research findings, including accurate incorporation of language where appropriate
* Participation in class discussion

Sharing

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