Australia’s first people

This learning sequence comprises one inquiry.

## Topic – First contacts

3 weeks – 90 minutes per week

### Key inquiry question

* What was life like for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples before the arrival of the Europeans?

### Overview

This topic introduces world history and the movements of peoples. Beginning with the history of Aboriginal people. This learning sequence consists of one inquiry about the life of Aboriginal people. Students identify who the first people to live in Australia were and how long they have lived here. They examine the traditional Aboriginal way of life through an independent inquiry with a focus on food, shelter, tools, weapons.

### Outcomes

A student:

* HT2-3 describes people, events and actions related to world exploration and its effects
* HT2-5 applies skills of historical inquiry and communication

### Content

The diversity and longevity of Australia's first peoples and the ways Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples are connected to Country and Place (land, sea, waterways and skies) and the implications for their daily lives (ACHHK077)

Students:

* identify the original inhabitants of Australia and create a timeline indicating their longevity in Australia of more than 50,000 years.
* investigate, drawing on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community representatives (where possible) and other sources, the traditional Aboriginal way of life, focusing on people, their beliefs, food, shelter, tools and weapons, customs and ceremonies, art works, dance, music, and relationship to Country

### Historical inquiry skills

Comprehension: chronology, terms and concepts

* respond, read and write, to show understanding of historical matters
* sequence familiar people and events (ACHHS065, ACHHS081)
* use historical terms (ACHHS066, ACHHS082)

Analysis and use of sources

* locate relevant information from sources provided (ACHHS068, ACHHS084, ACHHS215, ACHHS216)
* Perspectives and interpretations
* identify different points of view within an historical context (ACHHS069, ACHHS085)

Empathetic understanding

* explain how and why people in the past may have lived and behaved differently from today

Research

* pose a range of questions about the past (ACHHS067, ACHHS083)
* plan an historical inquiry

Explanation and communication

* develop texts, particularly narratives (ACHHS070, ACHHS086)
* use a range of communication forms (oral, graphic, written) and digital technologies (ACHHS071, ACHHS087)

### Selected historical concepts

Continuity and change – some things change over time and others remain the same, for example, aspects in the local community that have either changed or remained the same; changes to the lives of Aboriginal peoples with the arrival of the First Fleet.

Perspectives – people from the past will have different views and experiences, for example, views on the arrival of the British in Australia from a British and an Aboriginal point of view.

Empathetic understanding – developing an understanding of another's views, life and decisions made, for example, developing an understanding of the life and attitudes of an early colonist or convict.

Syllabus extracts are quoted from [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.

### Assessment

All activities require students to demonstrate their learning. All are assessment for learning activities.

### Vocabulary

Ask, listen, investigate, observe, collect, examine, identify, record, describe, sequence, compare, recall, explain, discuss, illustrate, write, present, reflect

Time, history, significance

Artefact, site, book, video, source, primary source, secondary source, reliability, timeline

Aboriginal, local, traditional

## Teaching and learning activities

This teaching framework comprises three inquiries.

### Inquiry 1 – semi-guided inquiry into the life of Aboriginal people

Students identify who the first people to live in Australia were and how long they have lived here. They examine the traditional Aboriginal way of life through a semi-guided inquiry with a focus on food, native plants and animals, tools, customs and ceremonies, art works, Aboriginal sites and artefacts and Aboriginal ways of managing the environment.

Note – this can be replaced with a student-led inquiry into a focus of choice.

If Aboriginal students are present, inform them that throughout the lessons, images of Aboriginal people who may now be deceased may be shown.

The inquiry questions below should be localised to represent your local Aboriginal community. The [NSW Aboriginal Education Consultative Group (AECG)](https://www.aecg.nsw.edu.au/) website provides contact details for your local Aboriginal representative who will be able to assist you with further information.

#### Stimulus

Read Source 1 – Nyuntu Ninti by Bob Randall and Melanie Hogan, Harper Collins, 2011. Ask students: Why do you think this book was written? What do the black and white images in the book show us? How long have Aboriginal people lived here? What does the book tell us about the way Aboriginal people used to live?

Ask each student to complete a KWL chart that outlines what students already know and what they would like to know about traditional Aboriginal life.

#### Historical inquiry step 1 – question

With reference to the students’ KWL charts, and guided by syllabus dot points, generate a class set of inquiry questions to find out more about who the first people to live in Australia were, how long they have lived here and what the traditional Aboriginal way of life was like. (If possible include a focus on your local Aboriginal community.)

Sample questions:

* Who were the first people to live in Australia? How long have they lived here?
* How did Aboriginal people live before the arrival of the Europeans?
* How did Aboriginal people use the resources of the country to live?
* What resources were used by the local Aboriginal people?

Note ­– inquiry questions may need to be redesigned through the historical inquiry process.

#### Historical inquiry step 2 – research

Provide at least one primary and one secondary source to support the inquiry.

Examples include:

* [ABC Splash Bruce Pascoe: Aboriginal agriculture, technology and ingenuity](http://education.abc.net.au/home#!/digibook/3122184/bruce-pascoe-aboriginal-agriculture-technology-and-ingenuity). This digibook, teaches students about the history of Aboriginal agriculture and technology and celebrates the ingenuity of the First Australians
* [WilderQuest](https://wilderquest.nsw.gov.au/). This website is developed by NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service. It has a campfire section which provides information about the traditional Aboriginal way of life with a focus on food, shelter, tools, weapons and relationship to Country. Students can investigate how traditional ways of living were adapted to the resources of the Country. Visit the campfire and click on the bush tools (axe icon), bush tucker (food in a bowl) and carrying or holding tools (basket icon) to find out more.
* Contact your local [NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service](https://www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au/) to organise an Aboriginal cultural tour with a local discovery ranger. The focus of the tour is to provide real life examples of resources used in the traditional Aboriginal way of life in the local area and to increase awareness of the special relationship local Aboriginal people have with their Country. Discovery rangers will engage students in learning about bush tucker and bush tools, native plants and animals, Aboriginal sites and artefacts, sharing of local stories and Aboriginal ways of managing the environment.
* Contact your local [environmental education centre](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/learning-across-the-curriculum/sustainability/environmental-zoo-centres) to participate in an excursion or incursion focusing on Aboriginal culture and traditional Aboriginal people’s ways of life.
* [ABC Education Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history and cultures](http://education.abc.net.au/home#!/topic/494038/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-histories-and-cultures). This website includes videos, paintings, works of art and photographs of traditional Aboriginal way of life.
* [Mungo National Park](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7WC8tZS4EmM.) video. Start​ ​the​ ​video​ ​at​ ​3:31min​ and stop​ ​the​ ​video​ ​at​ ​6:52min​.​ ​This video outlines significant items that have been found at Lake Mungo that demonstrate how long Aboriginal people have inhabited Australia.
* [Australian Museum Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander collection timeline](https://australianmuseum.net.au/learn/cultures/atsi-collection/timeline/). This timeline outlines the collection of Aboriginal items that dates back to 65,000 years ago.

Guide students in extracting information from the sources to answer the inquiry questions. Model the use of a source analysis table to record the information.

Table 1 – source analysis table

| Source number | Title and date | Who created it? | Why was it created? | Whose view is it? | Key information | Questions raised |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

#### Historical inquiry step 3 – analyse

**Significance of the information collected**

From the information obtained, collectively identify the information that will be useful to assist in answering the inquiry questions. Assist students to determine which source/s to include or exclude and start to develop an historical opinion about who the first people to live in Australia were, how long they have lived here and what life was like for the local Aboriginal people before the arrival of the Europeans.

Collectively create a timeline to illustrate how long Aboriginal people have inhabited Australia.

#### Historical inquiry step 4 – evaluate

Guide the students in evaluating the reliability of the sources. Are there inconsistencies or contradictions between the sources? Do the inquiry questions need to be redesigned as a result of analysing and evaluating sources?

#### Historical inquiry step 5 – communicate

**Local Aboriginal History**

Students write an information text that outlines what they have learnt about the local Aboriginal way of life. Students could include information about local bush tucker and bush tools, native plants and animals, customs and ceremonies, art works, Aboriginal sites and artefacts and Aboriginal ways of managing the environment. Encourage students to use a range of communication methods to create and present their information text including written, graphic and oral. Provide students with the option of using digital technology to create the text.

**Reflection**

Students reflect on the historical inquiry process using their original KWL chart. They reflect on what they learnt, how they learnt it and what else they would like to find out.

### Resources

**Picture books**

Nyuntu Ninti by Bob Randall and Melanie Hogan, Harper Collins, 2011.

**Websites and resources**

[NSW Aboriginal Education Consultative Group (AECG)](https://www.aecg.nsw.edu.au/)

[ABC Splash Bruce Pascoe: Aboriginal agriculture, technology and ingenuity](http://education.abc.net.au/home#!/digibook/3122184/bruce-pascoe-aboriginal-agriculture-technology-and-ingenuity)

[WilderQuest](https://wilderquest.nsw.gov.au/), National Parks and Wildlife Service NSW

[NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service](https://www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au/), Aboriginal Cultural Tours

[ABC Education Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history and cultures](http://education.abc.net.au/home#!/topic/494038/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-histories-and-cultures)

[Mungo National Park](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7WC8tZS4EmM.)

[Australian Museum Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander collection timeline](https://australianmuseum.net.au/learn/cultures/atsi-collection/timeline/)