

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY SHEET:

Year 1

Overview

This Year 1 unit is designed to give children an introduction to the presence and significance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and the Stolen Generations. The unit is designed to align with National Sorry Day (26 May), National Reconciliation Week (27 May–3 June) or NAIDOC Week (July) but it can be delivered at any time of the year.

The following four activities can be done in one day as a block or can be broken up over a week, a month or a term. They are designed to be done as a whole class, so the teacher can guide and support students. However, if resources are available the activities can be done in small groups with adult support.

Each of these activities is linked to Year 1 Australian Curriculum Content Descriptions, as well as the Australian Curriculum Cross-curriculum Priority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures.

These activities are designed to be a starting point for teachers to embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives into your classroom. For more activities and organisations to contact for support and information see the 'Continuing the work' section.

ACTIVITY 1: LITERATURE INTRODUCTION (20–30 MINUTES)

Teacher leads students in a guided reading session of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander story. This style of guided reading session is also designed as the beginning of the other three activities. Students create a yarning circle.

ACTIVITY 2: STORYTELLING TRADITION (30–40 MINUTES)

Students explore the oral storytelling tradition in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and create their own retelling of a story with freeze frames.

ACTIVITY 3: VIDEO RESPONSE (30–40 MINUTES)

Students view and respond to a video of a member of the Stolen Generations (Florence Onus) telling her story to her granddaughter. Whole class uses prepared illustrations by Donna Hensen to sequence and retell the story.

ACTIVITY 4: DISPLAY AND REFLECT ON LEARNING (40–60 MINUTES)

Students create a presentation or engage in small group discussion to verbally retell Florence Onus' story and then share their learning with their school and home community.

Checklist for preparing your classroom

- Liaise with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander resource centres, for example the [Dandiiri Community Library](#), to source age-appropriate texts on a range of topics including culture and country, dreaming stories, Stolen Generations stories, reconciliation, the National Apology to the Stolen Generations and NAIDOC Week as well as texts for your own reference. For initial suggestions, see the book list at the end of this document. You may also be able to source puzzles and games from the library that will be useful for group rotations or students who finish quickly.



- For your own background knowledge:

Read

- [Reconciliation Australia's fact sheet on the Apology to the Stolen Generations](#)
- [The Little Red Yellow Black Book](#)
- [The Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies \(AIATSIS\)](#) website for more information about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and history.

Watch

- [The Story of The Healing Foundation](#)
 - [Intergenerational Trauma Animation](#)
- Send a note or newsletter home to parents so they can facilitate and support discussion at home. If desired, distribute the Florence Onus video for parents using your sharing platform (Seesaw, Storypark, Facebook).
 - Prepare a wall of the classroom to hang student work on and use as a reference. For example it could include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags, images of books the class will be reading, images of prominent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and posters from The Healing Foundation etc.).
 - [Make a flower wall for your display](#). This could also be done as a separate Art activity. (The five-petal Native Cotton, Desert Rose, or Native Hibiscus, was originally chosen by members of the Kimberley Stolen Generation Aboriginal Corporation, and later endorsed by the National Sorry Day Committee, to symbolise the Stolen Generations. It was chosen because it is found across Australia and it is a survivor. Its colour denotes compassion and spiritual healing.)



Activity 1: Literature introduction (20–30 minutes)



Curriculum links

ENGLISH

- Discuss characters and events in a range of literary texts and share personal responses to these texts, making connections with students' own experiences. ([ACELT1582](#))
- Respond to texts drawn from a range of cultures and experiences. ([ACELY1655](#))
- Engage in conversations and discussions, using active listening behaviours, showing interest, and contributing ideas, information and questions. ([ACELY1656](#))

Resources

- Suggested book for this session: *My Country* by Ezekiel Kwaymullina and Sally Morgan
- Butchers' paper and pens
- Equipment to help you create a yarning circle (e.g. logs arranged outside, cushions arranged inside, an object that will act as a power instrument for speaker to hold)
- Read information about [yarning circles](#).

Lesson

INTRODUCTION

- Read the selected book, stopping to explain or answer questions if necessary.
- Once you have finished the book, discuss any key points. You might ask:
 - What did you like about the story?
 - What did you learn from the story?
 - Are there any words in the story that are new to you?
 - Use one word to describe how the book made you feel.
 - How does the author use illustration to help us feel something in the story?
- Record students' ideas on butchers' paper and display them on the classroom wall. This activity can also be used to activate students' prior knowledge about Aboriginal history and allow teachers to gauge any misinformation students may have about Aboriginal culture or history.
- This guided reading activity can be repeated with different books to expose students to a variety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander themes and create a rich Response to Reading wall.



CREATING A YARNING CIRCLE

- Introduce the children to the concept of a yarning circle and discuss its importance in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture. Yarning circles, also known as dialogue circles, have been used by Indigenous peoples from around the world for centuries to learn from a collective group, build respectful relationships, and to preserve and pass on cultural knowledge.
- As a group pick an appropriate place in the classroom that will be set up as a permanent yarning circle.
- Create the yarning circle using cushions/blankets if inside, or logs/mats/other appropriate material if outside.
- Practice using the yarning circle in this session by having students talk about the book they just read (if children need prompting, they can give one word to describe their thoughts and reactions to the book).

Activity 2: Storytelling tradition (30–40 minutes)

Curriculum links

ENGLISH

- Understand that people use different systems of communication to cater to different needs and purposes and that many people may use sign systems to communicate with others. ([ACELA1443](#))
- Recreate texts imaginatively using drawing, writing, performance and digital forms of communication. ([ACELT1586](#))

THE ARTS

- Explore role and dramatic action in dramatic play, improvisation and process drama. ([ACADRM027](#))
- Present drama that communicates ideas, including stories from their community, to an audience. ([ACADRM029](#))

Resources

- Suggested book for this session: *A is for Aunty* by Elaine Russell
- For your own background knowledge, read information about [storytelling](#) in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures
- Suggested audio: recording of [Gelam—creator of dugong](#)
- Butchers' paper and pens for teacher to record brainstorming ideas.

Lesson

INTRODUCTION

- Read a text from the classroom library and discuss. You can choose to record students' thoughts and responses on butchers' paper.

STORYTELLING TRADITION

- Introduce the activity. Ask students to think about stories their parents or family have told them. Not stories from a book, but stories from the past when your parents or carers were little. *Funny stories about things you did when you were a baby, or important stories about significant events like how your parents met or how your family came to live in your home.*
- Model telling a story from your own past or your family's history.
- Ask students to work with a partner and share their stories with each other. Ask each pair to respond to each other's stories by telling each other how the story made them feel.
- Ask students how they told those stories. Did you need a book or illustrations to tell the story?
- Introduce the idea that in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, telling stories just using your voice (oral tradition) is very important.
- Often in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, stories would be told by Elders to educate, to entertain, to warn of danger, to teach about the importance of taking care of country and lots more. Today we are going to listen to a story from the Torres Strait.
- Play the students the audio of the Torres Strait Islander story *Gelam—creator of dugong* (do not show the video).
- Once students have listened to the recording once, discuss the key elements they can remember from the story and use butchers' paper to write out the sequence of events in the story. Keep it extremely simple with only 4–5 key events in the story.

PERFORMING THE STORY

- Put students into 4–5 small groups (depending on class size and how many key events the class listed from the story).
- Tell students that in their group they are going to create a 'photo' of one part of the story. Assign one event to each group and tell them to think of how they could use their bodies and work as a group to show their part of the story. If students need support, remind them that their 'photo' might need scenery (could someone be the waves or the trees? Could more than one person be the dugong?)

CONCLUSION

- Have all students sit as an audience. As you narrate the story, groups get up in order and freeze in their 'photo'. Audience can discuss and respond.
- If you have the resources, film the whole performance to show parents and carers or the school community.



Activity 3: Video response (30–40 minutes)

Curriculum links

ENGLISH

- Respond to texts drawn from a range of cultures and experiences. ([ACELY1655](#))
- Use comprehension strategies to build literal and inferred meaning about key events, ideas and information in texts that they listen to, view and read by drawing on growing knowledge of context, text structures and language features. ([ACELY1660](#))

Resources

- Suggested book for this session: *Sorry Day* by Coral Vass
- [Florence Onus Video](#)
- Butchers' paper for teacher with three columns drawn: 'I see...I think...I feel...'
- A4 colour print outs of [Donna Hensen's illustrations](#) (if you choose to do the sequencing activity in small groups, you will need multiple copies of the illustrations—a set for each group).
- Butchers' paper that is used to record retelling during class brainstorm.

Lesson

INTRODUCTION

- Read a text from the classroom library and discuss. You can choose to record students' thoughts and responses on butchers' paper.

VIDEO RESPONSE

- Remind students of the storytelling tradition discussed in the last lesson.
- Introduce the video. *Today, we are going to watch a video of an Elder telling a story to her granddaughter about her memories. This Elder, Florence Onus, was a member of the Stolen Generations. Before you were born, the governments in Australia created laws that said that many Aboriginal children should be taken from their homes and families to live in other places. Taking these children away from their homes and families caused a lot of pain and sadness that still exists today. The children who were taken are called the Stolen Generations. These children have grown up now and have families of their own and lots of them are still healing from their sadness.*
- Play the video of Florence Onus. Be prepared to answer questions and discuss ideas further.
- If required, watch the video for a second time and ask students to verbally respond with 'I hear...I think...I feel...' as a class brainstorm. Students can discuss in pairs and then share as a class.

STORY SEQUENCING

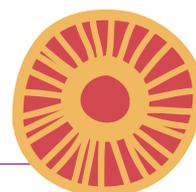
- Show students [illustrations by Donna Hensen](#) that depict Florence Onus' story. Make sure to show them out of order.
- As a class, students must sequence the images and retell Florence's story. Using butchers' paper, record class retelling for display in the classroom and reference for final activity.

CONCLUSION

- Use the yarnning circle to allow students to share their feelings and thoughts about the lesson.



Activity 4: Display and reflect on learning



Curriculum links

Make short presentations using some introduced text structures and language, for example opening statements. ([ACELY1657](#))

Resources

- [A4 colour print outs of Donna Hensen illustrations](#)
- iPads (one per student if possible) with the app Book Creator or any other presentation app
- space for students to have small group discussions
- recording device (video camera, iPhone)
- If you wish, create your own model version of the task to show students: take photos of each Donna Hensen illustration in order and then create an audio file for each illustration where you retell each part of Florence Onus' story over the appropriate illustration.



Lesson

INTRODUCTION

- Refer students to [Donna Hensen illustrations](#) they sequenced in the last activity. If required, verbally retell Florence Onus' story or reread *Sorry Day* by Coral Vass and Dub Leffler.

DIGITAL RETELL

- Introduce students to the task. Using iPads and the app Book Creator (or similar), ask students to photograph and upload the illustrations in order, one illustration per page.
- Then, ask students to create an audio file for each illustration where they retell each part of Florence Onus' story over the appropriate illustration. They can add music, graphics or any other appropriate elements in their presentation.

OR GROUP RETELL AND DISCUSSION (IF IPADS ARE NOT AVAILABLE)

- Put students into small groups of four or five. Give each group a [set of the Donna Hensen illustrations](#).
- While recording (either with video or audio) encourage the group to retell the story verbally using the illustrations as guides.
- Use questions and comments to prompt or guide a group discussion.
 - What do you think you have learnt about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people?
 - How did you feel when you watched the Elder's story or looked at the art?
 - What was your favourite story we read this week and why?
 - Why do you think it is important for us to learn about the Stolen Generations?

SHARING LEARNING

- Students can show and share their learning by playing their video to a buddy class, emailing the videos home for parents and carers or showing the videos at school assembly.

CONCLUSION

- Use the yarning circle to allow students to share their thoughts about their learning. They could answer the prompt questions as a class:
 - What do you think you have learnt about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people?
 - How did you feel when you watched the Elder's story or looked at the art?
 - What was your favourite story we read this week and why?
 - Why do you think it is important for us to learn about the Stolen Generations?

Continuing the work

Once you have completed these set lessons you might like to continue or follow up with some other activities. You could:

- Retain the [yarning circle](#) and use it for daily check ins for discussions.
- Start each day/week with an [Acknowledgement of Country](#) or display a written statement in the classroom.
- Send books from the classroom library home for students to discuss with parents and carers.
- In guided reading time, include stories by, about and full of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- Introduce children to language through ICTV's '[Our Bedtime Stories](#)' and research more about [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages](#).
- Invite parents and carers to an open day style session, where children can show their work.
- Seek further information or [incursions](#) from Elders, Stolen Generations members or community members.
- Join the [Narragunnawali community](#) (and develop a [Reconciliation Action Plan](#) for your school) to access a variety of curriculum resources about reconciliation and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and contributions.
- Hold [National Reconciliation Week](#) or [NAIDOC Week](#) celebrations in your school or attend events in your local community.



Books to read: Year 1

Here is a preliminary list of suggested books for your classroom, chosen with the guidance of Vanessa Kerley, teacher librarian at the Dandiiri Schools and Community Library.

For more book suggestions and support in choosing texts or to source other materials, please contact Dandiiri Community Library or the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Institute of Studies.

When choosing books for your classroom, investigate if the author and illustrator are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander and consider this as part of your selection.

RELEVANT TO THE STOLEN GENERATIONS

Tell Me Why by Robyn Templeton and Sarah Jackson

Sorry Sorry by Anne Kerr and Marda Pitt

Sorry Day by Coral Vass and Dub Leffler

Stories for Simon by Lisa Miranda Sarzin and Lauren Briggs

Bush Games and Knucklebones by Doris Kartinyeri and Kunyi June Anne McInerney

The Rabbits by John Marsden and Shaun Tan

ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER CULTURE AND STORIES

Munyourarn: Look And Learn – an Aboriginal Elder's Story by Vi McDermott and Leah King-Smith

Fair Skin Black Fella by Renee Fogorty

Look See, Look At Me! By Leonie Norrington and Dee Huxley

The Lizard Gang by Kirra Sommerville and Grace Fielding

A is for Aunty by Elaine Russell

The Sand Symbols by Nola Turner-Jensen and Skelton

Same, But a Little Bit Diff'rent by Kylie Dunstan

No Way Yirrikipayi by Alison Lester and the Children from the Milikapiti community

Mad Magpie by Gregg Dreise

Mrs White and the Red Desert by Josie Boyle

Kick With My Left Foot by Paul Seden and Karen Briggs

Shake a Leg by Boori Monty Pryor and Jan Ormerod

How Frogmouth Found Her Home by Ambelin Kwaymullina

Caterpillar and Butterfly by Ambelin Kwaymullina

Yirruwa Yirrilikenuma-langwa When We go Walkabout by Alfred Lalara and Rhoda Lalara

My Country by Ezekiel Kwaymullina and Sally Morgan

The Lost Girl by Ambelin Kwaymullina and Leanne Tobin

Our Island by the Children of Gununa with Alison Lester and Elizabeth Honey

Welcome to Country by Aunty Joy Murphy and Lisa Kennedy

ABC Dreaming by Warren Brim

Shapes of Australia by Bronwyn Bancroft

Big Rain Coming by Katrina Germein and Bronwyn Bancroft

