

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander place names and meanings

Australian Curriculum Links

Humanities and Social Sciences/Geography/Year 8/Geographical Knowledge and Understanding/Landforms and landscapes/ACHGK048

Australian Curriculum Content Description

Different types of landscapes and their distinctive landform features.

Australian Curriculum Elaboration

Exploring the names, meanings and significance of landform features from an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander perspective.

Australians Together Learning Framework



The Wound



Our History



Why Me?



Our Cultures



My Response

Essential question

In what ways are landscapes and landforms significant to people?

Introduction

Landscapes and landforms are distinctive and can be significant for many reasons. Before you begin, students should have an understanding of the various landscapes and landforms, how their features are classified and the processes that create them. From there, students will investigate the significance of some of these to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and explore the ways that mapping and geographic information systems (GIS) can be used to represent data.

Glossary

Terms that may need to be introduced to students prior to teaching the resource:


Traditional Custodian: an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person who's directly descended from the original inhabitants of a culturally defined area, and who's culturally connected to their Country. More generally, a custodian is a person who has custody of something; the keeper of something, responsible for its safekeeping.


Dreaming stories: a European term used to describe complex First Nations stories that offer an understanding of the land, rules for living (a moral code) and show connections between all people and all things through all times.



midden: a mound, often of shells from mussels and other shellfish, which marks the site of long-term human habitation throughout history.


missions and reserves: places run by Christian organisations or the government where many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were forced to live after colonisation.

sacred sites: landforms that have special meaning or significance, including rocks and trees; billabongs, waterholes and lakes; plains, valleys and hills; and **middens**, clearings and places of burial.

	Teacher guidance	Ideas for student activities
 <p>The Wound</p> <p>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives on the issue</p>	<p><i>It's a good idea to introduce students to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives at the beginning of a study so their views don't become peripheral to the topic.</i></p> <p>Landscapes and landform features are significant to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and Indigenous communities have cared for, mapped and managed Australia's complex landscape since long before colonisation.</p> <p>The arrival of Europeans, which started in 1788, changed Australia's landscapes and landforms dramatically. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were forcibly moved off the land they cared for. Fences, farming, mining and private land ownership made it extremely difficult for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to continue traditional land management practices. Because of this, large numbers of sacred sites were destroyed. Today, there are many sacred and significant sites all over Australia that are in danger, and many that Traditional Custodians are campaigning to protect.</p> <p>At the same time, many sites have survived. There are landscapes and landforms around Australia that have been recognised by the government as significant to First Nations Peoples, such as Uluru and Kata Tjuta (the Olgas) in the Northern Territory and the Budj Bim eel traps in Victoria (a complex aquaculture system developed by the Gunditjmarra People). There are also thousands of lesser-known sites across the country.</p>	<p>Values discussion</p> <p>As a class, discuss the ways a landform or landscape can hold different values: cultural, spiritual, aesthetic and economic.</p> <p>Personal connection discussion</p> <p>Think of places that are significant to you. What landscape and landforms make up these places? How do these places make you feel?</p> <p>What would you do if one of these places was threatened or destroyed?</p> <p>In pairs, discuss these places and what makes them important to you and / or your family.</p> <p>Personal place display</p> <p>Find or bring a photo of your place of significance to school. Annotate the image to label the landscape and landform types present. Display these in the classroom.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Create and annotate a photo sketch from a photo of your place of significance.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Create an annotated map of a selection of sites of significance to you and your family. Label the various landforms and landscapes and include brief explanations of the importance of each site.</p>

	Teacher guidance	Ideas for student activities
	<p>Useful resources</p> <p>This Common Ground learning resource includes direct quotes from First Nations people about the importance of land: https://www.commonground.org.au/learn/connection-to-country</p> <p>GeogSpace has a useful overview of photo sketching as a geographical skill that can be adapted for Year 8: https://www.geogspace.edu.au/verve/_resources/2.1.2.3_2_photo_sketching.pdf</p> <p>You may wish to show this clip, 'We Are Caretakers', from the Global Oneness Project. It features Bob Randall, a Yankunytjatjara Elder and a Traditional Custodian of Uluru: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IZmcRp6XbkA</p>	
 <p>Our History</p> <p>A background to the issue</p>	<p><i>Below is a summary of the information on the student handout:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have always been, and continue to be, deeply connected to land, landscapes and landforms. • For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people the land is something they belong to and care for. This is very different from a Western understanding of land. • Colonisation disrupted culture, land management and sources of food, and forced many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to live on missions and reserves away from their traditional lands. • British colonisers didn't understand Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's land management, connection to land or the cultural boundaries of the different Indigenous nations. • The British used the concept of <i>terra nullius</i> to justify the theft of the land. • There were over 250 Indigenous languages at colonisation, but only around 100 are spoken today and only 13 are still learned by children, (AIATSIS, 2019). • Europeans renamed many places – giving them European names even though they had Indigenous names that had been used since long before colonisation. <p>Useful resources</p> <p>This video and webpage from Australians Together explains the importance of land to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people: https://australiantogether.org.au/discover/indigenous-culture/the-importance-of-land/</p> <p>This ABC News In-depth clip, 'Australia's weird and wonderful place names – Did You Know?' is suited to Year 8 students and offers a quick overview of the reason behind many place names in Australia and the move to include or use Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander place names. Consider how students might reflect on the messages in the clip (6:12): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OWULMmmuJtE</p> <p>This document from the Australian Women's Weekly in 1961, is a comprehensive list of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's names for their homes. Students could consider the main purpose of the many names listed: https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/51392923</p>	<p>Local language map</p> <p>Use the language map of Australia to find out the different language groups of your area: https://aiatsis.gov.au/explore/articles/aiatsis-map-indigenous-australia</p> <p>How many different languages were spoken in your region or state prior to colonisation?</p> <p>Renaming exercise</p> <p>Come up with a new name for one of the significant places you identified in the first activity. Consider what you want that name to express – will it reflect the use of the site, history, family connection, the name of an important person, or some other reason? Explain your reasoning to the class.</p> <p>Renaming reflection</p> <p>In pairs, rename one of each other's significant places and give a reason why you chose that name – is it the name of the 'discoverer'?; does it reflect the experience or impression of that place?; is it to commemorate or pay respect to someone important?</p> <p>Reflect on how it feels to have your place of significance renamed.</p> <p>Class discussion</p> <p>Why might it be important to use Indigenous place names in Australia?</p>

	Teacher guidance	Ideas for student activities
	<p>Students can read this short SBS article, 'Push to change names linked to Australia's violent colonial past' (2017), and discuss the argument for removing some of the names applied by the colonising forces: https://www.sbs.com.au/news/push-to-change-names-linked-to-australia-s-violent-colonial-past</p>	
 <p>Why Me?</p> <p>Why am I learning this? What do I need to know to understand the issues?</p>	<p><i>Teachers are encouraged to engage in an in-depth examination that reflects the location and specific interests and academic levels of students. There are many online resources to help students explore local place names. Some ideas are provided below.</i></p> <p>Australia's Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment has an online interactive map of the National Heritage List, including places of significance to the First Peoples of Australia: https://www.environment.gov.au/heritage/places/national-heritage-list</p> <p>The ABC has many short videos exploring specific places and their Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander names through their site <i>This Place</i>: https://iview.abc.net.au/show/this-place</p> <p>This website from the State Library of NSW allows students to explore the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander place names of NSW in an interactive way: https://dxlab.sl.nsw.gov.au/muruview/</p> <p>SBS has an article by Sophie Verass that lists the names and meanings of many Australian places: https://www.sbs.com.au/nitv/article/2016/08/03/indigenous-meanings-australian-town-names</p> <p>There are a number of criteria a site is measured by before it receives World Heritage Listing. Use this example of the Budj Bim eel traps in Victoria to discuss those criteria and how the site is managed and protected: https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1577/</p>	<p>Research and collation of names</p> <p>Research online to find some place names in your local area or state. Create a table of both non-Indigenous and Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander names and their meanings. In a third column categorise the names to identify those which reflect geographical features and those which have other meanings.</p> <p>Research and reflect</p> <p>In small groups, watch one of the ABC's This Place videos. Using reliable sources, find out more about the cultural significance and geographical details of the place mentioned in the video. Show the video and share your findings with the class.</p>
 <p>Our Cultures</p> <p>Are there any ways that more knowledge of Indigenous cultures can help broaden our understanding of this topic?</p>	<p>It might be interesting for students to find out more about Indigenous stories of how the land was created and formed.</p> <p>In this clip, Max "Duramunmun" Harrison, an Elder of the Yuin Nation of south-east Australia, explains that "you can't see sacredness." This could be used to help discuss with students how non-Indigenous Australians often look at the sacred sites from a Western viewpoint, wanting more visual 'evidence of sacredness': https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZChy1D89iAA</p>	<p>Discussion topic</p> <p>What's sacred to you that others might not recognise?</p> <p>Artwork research and presentation</p> <p>Find an artwork of a landscape or landform by an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander artist. Research its significance and share your findings with the class. Use online satellite imagery to compare the similarities between the artwork and the landform or landscape.</p>

	Teacher guidance	Ideas for student activities
 <p>My Response</p> <p>How does this lesson help us do our part to work towards justice and reconciliation?</p>	<p><i>This Key Idea concludes the unit and asks students to consider how they would reframe the situation in Australia to bring about justice and equality for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. There are many ways to respond, including:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visit local Indigenous sites of significance to learn more about your area. • When a place is known by both an Indigenous name and a European name, show your respects by using the Indigenous name. • Share with family or friends what you've learnt about the significance of using Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander place names and the importance of those names to all Australians. • Find out about sacred sites that are currently in danger of being destroyed and the steps being taken to protect them – in your city or town, your council area, your state or the whole of Australia. <p>Note on GPS and fieldwork</p> <p>If your school has or can get access to GPS devices, students could complete a small group fieldwork project to map out a local significant landform. GeogSpace has a helpful pdf guide to using fieldwork for Years 7 and 8 here: http://www.geogspace.edu.au/support-units/fieldwork/fi-illustration1.html</p>	<p>Mapping responses</p> <p>Create a map to show the landforms of a specific area. Include as many traditional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander names as you can find.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Choose a place of significance from Australia's National Heritage List. Write up a factsheet and draw a labelled map for the site.</p> <p>Creative response</p> <p>Use paper mâché or play dough to create a model of a specific Australian landform, significant to First Peoples of the area. Explain to an audience, live or recorded, the characteristics of that type of landform and the importance of this specific landform to First Nations people.</p> <p>Report presentation</p> <p>In small groups, write a report to explain the significance of a local sacred site, supported by spatial technologies. Address ways the site can be managed sustainably to ensure it's protected for future generations. Present your report to the class either live or as a recording.</p>
<p>Other resources</p>	<p>Fraser Island: https://www.couriermail.com.au/travel/fraser-island-goes-the-way-of-ayers-rock-as-indigenous-community-urges-name-change/news-story/5776e9555bf13ebdae9e27b0799995bb</p> <p>K'gari or Fraser Island? interactive story: http://www.sbs.com.au/kgari/</p> <p>Dreaming stories through art: https://japingkaaboriginalart.com/info/stories/</p> <p>Dreaming stories and connection to land: http://www.kullillaart.com.au/dreamtime-stories/</p>	
<p>References</p>	<p>Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority (AAPA) 2020, 'What is a sacred site?', NT Government, viewed 18 March 2020, <https://www.aapant.org.au/sacred-sites/what-sacred-site></p> <p>Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) 2019, Indigenous Australian Languages, viewed 27 Feb 2020, <https://aiatsis.gov.au/explore/articles/indigenous-australian-languages></p> <p>Edwards in Poroch, N, Arabena, K, Tongs, J, Larkin, S, Fisher, J & Henderson, G 2009, Spirituality and Aboriginal People's Social and Emotional Wellbeing: A Review, Discussion Paper No. 11, Cooperative Research Centre for Aboriginal Health, Darwin, viewed 18 March 2020, <">http://nceta.flinders.edu.au/download_file/728//></p>	

	Teacher guidance	Ideas for student activities
	<p>Grieves, V. 2009, Aboriginal Spirituality: Aboriginal Philosophy, The Basis of Aboriginal Social and Emotional Wellbeing, Discussion Paper No. 9, Cooperative Research Centre for Aboriginal Health, Darwin, viewed 6 March 2020, <https://www.lowitja.org.au/page/services/resources/Cultural-and-social-determinants/mental-health/Aboriginal-Spirituality-Aboriginal-Philosophy></p> <p>Migration Heritage Centre 2011, Objects Through Time: Governor Bourke’s 1835 Proclamation of Terra Nullius, Australia’s migration history timeline, nsw.gov.au, <http://www.migrationheritage.nsw.gov.au/exhibition/objectsthroughtime/bourketerra/index.html></p> <p>Museum of Australian Democracy 2020, Documenting Democracy; Governor Bourke’s Proclamation 1835 (UK), foundingdocs.gov.au, viewed 17 April 2020, <https://www.foundingdocs.gov.au/item-did-42.html></p> <p>Tripcony, P 1999, Too obvious to see: Explaining the basis of Aboriginal spirituality, <https://www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/downloads/approach2/indigenous_read001_0708.pdf></p> <p>Wroth, D. and Veth, P. 2017, Kimberley Rock Art: An Overview, Japingka Aboriginal Art Gallery, viewed 17 April 2020, <https://japingkaaboriginalart.com/articles/kimberley-rock-art-overview/></p>	

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