

INDIGENOUS EXPERIENCES OF THE AUSTRALIAN DEMOCRATIC PROCESS

**Unit 3: Laws and Rights (Upper Primary) At a glance**

Content	Suggested Teaching and Learning Activities	Special Resources
<b>Focus 1: Understanding Country</b>		
	Research Table construction Discussion/learning circles	<i>The First Australians</i> C & P Brendt <i>The Rabbits</i> John Marsden & Shaun Tan Video: <i>Killing me softly – A Land Looking West</i> <i>Expressing Our Culture – Aboriginal and Islander Art</i>
<b>Focus 2: Improving Relationships</b>		
	Guest speakers (ideas for reconciliation) Learning circles Role play	<i>Bringing Them Home</i> Report Aboriginal Speakers Program 2001 – Catholic Education Office
<b>Focus 3: Valuing Cultures</b>		
	Investigating our indigenous community Reading texts Viewing videos  <b>Poetry, story or song</b>	<i>Encyclopedia of Aboriginal Australia.</i> <i>Aboriginal Australian map</i> (ATSIC) Books by Aboriginal authors such as Sally Morgan, Monty Prior, Ruby Langford Ginibi, Oodgeroo Noonuncal, Kevin Gilbert or James Miller. <i>Kath Walker</i> by Equality videos or <i>Oodgeroo – A Life</i> (video)
<b>Focus 4: Sharing History</b>		
	Textbook and comprehension activities Perspectives on history - Guest Speakers (historical perspectives) Video Poetry reading  <b>Poetry analysis</b>	Aboriginal Speakers Program 2001 – Catholic Education Office Selected resources: <i>A secret country</i> <i>Unfinished business</i> <i>Six Australian Battlefields</i> <i>The World of the First Australians</i> <i>Muirhead Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody</i> <i>Bringing Them Home.</i> <i>Women of the Sun</i> <i>Lousy little sixpence</i> <i>Around the kitchen</i> <i>Discovering Australia's Aboriginal History</i> (ABC video) <i>Aboriginal Australia – To the Others</i> by Jack Davis (poem)
<b>Focus 5: Addressing Disadvantage</b>		
	Guest speakers (life stories) Brainstorming/group work	Aboriginal Speakers Program 2001 – Catholic Education Office

	<b>Picture book or class play</b>	
<b>Focus 6: Native Title</b>		
	Information gathering and evaluation of information  <b>Cartoon construction and presentation</b>	Videos: <i>From Wave Hill to Wik, &amp; Beyond – The Struggle for Native Title</i> <i>The Best of Lateline – Mabo Myths</i> <i>The Mabo Judgement &amp; the Native Title Act – An Act of Justice</i> <a href="#"><u>Matter of Fact</u></a> <i>Building a nation in your classroom</i> by J Cole-Adam & J. Gauld.
<b>Focus 7: Present Perspectives</b>		
	Interview techniques Guest speaker (life experiences) <b>Conducting an interview</b>	Aboriginal Speakers Program 2001 – Catholic Education Office video ‘Talking Together’
<b>Focus 8: Past Perspectives</b>		
	Role play  <b>Letter to the editor</b>	<i>1788: The Great South Land</i> musical resource kit (Creative and Musical Resources) <i>The Australian</i> 25 August 1994 pg.10
<b>Focus 9: Future Perspectives</b>		
	Guest speakers (future perspectives) Brainstorming issues and problems Presenting a vision  <b>Class or school mural</b>	United Nations Visit your local MP to discuss the options for Reconciliation, and what is being done to consider them in your local community; or approach the local council on the same issue. Amnesty International Aboriginal Speakers Program 2001 – Catholic Education Office

**The Unit:** Allows students the opportunity to investigate the ideas of belief and history (past and present) from an indigenous perspective.

**AUDIENCE** Upper Primary Students

The main aim of this unit is for students to develop and demonstrate their own understandings of the concepts of democracy and citizenship. They should be encouraged to express their own opinions and it is important to ensure a safe, secure and trusting environment, free of racism. Therefore, teachers will need to explore their own cultural understandings and be able to encourage students to support a society that accepts all peoples and recognises the significance of Indigenous people and history in the development of the nation.

Please consult with your local Indigenous community, family groups and peoples to assist in the further development and implementation the unit. This could provide the opportunity for Educators to build meaningful relationships between themselves, the school, their Indigenous communities, family groups and other peoples. At all times, Indigenous cultural protocols will need to be respected. It is vitally important to create the space for students to hear the voices of experience.

**PURPOSE** Students to demonstrate an understanding of past indigenous cultures and the changes that have occurred since colonisation. It is hoped that students will also be able to demonstrate understandings of current and future perspectives when considering indigenous culture and Australia as a nation.

## **LINKS & RESOURCES:**

Text; "The First Australians" C & P Brendt

Text: "The Rabbits" John Marsden & Shaun Tan

Video: Killing me softly – A Land Looking West

Expressing Our Culture – Aboriginal and Islander Art

*Bringing Them Home* Report

Aboriginal Speakers Program 2001 – Catholic Education Office

*Encyclopedia of Aboriginal Australia.*

*Aboriginal Australian map* (ATSIC)

Books by Aboriginal authors such as Sally Morgan, Monty Prior, Ruby Langford Ginibi, Oodgeroo Noonunual, Kevin Gilbert or James Miller.

*Kath Walker* by Equality videos or *Oodgeroo – A Life* (video)

*:A secret country*

*Unfinished business*

*Six Australian Battlefields*

*The World of the First Australians*

*Muirhead Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody Bringing Them Home.*

*Women of the Sun*

*Lousy little sixpence*

*Around the kitchen*

*Discovering Australia's Aboriginal History* (ABC video)

*Aboriginal Australia – To the Others* by Jack Davis (poem)

*From Wave Hill to Wik, & Beyond – The Struggle for Native Title*

*The Best of Lateline – Mabo Myths*

*The Mabo Judgement & the Native Title Act – An Act of Justice*

*1788: The Great South Land* musical resource kit (Creative and Musical Resources)

*The Australian* 25 August 1994 pg.10

*Building a nation in your classroom* by J Cole-Adam & J. Gauld.

[Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation Learning Circle Kit](#) this kit also has a series of information sheets relating to indigenous issues.

[General site for Aboriginal Studies resources](#)

[ATSIC](#)

[Racism NoWay](#)

[Matter of Fact](#)

## **Links to local curriculum and Discovering Democracy:**

Please see tables included in the Introduction/Overview to the units

## Unit 3:      **Laws and Rules (Upper Primary)**

### **Focus 1:**                      **Understanding country**

#### **Learning Activities**

---

**Aim:** *Identifying the significance of the land to indigenous people*

1. Students research the significance of land and sea to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander societies.
  - Accept that for the Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders, their cultural identity is bound with ties to the land and sea.
  - Acknowledge that Aboriginal people inhabited Australia for at least 50 000 years before Europeans came.

**Teacher resources:**

Text; “The First Australians” C & P Brendt

Text: “The Rabbits” John Marsden & Shaun Tan

Video: Killing me softly – A Land Looking West

Expressing Our Culture – Aboriginal and Islander Art

2. On a map of Australia students to write down the names of different Indigenous cultural groups. Make a class table that displays the results.  
Ask students to identify the number of students in the class that identified Aboriginal Australians and Torres Strait Islander Australians.  
Ask students to discuss what they think students in a school:
  - With no Indigenous Australians would list, and why;
  - With a high proportion of Indigenous Australians and why;
  - With one Indigenous child in the school would list and why;
  - With half Indigenous and non-Indigenous students would list and why.

## **Focus 2: Improving relationships**

### **Learning Activities**

---

**Aim:** *Building new relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and all other Australians.*

1. Invite Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people to give talks in the classroom.
2. Work with local Aboriginal people in your area towards a statement of commitment to reconciliation. You might like to consult the [Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation Learning Circle Kit](#) for some ideas on how to do this.
3. Ask students to look up the word 'reconciliation' in a dictionary and thesaurus and ask them if they know what the word means, besides the "Sacrament". Ask students to discuss what they think that the word might mean. In groups, students to act out a two-minute scene or draw a general scene that shows Reconciliation in action. Ask students to explain how their drawing or scene shows Reconciliation.

## Focus 3: Valuing Cultures

### Learning Activities

---

**Aim:** Students to recognize the valuable contribution the cultures of Indigenous people make to the Australian heritage.

1. Find out the name of the traditional owners of the land where you live and attend school.
2. Obtain a copy of the Aboriginal Australian map published by the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies
3. Borrow a copy of the Encyclopedia of Aboriginal Australia.
4. Read books by Aboriginal authors such as Sally Morgan, Monty Prior, Ruby Langford Ginibi, Oodgeroo Noonuncal, Kevin Gilbert or James Miller.
5. Students to view the video *Kath Walker* by Equality videos or *Oodgeroo – A Life* (ABC TV). Ask students to identify key things Oodgeroo did in her life to promote Reconciliation (eg. a timeline). Ask students to read about her other achievements.
6. Students to choose one of Oodgeroo's poems. In groups discuss the meaning of their poems with local Aboriginal Guest Speakers. Students read their poem on a class tape and explain on tape what they think the poem is about.

**Assessment:** Ask students to write a song, poem or story that gives a view on the idea of reconciliation.

## Focus 4: Sharing history

### Learning Activities

---

1. Students understand that the history of Australia began long before the arrival of Captain Cook in 1770.
2. Read general textbooks about Aboriginal history:
  - *A secret country*
  - *Unfinished business*
  - *Six Australian Battlefields*
  - *The World of the First Australians*
3. Read the summary of the *Muirhead Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody* and *Bringing Them Home*.
4. Invite Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the classroom to share their knowledge and perspective of history.
5. Watch videos:
  - *Women of the Sun*
  - *Lousy little sixpence*: Students find out more about the policy of taking children away. They write a story about how they would feel if this happened to them.
  - *Around the kitchen*
6. Students watch a video providing an overview of Australia's history (e.g. *Discovering Australia's Aboriginal History* ABC). List key events in Australia's history.
7. Students read the poem *Aboriginal Australia – To the Others* by Jack Davis. In small groups or pairs, students to discuss what they think the poem means and whether such distortions of history need to be addressed in the context of the Reconciliation process.

**Assessment:** Poetry analysis of *Aboriginal Australia - to the others*

## Focus 5: Addressing Disadvantage

### Learning Activities

---

**Aim:** *Students acknowledge that Indigenous people are the most disadvantaged group in Australian society.*

1. Invite Indigenous community members to talk to the class about the experiences of their families historically.

**Assessment:** Based on the stories that they hear, students could write a picture book or a class play.

2. Having learned from reading, watching and listening about indigenous peoples in Australia. Ask students to suggest ways that they could speak up when others voice myths, errors and prejudices about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Blackboard these ideas. Ask students to give reasons why it is important to respond when others make these types of comments. Alternatively, ask students to consider the impact these sorts of comments might have on:
  - The individual
  - The community in which they live
  - Indigenous peoples
  - Our national identity
3. Brainstorm ways to create better understandings between indigenous communities and others. An idea might be to make friends with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

**Note:** *Would it be possible to encourage affirmative action in your school? In what ways could a teacher assist in redressing the balance? Some ideas could be to:*

- *Encourage the teaching of Indigenous history, culture*
- *Identify issues within your school which may impact on indigenous students or student attitudes (racism, disadvantage, bullying). Encourage your staff to address these issues through learning activities to promote understanding and cohesiveness.*

## Focus 6: Native Title

### Learning Activities

---

**Aim:** *To recognise the implications of the Native Title debate.*

1. Learn more about Native Title

Videos:

- *From Wave Hill to Wik, & Beyond – The Struggle for Native Title*
  - *The Best of Lateline – Mabo Myths*
  - *The Mabo Judgement & the Native Title Act – An Act of Justice*
2. Students read one myth from the booklet [Matter of Fact](#)
  3. An excellent activity is included in *Building a nation in your classroom* by J Cole-Adam & J. Gauld. Chapter 5 provides background and a roleplay to MABO and reconciliation.

**Assessment:** Students design a cartoon to rebut the myth they examined and explain their cartoon to a group of students. Display cartoons around the school and community.

## Focus 7: Present Perspectives

### Learning Activities

---

1. Watch the video 'Talking Together' to hear the views of four Australian women about the importance of healing the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. Identify their reasons.
2. Invite an Indigenous community member to talk about how their lives have been affected by socioeconomic disadvantages and why it is important to address disadvantage.

**Assessment:** Students to select and interview a person from their local community. The focus of the interview will be 'disadvantage'. For the interview, students will need to design their questions, conduct the interview and then present their interview to the class or small group.

## Focus 8: Past Perspectives

### Learning Activities

---

1. Students listen to a song from *1788: The Great South Land* musical resource kit (Creative and Musical Resources), complete some of the activities that relate to the song, act out the songs as a play. Better still, use the activities in the kit to develop a sequence of teaching activities for students and perform the musical as a class or school for the local community.
2. Read newspaper articles, view video segments, showing Cathy Freeman carrying both the Aboriginal and Australian flag at the XV Commonwealth Games in 1994. (e.g. *The Australian* 25 August 1994 pg.10). Discuss what Cathy did and how this contributed to Reconciliation. Read a newspaper article showing different people's viewpoints.

**Assessment Activity:** Write a letter to a newspaper editor explaining what you thought of Cathy's actions.

## Focus 9: Future Perspectives

### Learning Activities

---

**Aim:** *To allow students to consider the future issues and perspectives relating to indigenous issues.*

1. You may like to organise a variety of speakers who could present information relating to the issues covered or raised in earlier activities.

*For example:*

- Contact the United Nations for more information on the UN's role in Indigenous issues.
  - Visit your local MP to discuss the options for Reconciliation, and what is being done to consider them in your local community; or approach the local council on the same issue.
  - Amnesty International
  - Aboriginal Speakers Program 2001 – Catholic Education Office
2. Allow students to discuss with a partner or in small groups, problems or issues confronting indigenous people and their visions for the future.
  3. Design a classroom or school mural in which all students participate on the theme of “Walking Together – Our Faith in the Future”. This could also be a project organised collaboratively with the local council or community.