

ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER  
HISTORIES AND CULTURES

# LIVING CULTURES – SHELL STRINGING

YEAR 4

The  
**Orb**

**SHELL STRINGING**

# THE STRING IS UNBROKEN

Learners identify factors that shape identities, including cultural practice and connections to others. They learn about how Tasmanian Aboriginal people have formed their identity through practicing their continuing culture.

## CROSS CURRICULUM PRIORITY

### Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures

#### 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

Students fluently read texts that include varied sentence structures, unfamiliar vocabulary including multisyllabic words.

They express preferences for particular types of texts, and respond to others' viewpoints. They listen for and share key points in discussions.

They understand how to express an opinion based on information in a text. They create texts that show understanding of how images and detail can be used to extend key ideas.

They make presentations and contribute actively to class and group discussions, varying language according to context.

## CONTENT DESCRIPTORS

### English

Understand that social interactions influence the way people engage with ideas and respond to others for example when exploring and clarifying the ideas of others, summarising their own views and reporting them to a larger group (ACELA1488).

Discuss literary experiences with others, sharing responses and expressing a point of view (ACELT1603).

## GENERAL CAPABILITIES

### Intercultural Understanding

*Interacting and empathising with others*

Communicate across cultures

Level 3 – recognise there are similarities and differences in the ways people communicate, both within and across cultural groups

Empathise with others

Level 3 – imagine and describe the feelings of others in a range of contexts

*Reflecting on intercultural experiences and taking responsibility*

Reflect on intercultural experience

Level 3 – identify and describe what they have learnt about themselves and others from real, virtual and vicarious intercultural experiences

## Learning Goals

*Learners will:*

- » Describe how the continuing practice of shell stringing shapes identity for Tasmanian Aboriginal people.
- » Explore how culture continues in the face of events that change and disrupt peoples' traditional cultural practices.
- » Explore factors that shape identity.

## Learning Sequence

### Activating and Engaging

*Story Sharing*

Explore with the learners the poem *The String is Unbroken* by Theresa Sainty from *kanalaritja: An Unbroken String*.

Have learners explore and share their understanding of the phrases from the poem such as: 'unbroken', 'not yet complete', and, 'memories are intertwined with string' in relation to continuing culture.

Ask learners:

- » What might the poem be telling us about culture?
- » What might be the significance of string?
- » What might the string be representing?

Have learners work in three groups to complete the learning task Visualising Song from the 'Illustrations of Practice' section of The Orb. Students are to prepare a visual interpretation of one of the three extracts from *kanaloritja: An Unbroken String* by Theresa Sainty and Karen Brown.

- » *The String is Unbroken*, Theresa Sainty, Introduction
- » *pakana-mana takara lutriwita*, Theresa Sainty, p. 11
- » *The Gatherers*, Karen Brown, p.33

Invite a local elder, community member or member of the Aboriginal Shares of Knowledge (ASK) program to explore their understanding of culture and how it might have been interrupted.

Have learners pose questions to ask the guest speaker to discuss their experience of continuing culture. (See *Listening and Telling* from the 'Illustrations of Practice' section of The Orb.)

Have learners re-tell the guest speaker's story to them and present it as a written, visual or oral piece to share their understandings with the guest speaker.

### Exploring and Discovering

#### Learning Maps

Refer to the grade 4 *From Gumnuts to Buttons* task *Before and After* in the 'Learning Task' section of The Orb. Have learners respond to different perspectives of the contact between Aboriginal and European people in Tasmania and summarise their thoughts through writing and image making.

Complete the *From Gumnuts to Buttons* experience, using the resource book to guide the process.

As a class, de-brief *From Gumnuts to Buttons* and discuss how learners responded emotionally.

Have learners individually re-write their six word story after participating in *From Gumnuts to Buttons* using the second coloured sticky note. With a partner, ask learners to share their two stories and chat about how their thinking may have changed after participating in *From Gumnuts to Buttons* experience.

#### Story Sharing

View *Cultural Evolution* from the 'Living Cultures – Shell Stringing' section of The Orb.

Ask learners:

- » How does Lola contribute to her continuing culture?
- » How does Lola's connection to her culture shape her identity?
- » Why might Lola have been reluctant to share her culture when she started stringing?
- » How does Lola suggest that young people can learn about their culture?

Discuss with the learners:

- » How might shell stringing help keep Lola's culture strong, resilient, rich?
- » How might shell gatherers and stringers help Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples maintain communities and cultures that are strong, resilient, rich and diverse?

### Synthesising and Applying

#### Deconstruct-Reconstruct

Have learners choose a figure from the book *kanaloritja: An Unbroken String* to research and explore how shell stringers contribute to the unbroken string of Tasmanian Aboriginal culture.

Have learners compare their research with one another.

### Success Criteria

Learners:

- » Explain how the continuing practice of shell stringing shapes identity for Tasmanian Aboriginal people.
- » Describe how culture continues in the face of events that change and disrupt peoples' traditional cultural practices.
- » Identify factors that shape identity.

## 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](#)

## Glossary

### *Shell stringing*

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

 National Museum Australia



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