

ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER  
HISTORIES AND CULTURES

# LIVING CULTURES – SHELL STRINGING

YEAR 2

The  
**Orb**

SHELL STRINGING

# MAIREENER EYE

Learners will investigate the stories of Tasmanian Aboriginal shell stringers to understand the complexities of gathering specific shells used in the cultural art of shell necklace making. They will make connections between cultural practices and connection to 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 responsibility for Country/Place.

#### *Organising idea 5*

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' ways of life are uniquely expressed through ways of being, knowing, thinking and doing.

## ACHIEVEMENT STANDARDS

### English

When discussing their ideas and experiences, students use everyday language features and topic-specific vocabulary. They explain their preferences for aspects of texts using other texts as comparisons. They create texts that show how images support the meaning of the text.

### Humanities and Social Sciences (HASS)

Students describe a person, site and/or event of significance in the local community and explain why places are important to people.

They recognise that places have different meaning for different people and why the significant features of places should be preserved.

They reflect on their learning to suggest ways to care for places and sites of significance. Students develop narratives about the past and communicate findings in a range of texts using language to describe direction, location and the passing of time.

## CONTENT DESCRIPTORS

### English

Discuss how depictions of characters in print, sound and images reflect the contexts in which they were created (ACELTI587).

### Humanities and Social Sciences (HASS)

The importance today of a historical site of cultural or spiritual significance in the local area, and why it should be preserved (ACHASSK045).

The ways in which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples maintain special connections to particular Country/Place (ACHASSK049).

## GENERAL CAPABILITIES

### Intercultural Understanding

*Recognising culture and developing respect*

Investigate culture and cultural identity

Level 2 – identify and describe the various groups to which they belong and the ways people act and communicate within them

### Critical and Creative Thinking

*Generating ideas, possibilities and actions*

Imagine possibilities and connect ideas

Level 2 – build on what they know to create ideas and possibilities in ways that are new to them

## Learning Goals

*Learners will:*

- » Know that shells used for necklace making are scarce and that areas where they occur need protecting and respected.
- » Know that the art of identifying collecting, preparing and stringing shells is passed on through generations.
- » Understand that shell necklaces have great significance for Aboriginal people.

## Learning Sequence

### Activating and Engaging

*Story Sharing*

Have learners listen to: *Memories of our Mother Collecting Shells* p.31 and Karen Brown's poem *The Gatherers* p. 33 in *kanalaritja: An Unbroken String* read by their teacher.

Ask learners:

- » Why might these memories be special?
- » Why did the elders protect their spot for shelling?
- » What was talked about during this family time?
- » Why might these have been wonderful times?
- » What had to happen to get the jars full?
- » What were the jars filled with?

Have learners identify topic specific vocabulary from the two extracts and explain their meaning.

Have learners tell and write their own stories called *Memories of Mine* describing an event or activity that they remember.

Advise learners to use photographs or illustrations that shows how their images supports the meaning of their written story.

Ask learners:

- » What topic specific vocabulary have they used?
- » How does their illustration help to tell their story?

### Exploring and Discovering

*Deconstruct–Reconstruct*

View *Full Circle* from the ‘Living Cultures – Shelters’ section of *The Orb*.

Ask learners:

- » What might Bronwyn mean when she talks about her ‘maireener eye’?
- » How does Bronwyn go about finding and collecting shells for her necklaces?
- » What stories do you have in your family?
- » What part of the shell stringing process is she willing to share with her young son Arlo?
- » How does Bronwyn develop a special connection to the beach that she found?
- » How do the shells that Bronwyn collect help her to stay connected to her ancestors?
- » What is special for Bronwyn about shell gathering and stringing?
- » How does Bronwyn and Arlo demonstrate that they continue their culture and connection to Country?

### Story Sharing

*Community Links*

*Land Links*

Invite an Aboriginal Sharer of Knowledge via the ASK program to join learners on Country, either at a beach, or *putalina*, *tiagarra* or *piyuri kitina* and talk about the significance of that place, and Country to Tasmanian Aboriginal people.

Ask the invited guest to discuss why the chosen place is significant to them and to share stories about their connection to that place.

### Synthesising and Applying

*Symbols and Images*

Have learners illustrate, tell and write a story that describing their understanding of the role shell stringers play in ensuring that Tasmanian Aboriginal culture continues to be passed down from one generation to another.

Have learners record or perform, and present their stories to share with the guest Aboriginal community member(s), others in their school and their own families.

### Success Criteria

*Learners:*

- » Describe how shells used for necklace making are scarce and that areas where they occur need protecting and respected.
- » Recount a story from an Aboriginal shell stringer that tells us that the art of identifying collecting, preparing and stringing shells is passed on through generations.
- » Demonstrate how shell necklaces have great significance for Aboriginal people.
- » Identify relationships between shell stringing, culture and connection to Country.

## 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
- » Various, 2016, *kanalaritja: An Unbroken String*, Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery
- » TMAG online resource: [kanalaritja: An Unbroken String](#)
- » Visual Resource: *Cultural Jewels [kit]: Tasmanian Aboriginal Shell Collecting and Stringing*, 2010, Department of Education Tasmania

## Glossary

### *Shell stringing*

Shell-stringing was (and remains) a painstaking process, requiring knowledge of coastal resources as well as great skill and patience. NMA

### *maireener*

A type of shell used in necklaces created by Tasmanian Aboriginal women. UTAS

NMA National Museum Australia

UTAS University of Tasmania



State of Tasmania (Department of Education)  
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