

## DREAMING UNIT

### Lesson 1

There are many Aboriginal languages spoken throughout Australia.

Look at the Aboriginal Language map on ABC online -and discuss all of the various languages.

Discuss the local language of your local area.

**Task-** Think about yourself, who do you communicate with?

How and in what ways do you communicate?

What languages/ dialects do you use?

When and in what places do you communicate?

Who do you communicate with?

Show the ways you use language by making a picture (language map) on a blank piece of white A3 paper.

Organise this any way you like

Examples of maps from Jacqueline Dwarde-



### Lesson 2

**-Write Dreaming stories on the board. What does this mean?**

(These are the stories that belong to the Indigenous people and they teach us a lesson or they explain something about creation) xTalk about how the Aboriginal community regularly sat under the stars at night around the campfire – following their evening meal – and listened to storytellers unfold the stories from the Dreaming, or tell of daily happenings, such as hunts, battles, etc. The written word was unknown to these people, so the Aboriginal culture was an oral one. The storyteller's role was not just to entertain but to preserve their culture,

while educating the growing generation of children and young adults – in the history, traditional values and lore of their people.

**-Have students share some Dreaming stories that they know.**

One example- ‘Thukeri’ In this story from the lower River Murray area of South Australia, two fishermen are delighted with their huge catch of fish. The trouble begins when they refuse to share it. A cautionary tale about greed, from the Ngarrindjeri people.

**-Dreaming story – ‘How the birds got their colour’ students predict what the story might be about, share with a partner and discuss. Does the title give us on any clues about the story? Read the story or play on YouTube.**

*What importance does the story have for the Aboriginal people*

- *When may have the story been told*
- *Where does it come from?*
- *What are the essential elements in the stories?*
- *How are the stories presented?*
- *Why are the stories written/told?*
- *What are the visuals telling us?*

**What lessons might Dreaming stories teach us about? What might they teach us about creation?**

*Often the “aunties” (older women) told children stories, to help protect them from dangers – both inside and outside the boundaries of the camp – and to enforce the taboos and traditions of the clan. The men taught the young boys stories of hunting, teaching vital information about survival and bushcraft that were embedded in the stories they told. Every genre of storytelling and hundreds of categories are used within Dreaming stories. The stories: “Brolga” and “First Platypus” are excellent examples of Stranger Danger; “The Murray Cod”, is a Creation Map story; while “The Min Min Light”, is a Space story. When telling the children stories, the storyteller gave no explanation of the meaning of them. All the stories they told carried hidden knowledge which reached down to a much deeper level of understanding.*

**-Illustrate or write about favourite part of the story**

### **Lesson 3**

Students watch and listen to the [What are Songlines?](#) video on YouTube.

At the end of the video, ask the students:

- What are songlines?
- Why are songlines important to Aboriginal peoples?
- How do songlines connect Aboriginal peoples to their history and the land?

### **Lesson 4**

**-What are some examples of Dreamtime stories that explain the creation of something?** For example, The Two Wise Men And the Seven Sisters A creation story from the WONG-GU-THA, people of the desert near Ooldea, South Australia. It is how the hills and valleys, the rivers and oceans were made and how the earth was beautified.

**-Discuss some Australian animals.** Focus on the Koala. *What are some unique features that a Koala has? How could we explain the creation of these features?*

-Watch the following YouTube video (why the koala has a stumpy tail)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=itszep0duwl>

-Who was your favourite character and why?

-On the board display the website: <http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/student-interactives/cube-creator-30850.html> (This link will bring up an interactive story cube)

Model how to complete the 6 sections and ask for students to assist.

Print out the cube, illustrate and display in the room.

## **Lesson 5**

**Read the following story and see the list of some life lessons you can find in the story.**

### **Wirroowaa and the Giant Kangaroos**

Long ago, many people were camped at the place where the Lachlan and Murrumbidgee rivers meet. The day was very hot and a haze rose from the windless plain so that the horizon danced, and mirages distorted the landscape. Everyone lay motionless, resting in the heat. Suddenly, a tribe of giant kangaroos were seen away in the distance and the headman leapt to his feet with a cry. The camp became a scene of wild excitement and fear. Children were quickly seized and everyone dispersed into the bush. In those times, however the men had no weapons and were defenceless against the enemy. The kangaroos relentlessly advanced on them through the bush and without mercy crushed their victims with powerful arms. When the animals were finished, few of the tribe remained. The headman, however, lived, and in desperation he called the remaining band tighter to discuss methods of defence. At the meeting the men devised the weapons of spears, shields, clubs and boomerangs. Many young women had lost their children as they fled, and needing a device in which to carry their babies they made the bark cradle.

But Wirroowaa, the cleverest of the men, thought of enlisting the help of the Great Spirit. To do this, however, he needed to paint his chest with sacred designs in white clay which had to be collected from the banks of the river bed where the giant kangaroos were camped. Fearlessly he set out across the plain for the river bed; He turned over a hollow log with his foot and found a big, brow-banded goanna. Quickly killing the goanna, Wirroowaa slit the belly open with a stone and extracted the body fat. This he smeared all over his skin until it glistened in the hot sun; then he rolled in the dust until he was brown as the earth, and then he picked up a branch of leaves to hold before him.. Completely disguised he quietly crept on towards the Kangaroo camp and without being observed stole the sacred clay.

Behind him a small breeze had come up, and the nearer he got to the river bed the stronger the breeze became. Two sticks which first were gently rubbing together soon became warm, then red hot, and suddenly a spark flew from the smoking twigs into a patch of dry grass. A fire was made. Wirroowaa quickly smeared his body with the clay, making designs which would bring the presence of the Great Spirit to him.

The wind gradually grew in volume and spread over the grassy plain. The little breeze became a gale. The Great Spirit came and told Wirroowaa to keep to the dry patches of ground. The giant kangaroos appeared on the horizon but were driven back immediately by the fire. Each man must now carry spears, clubs and bark must be stripped from the trees to make shelters for each family, so that the sun would not weaken the people as it had in the past.

**Some life lessons you can learn from this story:**

- Danger of animals
- Map
- Use of white clay

- Camouflage
- How to catch a goanna
- War tactics
- Development of tools and weapons
- How to make fire
- Fire season
- Fire evacuation
- Role of men and women
- Firestick farming / controlled burning

## **Lesson 6**

Read the following story from the Newcastle area. List any life lessons you can identify.

*Note, a 5.6 magnitude earthquake occurred in Newcastle in 1989 and is considered Australia's most destructive.*

### **The Kangaroo That Lives Inside Nobbys**

A very long time ago, when there were still giant sized animals around, all the various animals within the area would separate into two groups – one group being the females and the other the males. They all lived together very peacefully and happily.

One day a large male kangaroo attacked a female wallaby. This was against the law.

He was banished from the kangaroo group forever. After a long chase by the wallabies the kangaroo reached Muloobinba, the place of the sea ferns, now called Newcastle (the Awabakal language nation).

As he entered the sea, he thought about how lucky he was to be able to slip away from the wallabies that chased him. The wallabies thought that he had drowned.

But the kangaroo had swum to Nobbys Island and entered the tall rocky outcrop, making sure that he was out of sight of everyone.

He is still there to this day, but he won't come out because he is never sure if it is safe for him from the angry wallabies. Sometimes he gets upset and jumps around inside his prison. When his giant tail crashes against the earth, it makes the rocks fall and the ground tremble.

**Lesson 7** Ask Elders in the community if they can read/tell some stories to the student.

How do oral retellings differentiate from written retellings? What are the elements present in the oral retellings?

## **Lesson 8**

**This lesson will provide students with more opportunities to listen to and discuss Dreamtime Stories.**

**Any Dreaming story can be used for this activity.**

Some Kurna dreaming stories include- Tjilbruke Dreaming Story or Kondili the whale.

**For example "Why the Emu Can't Fly".**

-What might this story be about? What characters do you expect to see in the story? Where might the story take place? What could the problem be? What might the conclusion be?

-If you were writing a story about why the Emu can't fly, have a think about what you might write about. Discuss with a partner and share.

**-Read the story or watch on YouTube**

**-Students to choose from the following activities.**

- **Create a story map of events.**
- **Change the ending of the story.**
- **Write a conversation between characters.**
- **Write a review of the story.**
- **Draw the most important scene from the story. Why do you think it is important?**

### **Lesson 9**

Visit Kurna Park or some other local place of Aboriginal significance.

Explain the significance of the area and find a story associated with the special place. Allow students in small groups to 'experience' and discuss the significance of such a place.

### **Lesson 10**

**-Students recall purpose of Dreamtime Stories.** (Keeps culture alive and a reminder of how things came to be and they can be used as lessons for life's journey)

**- If we were to write a Dreamtime story what would we write it about?**

**-Brainstorm topics on the board.**

**-Students will be given some paper/laptops and will brainstorm topics they would like to write a story about.**

- Suggestions: Great Australian Bight, Uluru, Kangaroo's pouch, lizards blue tongue, echidnas spikes etc...
- **Students to decide on a final topic.** Share topic with peers.

### **Lesson 11**

**In the lessons following this, students will be working on their own Dreamtime Stories.**

**They will complete the following steps.**

- Create story cube- <http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/student-interactives/cube-creator-30850.html>
- Decorate story cube.
- Begin forming a draft of the story.
- Add as many Kurna words as they can into their Dreaming story
- Students to edit their own stories.
- Have a peer edit their story
- With the assistance of parents/ community members etc. students devise a way to present their story, e.g. as a PowerPoint, on bark, on material, on DVD, as a play, a book etc.

Students present their Dreaming stories to the class/ group/ rest of school.

Make a copies of their story to send home to families and displayed at school.