# Colonisation

## Activity 1

Read the text below and answer the questions that follow.

Text 1 – Virgil, *Aeneid* *VII* 37–45

*The Trojans believed they were destined to live in Italy due to a prophecy, but there were already people there …*

Come now, Erato, and I’ll tell of the kings, the times,

the state of ancient Latium, when that foreign

troop first landed on Ausonia’s shores, and I’ll recall

the first fighting from its very beginning. You goddess,

you must prompt your poet. I’ll tell of brutal war,

I’ll tell of battle action, and princes driven to death

by their courage, of Trojan armies, and all of Hesperia

forced to take up arms. A greater order of things

is being born, greater is the work that I attempt.

Translation by A.S. Kline

### Questions

1. Virgil invokes Erato, the Muse of literature and the arts, to inspire this part of his epic poem. What do you think is the effect of this invocation for his portrayal of the events to come?

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1. What does Virgil say were the consequences when the Trojans and Italians laid claim to the same piece of land?

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## Activity 2

Consider the following 2 prophecies and answer the question that follows.

### Text 1 – Virgil, *Aeneid VII 95–101*

*Prophecy 1: King Latinus’s daughter, Lavinia, is betrothed to Turnus, the king of a local kingdom. When Latinus consults the Oracle of Faunus, however, he receives the following prediction:*

Suddenly a voice emerged from the deep wood:

‘O my son, don’t try to ally your daughter in a Latin marriage,

don’t place your faith in the intended wedding:

strangers will come to be your kin, who’ll lift our name

to the stars by their blood, and the children

of whose race shall see all, where the circling sun

views both oceans, turning obediently beneath their feet.’

Translation by A.S. Kline.

### Text 2 – Virgil, *Aeneid VII 107–132*

*Prophecy 2*: *Aeneas and his companions have a meal on the beach, and Aeneas’s son, Iulus, reveals the meaning of his father Anchises’ prophecy to him.*

Aeneas, handsome Iulus, and the foremost leaders,

settled their limbs under the branches of a tall tree,

and spread a meal: they set wheat cakes for a base

under the food (as Jupiter himself inspired them)

and added wild fruits to these tables of Ceres.

When the poor fare drove them to set their teeth

into the thin discs, the rest being eaten, and to break

the fateful circles of bread boldly with hands and jaws,

not sparing the quartered cakes, Iulus, jokingly,

said no more than: ‘Ha! Are we eating the tables too?’

That voice on first being heard brought them to the end

of their labours, and his father, as the words fell

from the speaker’s lips, caught them up

and stopped him, awestruck at the divine will.

Immediately he said: ‘Hail, land destined to me

by fate, and hail to you, O faithful gods of Troy:

here is our home, here is our country. For my father

Anchises (now I remember) left this secret of fate with me:

‘Son, when you’re carried to an unknown shore, food is lacking,

and you’re forced to eat the tables, then look for a home

in your weariness: and remember first thing to set your hand

on a site there, and build your houses behind a rampart.’

This was the hunger he prophesied, the last thing remaining,

to set a limit to our ruin…come then,

and with the sun’s dawn light let’s cheerfully discover

what place this is, what men live here, where this people’s city is,

and let’s explore from the harbour in all directions.

Translation by A.S. Kline.

### Question

In what ways does Virgil justify the Trojans’ arrival and settlement?

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## Activity 3

Read the text about the arrival of the First Fleet and answer the questions that follow in the spaces provided.

### Text 1

*History repeats itself – Gadigal Elder Allen Madden describes what his ancestors saw when the First Fleet landed on their Country …*

Blackfellas saw them coming up the coast and didn’t know what the bloody hell they were. It was strange for us blackfellas on the east coast to see these ships because not many passed along this way…At that point, everything was OK. There was new blood on the block, in modern-day speaking. But it didn’t take long to fester into arguments because we found that these fellas weren’t going anywhere. They were here to stay. And it didn’t take them long to clear all the trees from Farm Cove back up to the swamp up where Hyde Park is.

Text sourced from the [Museum of contemporary art](https://www.mca.com.au/about-us/mca-story/first-contact-contemporary-aboriginal-perspective/).

### Question

What similarities can you find between the arrival of Trojans in Italy and the arrival of the British in Australia? What might be some differences in the situations?

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### Text 2

*Madden reflects on modern, multicultural Australia.*

Aboriginal people have never, ever professed to own this land. This is our mother. This is where we come from and where we’ll go back to. We can’t do anything with you fellas. There’s too many of you. We can’t put you on a boat and send you back home, so we’ve all got to share and care for this country. It’s all of our country. We just happened to be here first.

### Question

In your opinion, how can non-Indigenous Australians demonstrate care and respect for the land and its First Peoples?

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## For the teacher

Remove this section before sharing this resource with students.

All text extracts from *Virgil: The Aeneid translated* by A. S. Kline have been freely obtained online via [York University](https://www.yorku.ca/pswarney/Texts/aeneid-kline.htm) and used with permission.

## Sample responses

### Activity 1

1. **Virgil invokes Erato, the Muse of literature and the arts, to inspire this part of his epic poem. What do you think is the effect of this invocation for his portrayal of the events to come?**

The invocation of Erato serves to elevate the narrative and imbue it with a sense of gravitas and artistic significance. By calling upon a Muse, Virgil suggests that the events he is about to describe are not merely historical but are also steeped in cultural and poetic importance. This invocation sets the tone for the epic, indicating that the ensuing battles and struggles are not just about land but also about destiny, heroism and the larger narrative of civilisation. It emphasises the idea that these events are worthy of remembrance and artistic expression, creating an expectation for the reader about the depth and intensity of the upcoming portrayal.

1. **What does Virgil say were the consequences when the Trojans and Italians laid claim to the same piece of land?**

Virgil indicates that the consequences of the Trojans and Italians laying claim to the same piece of land were violent and tumultuous. The arrival of the Trojans led to ‘brutal war’, with both sides forced to take up arms. This conflict is characterised by themes of courage and tragedy, as princes are driven to death. The struggle for territory results in a significant upheaval, marking the beginning of a ‘greater order of things’, suggesting that the clash between these cultures will lead to profound changes in the social and political landscape of the region.

### Activity 2

**In what ways does Virgil justify the Trojans’ arrival and settlement?**

Virgil justifies the Trojans’ arrival and settlement by emphasising prophetic authority and divine guidance, which frame their journey as a fulfilment of destiny rather than an invasion. In Prophecy 1, King Latinus receives a warning from the Oracle of Faunus that strangers – who are the Trojans – will come to be his kin, indicating that their presence is part of a larger cosmic plan and legitimising their integration into the local culture. Similarly, in Prophecy 2, Aeneas realises that his father’s prophecy is being fulfilled when they are forced to eat their makeshift tables, signifying that their settlement in this new land is divinely ordained. This divine endorsement is further highlighted by Aeneas’s recognition of the ‘faithful gods of Troy’ guiding their journey, which portrays their arrival as a preordained event sanctioned by higher powers. Together, these elements position the Trojans as destined settlers whose presence and actions are essential parts of a divinely orchestrated narrative, thus legitimising their claim to the land.

### Activity 3

#### Text 1

**What similarities can you find between the arrival of Trojans in Italy and the arrival of the British in Australia? What might be some differences in the situations?**

The arrival of both the Trojans in Italy and the British in Australia shares several similarities, particularly in terms of initial encounters and the subsequent impact on the local populations. In both cases, the newcomers are initially perceived as foreign entities whose arrival brings about significant change. For the Trojans, as depicted in Virgil’s *Aeneid*, their landing is prophesied, suggesting a sense of inevitability and destiny. Similarly, Gadigal Elder Allen Madden describes the initial reaction of Indigenous Australians to the sight of the First Fleet, where the newcomers were initially seen as ‘new blood’, indicating a mix of curiosity and uncertainty about their intentions.

However, the consequences of these arrivals highlight key differences. The Trojans are portrayed as seeking to establish their presence through conquest and integration into the existing socio-political landscape of Italy, leading to conflict but also eventual alliances. In contrast, the arrival of the British led to displacement, colonisation and significant environmental destruction, as evidenced by Madden’s mention of clearing trees and the long-term detrimental impact on Indigenous lands and cultures. While the Trojans are woven into a narrative of fate and prophecy, the British arrival is framed in terms of disruption and loss for the Indigenous populations, marking a stark contrast in the historical and cultural repercussions of their respective arrivals.

#### Text 2

**In your opinion, how can non-Indigenous Australians demonstrate care and respect for the land and its First Peoples?**

Non-Indigenous Australians can demonstrate care and respect for the land and its First Peoples in several meaningful ways. First, they can engage in active listening and learning about Indigenous cultures, histories and perspectives to foster a deeper understanding of the significance of the land to its traditional custodians. Supporting Indigenous-led initiatives, which focus on land management, conservation and cultural practices, is crucial in recognising the expertise and knowledge that Aboriginal peoples have regarding their Country.

Additionally, non-Indigenous Australians can advocate for the rights of Indigenous communities, ensuring their voices are heard in discussions about land use, environmental policies and social justice issues. Participating in cultural events and acknowledging significant days, such as NAIDOC Week and National Reconciliation Week, helps to promote awareness and appreciation of Indigenous heritage.

Furthermore, practising sustainable living and environmental stewardship reflects a commitment to caring for the land, aligning with the Indigenous philosophy of kinship with nature. By respecting sacred sites and promoting the importance of preserving Indigenous languages and traditions, non-Indigenous Australians can contribute to a shared sense of responsibility for the land, honouring its original custodians and fostering a more inclusive and respectful relationship moving forward.

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