Local Aboriginal History, Levels 7–10

Victorian Aboriginal Languages F–10

Sample unit of work

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Local Aboriginal history, Levels 7–10

**Overview:** Students learn about the history of Aboriginal people in the area, the protocols involved in greetings such as the Welcome to Country ceremony, and Aboriginal survival strategies.

**Time allocation:** Approximately 10 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))
* Consider and discuss their own and each other’s ways of communicating and expressing identity, reflecting on how the language links the local, regional and national identity of its speakers with the land ([VCLVC183](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCLVC183))
* 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:**

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use language where possible to locate, analyse and summarise factual information from a range of sources such as historical documents, and respected community members.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

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

**Extension*** Where the language is available, students converse briefly in language, enquiring after each other’s health, describing activities, etc.
 |
| * Ask students to recall as many Language words as possible from the previous lesson.
 | 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.
 |
| * Invite a senior Traditional Owner, as appropriate, to give a Welcome to Country and to speak about the history of Aboriginal people in the area. Alternatively, ask a community member to make an Acknowledgement of Country, and to speak about the history of Aboriginal people in the area.
* Ask students to prepare appropriate questions for the speaker prior to the talk.
* Students take notes during the talk.
 | Words used by the Traditional Owner: | * It is important to motivate students to see the link with the past and the oral language tradition.
* Only Traditional Owners can give a Welcome to Country. All other people make an Acknowledgement of Country.
 |
| * Discuss why Aboriginal society is the oldest civilisation on Earth. Questions to aid discussion might include: Are all Australian Aboriginal languages related? Do all Aboriginal groups share one culture?
* Students try to visualise the long history of Aboriginal culture in relation to their prospective lifetimes. For example, students could create a timeline, allowing about 2cm per thousand years, and place themselves as a dot in the 21st century.
* Include some ancient civilisations such as the Egyptians and Romans and compare their longevity to that of Aboriginal culture on the timeline. (Ancient Egyptians = approximately 5000 years ago, Ancient Romans = approximately 2000 years ago.)
 |  | * [Moyjil – The Point Ritchie Story](http://www.moyjil.com.au/point-ritchie-story)
* [Almost all living people outside of Africa trace back to a single migration more than 50,000 years ago](http://www.sciencemag.org/news/2016/09/almost-all-living-people-outside-africa-trace-back-single-migration-over-50000-years)
* [Why Australia is home to one of the largest language families in the world](http://www.sciencemag.org/news/2016/09/why-australia-home-one-largest-language-families-world)
* [Australian Aboriginal Culture](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Australian_Aboriginal_culture)(s)
* The timeline can be created online or manually.
 |
| * Students research the types of community knowledge and wisdom that allowed survival in the different environments found in Australia, particularly in the local area, and prepare a presentation for the class.
* Where possible, prepare the presentation in the target language, or use as much of the target language as possible.
 |  | * For example, the use of fire to maintain the environment, ways of finding water, cultivation of yams, and reading the environment for sustainability
 |
| **Daily farewell activity*** Farewell the students in language.
* Students return the teacher’s farewell.
* Students farewell any guests in language.
* Students farewell each other in language.
 |  | * The farewell routine should be used at the end of every class.
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Assessment opportunities

* Participation in discussions
* Presentation

Sharing

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