



## Theme: Culture

## Teacher Guide

These resources accompany films, videos, transcripts, and vignettes that were created in, by and with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island communities.

The resources are designed to help teachers use the media in their classrooms, to develop all children’s understanding and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander: identity, communities (traditional and contemporary), history, Culture, Country, and the integral part they play in Australian history and life in general.

The resources include:

- Media (listed below)
- Teacher guide (including suggestions for activities)
- BLMs (to support activities)
- Background information for teachers (addresses issues from all three themes)

### Media for this theme

#### Films and transcripts

Title	Community	Place	Theme
<i>The Moon and Gecko</i>	Paakantji	Wilcannia, NSW	Culture & Country
<i>Yulu’s Coal</i>	Adnyamathanha	Flinders Ranges	Culture, Country & Community
<i>The Danger Seed – Bidyadanga</i>	Karajarri	Kimberley	Culture & Community

The film from Tasmania, *The Creation of Trowenna*, is also referenced in this theme, but is explored in greater depth in the Country theme.

#### Videos and transcripts of children’s stories

Title	Child’s name	State	Theme
<i>Ngatji and the Paddlesteamer</i>	Multiple producers	Elcho Island, NT	Culture
<i>Bilwal</i>	Hosannah, Kirra and Holly	Jarlmadangah, WA	Culture
<i>Thunderman</i>	Cyril	Elcho Island, NT	Culture & Community

*Thunderman* is also explored in the Community theme.

#### Vignettes (videos and text)

Person	State	Theme
Reenie Pascal	Maningrida, NT	Culture
William Watson	Jarlmadangah, WA	Culture, Country

William’s vignette is also discussed in the Country theme.

## **Aspects of Aboriginal Culture explored in this theme**

- Cultural perspectives on historical events
- History from an Aboriginal perspective
- Ways to maintain Culture
- Examples of cultural expression
- Reconciliation
- Cultural transmission – Elders and ancestors passing on traditional cultural knowledge
- Impacts of European settlement
- Respect for Culture
- Identity

## **These resources align with the following areas of the Australian Curriculum**

### **English**

#### **Year 5**

(ACELT1608)

Identify aspects of literary texts that convey details or information about particular social, cultural and historical contexts

(ACELY1700)

Plan, rehearse and deliver presentations for defined audiences and purposes incorporating accurate and sequenced content and multimodal elements

#### **Year 6**

(ACELY1709)

Participate in and contribute to discussions, clarifying and interrogating ideas, developing and supporting arguments, sharing and evaluating information, experiences and opinions

#### **Year 7**

(ACELY1728)

Use a range of software, including word processing programs, to confidently create, edit and publish written and multimodal texts

#### **Year 8**

(ACELA1548)

Investigate how visual and multimodal texts allude to or draw on other texts or images to enhance and layer meaning

(ACELT1806)

Explore the interconnectedness of Country and Place, People, Identity and Culture in texts including those by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander authors

(ACELY1735)

Explore and explain the ways authors combine different modes and media in creating texts, and the impact of these choices on the viewer/listener

(ACELY1736)

Create imaginative, informative and persuasive texts that raise issues, report events and advance opinions, using deliberate language and textual choices, and including digital elements as appropriate

## **Year 10**

(ACELY1756)

Create sustained texts, including texts that combine specific digital or media content, for imaginative, informative, or persuasive purposes that reflect upon challenging and complex issues

## **Geography**

### **Year 2**

(ACHGK011)

The ways in which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples maintain special connections to particular Country/Place

### **Year 3**

(ACHGK015)

The many Countries/Places of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples throughout Australia

### **Year 4**

(ACHGK023)

The custodial responsibility Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples have for Country/Place, and how this influences their past and present views about the use of resources

### **Year 7**

(ACHGK041)

The economic, cultural, spiritual and aesthetic value of water for people, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and peoples of the Asia region

### **Year 8**

(ACHGK049)

The aesthetic, cultural and spiritual value of landscapes and landforms for people, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples

## **History**

### **Year 3**

Historical Knowledge. Community and Remembrance

(ACHHK060)

The importance of Country and Place to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples who belong to a local area. (This is intended to be a local area study with a focus on one Language group; however, if information or sources are not readily available, another representative area may be studied)

### **Year 4**

Historical Knowledge and Understanding. First Contacts

(ACHHK077)

The diversity and longevity of Australia's first peoples and the ways Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples are connected to Country and Place (land, sea, waterways and skies) and the implications for their daily lives.

### **Year 9**

Making a nation

(ACDSEH020)

The extension of settlement, including the effects of contact (intended and unintended) between European settlers in Australia and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples)

## Suggestions for viewing all films

You may choose to view:

- each film, and complete its activities, before moving onto the next;
- all films (on separate days) before beginning the activities; or
- a film about a particular community, if you prefer to focus on just one of them.

Stories from the films: *The Moon and Gecko*, *Yulu's Coal*, and *The Danger Seed (Bidyadanga)* are told in *Sharing Our Stories 2*, a set of books by Liz Thompson and published by Pearson.

### Films to View

Can be found at <http://sharingstories.org/our-stories/films-by-location/>

Use the map on this site (and your atlases for precise location) to find:

- Find Wilcannia in NSW on the map and click to watch *The Moon and Gecko* film.
- Find the Flinders Ranges in SA on the map and click to watch *Yulu's Coal* film.
- Find the Kimberley in WA on the map and click to watch *Danger Seed – Bidyadanga* film.

This module also references content from *The Creation of Trowenna* (a film from Tasmania), which is explored in detail in the Country theme.

- Find Tasmania on the map and click to watch *The Creation of Trowenna* film.

### Transcripts of the films

Parts of some transcripts (provided as BLMs) aren't verbatim; rather they provide a general overview of the film.

Suggestions for using them:

- Use as background information for teachers.
- Make copies for students, and:
  - Read and discuss prior to viewing the film.
  - Ask students to find particular information as they watch the film, such as suggestions provided below.
  - Read and discuss after viewing the film to help answer focus questions.

### First viewing

After watching a film, focus questions/statements for class discussion include:

- Recap what the film tells you.
- Why do you think the person/people, and their community wanted to make the film?
- What are the names of the people in the film?
- What is the community's name?

## Follow-up viewing/s

Students may need to view the film again and read the transcript to check answers for the questions discussed.

Before viewing, in addition to checking their answers, you may like to ask students to focus on further questions, such as these:

- What is the main message of the film?
- Are there any other messages as well?
- What questions does the film raise?
- What story is told in the film? What is its name?
- Is it a Dreaming story? If yes, what is it about?
- Why do people tell Dreaming stories?
- Is it another kind of story? If yes, what kind is it, and what does it tell us?
- Why do you think the story is told?

Discuss students' answers, and view the film a third time if necessary.

## Related tasks

Select from the following activities, adapting them as necessary to suit your students' needs, or use your own activities.

**Using the BLM: Map of Australia**, accurately mark on the map communities whose stories you've viewed, and any other places mentioned in the films. Mark in your own community, and other places that are important to you.

Use digital mapping tools and/or atlases ... Explore Geoscience Australia's online tools in particular, as there is data for all locations around Australia. Various states and territories also have gazetteers and other location mapping services. Geoscience Australia's *As the Cocky Flies* distance calculator tool is useful to work out how far the community is from your own, from the closest capital city, and from other communities.

1. **Visit communities' websites.** Explore the sites and list community names, moieties, totems, stories ... you find there. Choose one of the communities and find out the following information:
  - names of language groups in the community,
  - key points in its history;
  - how Europeans have affected traditional people and their way of life;
  - describe the community (e.g. population, facilities, weather); and
  - explore ways that, and places where, the community expresses aspects of its Culture,

Make a poster (digital or on poster size card) showing aspects of the community and its cultural heritage you think would be of interest to visitors to the community.

2. **Choose a different community** and identify its language groups. Choose a Dreaming story, belonging to one (or more) of these language groups, that is part of its Culture, and in groups, make up a play that tells the story. Perform plays for the class, and ask the audience to identify what the story tells, and why it is important to the people.
3. **Prepare and conduct an interview** with an Elder from your own community, a family member, or a prominent community figure. Ask them what they consider to be

important aspects of traditional Culture of the community, how it is passed on to each generation, and ways they preserve their Culture. The interview may be videoed or recorded and presented to the class.

4. **Ask permission to take photos** of displays, artifacts, craft, art that expresses aspects of the community's cultural heritage.
5. **Use information collected in the interview, and photos, to develop** (using electronic media or concrete materials) a collage, with captions, displaying aspects of Culture that you found.

## Discussion points and student activities for individual films

---

<i>Moon and Gecko</i>	Paakantji	Wilcannia, NSW	Culture & Country
-----------------------	-----------	----------------	-------------------

---

After viewing you may like to hold class/group discussions focusing on questions or statements like:

- Who are the two main characters in the story Murray tells?
- Which character wanted to punish the other and why? What happened to him?
- The character who did the punishing was punished himself. Who did this? Why? What happened to him?
- How did Bunu make the tree grow?
- What did Bunu do when his uncle grabbed hold of the moon?
- What animals and insects came into being as a result of this event?
- What's the name of Murray's people (language group)?
- What does Murray tell us about their Country, the Country the story is about?
- What do you feel Murray is referring to when he speaks of a 'history'?
- He says: *'Our history in Australia, it doesn't just start with the coming in of the first fleet. Our history began a lot longer ago than that ...'* When does he mean that it started?
- What would Murray like non-Aboriginal people to learn from Aboriginal people and Culture?
- When he's talking to Murray, Jonathon says: *'Losing our Culture and traditional ways and that has affected all us younger people.'* Explain some ways losing Culture may have affected young people.
- In the film (not included in the transcript) Murray says: *'... and we need to have a look, through Aboriginal people's eyes?'* What do you think he means?

[Moon and Gecko](#) in the *Sharing Our Stories* series is a useful additional resource.

---

<i>Yulu's Coal</i>	Adnyamathanha	Flinders Ranges	Culture, Country & Community
--------------------	---------------	-----------------	------------------------------

---

After viewing you may like to hold class/group discussions focusing on questions or statements like:

- Where does Noel Wilton say he's standing?
- What is the name of his people?
- Is the place he's standing important to his people? Why? Why not?

- Is he happy working there? Why? Why not?
- What would he have preferred to be doing?
- What did the mining company find when they dug the pit?
- Was this of any significance? Explain.
- Who is Yulu?

**Retell** Yulu's Dreaming story. You may choose to have students do this orally, as a written retelling, or prepare a PowerPoint presentation using downloadable images at: (<http://sharingstories.org/content/photo-gallery>).

**Explain** the importance of Yulu's story to the Adnyamathanha people and their Country.

**Consider and discuss** how students' families or community builds a framework of belief and what does that mean to their community? How is it different to the framework of belief experienced by the Adnyamathanha community?

[Yulu's Coal](#) in the *Sharing Our Stories* series is a useful additional resource.

### Photo Gallery

The images provided here <http://sharingstories.org/content/photo-gallery> show places of significance in Aboriginal Culture; and foods, dance, artifacts and traditional clothing important to communities; with relevance to both Culture and Country. They reflect how all three themes: Culture, Community and Country, are inextricably entwined. Encourage students to use relevant images in presentations for any theme.

Three of the images relate to *Yulu's Coal*, students may like to use some of the images/references in their presentations.

**Image 1.** The mine at Leigh Creek where they dug up Yulu's Dreaming.

**Image 2.** Yulu's damper as discussed by Terrence Coulthard in his vignette, and *Yulu's Coal*.

You may choose to ask students to read Terrence Coulthard's vignette, included as a BLM in both Country and Culture themes. He talks about Yulu's Dreaming and it's meaning to the Adnyamathanha people. Focus points may include:

- the importance of Dreaming (creation) stories in Aboriginal Culture;
- the story told in the Adnyamathanha people's Dreaming story;
- what the story means to the Adnyamathanha people; and
- how such stories are an important aspect of educating children.

Then discuss what he says in this extract from the vignette:

*The mine is actually digging up a very sacred part of our Culture, that's where Yulu lit the fire. It certainly is difficult for us because what they're doing is they are digging up part of the creation story. It's part of Yulu's Dreaming, Yulu's Muda, and so certainly we don't like them mining the coal but you can't tell white man not to do anything, they just do it anyway. It is our land but with the way the government is we can't do anything.*

*You know sites, when you mess with sites you're actually taking away a piece of religion, a piece of Culture, a piece of tradition and it's irreplaceable.*

**Image 3.** The two snakes in the Yulu's coal story became these two hills.

Noel is speaking of the two hills at Copley. What does he tell the children the snakes were doing there?

What is the Adnyamathanha name that Noel Wilton uses for the two snakes?

The mining company dug up two rocks, shaped like damper, from Yulu's Muda (Dreaming site).

Adnyamathanha Elders told the coal mining company that Yulu's fire setting lay beneath the ground and that the rocks, shaped like damper, were the damper he cooked on his way to Wilpena Pound. For the Adnamathanha people the coal being dug by Leigh Creek Mine are the embers of the fire that Yulu lit as he travelled toward Wilpena pound to conduct an initiation ceremony.

The Argyle Diamond mine sits on the Barramundi Dreaming site. The diamonds for the people that own that land are the Barramundi scales.

**Research** to find other places where resources being dug from the ground relate to Dreaming stories.

**Discuss** as class what kind of relationship exists between these stories and scientific findings.

---

<b><i>The Danger Seed</i></b>	<b>Karajarri</b>	<b>Kimberley</b>	<b>Culture &amp;</b>
<b><i>- Bidyadanga</i></b>			<b>Community</b>

---

After viewing the film you may like to hold class/group discussions focusing on questions or statements like:

- In the film Mervin Mulat Mulardy, tell us about the songs. Why are they so important to the Karajarri people?
- Who holds the Culture and is responsible for passing it on?
- Write a paragraph explaining how, traditionally, old people travelled and what food they caught or found.
- How do stories sometimes come to some of the people?

This film, *The Danger Seed*; Wynston's story, *My Karajarri People*, in the Community theme; and Murray in *The Moon and Gecko*, all speak of history. *The Danger Seed* and *My Karajarr People* speak of an important historical event from the perspective of the Karajarri people. European historians tell it in a different way. View the two web sites provided in the 'Background information for teachers' resource: one describes a massacre in the Northern Territory, the other gives a European version of the massacre of Karajarri people at Mowla Bluff. Copy the Mowla Bluff description and distribute it to students, then you may like to guide them in writing a critical review. Ask students to:

- read the European version of the Mowla Bluff massacre;
- discuss, in groups, differences between this account and that of the Aboriginal perspective shown in *The Danger Seed* film and transcript;
- compare, working individually, the European perspective with the Karajarri people's perspective; then
- write a review analysing these differences and considering why they differ.



**Another film**, *The Creation of Trowenna*, expresses the importance of Culture in a different way. In it Kartanya tells us:

*We have such a rich Culture and heritage that you know you want to pass it down, and if you don't, we'll lose who we are as people in Tasmania.*

Ruth tells us:

*The Culture gives us an anchor that we come from ancient, ancient belonging, and so that we have this great cradle to sit in. And that Culture is like a breath that when we breathe Culture we're actually breathing our life.*

**Discuss** and write about what you understand these two statements mean.

## Children's stories

**Explain** you're going to show videos of children telling stories about their communities. Transcripts of these are provided as BLMs.

---

**Bilwal**

**Hosannah, Kirra  
and Holly**

**Jarlmadangah**

---

**View the video:** <http://sharingstories.org/content/Culture>

Around Jarlmadangah, south-east of Derby in Kimberley region Holly, Kirra and Hosanna record Elder Annie Milgin as she demonstrates how to harvest and process tree sap called 'bilwal'. She makes a medicine for skin irritations and sore throats. Annie is a trained health worker who uses bush medicines like bilwal in her clinic at Jarlmadangah community.

### Follow up focus points, and student activities:

- How does Annie harvest the bilwal from the tree?
- Who told Annie how to make the medicine?
- Annie tells us this medicine can treat a list of illnesses and infections. What are they?
- Annie says: 'you got 'em around the community'. What does she mean?
- Do you or your family make any of your own medicines?
- Annie thinks it's important to hold traditional medicinal knowledge for future generations. Why do you think that is the case?
- Where do you get your medicines? Do you know what's in them and how they're made?
- What medicines do you know of that you can find in your own local environment or garden (aloe vera for example)?

**Note the steps** in Annie's recipe, then write a procedure for making bilwal medicine.

**Research, or interview** local Elders, to find out which plants local Aboriginal communities might have used as bush tucker and bush medicine, in the area that you live. Write a report with your findings.

**Use the image** of bilwal provided in the photo gallery, and write a recount of what you have learnt from this clip <http://sharingstories.org/content/photo-gallery>.

**Then, take a photograph** of a medicine that you have learned grows in your own environment. Write a brief report about its qualities and medicinal application.

---

***Ngatji and the Paddlesteamer***

---

**Multiple creators NSW**

**Paakantji**

---

**View the video** <http://sharingstories.org/content/Culture>

*Ngatji and the Paddlesteamer* made by members of the Paakantji community in Wilcannia NSW and tells of a Dreaming creature that lives in the Darling River. The story told by Elder Murray Butcher tells of how Ngatji became upset with noise of paddlesteamers and sank the boat. All the bales of wool fell into the river. The Paakantji people were camping on the banks of the river and dived down to pull the wool from the water. After 'clever men' sang Ngatji to sleep, the bales could be safely retrieved, as well as the body of one man who died.

The story is from the point of view of the Paakantji people. Murray Butcher explains that Europeans see it from a different point of view. Their interpretation, and historical perspective, about the same event, is quite different.

**Follow up focus points, and student activities:**

- Murray tells us why he thinks *Ngatji and the Paddlesteamer* is an important story, what does he say?
- The story tells of a paddlesteamer sinking on the Darling River, at Steamers Point. It addresses two different historical recounts of why this happened. What are they and how do they differ?
- Before the Paakantji people could retrieve the bales of wool and the person who died as a result of the crash, what did they do first? How was it done?
- What was the name the special people the Paakantji people asked for help? What does this name mean?
- Do you know anyone who has those kinds of powers?

**Ask students to write a recount of the story.** Discuss their recounts – students may not all remember/write down the same events or people. Use the individual recounts to write a comprehensive class story.

Owen, and other students, drew scenes from the story to illustrate it as Murray told it. This was an imaginative way to provide viewers with extra details that weren't mentioned in telling the story.

**Watch the story again and note** some things shown in the illustrations, that weren't in Murray's telling of the story.

**Choose another story, or film, to illustrate in this way.** Each student may choose a scene, or teachers may allocate scenes to students.

**Make a class book or slide show** using the story and illustrations. You'll need a written script to accompany the slide show. You may choose to record the story and play it to accompany the slide show – students will have to work out how to synchronise sound and visuals.

*Thunderman* is also explored in the Community theme.

**View the video:** <http://sharingstories.org/content/Culture>

This video of the story is made by Cyril who lives in Galiwinku on Elcho Island. The story is about the Thunderman that his mother Mavis Ganambarr makes as weavings, and sells at the Cultural Centre. It tells of how the Thunderman spirit brings rain to Elcho Island.

**Follow up focus points, and student activities:**

- What does Mavis say about the Thunderman's real name? Why do you think she doesn't use it in this video?
- Why did she make the weaving of the Thunderman?
- In the story Mavis says, '*And then the Thunderman calls out to all the clans. He calls to all the clans who must sing his song.*' Why do you think she says they must sing?
- What happens when the clans sing?

**Retell the story** of *Thunderman*, explaining how it affects the community.

**Illustrate** an event or person in the story.

**Research** to find pictures of the bush foods mentioned in the story. Add any others which may be found in the area.

**Create** an artwork depicting all these bush foods, and animals that feed on them, which form part of the Aboriginal people's diet. It may be a poster, painting, collage of pictures/photos, or a form of your own choice.

**Use illustrations and models** shown as Mavis tells the story, to inspire students to make different creations from either the story or students' own communities.

**Research** any other groups who have stories to explain the weather.

**Write a description** of the communities in each of the three stories, as well as one of their own community. Discuss similarities and differences.

## Vignettes – videos and transcripts

Reenie Pascal from Maningrida in Arnhem Land in NT explains some of the cultural protocol and practices that take place at the end of the first stage of Initiation, a ceremony through which boys become young men.

Reenie tells of a young man's ceremony where he 'becomes a man', and how and why after the ceremony, he's covered in termite nest. This is an important part of Culture for Reenie's people who live at Maningrida. All boys must go through the ceremony to become men.

**Follow up questions and activities:**

- Reenie doesn't describe the ceremony itself, rather she tells us about what happens after it. Why do you think she does this?
- Find out if the ceremony is a secret one that only men can know about. How do you think knowledge of this ceremony can be passed down through generations?

**Research** other language groups and find out whether they have similar ceremonies. Explain what those that aren't secret, entail. Write a paragraph about these ceremonies.

**Ask students to investigate** what other ceremonies are secret. That is, knowledge of them is only known to either men or women. List these ceremonies and the communities they belong to.

**Describe and illustrate** a ceremony that is public knowledge? The photo gallery may help you with an image: <http://sharingstories.org/content/photo-gallery>

---

**William Watson**

**Jarlmadangah, WA**

**Culture, Country**

---

William Watson speaks about ceremonies and important protocols when visiting or returning to Country as well as the beings that live there. He also explains that Country is family.
--

This vignette is also discussed in the Country theme.

William says:

*When you are in Country even in other people's place, that special waterhole that rock hole that jila (waterhole) you have to recognise that important area. And there are certain rituals and ceremonies about recognising the Country and the things that belong to that Country.*

Why does he say these Cultural rituals or ceremonies are necessary? What effects do they have?

Later, he talks about a Cultural practice that brings with it certain responsibilities, and may provide a person's totem.

*Wherever you're from you're named after that Country, that certain waterhole, that certain sand hill, that tree that's growing there ...*

*He is named after that area, he been conceived in that area, something has given the mother and father that child from that area the spirit from there. So he belongs to that area so that his birthright.*

**Research** totems, and how they are given to Aboriginal people.

**Research on the Internet** William's community, and see if you can find information about totems given to the people.

Resource created by Alwyn Evans and Liz Thompson.

© 2013 Sharing Stories Pty Ltd (except where otherwise indicated). This material may be used (but not modified), reproduced, published, and communicated free of charge for non-commercial educational purposes until 31 December 2018, provided all copyright notices and acknowledgements are retained.