Aboriginal perspectives, practices and traditions in the creative arts

## Stages 2 and 3

## Table of contents

[Aboriginal perspectives, practices and traditions in the creative arts 1](#_Toc75176414)

[Stages 2 and 3 1](#_Toc75176415)

[Table of contents 2](#_Toc75176416)

[List of images 2](#_Toc75176417)

[Overview 4](#_Toc75176418)

[Outcomes – creative arts 4](#_Toc75176419)

[Visual arts 4](#_Toc75176420)

[Music 5](#_Toc75176421)

[Dance 6](#_Toc75176422)

[Drama 6](#_Toc75176423)

[Outcomes – HSIE 7](#_Toc75176424)

[History 7](#_Toc75176425)

[Geography 8](#_Toc75176426)

[Learning sequence 1 – Aboriginal Peoples and the visual arts 9](#_Toc75176427)

[Recognising connections 9](#_Toc75176428)

[Diversity of visual arts 14](#_Toc75176429)

[Role of visual arts 20](#_Toc75176430)

[Learning sequence 2 – colonisation and Aboriginal visual arts practices 29](#_Toc75176431)

[Colonisation and visual arts 29](#_Toc75176432)

[Impact on visual arts practices and conventions 30](#_Toc75176433)

[Learning sequence 3 – representation of Aboriginal culture in music 34](#_Toc75176434)

[Traditional music in Aboriginal culture 34](#_Toc75176435)

[New developments in traditions 35](#_Toc75176436)

[Musical innovations on Aboriginal stories 38](#_Toc75176437)

[Learning sequence 4 – changing responses to arts practices 43](#_Toc75176438)

[Contemporary music and Aboriginal culture 43](#_Toc75176439)

[Learning sequence 5 – representation of Aboriginal culture in music and dance 57](#_Toc75176440)

[Music and dance in Aboriginal culture 57](#_Toc75176441)

[Learning sequence 6 – further connection of arts practices 63](#_Toc75176442)

[Aboriginal identities through drama 63](#_Toc75176443)

### List of images

[Image 1 – a student painting a symbolic representation on a paving stone 11](#_Toc75176594)

[Image 2 – an example of a symbolic artwork made using sticks and leaves 14](#_Toc75176595)

[Image 3 – an example of a perspective artwork by Katie Williams (2019) 27](#_Toc75176596)

[Image 4 – a graphic notation for a composition of ‘Tiddalick the frog’ (2011) 40](#_Toc75176597)

## Overview

The focus of this unit starter is the diversity of arts practiced by Aboriginal Peoples. Students investigate the importance of the arts to Aboriginal Peoples as unique groups within Australian society, and their importance in expressing their diversity of identities. Issues surrounding cultural appropriation, the varying and sensitive roles of individuals, communities, as well as language and cultural groups in the development and expression of the arts are investigated through all four artforms: visual arts, music, dance and drama.

The duration of this unit starter is flexible. Teachers should use the material that best suits their school, local community and students. Some learning experiences involve making, performing, organising sound and/or composing. Others involve critiquing, appreciating, evaluating and/or listening. Both are equally important and should be used in partnership. Teachers are advised to include a variety of learning experiences to best suit their context.

Reference should be made throughout to the [Map of Indigenous Australia](https://aiatsis.gov.au/explore/map-indigenous-australia) (David R Horton [creator] © AIATSIS, 1996). Students should continue to access this map through the following learning sequences and locate the relevant artists and artworks in their local community contexts on this map.

## Outcomes – creative arts

### Visual arts

#### Stage 2

* **VAS2.1** – represents the qualities of experiences and things that are interesting or beautiful by choosing among aspects of subject matter.
* **VAS2.2** – uses the forms to suggest the qualities of subject matter.
* **VAS2.3** – acknowledges that artists make artworks for different reasons and that various interpretations are possible.
* **VAS2.4** – identifies connections between subject matter in artworks and what they refer to, and appreciates the use of particular techniques.

#### Stage 3

* **VAS3.1** – investigates subject matter in an attempt to represent likenesses of things in the world.
* **VAS3.2** – makes artworks for different audiences, assembling materials in a variety of ways.
* **VAS3.3** – acknowledges that audiences respond in different ways to artworks and that there are different opinions about the values of artworks.
* **VAS3.4** – communicates about the ways in which subject matter is represented in artworks.

### Music

#### Stage 2

* **MUS2.1** – sings, plays and moves to a range of music, demonstrating a basic knowledge of musical concepts.
* **MUS2.2** – improvises musical phrases, organises sounds and explains reasons for choices.
* **MUS2.3** – uses commonly understood symbols to represent own work.
* **MUS2.4** – identifies the use of musical concepts and musical symbols in a range of repertoire.

#### Stage 3

* **MUS3.1** – sings, plays and moves to a range of music, individually and in groups, demonstrating a knowledge of musical concepts.
* **MUS3.2** – improvises, experiments, selects, combines and orders sound using musical concepts.
* **MUS3.4** – identifies the use of musical concepts and symbols in a range of musical styles.

### Dance

#### Stage 2

* **DAS2.1** – performs dances from a range of contexts, demonstrating movement skills, expressive qualities and an understanding of the elements of dance.
* **DAS2.2** – explores, selects and combines movement using the elements of dance to communicate ideas, feelings or moods.
* **DAS2.3** – gives personal opinions about the use of elements and meaning in their own and others’ dances.

#### Stage 3

* **DAS3.1** – performs and interprets dances from particular contexts, using a wide range of movement skills and appropriate expressive qualities.
* **DAS3.2** – explores, selects, organises and refines movement using the elements of dance to communicate intent.
* **DAS3.3** – discusses and interprets the relationship between content, meaning and context in their own and others’ dances.

### Drama

#### Stage 2

* **DRAS2.1** – takes on and sustains roles in a variety of drama forms to express meaning in a wide range of imagined situations.
* **DRAS2.2** – builds the action of the drama by using the elements of drama, movement and voice skills.
* **DRAS2.3** – sequences the action of the drama to create meaning for an audience.
* **DRAS2.4** – responds to, and interprets drama experiences and performances.

#### Stage 3

* **DRAS3.1** – develops a range of in-depth and sustained roles.
* **DRAS3.2** – interprets and conveys dramatic meaning by using the elements of drama and a range of movement and voice skills in a variety of drama forms.
* **DRAS3.3** – devises, acts and rehearses drama for performance to an audience.

[Creative Arts K-6 Syllabus](https://educationstandards.nsw.edu.au/wps/portal/nesa/k-10/learning-areas/creative-arts/creative-arts-k-6-syllabus) © 2006 NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) for and on behalf of the Crown in right of the State of New South Wales.

## Outcomes – HSIE

### History

#### Stage 2

* **HT2-1** – identifies celebrations and commemorations of significance in Australia and the world.
* **HT2-2** – describes and explains how significant individuals, groups and events contributed to changes in the local community over time.
* **HT2-3** – describes people, events and actions related to world exploration and its effects.
* **HT2-4** – describes and explains effects of British colonisation in Australia.

#### Stage 3

* **HT3-1** – describes and explains the significance of people, groups, places and events to the development of Australia.
* **HT3-2** – describes and explains different experiences of people living in Australia over time.
* **HT3-3** – identifies change and continuity and describes the causes and effects of change on Australian society.
* **HT3-4** – describes and explains the struggles for rights and freedoms in Australia, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

[History K-10 Syllabus](https://educationstandards.nsw.edu.au/wps/portal/nesa/k-10/learning-areas/hsie/history-k-10) © 2012 NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) for and on behalf of the Crown in right of the State of New South Wales.

### Geography

#### Stage 2

* **GE2-1** – examines features and characteristics of places and environments.
* **GE2-2** – describes the ways people, places and environments interact.

#### Stage 3

* **GE3-1** – describes the diverse features and characteristics of places and environments.
* **GE3-2** – explains interactions and connections between people, places and environments.

[Geography K-10 Syllabus](https://educationstandards.nsw.edu.au/wps/portal/nesa/k-10/learning-areas/hsie/geography-k-10) © 2015 NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) for and on behalf of the Crown in right of the State of New South Wales.

## Learning sequence 1 – Aboriginal Peoples and the visual arts

Through this learning sequence students will:

* describe the diversity of visual arts of Aboriginal Peoples and compare a range of styles and forms, for example painting, carving, weaving
* assess the role of visual arts practices by Aboriginal Peoples in connecting communities.

### Recognising connections

Commence this work with a [yarning circle](https://www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/about/k-12-policies/aboriginal-torres-strait-islander-perspectives/resources/yarning-circles) as a way to focus a discussion of Aboriginal culture in Australia and to reflect on the importance of the original owners of the land in the local community. Highlight that Aboriginal Peoples have looked after this land for a long time and we all have the responsibility to continue this practice.

To commence this process, it is imperative that the 5 steps of a yarning circle are observed with respects to each other’s opinions:

1. Sit in a circle
2. Introduce the group
3. Introduce some of the possible questions
4. Take turns to share ideas
5. Reflect on or resolve any issues.

Focus this thinking around a few potential questions such as:

* What do you know about Aboriginal arts in Australia?
* What types of Aboriginal arts practices do you know about?
* What Aboriginal artists (including performers in a variety of artforms) do you know of?
* Why are the arts important to Aboriginal culture?
* What do Aboriginal arts practices teach us about Australia?

Evaluate the students’ background knowledge of the role of rock painting as amongst the earliest examples of artworks.

**Teacher note –** the role of the visual arts to communicate and capture history and tell stories is highlighted through Aboriginal rock paintings. Explore examples of rock paintings throughout Australia’s history explained by [Rock Art Australia](https://rockartaustralia.org.au/rock-art/rock-art-sequence/naturalistic/).

Share with the students the oldest Australian rock paintings that have now been dated. These are thought to be some 17,500 years old in what is known as the ‘naturalist period’. In this period (at the end of the last ice age) water levels were 106 metres lower than they are now and it was much drier and cooler than it is now. Aboriginal artists at this time depicted kangaroos, other animals and plants.

Discuss the role of visual arts in allowing us to capture images and inform us of these important stories.

Ask the students to consider what they would draw if they were to depict something in a time capsule for the future. These images should capture things that would illustrate to people in the future something that is important in their life now. Try to focus thinking away from just technological advances such as phones and into other things that are important parts or symbols of their daily lives. Draw these images and store them for future school or personal archives.

To establish connections, stimulate thinking and support understanding, engage the students in symbolic representation through creating temporary artworks. Use this video as a guide to the process of a form of symbolic abstract painting and creating temporary artworks.

Go outside to a special place within your school or local environment. Where possible, take a plastic surface, some cardboard, a paver or alternatively find some concrete, a tiled or paved area. Take some water in a container and a paintbrush for each student.

Ask the students to look around at their immediate environment in silence. Ask them to identify something that they perceive as important about their environment – either natural or man-made.

Encourage the students to create artworks to reflect a symbol of something in this environment that is important to them. Once it has vanished, repeat with another symbolic image that may also be of a place but may also be a thing that is important to them. Point out to the students that artworks do not always need to be permanent but that they do represent and/or make meaning to the artist, and when permanent can be used to keep that meaning for audiences to consider.

Image 1 – a student painting a symbolic representation on a paving stone



Share with the students the app [Indigemoji](https://mod.studio/production/indigemoji/) or other common emojis in digital messages to explore what students think might represent them or their culture. Ask the students to consider what an emoji is.

Consider the role of an emoji in allowing us to symbolise something and to make meaning through a picture. Relate this back to the temporary artworks the students have just completed.

Ask the students to create their own self-made emoji using either technology or drawing it on paper.

Explore the ways in which artists often use symbols to represent things in their work. This may be a connection of several symbols together in one artwork or may be just one.

Commence this by examining the work [‘Stop and think’](https://www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/collection/works/217.1994.a-e/) (1993) by HJ Wedge. Explore how his images portray fears and feelings of dispossession about colonisation and the colonial experience from an Aboriginal perspective through a variety of symbols.

Also examine other Aboriginal artworks such as [‘Holy Mother 1’](https://www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/artboards/home/country/item/lilpjn/) (2009) by Karla Dickens which uses a variety of materials and symbolically represents the cycle of life and death.

Artworks such as [‘Centrepoint Tower’](https://www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/collection/works/214.2010/) (2002) by Aboriginal artist Esme Timbery from the collection at the Art Gallery of NSW are strong examples of symbolically representing Aboriginal perspectives. Timbery is a Bidjigal artist whose family were shell workers from the Aboriginal mission community of La Perouse in Sydney. La Perouse women artists have been working with and earning an income from shell work for generations (one of the earliest reports from the late 1800s).

Ask the students to look at this work and think about how this work was created and what it symbolises. Discuss the meaning of the shells as traditional materials and a technique used by the artist and to think about why they would be placed on a man-made symbolic structure like Centrepoint Tower. Consider the meaning of the work in terms of a mixture of traditional methods, natural and man-made and the importance of Aboriginal culture.

Ask the students to think again about their environment and consider an item that symbolises Australia or an important place to them. Ask the students to discuss their intentions for artmaking and recognise how these affect their selection of ideas, materials, tools and techniques and methods of working. Their artworks may be 3D sculptures, installations or collages, using gathered materials, textiles or other materials. Students may select a variety of materials from their environment or as available to incorporate into their works.

Emphasise to the students that they should not take from nature, such as shells from the beach, permanently – in most cases it must be returned once the work is complete. Point out to the students that this also represents the importance of only taking what you need from the environment and returning things that are not required.

The students should then create a symbolic sculpture, installation or other artwork and photograph it. For example, their artwork may include leaves, shells or flowers and may also include cultural aspects of symbolic importance to their community to represent an aspect of their Australia. This footage of the [process of creating a symbolic sculpture](https://vimeo.com/user98607695/review/342181953/4cb1e14b05?sort=lastUserActionEventDate&direction=desc) [duration 2:13] may be used to support this process. In this example, a sculpture was created about a classic Australian symbol, the gum leaf, using air-drying clay.

Complete a [gallery walk](https://app.education.nsw.gov.au/digital-learning-selector/LearningActivity/Card/555#.YCtMXyhce4s.link) to investigate each other’s sculptures and/or the photographs of temporary works. Discuss the symbolic nature of each work, the materials and techniques used, and what they represent. Is the artist’s intent clear? What other reflections do the students have on their peers’ works?

Image 2 – an example of a symbolic artwork made using sticks and leaves



### Diversity of visual arts

Discuss with the students how Aboriginal art is developed by an Aboriginal artist and that there are various techniques and symbols that match up with different languages or places across Country. Each group may have different symbols that mean different things to their people. There are special rules (or protocols) that are connected with their use. Some are related to gender, others to language groups or to specific situations.

Point out that Aboriginal Peoples use all artforms as a way of communicating and storytelling. In visual arts, artworks can be represented as either 2D (collage, painting, drawing, photographic, printmaking and so on) or 3D (fibre, ceramics, sculpture, wood carving, weaving, shell stringing, adornments, glasswork and so on).

Access the [Art Gallery of NSW Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander galleries](https://www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/collection/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-art/) online. Select four different art works from the collection in a range of styles. Describe the range of visual arts works in terms of the diversity of materials, subject matter and techniques.

Complete the following table to document the range of Aboriginal artwork styles:

Table 1 – a table for recording information about a range of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artworks

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Name of artwork | Name of artist and Country | Date of publication | Subject matter | Materials used | Artistic technique |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |

**Teacher note** – the completion of the following table may be done as a class discussion to gain a variety of interpretations of the representation of the collections.

Complete the following table to examine the ways that Aboriginal culture, image and experiences are represented at the [National Gallery of Australia (NGA)](https://nga.gov.au/collections/atsi/). Choose one item from each of the NGA Aboriginal collections. Write down how the collection represents Aboriginal cultures, images and experiences:

Table 2 – a table for recording representations of Aboriginal cultures, images and experiences from a variety of artwork collections

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Collection | Item | Representation of Aboriginal cultures, images and experiences |
| 19th century objects |  |  |
| Early western desert paintings 1971-1974 |  |  |
| Hermannsburg school |  |  |
| Textiles |  |  |
| Early bark paintings and sculpture – pre 1980 |  |  |
| Contemporary |  |  |

Share information with the students about how many Aboriginal artists use traditional techniques and forms in their artmaking practices. For example, traditional weaving methods are now being employed to create [ghost net artworks](https://australian.museum/learn/cultures/atsi-collection/ghost-net-art/) as a way to tell traditional stories.

In these artworks, materials are passed from beach or waterway rangers onto communities. Many materials are hazardous to marine life, such as old fishing materials (‘ghost’ nets) or ropes. These are then turned into artworks or totems such as in [Pormpuraaw](https://australian.museum/learn/cultures/atsi-collection/ghost-net-art/ghost-net-art-from-pormpuraaw/), Cape York, and in sculptural works in [Darnley Island (Erub)](https://australian.museum/learn/cultures/atsi-collection/ghost-net-art/ghost-net-art-from-darnley-island/).

Jonathan Jones is another Aboriginal artist who uses everyday items in works such as [‘untitled (illuminated tree)’](https://www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/collection/works/358.2017/) (2012) in a variety of mediums to share Aboriginal practices, relationships and ideas. Lorraine Connelly-Northey in works such as [‘Narbong (string bag)’](https://www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/collection/works/9.2008/) (2008) uses traditional coil weaving techniques to create artworks from recycled materials.

Ask the students to reflect on items from their environments that could potentially be used within artworks. Decide on the materials that could then be repurposed as art within the classroom. Consider safety guidelines and decide on how these can be created. For example, natural materials such as grass, stems, gumnuts or leaves woven or glued together; or string, paper or plastics repurposed. Ensure that acknowledging the return of items to the environment and other sustainability practices are observed.

Experiment with these materials and then create artworks using found materials. Students are encouraged to consider a variety of forms in their works. This may include: drawing, painting, printmaking, sculpture and 3D, fibre, photography or other digital forms.

Ask the students to view each other’s artworks and reflect on what and how these they have been created. Complete a [gallery walk](https://app.education.nsw.gov.au/digital-learning-selector/LearningActivity/Card/555#.YCtMXyhce4s.link) to investigate each other’s works. Discuss the materials used in each work, techniques used and what they represent.

### Role of visual arts

As a class, investigate the role of [songlines in Aboriginal visual artworks](https://japingkaaboriginalart.com/articles/songlines-important-aboriginal-art/). Use this information to discuss what it tells the audience about the diversity of visual arts practices of Aboriginal peoples and the range of styles and forms, for example painting, carving, and weaving.

There are 17 sections within this article. Give each student a section to focus on or become an ‘expert’ on such as ‘Focus on a location’ or ‘Connection between powerful art and songlines’. Ask students to share or present their knowledge to the rest of the class as an ‘expert’ and use a [jigsaw](https://app.education.nsw.gov.au/digital-learning-selector/LearningActivity/Browser?cache_id=68e77) technique to piece all the information together.

Follow this up with questions to solidify this understanding, such as:

* What is the ‘common narrative’ of songlines? (the creation narrative)
* What important information do songlines teach about culture? (cultural obligations)
* Why are song cycles important? (they teach the entire cultural story of their people)
* What does a songline define for its people? (their laws)
* When all the songlines are tied together what do they connect? (all of Aboriginal Australia)
* What do songlines use to represent landscapes or places? (repeated symbols)
* What do some Aboriginal artists do with their songlines in a ceremony? (sing a song about them)

Point out to the students the importance of honouring the traditions of different communities across country and that it is not our place to copy them, but rather to use these ideas and techniques as inspiration for our own works and to capture our own sense of place and connection.

Pattern making and recognising patterns is an essential skill in many aspects of learning and life. They are also a common feature and technique used in Aboriginal artworks across Country. Patterns and repetition have been used in visual artworks throughout history and across cultures.

Ask the students to gather materials that could be used to create repetitive patterns. For example, repeated items may include patterns of leaves, grass to represent a pathway near the classroom or pens, pencils and erasers to represent their desk. Some students may wish to use a grid, such as included in the next section, as a structural frame. Allow the students the freedom to select what they wish to represent and how they achieve this.

Ask the students to share their intent, stories and techniques after the creation of the artwork. Share these works through a gallery walk, exhibition, hot seat discussion or through pair conversations. Focus on the intent of the work, its meaning and the materials and techniques used.

‘When you walk into an Aboriginal art gallery, it's like you're walking into a book. You're walking into knowledge, into a beautiful picture book where every image you see has a soul.’ Sarrita King (from 'Sisters at one with their art', The West Australian 04/09/2014)

Discuss the role of the arts as a means of transmitting culture, knowledge and storytelling between generations. Reflect on Sarrita King’s quote and its power in storytelling.

What other ways do people share the stories of their cultures or communities? Allow the students an opportunity to share any family, cultural or community stories that have been passed on to them. How were they told?

Consider further how we communicate through our stories. Explore the role of the arts in this and other means of communication amongst families such as written histories, oral traditions and so on. Students may reflect on songs or dances shared in their families as well as photographs and other visual artworks.

Discuss this as a class and create a concept map or interactive [Google Jamboard](https://app.education.nsw.gov.au/digital-learning-selector/LearningTool/Card/593#.YDcStM5AV8o.link) to capture this thinking. Analyse the results and consider the similarities and differences.

Ask the students to consider a selection of objects that symbolise themselves, their family or simply their life at school. This may require them to gather objects from home or it may be preferable to use objects within the school environment.

Individually they should place the objects in a way that allows them to represent their story symbolically. Alternatively, they may choose to photograph or draw these symbols instead.

Some students may find the use of a grid beneficial as a structure for this process to enable them to add something to each section. This may include a drawing in each box, a photograph, an emoji (such as that created earlier), or an object. For example, in the grid following, the students would be required to find 9 objects to symbolically represent their identity or their story.

Table 3 – a table for recording examples of representational artworks

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| My representational artwork | Name: | Date: |
| Object/image 1 | Object/image 2 | Object/image 3 |
| Object/image 4 | Object/image 5 | Object/image 6 |
| Object/image 7 | Object/image 8 | Object/image 9 |

Ask the students to share their stories created through symbolic representation with a partner or small group in a comfortable and supportive environment.

Watch the [story of Peter Mungkuri](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4fIqDATbTdw&list=RDCMUC-rRm68B8b6nF-W-qvBTS8Q&index=2) (2020) [duration 4:20] and his way of capturing culture and his story. Reflect on the ways he uses art to celebrate his culture, his environment and the lives of his people. Focus on his use of drawn images, aerial perspective, and contrast from dark to light with some shading, patterns and repetition without colour or dots.

Discuss his comments about not using dot paintings or colour in his artworks and his personal style of representing his story. Reinforce to the students the importance of not replicating Aboriginal artworks. Consider the role of Aboriginal artworks within own local communities and the importance of considering perspectives and meaning within the works – not copying.

Dot painting is a technique used by many Aboriginal artists but as already discussed it is not the only technique. As with most visual arts techniques it should be used as an inspiration for creating own works not replicating others’ works.

Through exploring dot paintings, it is important that students capture their own thoughts and ideas. For example, the students could use a dot painting technique to show their own representation of their life’s journey, things, places, space or people that are important to them. Showing the connections between these ideas or things is a key component to using this technique. Encourage the students to use a wide variety of colours that capture their thoughts and what they are trying to represent when using this technique.

**Teacher note** – view the footage of [‘Beyond the dots’](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/key-learning-areas/creative-arts/early-stage-1-to-stage-3/visual-arts/beyond-the-dots) which points out the importance of moving away from a focus on dot paintings as the only way of thinking about Aboriginal visual artworks and to consider the important role of using the visual arts as a means of representation of Aboriginal perspectives.

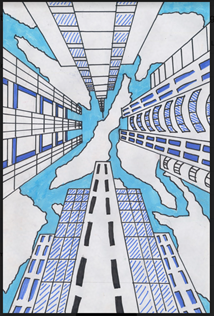
Using the stimulus of, and techniques shared by, Aboriginal artists, ask the students to consider aerial perspective as a technical way of viewing. Place an object on the floor and look down on it from a standing position. Taking a photograph can also be helpful if available. Ask the students to think about and reflect on what they can see. Sketch the object using that aerial perspective.

Ask the students to consider where they live or their community. What would be captured as prominent features of their environments if viewed from an aerial perspective? Consulting with [Google Earth](https://app.education.nsw.gov.au/digital-learning-selector/LearningTool/Card/620#.YDcg5nkoyWk.link) is an excellent tool for this.

Using only lead pencils (preferably sharp 2B) and an A4 sheet of paper, have the students capture the features of their landscapes, communities or streets as discussed in patterns. Ask the students to use aerial perspective and not focus on exact details, but rather on the creation of shapes to represent their environment.

Students may also wish to reverse this process by imagining they are an ant on the ground looking up at their environment. The example included from by Katie Williams (from Operation Art, 2019) captures this perspective beautifully:

Image 3 – an example of a perspective artwork by Katie Williams (2019)



Explore the artwork [‘Nanny Wright and Dog’](https://www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/artboards/home/representation/item/h1k8i4/) (1990) by Michael Riley from the series ‘A common place: portraits of Moree Murries’ (1990). This work comes from the Aboriginal art collection at the Art Gallery of NSW. Michael Riley was a Wiradjuri artist who was integral to the establishment of Australia’s Indigenous photography movement, which changed the way in which Indigenous culture is seen and understood. He was part of a group of NADOC ’86 artists who changed the way their communities were portrayed. Many Aboriginal artists began to document their communities, families and friends and for the first time the reality of Aboriginal Australia was shown.

Discuss with the students the important role photography has in capturing characters through their expression, environment, clothing, and any objects (such as pets or hobbies) that they may have with them. For example, in ‘Nanny Wright and dog’ what do we learn about the relationship of the woman and her dog?

Complete a [plus, minus, interesting (PMI)](https://app.education.nsw.gov.au/digital-learning-selector/LearningActivity/Card/551#.YMvNE8QFq4E.link) chart about student preference for photographed or painted portraits and why. What are the main reasons for their preferences? Students may wish to share some of their photographic portraits, special family or community moments with the class.

Ask the students to capture each other using a portrait setting on iPads or other devices. Students should consider whether they wish their photo to be black and white or in colour by adding filters. Students should consider if there are any available items that could be included in their portraits with them. Facial expressions and stance must also be planned prior to the photograph.

Display these portraits in the classroom. Encourage the students to write an artist intent statement about the person they photographed. For example, ‘In this photographic portrait of Jack, I captured his sense of humour through his big smile. I also highlighted his favourite hobby by including the basketball in this image.’

## Learning sequence 2 – colonisation and Aboriginal visual arts practices

Through this learning sequence students will:

* explain the impact of colonisation on Aboriginal visual arts. For example, disruption of arts practices across generations, access to materials and sites.
* describe some of the ways in which colonisation has affected visual arts practices and conventions of Aboriginal Peoples, for example adaptation of materials, style and media, meaning and purpose and audience.

### Colonisation and visual arts

As a class, complete a [KWLH chart](https://app.education.nsw.gov.au/digital-learning-selector/LearningActivity/Card/562#.X2AA5J12lVw.link) about what they know about the consequences of colonisation on Aboriginal people and the arts within their culture.

Discuss with the class the effects of colonisation on Aboriginal art. What do they assume was the influence of European art on traditional work? Watch [‘Aboriginal Artists of the 19th Century’](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=USbH8ERWu9k) (2018) [duration 3:35] and discuss the nature and consequences of colonisation on Aboriginal visual arts and add the information presented in these texts in the L column.

Explore the works of three early important Aboriginal artists who captured the impact of colonisation through their artworks:

* **Tommy McRae** captured traditional life in works such as [‘Spearing the kangaroo’](https://www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/collection/works/210.2004/) (c1880). Tommy McRae lived in the upper Murray region of New South Wales. His works depict aspects of traditional Aboriginal life, the impact of British colonialism onto traditional Aboriginal land. His drawings were considered novel amongst the Europeans as showing an ‘exotic’ culture and show a strong contrast between black and white colours.
* **William Barak** reveals life before colonisation in works such as [‘Ceremony](https://www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/artsets/d4w6cg)’ (c1895). William Barak lived near Melbourne in the Woiwurrung nation. After colonisation Barak was schooled at a mission school, and in 1844 he was recruited into the Native Police where he was given the name William. He had the role of Ngurungaeta (leader) of the community, started a family and fought relentlessly for the rights of his people. His works focus on the use of line, then filled with natural colours. His paintings are of times before colonisation, with figures in possum-skin cloaks with symbolic patterns.
* **Mickey of Ulladulla** in his series of works known as [‘At home’](https://mgnsw.org.au/articles/home-mickey-ulladulla/) (c1880s) captures daily life as colonisation was expanding in the late 1800s. We know that through this time Aboriginal families were broken up, their land turned into grazing areas and their lives as they had known them, were completely destroyed. These artworks serve as strong historical sources for the time. They provide us with unique insights into a changing society, providing us with valuable information as well as incredible artworks.

### Impact on visual arts practices and conventions

Compare and contrast the works of McRae, Barak and Mickey from Ulladulla with that of artists such as [Johnny Kangatong](https://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/learning/johnny-kangatong-making-sense-world) and Margaret Adams in her work [‘Reflection’](https://www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/artboards/home/representation/item/sz3s24/) (1996).

[Johnny Kangatong](https://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/learning/history-johnny-kangatong-making-sense-world/asking-historical-questions) was a friend of a European artist Eugene von Guerard, who encouraged him to draw. Kangatong's drawings are unique because they provide a connection to Aboriginal people’s early views of Europeans. Von Guerard also drew Kangatong thus giving us a perspective of the interactions between the cultures in the late 1800s.

What European influences can the students identify in the work of Kangatong? Was the relationship between Kangatong and von Guerard friendly? What artistic features can be identified in these works?

In the work ‘Reflection’, Adams uses the river as a way of telling a story. Along the river the history of colonisation is captured. Identify, discuss and/or explain the following features of ‘Reflection’:

* What differences are evident in this work to the works of McRae, Barak and Mickey of Ulladulla?
* Where is your eye drawn first?
* Why is there a separate waterway going to the centre?
* Where does the river start and finish?
* What are the differences from the start to the finish?
* What does the river symbolise?
* What do you notice about the people along the journey of the river?
* What do we notice about the flora and the fauna?
* What symbols can be seen and what are they representing?
* What is the artist trying to share with us?

Use the education resources mentioned previously to complete the following chart as a class. Choose three of the featured artists and explain how the issues of colonisation were seen through their artwork. For example, Aboriginal artist [Reko Rennie](https://www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/exhibitions/reko-rennie/) tackles contemporary Aboriginal artworks and describes the similarities and differences in techniques and understandings across Country. Collate and record information in this table:

Table 4 – a table for recording information about the influence of colonisation on the features of various artworks

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Artist | Name of artwork | Features of the artwork and influence of colonisation |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |

## Learning sequence 3 – representation of Aboriginal culture in music

Through this learning sequence students will:

* analyse the ways in which Aboriginal Peoples can share their identity and connections through music.
* examine the ways Aboriginal cultures and experiences are represented in music.

### Traditional music in Aboriginal culture

**Teacher note** – resources about Aboriginal instruments may be explored initially, such as the [traditional musical instrument list](http://hmcs.scu.edu.au/musicarchive/AusGeneral.html) or [Aboriginal music](https://kaitlinbove.com/aboriginal-music) explained.

Aboriginal music is commonly known for its instruments. Complete a [single concept map](https://app.education.nsw.gov.au/digital-learning-selector/LearningActivity/Browser?cache_id=22d8d) to show its essential characteristics, how it is played, where it is played, why it is played, who plays it, how it is made and so on. If working in pairs, students may wish to create a [double bubble concept map](https://schoolsnsw.sharepoint.com/:p:/s/DLS/Ebfby7x3r4VCjBaE0JBHgvEBFEWd8YcSmtJPLHDFidZsIw?e=iftHvY&clearCache=c6792a1-1325-653c-937c-8a7915132e2) showing the relationships and connections between instruments.

Research Aboriginal cultures and practices for [playing and performing the didgeridoo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0XlEkeot7HM) (2010) [duration 9:11]. Explore other information about the [history and culture of the digeridoo](https://kids.kiddle.co/Didgeridoo#:~:text=The%20didgeridoo%20(sometimes%20didjeridu)%20is,Australian%20Aboriginal%20wind%20musical%20instrument.&text=The%20longer%20the%20instrument%2C%20the,a%20wooden%20trumpet%20or%20drone.) to further understand ways of making and using it. [Use a simple Y chart](https://app.education.nsw.gov.au/digital-learning-selector/LearningActivity/Card/599#.YCsyppZ0YDU.link) to organise information into ‘Looks like’, ‘Sounds like’ and ‘Feels like’. Share information gathered.

As a class gather information focussing on the following:

* Where did the didgeridoo originate?
* How do you play the didgeridoo?
* Which Aboriginal nations traditionally played the didgeridoo?
* What are the specific cultural protocols around the digeridoo that should be considered before playing the instrument?
* Why is it important to respect the cultural expectations of playing the didgeridoo?
* What rules do other cultures in the class have with regards to music or dance?

### New developments in traditions

Consider the role of the didgeridoo in traditional Aboriginal culture. Compare this to the incorporation of didgeridoo in contemporary orchestral music. Listen to and watch a sample of [‘Earth Cry’](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cLu9GmV2vF0) (1986) [duration 17:20] by Peter Sculthorpe, which uses both the traditional orchestra and the Aboriginal didgeridoo in combination. Complete a [plus, minus, interesting (PMI) chart](https://app.education.nsw.gov.au/digital-learning-selector/LearningActivity/Card/551?clearCache=d699c97e-6dba-372d-7937-6fce2ca78178) or a [listening: ten times two (PDF 395KB) exercise](http://www.pz.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/Listening%20-%20Ten%20Times%20Two_0.pdf) about this piece of music. Share viewpoints and opinions.

Also consider the following questions:

* What effect does the didgeridoo have on the way the orchestra sounds?
* What effect does the orchestra have on the way the didgeridoo sounds?
* Describe the musical concepts/elements and how and why they are used in this context. For example, the dynamics are generally quite loud to create a stirring and exciting feel and so on.
* What are the students’ opinions of this work and why?
* Consider why the composer may have created this work.

**Teacher note** – William Barton’s performance with the [Sydney Symphony Orchestra](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o6S0hTZr-TM) (2019) [duration 8:23] is also an excellent connection for students to make to compositions such as an arrangement of Men at Work’s ‘Down Under’. It demonstrates the magnificent ways in which cultural connections can be made and the power of music in stirring national pride and mutual understandings.

Listen to the piece of music [‘Didge Fusion’](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PW7xVNdRtm4) (2014) [duration 6:08] by the Aboriginal didgeridoo player, William Barton. Ask the students to reflect on Barton’s Aboriginal heritage and the ways in which he captures storytelling so well. Describe the musical concepts that make this piece so exciting and how they add interest.

Using a table may assist in scaffolding this analysis as students re-listen to the work. Active and focussed critical listening will ensure the students’ understandings are accurately captured.

Table 5 – a table for recording information about the effect of various musical concepts and how they are used

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Musical concept | How is it used? | What effect does this have on the interpretation of the music? |
| ****Duration****   * Beat * Rhythm * Metre * Tempo |  |  |
| Pitch   * Melodic contour * Melody of the song * Melody of the instruments |  |  |
| Dynamics   * Is it loud or soft? * Does it change dynamic level? * What effect do the dynamics have? |  |  |
| Tone colour   * What effect do the instruments have? * How would it sound with different instruments? * Describe the instrumental timbres |  |  |
| Structure   * How is the piece put together? * What effect does that structure have? |  |  |
| Understandings/reflections   * What do we know and understand as a result of listening to this piece? * How have the musical concepts contributed to this? * What have we learnt about? * What do we need to know more about? |  |  |

### Musical innovations on Aboriginal stories

Read or watch the video of the animated story of [‘Tiddalick the frog’](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=65&v=0y3Ta5xcKV4) (2011) [duration 2:42]. Identify all the animals in the story and discuss the sounds they make.

Divide the class into groups. Each group should depict one of the animals in the story using instruments, vocal sound effects and body percussion. As a class, decide which animal should be the loudest dynamic and which animal the softest dynamic. Identify which would have the highest and the lowest pitch. Perform a sample of each sound as a group and then validate these earlier conclusions.

Each group should then create a short soundscape or sound effect story using only their animal. Focus should be on the use of pitch and dynamic levels appropriate for that animal.

Again read or watch the story and as each animal appears in the story, the appropriate group should perform their soundscape or sound effect creation. Use the video footage to assist with this. Consult with the [Vocal Ease MORE (Module 2)](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/key-learning-areas/creative-arts/early-stage-1-to-stage-3/music/vocal-ease-more) ‘Bring me down some of the rain’ (Stages 2 and 3): Make it up resource for extra support or ideas on this process.

Discuss with the students, ways in which composers of music document their works and why. How does this differ from oral tradition? Explore the advantages and disadvantages of oral tradition versus notation as a means for communicating a story. Use techniques such as [think, pair, share](https://app.education.nsw.gov.au/digital-learning-selector/LearningActivity/Card/645#.YCxHvTkDECU.link) to collaborate on this discussion and thinking.

Point out to the students that composers continue to imagine new sounds and create unique forms of notation. Graphic notation is a way of composing that uses primarily pictures and visual images. This graphic score is by composer John Cage of his work [‘Water Walk’](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gXOIkT1-QWY) (1959) [duration 3:58]. [Examine the score](https://www.google.com/search?q=water+walk+score+john+cage&rlz=1C1GCEA_enAU803AU803&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjkuvrXr7PkAhVbfSsKHaRuBdcQ_AUIESgB&biw=907&bih=757#imgrc=FQ3P2uuB0jDiZM:) with the students and listen to the music. How are they related?

Explain to the students that in each graphic notation score the composer creates a set of rules that explain what the symbols mean, and how they translate into sound. Explore [examples of graphic scores](http://www.classicfm.com/discover-music/latest/graphic-scores-art-music-pictures/vitiello-first-vertical/) to investigate common themes.

**Teacher note** – the visual arts and mathematics concepts and skills within graphic notation symbols when documenting musical scores can be explicitly stated when considering ways of connecting student learning.

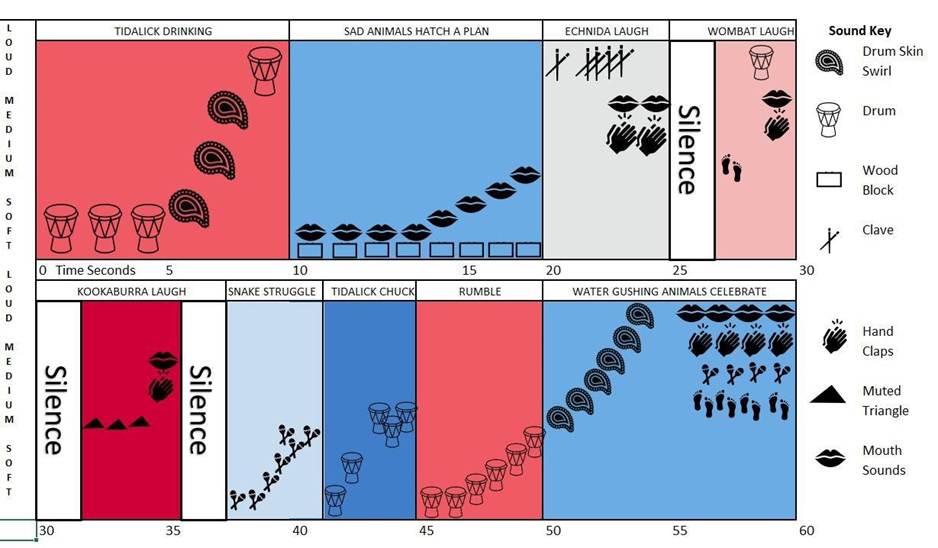
Share with the students [a graphic composition created by Alex Chorley](https://youtu.be/bBawmitub64) (2013) [duration 1:10], a then 12-year old student from Sydney. Explore and play the recording of his key and score. Depending on individual situations, some students may wish to play it on available instruments. You may need to change the key to suit the instruments you have available. The pitch rises as you move from the centre of the circle to the outside. Time passes in a circle, like a clock.

Look at the following example of graphic notation for a composition of ‘Tiddalick the frog’. Discuss everything the students notice and possible interpretations of how symbols can be understood. Ask questions that focus on information such as:

* What instruments are in this song?
* How do we know when to play our instruments?
* How do we know how loud to play?
* What elements are missing from this score?
* How do we get the story across?
* How do we stay in time with each other?
* Should there be a narrator? What will they say and so on?

Create a performance of this story of ‘Tiddalick the frog’ following the graphic score. This could be done as an entire class performance or in small groups depending on the dynamic of the class.

Image 4 – a graphic notation for a composition of ‘Tiddalick the frog’ (2011)



Each group should then revisit their musical soundscapes for ‘Tiddalick the frog’ created previously. They should experiment and devise a way to graphically notate their musical soundscape ideas, including documenting how fast, high, loud, often and which instruments are being played and so on. A reminder about the [musical concepts](https://education.nsw.gov.au/content/dam/main-education/0003/media/images/Musical-Concepts-Explained-accessible.jpg) (JPEG 511KB) of duration (rhythm, beat, tempo, metre), pitch (melodic contour, high or low), dynamics (louds or softs), tone colour (which instruments or sounds), and structure (how it is put together) will assist in their preparation.

Once complete ask the students to share and explain their graphic notation scores with another group. Attempt to play each other’s scores and then describe what worked and didn’t work and any suggested improvements.

Display the following chart to assist the students in their initial planning and organisation (students may wish to add to this with their own ideas before commencing):

Table 6 – a table outlining how various musical concepts can be documented visually

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Musical concept | | What it includes | Examples of how it can be documented |
| Duration | Beat – steady or changing?  Rhythm – changing, repetitive, driving  Tempo – is it fast or slow, or does it get faster or slower? | | Dots, dashes, lines  Spirals can show faster or slower  Animals to represent fast/slow  A symbol to represent repetition |
| Pitch | Does it have a melody?  Is it mostly up high or down low? | | Squiggly lines that move from high to low  Environmental images that show high/low |
| Dynamics | Is it loud or soft?  Does it change from loud to soft?  Are there sudden or gradual changes?  When do they occur? | | Colour is often used to indicate loud/soft  Environmental images may show louds or softs or the ways in which they change |
| Tone colour | Colour is often used to indicate loud/soft  Environmental images may show louds or softs or the ways in which they change | | Images or drawings of instruments  Symbols such as shapes or colours to represent different instruments or sound effects |
| Structure | What happens at the beginning, middle and end?  Are there verses/choruses?  Is there much repetition? | | Symbols, shapes or colours can show changing sections  Written instructions |

## Learning sequence 4 – changing responses to arts practices

Through this learning sequence students will:

* analyse the ways in which Aboriginal Peoples can share their identity and connections through music
* examine the ways Aboriginal cultures and experiences are represented in music.

### Contemporary music and Aboriginal culture

Aboriginal arts practices are entwined across artforms. Explore [songlines](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kVOG-RKTFIo) (2013) [duration 1:52] and watch the explanation of the [Vivid Festival at Sydney Opera House](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=33O08xrQpR8) (2016) [duration 4:55]. This shows the way of showing the connections between music and visual arts in Aboriginal culture.

In music, like all the arts, composers often use their artworks (in this case pieces of music) to tell a story. There are several ways that this can be done either through words or through the way the instruments sound (their ‘tone colour’) and the music they play.

Listen to a variety of Aboriginal composers and performers. Listen to and consider each piece (or a section of it) and complete some aspects of the table following. Remove or add to the table for the pieces you listen to.

Start by listening to [‘My Island Home’](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yZEodxUx2ME&list=RDvUrOjNcGgnk&index=16) (1988) [duration 4:23] by the Aboriginal Warumpi Band. Ask the students to consider while listening what they hear, think or wonder about the song or complete a [listening: ten times two](http://www.pz.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/Listening%20-%20Ten%20Times%20Two_0.pdf) (PDF 395KB) process.

Following on from this, consider the following questions to stimulate further thinking:

* What is the meaning the singer is trying to portray through his song?
* How do we feel his connection to Country?
* What instruments do you hear in the introduction?
* What do the introductory watery sounds and the folk style instruments throughout make us think of?
* Identify the different feel around 2:40 when the tempo speeds up and the music sounds much brighter and the dynamics get louder. What does this imply? (the singer is getting home - portraying happiness).

**Teacher note –** complete this table as a class or individually. Possible sample answers have been included in the second table. Remove as required.

Table 7 – a table for recording musical concepts and their meaning within a piece of music

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Title of piece and composer | Musical concepts used and what do they mean? |
| [‘My Island Home’](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yZEodxUx2ME) (1988) by the Warumpi Band. |  |

Table 8 – sample responses of musical concepts and their meaning within a piece of music

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Title of piece and composer | Musical concepts used and what do they mean? |
| [‘My Island Home’](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yZEodxUx2ME) (1988) by the Warumpi Band. | * Introduction with the watery sounds and the folk style instruments throughout. These connote a deep connection to Country. * Identify the different feel around 02:40 when the as the singer implies, he is getting home (portraying happiness). * Tempo speeds up, the music sounds much brighter and the dynamics get louder like a home arrival. |

**Teacher note** – as a class or individually, discuss and record this information in response to listening to and moving to ‘Solid Rock’.

Start by watching the music video [‘Solid Rock’](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O4LaPJMWLxo) (2009) [duration 3:51] by the Street Warriors. Some of the lyrics in this piece are from [‘Solid Rock’](https://youtu.be/tSNxFGW09Mo) (1982) [duration 4:35] by Goanna. The original piece is about caring for land. The rap group Street Warriors from Newcastle in New South Wales, have adapted the lyrics to emphasise links to the land and custodianship.

Ask the students to consider while listening what they hear, think or wonder about the song.

Following on from this, consider and complete the following table to inform the students listening and thinking. Focus on:

* How is the intention of the song captured?
* How are the musical concepts used to evoke the deep meaning within the song?
* How are some musical concepts such as tone colour used to show feelings?
* How are visual symbols in the film clip, such as clothing changes, used to represent culture?

Explore with the students how composers in music, like in all artforms (and literary authors as well), often use music to engage their audience and evoke particular feelings. There are several ways that this can be achieved, either through the lyrics (words) or through the way the instrument sounds (their ‘tone colour’) and the music they play. Listen to each piece (or a section of it) and complete some aspects of the following table. Remove or add to the table for the pieces you listen to.

Table 9 – a table for recording responses to a series of focussed listening questions

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Focussed listening questions | Discussion or written response |
| What is the narrative of the song? |  |
| What does the sound of the music and the lyrics help us to understand about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples connection to the land? |  |
| What does the tone colour of the piece remind you of? |  |
| How does the piece make you (as the audience) feel? |  |
| What does the clothing represent? |  |
| How is colour used in the video clip? |  |
| How does this piece engage and inform the audience? |  |

Learn to sing the song [starting with the lyrics](https://www.google.com/search?rlz=1C1GCEA_enAU880AU880&ei=csM2YPWxJoeC4-EP5N-xmA4&q=solid+rock+goanna+lyrics&oq=solid+rock+street+warriors&gs_lcp=Cgdnd3Mtd2l6EAEYADIHCAAQRxCwAzIHCAAQRxCwAzIHCAAQRxCwAzIHCAAQRxCwAzIHCAAQRxCwAzIHCAAQRxCwAzIHCAAQRxCwAzIHCAAQRxCwA1AAWABglnRoAXACeACAAcEBiAHBAZIBAzAuMZgBAKoBB2d3cy13aXrIAQjAAQE&sclient=gws-wiz). Start by keeping the beat through stepping, movement or adding some body percussion. Transfer this to any available instruments.

Explore creating ostinatos (repeated rhythms) to accompany the song. For example, (1, 2, ‘solid rock’, 2, 3, 4) repeated using these lyrics spoken out loud or the rhythm tapped. Other strategies to establish the song more solidly would include creating a dance or other movement sequence to accompany the song’s lyrics and using the beat and rhythm to establish a steady driving movement sequence.

The students may then wish to explore creating their own raps in the style of the opening section of the song. They may also wish to use the backing track of the [Goanna version](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5offdPv-5Rw) (1982) [duration 4:29] of the song to accompany them.

Alternatively, explore other methods of writing a rap using the [‘Rubbish Rap’](https://schoolsequella.det.nsw.edu.au/file/761ed995-daad-47ca-9805-00613f5ff953/1/vocal-ease-more-module-1(2).zip/index.html#/id/5f4e445caf064f19872438f6) ‘Make it up’ guide and the backing track provided. There are also numerous [online guides to writing a rap](http://raisingcreativechildren.net/6-steps-for-kids-to-start-creating-rap-music-2/) some especially designed for children and some are [more complex examples](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cLUK8ob-GMQ) (2018) [duration 10:48] depending on the experience and confidence of the students. Selecting a theme such as Australia, family or identity.

**Teacher note** – remind the students of their history studies in Stage 2 on [Community and remembrance – importance of Country and Place](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/key-learning-areas/hsie/HSIE-early-stage-13/history/learning-sequences#tabs_copy_copy_copy_2), and Stage 3 [Australia as a nation – Australian democracy and citizenship](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/key-learning-areas/hsie/HSIE-early-stage-13/history/learning-sequences#tabs_copy_copy_copy_3). Review students’ knowledge of ‘the stolen generation’. Discuss what happened and the impact that it has had on Australian history and people’s lives. View the videos of [The Apology](http://myplace.edu.au/teaching_activities/2008/1/the_apology.html?idSubtheme=) (2008) [duration 3:14] from My Place for Teachers and the [’Stolen Generations’](https://www.abc.net.au/btn/classroom/stolen-generations/10542138) (2008) [duration 3:58] from Behind the News to remind students of these key issues.

Encourage discussion that focusses on the arts as a way of sharing differing perspectives as well as capturing feelings and expression when communicating this meaning. Remind the students that artists often make their artworks to reflect their world (or context) for an audience. Paintings, plays, songs, dances and other performances are just some of the ways that this can be done.

Play the song ‘They Took the Children Away’ (1990) by Archie Roach, [performed at Schools Spectacular in 2016 by Sebastian Kelly-Toiava](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H34Y00HrkUU) (2016) [duration 4:56]. Allow time for students to discuss the lyrics, the meaning and any feelings they want to express.

Listen to the song again with a focus on the instruments playing. Discuss the following musical features:

* Why were those instruments chosen?
* What quality (tone colour/timbre) did the instruments bring to the song?
* What instruments or tone colours would be inappropriate for that song?
* How did that tone colour effect the way we felt when listening to and interpreting the song?

Listen to [Archie Roach’s version](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VeHGlJ32tak) (1990) [duration 5:24] of the song. Compare the instruments that were used in the recording. Discuss the similarities and differences between the versions, the feelings or expressions portrayed and the students’ preferences. Consider their reasons for these choices.

Listen to or watch other Aboriginal performances by artists such as Miiesha’s [‘Caged Bird’](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fo572xJ7ZXk) (2020) [duration 1:34] and [Gurrumul Yunupingu](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TXa3gw3g4C4) (2018) [duration 2:24] in [‘Bayini’](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oi6zbPjtO6I) (2013 [duration 3:40] or [‘Bapa’](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MKC-Jd7KN64) (‘Father’) (2009) [duration 2:34]. If desired, continue the previous table to capture responses and thinking. Comment on the use of musical concepts and their effect on the meaning in their songs (which are sometimes in other languages).

How do they make us feel and how is this achieved? Consider how some of the songs represent colonisation through their artistic expressions.

Listen to [‘Gapu’](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BUiDGYSiRMg) (1991) [duration 2:43] and [‘Treaty’](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jf-jHCdafZY) (1991) [duration 3:38] by Yothu Yindi. Reveal to the students that Yothu Yindi were the first Aboriginal rock band who introduced a ‘fusion’ style of Aboriginal and more mainstream popular music. They wanted to remind Australia that Aboriginal culture was still alive. Revisit earlier discussions about William Barton and Sculthorpe’s ‘Earth Cry’ composition.

A later [remix of ‘Treaty’](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-3zG1qPiiC8) (1991) [duration 4:06] was a popular dance club song by Filthy Lucre. Compare the original and complete this table focussing on the musical elements from the song:

Table 10 – a table for recording and comparing the Aboriginal music features and electronic effects used in two songs

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Artist | Aboriginal music features | Electronic effects in the music |
| Yothu Yindi |  |  |
| Filthy Lucre |  |  |

Which version did the students enjoy the most and why?

Ask the students about their knowledge of the music of Jessica Mauboy. Point out that Jessica is an Aboriginal Australian, part of the Kuku Yalanji people of Far North Queensland. Investigate the participation of Aboriginal Peoples at Eurovision – read the article Celebrating Diversity at Eurovison. Particularly focus on the involvement of Aboriginal Australian performers such as Jessica Mauboy and Isaiah Firebrace.

Discuss how these singers represent Australia. Reflect on what the responses were to these performances, both at Eurovision and in Australia.

**Teacher note** – [Music Matters 2013](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5dPJCOyGGlU) (2013) [duration 33:38] explains in greater detail the life and context of Gurrumul. It is worthwhile background viewing to aid understanding and expand the context of Gurrumul and his community.

During the [Music Matters 2013](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5dPJCOyGGlU) (2013) [at 12:51] video about Gurrumul, a comparison is made between streaming services such as Spotify and the oral traditions of Aboriginal cultures and song. Similarities are drawn on the fact that streaming services contain millions of songs, and Aboriginal cultures also have enormous libraries of songs that tell the stories of aspects of their Country. For example, songs exist that represent each tree, each hill, each cave and so on.

Reflect on the importance of songlines to Aboriginal culture and the connection to a place. Ask the students to think of a special place or thing within their environment (at home or school). Encourage them to draw this place in silence.

Ask them to consider how they could represent this place and their drawing through sound. For example, a whistle for a bird, a glass like the wind, hitting something strongly with their hands like a rock face, clicking a ring pull like a frog, a paint brush on a table like sand, or a water bottle shaken for the ocean and so on.

Ask the students to record the sound using the [Chrome Music Lab](https://app.education.nsw.gov.au/digital-learning-selector/LearningTool/Card/647#.YCyi2ta9cXc.link) using the voice spinner or [GarageBand](https://app.education.nsw.gov.au/digital-learning-selector/LearningTool/Card/614#.YCyi2sOLM1s.link). Use this as the basis of a looping composition. Allow the students time to experiment with this digital technology to complete their compositions.

Alternatively, have the students perform their representational sounds to the class and as a class decide on a way to arrange these sounds together. Use the [guide to organising sound](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n2F0kB1cU_c) (2017) [duration 2:42] to assist in structuring this work.

Ask the students to describe the sound they have chosen and what it represents.

Also, within the Music Matters video, reference is made to the importance of culture and representation through music [at 32:11] – music enables people ‘to be true to yourself, to represent your culture and to show the world what it is and to bring the world in.’

Consult with [local Elders](https://www.aecg.nsw.edu.au/aecg-regions/) and [Aboriginal Land Council of NSW](https://alc.org.au/) where possible to find out more about your local Aboriginal community. Ask the students to reflect on their cultural backgrounds and share any songs they have learnt or heard that possibly represent their culture. For example, lullabies, songs their parents or grandparents might sing, dances or recorded music that they recognise as important to their family. Why are these important and how do they represent their family?

Share these songs and/or dances and where possible as a class learn them. Community members and family may enjoy this opportunity to share their culture with the students.

## Learning sequence 5 – representation of Aboriginal culture in music and dance

Through this learning sequence students will:

* analyse the ways in which Aboriginal Peoples can share their identity and connections through music and dance
* examine the ways Aboriginal cultures and experiences are represented in music and dance.

### Music and dance in Aboriginal culture

Begin by pointing out to the students that Aboriginal culture is embedded in the arts. Remind them of the important role of the arts in storytelling and sharing messages and meaning. Discuss the important role of ceremonies in Aboriginal culture as a way of sharing religious and cultural beliefs involving a variety of artforms and artistic practices including music, dance and visual artworks.

Explore with the students what they know about Aboriginal dance and its purpose. For example, do males and females have different roles? Depending on the outcome of this discussion, share the following information with the students from the [Stages 4 and 5 unit ‘Aboriginal dance in Australia’](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/key-learning-areas/creative-arts/stages-4-and-5/dance/aboriginal-dance-in-australia).

* Dances from corroborees are passed down in unbroken form and the movements are strictly enforced with little variations allowed.
* [Ritual corroborees](https://www.flickr.com/photos/hwmobs/37118667184) involve the body being painted with intricate designs using natural materials from the ground.
* Most movement tends to be very rhythmical and uses the feet and arms. It is also close to the ground to symbolise connection with the Earth.
* If a shared performance, males may feature in performances. Females take on a support role, often forming a chorus to one side. Possibly using clapsticks.
* Beat is kept by beating together clap-sticks (used by women), tapping boomerangs, or by hitting the thighs or buttocks with cupped hands.
* The didgeridoo was used for accompaniment to create melody and rhythm. There was often heavy chanting during these ceremonies.

Watch [Aboriginal Dreamtime war dance](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k2BxJYJrg2A) (2015) [duration 4:18] and describe how Aboriginal Australians keep their cultures, languages and traditions alive through changes to society.

Explore the [Aboriginal Crane Dance](https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=U2vzsSmqGg8) (2008) [duration 1:36] and discuss the way the performers move and the qualities of their movements. For example, heavy, bouncing, feet spread, repetitive movements, mostly non-locomotor, group based, same movements within the group, mid to low level and so on.

Consider the role of storytelling in Aboriginal culture and in dance as an artform. Share with the students the [Bangarra Dance – Brolga](https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=zxnra4q1ElA) (2013) [duration 4:25] video about the ways in which the Bangarra Dance Company showcases Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures through contemporary and traditional dance methods:

* How does it show the connection to landscape and environment?
* How is the story told? What is the story?
* How does the music help us to understand the Aboriginal focus of the dance?
* Describe the dancers’ movements and how they relate to the brolga? Look particularly at their hands, arms and legs as well as the way they move.

The role of animals and storytelling is used a great deal in Aboriginal dance and appears regularly within Bangarra dance’s performances. Watch the clip [Wild Things: Animal on Stage](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mfF_NquI2RM) (2011) [duration 12:25] up to 7:44. Discuss the following features of the music and dance:

* How does the music aid the performance such as the instruments and the tempo?
* What elements of the land do they use as inspiration?
* How do the performers tell their story?
* What dance elements do they use to capture the movement of the animals. For example, their body shapes and movement features such as direction, energy, how they use the space, their pathways and how they relate to the other performers and so on.

Consider these dance elements in framing student responses:

Table 11 – an overview of the elements of dance

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Dance element | What the element means |
| Action – what? | What activity is taking place? (jumping, twisting, bending, sliding and so on)  What shapes can be seen? (curved, wide, narrow and so on)  What body part is moving? |
| Dynamics – how? | How does the body move?  How is the body using weight, force, flow, energy and spatial qualities? |
| Time – when? | When do changes in speed occur?  When does the movement reflect the rhythm and beat of the music? |
| Space – where? | Where does the body go – curved, straight, meandering pathways and so on?  Where does the dance take place?  Where does the dance move in the performance space?  Where are the movements – high, medium, low levels?  Where are the dancers in relation to each other?  Where do the eyes of the dancers go to communicate? |
| Relationships – who? | Who do the performers dance with - individually, partners, in a small group, with the whole groups? |
| Structure | How will it start and finish?  Will there be repeated patterns?  Will there be contrast or will it all be the same? |
| Contexts | Who is the audience?  Is the dance considerate of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders perspective? |

Using one of the pieces and/or songs from Aboriginal artists listened to, ask the students to compose a dance/movement sequence to accompany the music. Some groups may wish to do this without music. Each group may wish to work on the same piece of music or depending upon equipment, different music may be selected. Small groups of mixed levels of experience and confidence are ideal for this type of work.

Reinforce to the students that the aim of the dance is to tell a story. Ask the students to listen to their song or piece of music and decide as a group what their narrative or message will be. It may be preferable to select a short section of the piece rather than the entire composition.

Once their story is established, use the table of dance elements to guide decision making on how the dance will be composed. The students need to be aware of who their audience will be, what their music and story are, the context of the composition, the story that they are telling and how they will perform it.

Ensure safety is discussed and [safe dance practices](https://schoolsequella.det.nsw.edu.au/file/cc3cdf5e-e4f1-41e0-8249-8870476a8433/1/elements-of-dance-posters.pdf) (PDF 2.5MB) are adhered to, such as warming up and cooling down, as well as allowing adequate space and guidelines. Allow sufficient time for this process and to allow feedback to ensure the best possible outcome is achieved.

Ask the students to explain and then perform for the remainder of the class or another group and invite feedback to inform future directions and revisions.

## Learning sequence 6 – further connection of arts practices

Through this learning sequence students will:

* explain the significance of performing arts practices for Aboriginal Peoples
* evaluate the contribution of performing arts practices by Aboriginal Peoples and Torres Strait Islander Peoples to Australia’s identity.

### Aboriginal identities through drama

Investigate the role of the traditional storytellers in [Aboriginal storytelling](https://www.aboriginalstories.org.au/aboriginal-storytelling/). Identify the roles of storytellers in:

* dreaming and creation stories
* knowledge of spiritual
* knowledge of societal
* sharing cultural significance.

Discuss with students about how traditional Aboriginal stories often hold a message or moral for the audience. Explain that in the story they are about to hear, there are two key messages to learn.

Read the picture book with an accompanying video called [‘Kookoo Kookaburra’](https://youtu.be/F4HzWKMC5Aw) (2015) [duration 0:51] by Gregg Dreise. ‘Read’ the text again, noting the use of colour and artistic techniques in the illustrations. Focus on the way the author/illustrator represents the sun throughout the book. Note how colour and the size of the dots is used to indicate the time of day.

After reading, reflect on the two key messages of the story. Ask students to interpret the meanings of these expressions and to consider the ways in which these messages could be applied more broadly to their own lives:

* ‘Kindness is like a boomerang – if you throw it often, it comes back often’
* ‘You have two eyes, you have two ears, you only have one mouth. Look and listen twice as much as you speak.’

Discuss this as a literary theme, much like a story with a moral or a proverb in other cultures. What is the purpose of this type of message?

Introduce or review the drama form of playbuilding. Encourage sharing to build on students’ ideas. Revise the elements of drama and how they can be used within the form of playbuilding:

Table 12 – an overview of the elements of drama

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Drama element | What is it? | What does it look like? |
| Body and movement | Action of the body and how the body is used to make meaning in drama to represent ideas, emotions and relationships. | Changes according to the situation, roles and relationships and can include words, facial expressions, posture and expressive body movements. |
| Contrast | The way opposites are used to create dramatic meaning. | Sound and silence, darkness and light, loud and soft, or physically such as size, shape and height or emotions and voice. |
| Dramatic focus | A moment in the drama that directs meaning to something. | Groupings of roles, actions, a sound, gesture, movement, a pause, a costume or a prop. |
| Dramatic tension | Gives meaning to the action. | A surprise, a mystery, or something unexpected in the drama. |
| Mood | The overall feeling, tone or atmosphere. | A gloomy, happy, playful, frightening feeling in the drama and so on. |
| Place | Where the action of the drama takes place. | The place where the drama is set. |
| Relationships | Connections and interactions between characters. | Connections between people and ideas, their environments or other people. |
| Role and character | When a role is developed it is sometimes referred to as character. | Character traits, movements, attitudes and voice. |
| Situation | When, what and who is something happening to. | When, where and what is happening in the drama. |
| Sound | Any noises used in the drama. | Vocal sounds, music, sound effects, body percussion and so on. |
| Space | Where the drama will be performed and how the performers interact physically | The proximity between performers, props and the audience as well as the actual space that the drama takes place in. |
| Symbol | Something interpreted beyond the literal. | Representation of something through something else. Such as icons, food, songs, flags, gestures or movements to show a place or character. |
| Time | The pace of the drama. | How quickly or slowly the dialogue moves or the scene changes. |
| Voice and language | Tones of voice, words, and body language and how they affect the drama. | How a character should be portrayed, what language they use and how they use it. |

Ask the students to form groups of three or four. Groups create a short scene that demonstrates one of the two key messages established from the book. Give students time to playbuild and rehearse their scene.

Read and view the text [‘Why I Love Australia’](https://www.inquisitive.com/video/45-why-i-love-australia) (2010) [duration 2:59] by Bronwyn Bancroft. Discuss the text and what it means. Focus on the artworks within, including the colours, techniques and styles.

In pairs, ask the students to choose one double page spread from the book to use as inspiration for a drama improvisation. Ask the students to research and record their understanding of their chosen place using a [concept mapping tool](https://app.education.nsw.gov.au/digital-learning-selector/LearningActivity/Card/542#.YCoXlTAqyqI.link) to gain an understanding of:

* the landscape
* what people do on a typical day including who they would meet
* what people would see, hear, smell, touch or taste on a typical day
* a challenging thing about living there
* at least one thing that they would love about living there.

Students should then prepare a drama improvisation in which they:

* pretend that they live in the place that they have chosen from the book by taking on any appropriate roles and character, considering their use of voice and language as well as time, place, moods and so on
* describe a typical day, drawing on all five senses to make the image vivid for the audience considering use of symbol, contrast, focus, sound, situation and space
* engage with their audience using body movements, facial expressions, voice and language, sound and space.

Provide students with rehearsal and preparation time to allow them to develop confidence and improve the quality of the performance, as well as promoting the enjoyment of the experience.

Read the book again stopping after each page and allowing the students who chose that setting to deliver their improvisation to the class.

Discuss each group’s performance and the similarities and differences between the scenes that were based on the same message. Why did we have different performances? What does this tell us about our perspectives?

Techniques such as using [readers’ theatre](https://www.readingrockets.org/strategies/readers_theater) to dramatise many Aboriginal texts are engaging and assist students to understand the text, Aboriginal perspectives and collaboratively explore a variety of drama elements. Readers’ theatre involves a rehearsed reading of a text (often to an audience) using gesture and language, vocal expression, silence, mime and dialogue as well other drama elements.

Readers’ theatre can be used with a variety of texts. There are [a variety of popular Aboriginal texts](https://dreamtime.net.au/dreaming/story-list/) that are easily adapted for readers’ theatre such as ‘The Rainbow Serpent’, ‘How the Birds Got Their Colours’ and ‘The Echidna and the Shade Tree’ are just some examples.

Other drama forms such as puppetry and mask are also accessible and easily adaptable to use with Aboriginal texts. Explore [Act Ease](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/key-learning-areas/creative-arts/early-stage-1-to-stage-3/drama/act-ease---module-1) for ways of using these forms in context.

Revise the initial [yarning circle](https://www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/about/k-12-policies/aboriginal-torres-strait-islander-perspectives/resources/yarning-circles) by asking the same or similar questions as earlier. Ensure that the 5 steps of a circle (discussed in detail earlier) are enforced and respect for others’ opinions is honoured.

Complete an [exit slip](https://app.education.nsw.gov.au/digital-learning-selector/LearningActivity/Card/543#.YDdMOFskbn8.link) about all the work they have learnt, participated in and now understand about Aboriginal arts perspectives, practices, techniques and traditions through this unit. Consider what the students would still like to know and allow that to inform future directions with this work.