

ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER  
HISTORIES AND CULTURES

DEPARTMENT OF  
EDUCATION  
*learners first*

# FROM GUMNUTS TO BUTTONS

YEAR 10

The  
**Orb**

FROM GUMNUTS TO BUTTONS

# RABBIT PROOF FENCE

Learners explore the role of family and cultural identity through the film *Rabbit Proof Fence*. They explore personal understanding of the world through the lens of human experience.

## CROSS CURRICULUM PRIORITY

### Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures

*Organising idea 6*

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples live in Australia as first peoples of Country or Place and demonstrate resilience in responding to historic and contemporary impacts of colonisation.

## ACHIEVEMENT STANDARDS

### English

Students evaluate how text structures can be used in innovative ways by different authors. They explain how the choice of language features, images and vocabulary contributes to the development of individual style.

### History

Students analyse the causes and effects of events and developments and explain their relative importance. They explain the context for people's actions in the past.

## CONTENT DESCRIPTORS

### English

Compare and evaluate a range of representations of individuals and groups in different historical, social and cultural contexts (ACELT1639).

### History

Background to the struggle of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples for rights and freedoms before 1965, including the 1938 Day of Mourning and the Stolen Generations (ACDSEH104).

## GENERAL CAPABILITIES

### Intercultural Understanding

*Recognise culture and develop respect*

Develop respect for cultural diversity

Level 5 – understand the importance of maintaining and celebrating cultural traditions for the development of personal, group and national identities

*Interacting and empathising with others*

Empathise with others

Level 5 – imagine and describe the feelings and motivations of people in challenging situations

## Learning Goals

*Learners will:*

- » describe how the film informs the idea of family and kinship
- » understand events that act as turning points within the film
- » explain how identity is shaped through our experience and the greater idea of human experience.

## Learning Sequence

### Activating and Engaging

*Community Links*

View the film *Rabbit Proof Fence*.

Explore the themes of the film and detail, including:

- » turning points in the text where the lives of the characters change drastically, and
- » turning points in Australian History detailed in the film.

Ask learners:

- » What do the main characters' experience of family tell us about their sense of identity?

### Exploring and Discovering

*Deconstruct–Reconstruct*

Ask learners to consider:

- » What does 'family' mean?
- » How important is family to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples?
- » What are the main issues that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people face when maintaining family and connection (to culture/country/identity)?

- » What are the cultural practices shown in the film *Rabbit Proof Fence*?

View *Motion Transfer* from the 'Living Cultures – Dance' section of The Orb.

Ask learners:

- » How does dance strengthen connection to family?
- » How does song strengthen connection to family?

Have learners explore the questions within small groups and record the contributions using a Jig Saw strategy.

Share back to the class the ideas of the class.

Ask learners:

- » How would you feel if you were to be disconnected from your family?
- » What does family mean to you?

Have learners complete a short response to each of the questions.

Ask learners to define the term 'human experience' and record the results.

Explore the commonalities of human experience:

- » What are the themes that shape people's lives?
- » Does family shape any of these themes, or is it a theme in itself?
- » How does the role of family shape who we are?

Review the [Declaration of Human Rights](#).

In the film, the children of mixed race are called 'half-caste'. This term is no longer used as it is considered offensive.

- » Why might this term be offensive to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples?
- » What was wrong with what the Australian Government were doing with the mixed race children?

Have learners research the concept of Stolen Generations. Ask learners:

- » Why do you think the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children taken from their families are known as the 'Stolen Generations'?
- » It was Government policy that the mixed race children be removed. Why do you think they thought this was necessary?
- » What is assimilation?
- » Imagine being taken away from your family. How does it make you feel?

Have learners research the 2008 Rudd government apology. Ask learners:

- » Why do you think the Rudd government chose to apologise?
- » Describe how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples may have felt when the Prime Minister was apologising.
- » Why is it considered one of the most important speeches in Australian history?
- » The apology has been described as an important part of the healing process. Discuss.
- » Do you think it'll help the reconciliation process? Why or why not?
- » Should the Stolen Generations receive compensation?
- » The government has stated there will be no compensation fund. Discuss.
- » Is it ever too late to say sorry?
- » There was 'bi-partisan' support for the apology. What does this mean?

### Synthesising and Applying

#### *Deconstruct–Reconstruct*

Have learners write a response to the text in the form of a letter to Daisy, Molly, or Grace. In the letter, learners explore:

- » importance of family
- » hope and determination, and
- » cultural identity (through tracking, dance, connection to country).

### Success Criteria

*Learners:*

- » explain the importance of family (both their own, and the main characters')
- » describe how cultural practice develops a sense of 'being part of a whole'
- » describe key events that occurred in the lives of Daisy, Molly and Grace.

## 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
- » *From Gumnuts to Buttons [kit]: a walk through Tasmanian history from an Aboriginal perspective 2nd edition*, Aboriginal Education Services, Tasmania

### NOTE TO TEACHER:

The *From Gumnuts to Buttons* resource was distributed to all schools. It is stored in a large 'paint-like' tin and all the items needed for conducting the activity are stored in this container.

Please ask your librarian/library technician if you can't locate this resource.

Inviting parents to participate would add value to experience and provide opportunities for students to de-brief.

- » *Rabbit Proof Fence*, a film by Phillip Noyce, 2002
- » Pilkington Garimara D, 2002, *Follow the Rabbit-Proof Fence*, 2nd edition, University of QLD Press, St Lucia, QLD
- » [Follow the Rabbit Proof Fence resource](#)
- » [The National Apology Fact Sheet](#)
- » Jig-Saw (Cooperative Learning Activity)
  1. Divide learners into groups of six.
  2. Appoint one student from each group the leader.
  3. Each learner takes responsibility for each question.
  4. Each learner takes a segment of the jig-saw to complete their response.
  5. The team becomes an expert group that shares with the class.

More information at: [www.jigsaw.org](http://www.jigsaw.org)

## Glossary

### Half-caste

An offensive term to describe a person whose parents are of different races. G

### Stolen Generations

The Stolen Generations (also known as Stolen Children) were the children of Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent who were removed from their families by the Australian Federal and State government agencies and church missions, under acts of their respective parliaments. The removals of those referred to as "half-caste" children were conducted in the period between approximately 1905 and 1967, although in some places mixed-race children were still being taken into the 1970s. W

### The National Apology

The National Apology [13th Feb, 2008] to the Stolen Generations came about as a recommendation from the National Inquiry into the separation of Aboriginal [and Torres Strait Islander] children from their families. It highlighted the suffering of Indigenous families under Commonwealth, state and territory Aboriginal protection and welfare laws and policies. CS

### Compensation

Money that is paid to someone in exchange for something that has been lost or damaged or for some problem. C

- C [Cambridge Dictionary](#)
- CS Creative Spirits
- G General understanding
- W Webster



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