

Indigenous peoples: Upper Primary English, Year 5

People, place, language and song

In this unit, *People, place, language and song*, concepts of place, language and song are explored as they relate to Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and their cultures.

Multimodal texts used include music video clips, the picture book *Nyuntu Ninti (What you Should Know)* by Bob Randall and Melanie Hogan, and *My Island Home* by Neil Murray, illustrated by children from Papunya and Galiwinku, and with paintings by Peter Hudson.

Focus

This unit provides opportunities to explore the ideas that:

- Aboriginal Australia is made up of many cultures
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders are Australia's Indigenous peoples
- language and land are important to the identity of Indigenous cultures
- Indigenous peoples express their cultures in many ways
- people, place, language and song are connected in many ways.

Australian Curriculum: English

The general capabilities emphasised in this unit of work are literacy, critical and creative thinking, personal and social capability and intercultural understanding.

This unit addresses the cross-curriculum priority Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures.

Content

Students will be provided opportunities through the activities to engage with aspects of the following content descriptions.

Language Language variation and change	Understand that the pronunciation, spelling and meanings of words have histories and change over time (ACELA1500)
Language for interaction	Understand that patterns of language interaction vary across social contexts and types of texts and that they help to signal social roles and relationships (ACELA1501)
Text structure and organisation	Understand how texts vary in purpose, structure and topic as well as the degree of formality (ACELA1504) Investigate how the organisation of texts into chapters, headings, subheadings, home pages and sub pages for online texts and according to chronology or topic can be used to predict content and assist navigation (ACELA1797)
Expressing and developing ideas	Understand the use of vocabulary to express greater precision of meaning, and know that words can have different meanings in different contexts (ACELA1512)

<p>Literature Literature and context</p>	<p>Identify aspects of literary texts that convey details or information about particular social, cultural and historical contexts (ACELT1608)</p>
<p>Responding to literature</p>	<p>Present a point of view about particular literary texts using appropriate metalanguage, and reflecting on the viewpoints of others (ACELT1609)</p> <p>Use metalanguage to describe the effects of ideas, text structures and language features on particular audiences (ACELT1795)</p>
<p>Examining literature</p>	<p>Recognise that ideas in literary texts can be conveyed from different viewpoints, which can lead to different kinds of interpretations and responses (ACELT1610)</p> <p>Understand, interpret and experiment with sound devices and imagery, including simile, metaphor and personification, in narratives, shape poetry, songs, anthems and odes (ACELT1611)</p>
<p>Creating literature</p>	<p>Create literary texts using realistic and fantasy settings and characters that draw on the worlds represented in texts students have experienced (ACELT1612)</p>
<p>Literacy Texts in context</p>	<p>Show how ideas and points of view in texts are conveyed through the use of vocabulary, including idiomatic expressions, objective and subjective language, and that these can change according to context (ACELY1698)</p>

<p>Interacting with others</p>	<p>Clarify understanding of content as it unfolds in formal and informal situations, connecting ideas to students' own experiences and present and justify a point of view (ACELY1699)</p> <p>Plan, rehearse and deliver presentations for defined audiences and purposes incorporating accurate and sequenced content and multimodal elements (ACELY1700)</p>
<p>Interpreting, analysing and evaluating</p>	<p>Identify and explain characteristic text structures and language features used in imaginative, informative and persuasive texts to meet the purpose of the text (ACELY1701)</p> <p>Use comprehension strategies to analyse information, integrating and linking ideas from a variety of print and digital sources (ACELY1703)</p>
<p>Creating texts</p>	<p>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 (ACELY1704)</p> <p>Reread and edit student's own and others' work using agreed criteria for text structures and language features (ACELY1705)</p> <p>Use a range of software including word processing programs with fluency to construct, edit and publish written text, and select, edit and place visual, print and audio elements (ACELY1707)</p>

NSW K–6 English Syllabus

Syllabus outcomes	Syllabus indicators
<p>TS3.1 Communicates effectively for a range of purposes with a variety of audiences to express well-developed, well-organised ideas with more challenging topics</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engages in discussions based on ideas accessed in written, film and song texts • Listens to storytelling • Gives considered reasons for opinions and listens to those of others • Plans and delivers presentations for specific purpose and audience • Performs raps and songs for peers
<p>RS3.5 Reads independently an extensive range of texts with increasing content demands and responds to themes and issues</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reads a range of texts for personal enjoyment, interest and research • Interprets more complex maps • Identifies and interprets ideas, themes and issues in different types of literary texts such as picture books and film • Gathers and interprets information from a range of print and digital texts, makes inferences and generalisations and draws conclusions • Relates information in texts to personal experience

Syllabus outcomes	Syllabus indicators
<p>RS3.6 Uses a comprehensive range of skills and strategies appropriate to the type of text being read</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses a range of types of texts, including media texts, to gather and record information • Listens to and interprets a range of texts including film clips and song texts • Uses a range of strategies to gather literal information and make inferences about a text • Develops extended vocabulary associated with a research topic • Makes connections within and between texts
<p>WS3.7 Critically analyses techniques used by writers to create certain effects, to use language creatively, to position the reader in various ways and to construct different interpretations of experience</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognises how print and images work together to construct meaning in a text • Discusses writers' purpose and point of view • Discusses language choices and organisational features of a text • Identifies how meanings are constructed in images including black and white and colour photographs • Evaluates a text for effectiveness
<p>WS3.9 Produces a wide range of well-structured and well-presented literary and factual texts for a wide variety of purposes and audiences using increasingly challenging topics, ideas, issues and written language features</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writes personal description based on a text model • Creates texts for different purposes using a range of media including digital media • Uses writing such as tables and timelines to sort, sequence and compare information • Creates different types of texts such as raps and songs to explore ideas

Teaching & learning activities

1. Introduce the unit through song

Activity — talking and listening

‘Among the many markers of indigenous cultural identity, the attachment to land and the use of an indigenous language are two of the most significant.’

Source: UN report, *State of the World’s Indigenous Peoples*¹ (.pdf 2.8 MB), page 53

‘Language is at the core of cultural identity. It links people to their land, it projects history through story and song, it holds the key to kinship systems and to the intricacies of tribal law including spirituality, secret/sacred objects and rites. Language is a major factor in people retaining their cultural identity and many say “if the Language is strong, then Culture is strong”.’

Source: ATSIC (2000) *Submission to the House of Representatives into the Needs of Urban Dwelling Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.*²

Song has always been an important part of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures.

‘Traditional Aboriginal music is a vocal art — we sing...’

Source: *The Little Red Yellow Black Book*, page 40³

Aboriginal people believe that the country was sung into existence in the Dreaming. **Songlines**⁴ criss-cross Australia, both creating and describing the country.

Seat students in a **yarning circle**⁵ with a large **map of Aboriginal Australia**⁶ on the floor in the centre

¹ United Nations (2009) *State of the World’s Indigenous Peoples*: http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/SOWIP_web.pdf, UN, New York, page 53.

² ATSIC (2000) *Submission to the House of Representatives Standing Committee into the Needs of Urban Dwelling Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra.

³ Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies and Bruce Pascoe (2008) *The Little Red Yellow Black Book: An introduction to Indigenous Australia*, Aboriginal Studies Press, Canberra, page 40.

⁴ Wikipedia on Songlines: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Songlines>.

⁵ 8ways website: How to embed basic Aboriginal perspectives across your classroom in one week ...: <http://8ways.wikispaces.com/8way+basics%2C+start-up>.

and oriented to cardinal compass points. With traditional Aboriginal music playing softly in the background explain to students the way song is integral to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures. Refer to the map and talk about Aboriginal language groups. It is believed that prior to 1788 there were between 200 and 250 Aboriginal languages spoken in Australia and many dialects of each of these. Most Aboriginal people were multi-lingual, speaking their own language plus the languages of adjoining language groups. Today fewer than 50 Aboriginal languages are spoken.

View film clips of a range of contemporary Aboriginal music artists, such as [Geoffrey Gurrumul Yunupingu](#)⁷, [Yothu Yindi](#)⁸, [The Warumpi Band](#)⁹ and [Tiddas](#)¹⁰. Include some sung in Aboriginal languages and draw students' attention to these.

Discuss the various forms of music and how they relate to traditional music. Discuss instruments used and how traditional instruments are still used by many contemporary artists. After brainstorming, read about [traditional instruments](#)¹¹.

Create a class [popplet](#)¹² (web based, collaboratively constructed mind map) with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures as the central organiser and four sub-organisers of People, Place, Language and Song. If popplets are not available, a large paper-based mind map could be constructed and placed on a wall in the classroom. Talk about how a mind map is constructed and show the pre-view video for popplets, linked from the home page. Videos and photographs can be inserted into popplets. Explain that all students will be expected to contribute as they learn new information throughout the unit.

If the class meets weekly to review the unit, the teacher, who will have editing rights, will make agreed changes to links or modify conflicting information after checking sources. Discuss why conflicting information arises.

Ask students to look for connections between and among ideas and information and seek out the big ideas that underpin Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures.

⁶ Horton map of Aboriginal Australia at ABC Indigenous: <http://www.abc.net.au/indigenous/map/>.

⁷ 'Bapa' by Geoffrey Gurrumul Yunupingu: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MKC-Jd7KN64>.

⁸ 'Djapana (Sunset Dreaming)' by Yothu Yindi: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CG-CNqOhO2c&feature=results_video&playnext=1&list=PLE6416ECB79732DB5.

⁹ 'My Island Home' by the Warumpi Band: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VaQLw1CvPMk>.

¹⁰ 'Inanay' by Tiddas: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1xGWMFBfKi8>.

¹¹ Australian Aboriginal music on the Australian Music Archive website hosted by Southern Cross University: <http://www.scu.edu.au/schools/sass/music/musicarchive/AusGeneral.html>.

¹² Popplet website: <http://popplet.com/>.

2. Connecting

Nyuntu Ninti (What you should know) by Bob Randall and Melanie Hogan is a picture book written for children. It is based on the documentary film *Kanyini*.

After reading *Nyuntu Ninti*, watch the *Kanyini* [film trailer](#).¹³

Explain to students that reference to images or names of deceased persons is offensive to the cultural beliefs of many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Read the cultural warning on the last page of the book. Ask students if they have seen or heard similar warnings. Why is the warning written in both [Pitjantjatjara](#)¹⁴ and English?

Read the book *Nyuntu Ninti* to the class.

Bob Randall identifies himself as an Anangu man from Uluru. What does this mean? Locate Uluru on the map of Australia and refer to the tribal/language group name on the [Map of Aboriginal Australia](#)¹⁵. Uluru is referred to as 'her'. Why?

Locate the students' local area on the map and research the Aboriginal people and language of the locality. Discuss any connections that the class or students may have with the Aboriginal locality of the school. Make contact with the local Aboriginal community through the school community or the local Aboriginal Education Consultative Group (AECG) or land council. Listen to local stories or language if possible.

Bob Randall explains *Kanyini* as the principle that connects four main areas of responsibility.

- **What are they? (Tjukurrpa, Ngura, Waltyja and Kurunpa)**
- **Discuss these principles and identify the way they are explained in the book, listing them under each heading. Note the ways in which they connect and inter-relate.**
- **Add information to the class popplet or mind map.**

Re-read the book, paying particular attention to the images and the way they support the written text in explaining *Kanyini*.

- **View the images in the book.**
- **Discuss the way black and white photographs have been used alongside colour**

¹³ *Kanyini* film trailer: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LvoAE2719gg>.

¹⁴ Omniglot entry for Pitjantjatjara language and pronunciation: <http://www.omniglot.com/writing/pitjantjatjara.htm>.

¹⁵ As above Horton map of Aboriginal Australia at ABC Indigenous: <http://www.abc.net.au/indigenous/map/>.

photographs.

- **Discuss images in the book and talk about how we can use pictures as well as written text to gain information. List and discuss all the things that we can know from viewing the pictures only.**

Focus on the written text and support with information carried in the pictures.

The author sets out to teach us 'what we should know'.

Individually, then in small groups and finally, as a class, list five important things that Bob Randall thinks we should know. Add big ideas and connections to the class popplet or mind map. As a class, sum up in one sentence, the most significant idea from the final list.

Students make personal lists of what **is** most important to the way they live. Refer to the **Identity map**¹⁶ at the 8-Ways wiki space.

Students write a short text to situate themselves in time and place:

'My name is (insert name) and I'm a (insert identity word) boy/girl from (insert place most identified with).'

Two or three sentences about the place and attachment to it ...

I belong here.

For example, the first page might read like this:

My name is Helen Cassidy and I'm a sixth generation Australian girl from Western Sydney.

Western Sydney lies at the foot of the Blue Mountains. Sydney is the largest city in Australia and the capital of New South Wales. When I can see the Blue Mountains I feel as though I'm home.

I belong here.

¹⁶ Identity map at the 8-ways Wikispace: <http://8ways.wikispaces.com/Your+identity+map>.

From the text, compare 'What I remember most about those times is that I was totally free ...' with '... Our life was very disciplined.' How was that possible?

Bob Randall's idea of freedom is self-determination, whereas an upper primary conception of freedom may relate to a less directed idea of doing as you please. Use classroom discussion around Randall's talk of responsibility, and the classroom beliefs of what is being represented, to support students to understand the freedom that he is referring to.

Provide each child with the following table, or with the same schema use a mind map comprised of concentric circles and the question at its centre.

Responsibility mapping What are my responsibilities to ...	My friends
Me	My community
My family	My school

As a class, add ideas to each area, to build up a list with some detail. Next, have students individually write a **paragraph**¹⁷ (.pdf 49.4 kB) on one of the areas of responsibility, using the information gathered by the class. A copy of this activity, with all the written paragraphs from the class under their headings might then be displayed and kept as a point of reflection.

Compare these to the responsibilities Aboriginal people carry.

Bob Randall is a songwriter as well as an author. Read the lyrics for 'Where We Came From' and view a **video**¹⁸ of Bob Randall singing the song. Select words and phrases from the song that explain what Bob Randall thinks we should know.

Read the afterword, written by Melanie Hogan. Research the terms Indigenous and non-Indigenous. Melanie Hogan talks about the reasons for creating *Kanyini* and *Nyuntu Ninti* with Bob Randall.

- **What are those reasons?**
- **Do you think the reasons are 'good'? Why?**

¹⁷ Schools A-Z homework help tips — Paragraphs:

<https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/eppcontent/glossary/app/resource/factsheet/4100.pdf>.

¹⁸ YouTube video 'Where We Came From' by Bob Randall: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u5info-6nQ>.

Consider the reasons by providing students with the following headings for responses. What textual examples from the Hogan afterword belong in each heading category?

Heading	Insufficient knowledge of each other	Valuable for all	Pathway to positivity
Sample answers	<i>'Indigenous and non-Indigenous confused about each other'</i> <i>'... difficult to journey together'</i>	<i>'World going too fast'</i> and <i>'care and respect for Mother Earth'</i>	<i>'... changing negative attitude' ... 'it excites me' ... 'honesty and love, gentleness and strength continues to amaze me ...'</i>

Do you think the authors have achieved their purpose? How does the text close the gap in knowledge? How does the text communicate the benefits and value of slowness and looking after the Earth? How does the text communicate positivity and hope? Work with a partner to state and support your opinion using a presentation method of your choice; for example, video interview, Puppet Pals interview, poster talk, poem, song, writing or illustration.

Review the popplet. Discuss the connections and information and modify as necessary.

3. Expressing

My Island Home by Neil Murray is illustrated by children from Papunya and Galiwinku, and with paintings by Peter Hudson. It contains the lyrics to the song, 'My Island Home', written by Neil Murray for his friend and fellow musician George Burarrawanga when they were both members of the Warumpi Band.

To explain the context of the lyrics, the author has included both a foreword and a preface in the picture book. A foreword provides an introduction to a text and is generally written in the third person and a preface, while similar to a foreword, is usually written autobiographically, by the author, in the first person.

Discuss these organisational features and their importance to the overall understanding of the text.

Introduce the grammatical terms 'first', 'second' and 'third person' and identify personal pronouns in the text.

- **Why are these pronouns needed?**
- **Which one has the highest frequency?**
- **Why is that?**

Foreword to *My Island Home*

Refer to maps of Australia and Aboriginal Australia throughout the treatment of the book.

Before reading, provide groups of four students with the text cut into paragraphs. Ask the students to read the paragraphs then arrange them into the correct order. Number the students in the groups 1 to 4. Re-form groups as 1, 2, 3 and 4 and provide each numbered group with one paragraph of the foreword. Ask students to read the paragraph and discuss the meaning at word, sentence and text level. What is the main idea? Underline three instances of interesting, unusual or unknown vocabulary — try to figure out what it means — how could/did you do this? Have students record their thoughts and any questions that they have about the text. Make a copy for students to take back to their original groups.

Students return to their original groups and briefly report the agreed meanings of the paragraph that they each worked with. Read the questions asked by the numbered groups and attempt to answer them in light of the new information from the whole text.

As a class, discuss the meaning of the text and the relationship of Neil Murray and George Burarrawanga. Especially refer to 'a mighty gulf' in the first paragraph and the first sentence of the second paragraph. Locate and mark Papunya, Elcho Island and Lake Bolac on the map of Australia. Cross reference with the map of Aboriginal Australia. Add the information to the class popplet.

Preface to *My Island Home*

In this preface, Neil Murray uses the metalanguage of the music industry. Create a glossary of terms that will be used, to assist younger students when reading the preface. These terms are often used in the booklets that accompany music CDs. Provide groups with appropriate CD booklets and ask students to read the material and find terms they have recorded in their own glossary. Students may wish to add other terms that they find or have heard.

Neil Murray wrote 'My Island Home' for his friend and fellow band member, George R Burarrawanga. Compare the places that they came from — the freshwater country around Lake Bolac in Victoria and the saltwater country of Elcho Island. Locate them on the map. Explain that a sense of direction and awareness of place are important aspects of Aboriginal culture.

Discuss saltwater/freshwater people. Saltwater — from the coast and freshwater — the rest¹⁹. Put place markers in the room for cardinal points on the compass. Refer to these in discussions about place.

¹⁹ For reference, see Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies and Bruce Pascoe (2008) *The Little Red Yellow Black Book: An introduction to Indigenous Australia*, Aboriginal Studies Press, Canberra, page 7.

Divide the class into three research groups and set them the tasks of finding facts about Papunya, Elcho Island and Lake Bolac under the headings of place, people, language and other interesting facts. Groups create poster presentations to share with the class. In a yarnning circle, students then use information from their research to discuss similarities and differences between and among places and communities.

Create a timeline starting in January 1980 and finishing in 2010. Use the text in the preface to plot significant events on the timeline. Direct students to the title page for information about the significance of 2010 (date of publication) and take this opportunity to explain the information presented on the title page and how it can help when deciding which sources to use.

Read the lyrics to the song and watch the Warumpi Band performing 'My Island Home'²⁰. Remind students of the cultural warning in *Nyuntu Ninti*.

Point out to students that symbols in traditional paintings should not be reproduced without permission of the artist and the custodians of the symbols, following cultural protocols (.pdf 165 kB).²¹

Discuss the symbols used in Joy Maxwell Nampitjinpa's painting and how they are used to tell a story. Create story maps using the students' own symbols to represent the 'two month tour' described in paragraph 2 of the preface. Symbolism is also used in other artforms.

- **How has the relationship between Neil Murray and George Burarrawanga, and the relationships between all Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, been portrayed in the YouTube video?**

Students work in small groups to create a video clip using MovieMaker, Photostory, PowerPoint or similar software, to accompany the song 'My Island Home'. To do this, they will need to discuss the way the lyrics evoke images, then search for photographs or create drawings or dramatic pieces to tell the song in pictures.

Neil Murray and George R Burarrawanga knew each other for 27 years. Read paragraph 8 in the preface and the dedication at the front of the book. Discuss ways that we pay homage to significant people in our lives. Is the book *My Island Home* a fitting tribute? Why?

Review the popplet. Discuss the connections and information and modify as necessary.

²⁰ YouTube video of the Warumpi Band performing 'My Island Home':
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bortd3V5aXQ&feature=related>.

²¹ Oxfam Australia information on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island protocols:
<http://www.terrijanke.com.au/img/publications/pdf/14.OxfamAus-AboriginalTorresStraitCulturalProtocols-1207.pdf>.

4. Creating

On A3 paper make a copy of the popplet for each student.

In a yarning circle discuss information about people, place, language and song. Ask questions of each other and talk about sources of information.

Students annotate their copy of the popplet, colouring or outlining the big ideas and significant connections. Discuss how these understandings are important to them and to their community.

View videos of young Aboriginal students performing their own compositions and discuss the lyrics and the way some groups sing about who they are and where they're from, such as The [Wilcannia Mob](#)²²; and others sing about who they want to be, such as [The Colli Crew](#)²³.

Individually, or in pairs, write raps or songs that demonstrate the big ideas and connections students have discovered as they relate to their own lives. Collaboratively create rubrics to assess their own and each other's work. The rubrics should contain criteria related to the information conveyed, the effectiveness of the selected language choices and the performance. Perform songs for classmates. Use the rubrics to assess peers.

Create a class production to share with the school community.

²² Wilcannia Mob recording, with lyrics: 'Down the River': <http://downriver.com.au/music-and-video/>.

²³ Colli Crew video 'Change the Game': <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f0rJajbls-o>.

For the teacher

The Little Red Yellow Black Book: An introduction to Indigenous Australia (Aboriginal Studies Press, 2008) is an excellent resource. Having multiple copies available to students would be useful in this unit. There is also a [website](#)²⁴ for this book with many valuable links.

Learning processes from the [8 Ways of Aboriginal Learning](#)²⁵ have been used as a guide in the writing of this unit. The website and Wiki space is constantly evolving and should be investigated thoroughly before launching into its use. Symbols, for example, are specific to places and should not be used without permission.

Protocols for working and interacting with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and with the use of knowledge are important. The [protocols](#)²⁶ (.pdf 165 kB) used by Oxfam Australia provide useful information.

²⁴ *The Little Red Yellow Black Book* website: <http://lryb.aiatsis.gov.au/>.

²⁵ 8 Ways of Aboriginal Learning Wiki space/website: <http://8ways.wikispaces.com/>.

²⁶ As above: Oxfam Australia information on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island protocols:
<http://www.terrijanke.com.au/img/publications/pdf/14.OxfamAus-AboriginalTorresStraitCulturalProtocols-1207.pdf>.