

ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER  
HISTORIES AND CULTURES

DEPARTMENT OF  
EDUCATION  
*learners first*

# LIVING CULTURES – FIBRES

**FOUNDATION**

The  
**Orb**

**FIBRES****ON COUNTRY**

Learners explore the concept of being on Country. They consider the importance of Country for Tasmania's Aboriginal people and learn from Aboriginal people by experiencing a journey with them on Country.

**CROSS CURRICULUM PRIORITY****Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures**

*Organising idea 2*

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities maintain a special connection to and responsible for Country/Place.

**ACHIEVEMENT STANDARDS****English**

Students identify connections between texts and their personal experience.

They understand that their texts can reflect their own experiences.

**CONTENT DESCRIPTORS****English**

Recognise that texts are created by authors who tell stories and share experiences that may be similar or different to students' own experiences (ACELTI575).

Deliver short oral presentations to peers (ACELY1647).

**GENERAL CAPABILITIES****Critical and Creative Thinking**

*Inquiring – identifying, exploring and organising information and ideas*

Identify and clarify information and ideas

Level 1 – identify and describe familiar information and ideas during a discussion or investigation

**Ethical Understanding**

*Reasoning in decision making and actions*

Reason and make ethical decisions

Level 1 – identify examples from stories and experiences that show ways people make decisions about their actions

**Intercultural Understanding**

*Recognising culture and developing respect*

Investigate culture and cultural identity

Level 1 – share ideas about self and belonging with peers.

**Learning Goals**

*Learners will:*

- » Investigate what it means to be on Country.
- » Discover animal tracks and evidence of animals in the environment.
- » Discuss the use of fire as a land management tool.
- » Investigate what makes a good habitat.

**Learning Sequence****Activating and Engaging**

*Land Links*

View *Tried and True* from the 'Living Cultures – Fibre' section of The Orb.

Generate a class discussion around what students saw in the clips.

Invite an Aboriginal Sharer of Knowledge from the ASK Program, or a Tasmanian Aboriginal community member to go on Country and investigate the local environment with learners.

Ask learners:

- » How do we know that there are animals that have been here?
- » What evidence can we find of animals within this area?

With assistance of the Community member, ask learners to investigate Country to find evidence of scats, tracks and homes.

Have learners draw and record the tracks and scats found to share back to the whole group.

Read *Mummy, What's Country?* by Tanya McQueen and Judi Rhodes.

Ask learners:

- » What would it feel like to be on Country?
- » Why would we have to know all that is going on in the environment if we lived on Country?
- » Do you feel like you belong to this Country? Why or why not?

Ask the community member to share what Country means to them.

### Exploring and Discovering

#### *Learning Map*

Hide puppets or soft toys of animals in likely habitats in the environment. Include native and introduced species.

Ask learners:

- » Which animals are native to this environment?
- » Which animals are introduced?

Discuss whether introduced animals might have changed the environment since being introduced to Tasmania.

#### *Symbols and Images*

Organise learners into groups and ask them to search for the animals in the environment and record their findings by making a map.

Have learners share their findings and discuss how balance is a very important concept within Aboriginal land management.

Talk about Fire and the uses for now and how Country is managed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to maximise the productivity of the land.

### Synthesising and Applying

#### *Non-verbal*

Discuss the totem system with learners. Ask learners to identify one of the animals discussed and how they share a trait with that animal. It might be the slow and steady wombat, or the cheeky possum.

Learners use clay to shape the likeness of the animal that they identify with. This stage can be done on Country, or back in the classroom. However, it is important for the clay to be dry before firing.

On Country, have learners help create a fire to act as a kiln for their objects. Ensure learners keep the fire going until there is a deep coal bed and then an adult places the dried clay objects in the coals. Maintain heat above the coals to ensure objects are fired.

Learners can also enjoy damper and stories around the fire if preparations are made.

Generate a class discussion:

- » Fire was important for land management and keeping balance in the environment – why else

might fire have been important to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples?

Discuss the importance of storytelling to knowing and locating places on Country. Ensure learners discuss how storytelling was a way of explaining Aboriginal Law and that the laws were central to Aboriginal life.

Ask learners to retrieve their objects from the fire when the coals have cooled and prepare a recount to share to the class.

Learners will address:

- » What animal did I make and why?
- » What does Country mean to me?
- » How can we protect Country?

### Success Criteria

#### *Learners:*

- » Describe how balance is an important part of Country.
- » Identify a few native or introduced animals.
- » Create an animal and describe how it was chosen as a totem.
- » Reflect on what Country means to them.
- » Share practical ways to manage and enrich the land.

#### GOING FURTHER:

Have learners share their objects in a display for parents and community members to see. Develop a book as a class to describe ways to maintain balance on Country.

Have learners investigate other aspects of land management, such as weed management and rubbish disposal. Present the book to the school or local council to educate others on culturally sensitive land management.


Invite a member of the Aboriginal Community or the Aboriginal Sharers of Knowledge (ASK) program to describe what Country means to them, to the school community. Link in with Landcare or other organisations to establish a project that the students can continue to engage in as they go through their schooling.

## Resources


- » [The Orb](#)
- » [Australian Curriculum](#)
- » [Aboriginal Sharers of Knowledge \(ASK Program\) Guidelines](#)
- » [Aboriginal Sharers of Knowledge \(ASK Program\) Application Form](#)
- » The Aboriginal Education Library: email [Aboriginal.education.library@education.tas.gov.au](mailto:Aboriginal.education.library@education.tas.gov.au) or telephone 03 6165 5480 for more resources, including the ones listed below.
- » The Eight-way Framework of Aboriginal Pedagogy
- » Story: [Mummy, What's Country?](#)
- » Parks and Wildlife website: [Wildlife of Tasmania](#)
- » Parks and Wildlife website: [Plants of Tasmania](#)
- » Land Care Australia website: [Land Care Australia](#)

## Glossary


### *Aboriginal Law*

Also known as Lore. Handed down by the Creation Ancestors and upheld by Aboriginal communities for thousands of generations, Law includes the accepted and traditionally patterned ways of behaving and shared understandings relating to land, language, ways of living, kinship, relationships and identity. 


### *Connection*

A relationship in which a person or thing is linked or associated with something else. 

### *Country*

In Aboriginal English, a person's land, sea, sky, rivers, sites, seasons, plants and animals; place of heritage, belonging and spirituality; is called 'Country'. 


### *Cultural Practice*

Objects, events, activities, social groupings and language that participants use, produce and reproduce in the context of making meaning in everyday life. 

### *Endemic*

Native and restricted to a certain place. 

### *Habitat*

The natural environment in which an animal or plant usually lives. 


### *Identity*

The characteristics determining who or what a person or thing is. 


### *Land Use*

The process by which lands are evaluated and assessed to become a basis for decisions involving land disposition and utilization. 


### *Map*






A drawing of a particular area such as a city, a Country, or a continent, showing its main features as they would appear if you looked at them from above. 

### *Sustainability*

Avoidance of the depletion of natural resources in order to maintain an ecological balance. 

### *Totem*

An object (such as a plant or animal) serving as the emblem of a family or clan and often as a reminder of its ancestry. 

	Australian Museum
	Cambridge Dictionary
	IGI Global
	Merriam Webster
	OECD
	<a href="#">Oxford Online Dictionary</a>



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