Studies of Religion

Preliminary – Nature of Religion and Beliefs

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This resource has been developed to assist teachers in NSW Department of Education schools to create learning that is contextualised to their classroom. It can be used as a basis for the teacher’s own program, assessment, or scope and sequence, or be used as an example of how the new curriculum could be implemented. The resource has suggested timeframes that may need to be adjusted by the teacher to meet the needs of their students.

# Overview

**Description:** this program of learning addresses the nature of religion and beliefs, including Australian Aboriginal beliefs and spiritualities, as a distinctive response to the human search for meaning in life. This study introduces students to the essential concepts of Studies of Religion. It provides an understanding of the nature of religion and the expression of religious thought and practice in various belief systems. In this part of the course, the religious traditions illustrate the variety of beliefs about the relationship between the supernatural and the human, the search for meaning and the ultimate goal of human life. Students also investigate the unique expression of spirituality by Aboriginal peoples. These responses all demonstrate a relationship between beliefs and their adherents.

**Explicit teaching:** suggested learning intentions and success criteria are available for some lessons provided. Learning intentions and success criteria are most effective when they are contextualised to meet the needs of students in the class. The examples provided in this document are generalised to demonstrate how learning intentions and success criteria could be created.

**Duration:** this program of learning is designed to be completed in approximately 16 hours.

## Outcomes

A student:

* **P1** describes the characteristics of religion and belief systems
* **P2** identifies the influence of religion and belief systems on individuals and society
* **P6** selects and uses relevant information about religion from a variety of sources
* **P8** uses appropriate terminology related to religion and belief systems

[Studies of Religion Stage 6 Syllabus](https://educationstandards.nsw.edu.au/wps/portal/nesa/11-12/stage-6-learning-areas/hsie/studies-of-religion-2) © NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) for and on behalf of the Crown in right of the State of New South Wales, 2009.

## Objectives

Stage 6 Studies of Religion seeks to develop the knowledge, understanding and skills of students. Students will also value and appreciate the diversity of beliefs within society.

# Learning sequence 1 – Nature of Religion

This learning sequence is designed to take approximately 8 hours. The religious traditions referenced in this sequence illustrate the variety of beliefs about the relationship between the supernatural and the human, the search for meaning and the ultimate goal of human life.

This learning sequence will support students to:

* develop their knowledge and understanding of the essential concepts of Studies of Religion
* learn to value and appreciate religion and beliefs as a distinctive response to the human search for meaning in life.

Schools are encouraged to visit religious places and to work with religious leaders and groups wherever possible to support student learning. Teachers and students will need to be aware of sensitivities and protocols. Teachers are advised to check with the appropriate people to meet the requirements of a visit to a religious place and when dealing with specific religious individuals and/or groups.

For further advice, please refer to the policies and procedures for [Controversial issues in schools](https://education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/policies/pd-2002-0045) and [Excursions](https://education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/policies/pd-2004-0010).

## Syllabus content

**The Nature of Religion**

Table 1 – syllabus content

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Students learn about: | Students learn to: |
| * religion as a worldview that: * acknowledges the supernatural dimension * has a belief in a divine being or powers beyond the human and/or dwelling within the individual * characteristics of religion: * beliefs and believers * sacred texts and writings * ethics * rituals and ceremonies * the contribution of religion | * define the supernatural dimension * discuss a transcendent religious worldview which has a belief in a divine power and/or powers beyond the human * discuss an immanent religious worldview which has a belief in a divine being or powers dwelling within the individual * define the characteristics of religion * explore the ways in which these characteristics interact to create a dynamic, living religion * appreciate the contribution of religion to: * individuals * society and culture |

## Learning intentions

**Note:** these learning intentions and success criteria are general and should be contextualised to suit your school and students’ needs.

Students will:

* appreciate the contribution of religion to individuals and society.

## Success criteria

Students can:

* apply appropriate terminology to communicate their understanding of the nature of religion and beliefs
* apply the characteristics of religion in different contexts to communicate their understanding of religions as dynamic and living
* know and understand the contribution of religion to individuals and society.

## Capacity matrix

**Note:** explain to the class how to use the [Capacity matrix (Appendix)](#_Appendix:_–_cCapacity). Ensure students understand and can distinguish between information, knowledge, know-how and wisdom categories in the matrix.

The capacity matrix can be used as a formative assessment tool that clarifies student understanding of course concepts for the duration of the learning sequence. For more information, see Quality Learning Australasia’s [The Capacity Matrix](http://www.qla.com.au/capacity-matrix). Please note that teachers need to register to access the free resources on this site.

Review the capacity matrix for terminology relating to the topic the ‘Nature of Religion and Beliefs’. Shade or tick where you feel you are according to the matrix criteria for each term. The criteria for the matrix are:

* information – at this level, you have heard of the term and you might recall basic facts about it
* knowledge – at this level, you can explain and know what the term or concept means
* know-how – at this level, you can draw connections between this religious term or concept and relate it to other concepts or situations
* wisdom – at this level, you can use the term or concept in new contexts or teach others.

You will revisit this matrix throughout the learning sequence.

## Religion as a worldview

**Note:** throughout this resource, multiple religions will be used as examples. You may change these examples to suit your local context.

Table 2 would need to be expanded for students to be able to populate the information from the video. Alternatively, students could construct a table where the religious tradition is presented across the columns and the categories of significant figures or deities, beliefs and believers, ceremonies, ethics, places, practices, and rituals or texts can be presented in the rows.

Engage with [The five major world religions (11:09)](https://youtu.be/m6dCxo7t_aE) to complete Table 2.

Table 2 – notes on 5 major world religions

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Category | Hinduism  (0:38–2:20) | Judaism  (2:21–4:19) | Buddhism  (4:20–6:26) | Christianity  (6:27–8:25) | Islam  (8:26–10:26) |
| Significant figures or deities |  |  |  |  |  |
| Beliefs and believers |  |  |  |  |  |
| Ceremonies |  |  |  |  |  |
| Ethics |  |  |  |  |  |
| Places |  |  |  |  |  |
| Practices |  |  |  |  |  |
| Rituals or texts |  |  |  |  |  |

Use Table 2 to write 2 PEEL paragraphs that address the question ‘How are the five major world religions similar?’

In small groups complete a [Frayer diagram](https://app.education.nsw.gov.au/digital-learning-selector/LearningActivity/Card/553#.ZBp5SmEGDN8.link) for each of the following terms in the context of religion. You could use dictionaries, encyclopedias or [Merriam-Webster](https://www.merriam-webster.com/) to research each term.

* Immanent
* Monotheistic
* Polytheistic
* Supernatural
* Transcendent
* Worldview

Use your completed Frayer diagrams to define what the ‘supernatural dimension’ means when studying religion.

Engage with the consolidation video [NSW Y11-12 Studies of Religion: The Supernatural Dimension (6:22)](https://youtu.be/3Ys7sz1pYfQ), then review your definition of the ‘supernatural dimension’ and make any edits you think are required.

**Modelled response**

The following is a modelled example with Christianity as the focus. Students can work through the Islamic example below once this section has been modelled. Read [What is a Christian worldview?](https://www.gotquestions.org/Christian-worldview.html)

In groups, address your assigned prompt from the list below. For this example, each prompt is highlighted in bold and is followed by a suggested response.

**How does the Christian worldview answer the questions of origin, purpose and redemption?**

The Christian worldview teaches that God created humans. Due to this, humans have a purpose to take care of the world and have a relationship with Him. The main goal in life for Christians is to love and serve God. Christians believe that redemption and salvation come from the sacrifice of Jesus, which promises to restore everything to its original perfect form.

**In what ways does the belief in a divine power influence moral decisions and actions in daily life?**

Believing in a divine power gives Christians clear moral guidelines based on biblical teachings. This belief inspires them to act with integrity, compassion and responsibility, knowing their actions are accountable to a higher authority.

**What are some examples of how a Christian worldview can impact areas such as politics, art or science?**

A Christian worldview impacts areas such as politics, art and science by influencing moral principles and values. The text states that a worldview ‘affects every area of life, from money to morality, from politics to art’. This indicates that the beliefs held within a Christian framework guide decisions and actions in these various fields, leading to a cohesive approach that reflects Christian values and ethics.

**Individual reflection – How does the Christian worldview, as presented in the text, inform your understanding of transcendence and its implications for human existence? Provide examples from the text to support your response.**

The Christian worldview, as described in the text, helps individuals understand transcendence and its impact on human life. It teaches that God is a higher power beyond human understanding, shaping how people see reality and their role in it. This belief in a divine creator explains humanity’s origin and gives meaning to purpose and moral values.

For instance, the text states that humans are created by God, highlighting the dignity and value of every person. This belief encourages respect for life and compassion towards others, recognising that everyone is part of God’s creation.

The text also emphasises Jesus’ sacrifice as a way for people to overcome their limitations. It shows that salvation is a gift from God, not something people can earn themselves. This offers hope and guidance, reminding individuals that there is always a chance for redemption through faith. Overall, the Christian worldview provides a clear understanding of transcendence, influencing beliefs about purpose, morality and the need for divine support in dealing with life’s challenges.

**Note:** the term Allah in the text is the Arabic translation for the English word God.

Read [Doctrines of the Qur’ān](https://www.britannica.com/topic/Islam#:~:text=Doctrines%20of%20the,the%20Divine%20Will.) and highlight the key points that relate to the concept of transcendence. Work in groups to address your assigned prompt from the list below.

* What characteristics of Allah (God) indicate His transcendence?
* How do the attributes of Allah (God) shape the beliefs and practices of Muslims?
* In what ways does the belief in a transcendent God impact the understanding of existence and purpose in Islam?

As a group share your insights with the class.

How does the Islamic worldview presented in the text inform your understanding of a transcendent religious perspective? Provide examples from the text to support your response.

Read [Buddhism](https://education.nationalgeographic.org/resource/buddhism/) to complete the activities below.

* Highlight the key points that relate to the concept of immanence.
* Create a concept map that connects these key ideas.
* Start with ‘Immanent Worldview in Buddhism’ at the centre.
* Branch out to related concepts such as enlightenment (nirvana), meditation, four noble truths, karma.
* Compare your concept map with a peer.
* Reflect on what you have learned about the immanent worldview. In your response consider
* how creating and discussing the concept maps helped you understand the concept of immanence in Buddhism
* one key takeaway about the immanent worldview in Buddhism.

**Note:** to facilitate an effective Socratic seminar, students will need time to develop a classroom contract, to conduct the seminar and to reflect on and evaluate their process. A potential opening question is ‘How can a deity be both transcendent and immanent?’ More information on how to use Socratic seminars as a teaching strategy can be found at [Facing History: Socratic Seminar](https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/socratic-seminar).

Extension activity – participate in a [Socratic Seminar](https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/socratic-seminar) using the article [How Is that Possible For God to Be Transcendent and Immanent?](https://www.learnreligions.com/god-is-transcendent-and-immanent-251063) as a stimulus.

## Characteristics of religion

Use Table 3 to match the correct term with its definition. The first definition ‘beliefs’ has already been matched.

Table 3 – matching activity

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Term | Definition |
| *Beliefs* | *Acceptance of something to be true, without requiring proof.* |
| Believers | Written works that contain teachings, laws and stories for its followers. |
| Sacred texts and writings | Individuals who adhere to and accept the teachings, rituals and customs of their religious traditions. |
| Ethics | Structured activities or acts that celebrate and demonstrate the beliefs, values and community identity. |
| Rituals and ceremonies | Key part of a religion in determining right from wrong. |

**Note:** model the following activity with one religion of your choosing first before having students attempt the activity for another religion of their choice.

Select one religion and create a table describing the characteristics of that religion:

* beliefs and believers
* sacred texts and writings
* ethics
* rituals and ceremonies.

**Note:** an [explicit teaching strategy](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/explicit-teaching/explicit-teaching-strategies) should be taught to students particularly for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students, EAL/D Learners and students who have learning difficulties.

How do the 4 characteristics of religion interact to create a dynamic, living religion?

* Discuss what each characteristic (beliefs and believers, sacred texts and writings, ethics, rituals and ceremonies) involves and how they might be interconnected.
* Consider logical arguments in response to this question.
* Prepare examples or analogies that may support your response.
* Consider alternative responses that may be presented.

Sit in a circle and share your response with the class. Some guidelines for this discussion may include:

* everyone should actively listen as others speak
* the speaker should pass to the next person who wishes to speak
* the speaker can present arguments on the question, build on each other’s ideas, challenge the ideas of others, or make inferences from what has been said
* where possible, arguments should be supported by examples
* discussion should be directed to the group rather than the teacher.

**Note:** this activity can be done in a Yarning Circle context. See [USING A YARNING CIRCLE Activities to enrich students everyday learning (3:51)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YSlNPgcObfw) for more information.

* At the end of the discussion, in bullet points reflect on the knowledge gained in the inquiry as well as the process of inquiry by considering the following questions.
* What did we learn today?
* Did we all contribute?

## The contributions of religion

Read the ‘Impact of Religion’ section of [Why Is Religion Important?](https://www.verywellmind.com/religion-improves-health-2224007) and [Religion and Identity](https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/religion-identity). Develop a brochure that appreciates the contribution of religion to individuals. In your response, refer to the stories of Rebecca, Maham, Sara or Hesed from the text [Religion and Identity](https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/religion-identity). Consider at least 3 of the following themes:

* sense of community
* support and guidance
* health benefits
* identity
* structure
* spiritual practices.

Read [Religion](https://culturalatlas.sbs.com.au/australian-culture/australian-culture-religion). After reading, reconvene as a class and facilitate a discussion using the following guided questions:

* What contributions do you see religion making to individuals in the text?
* How does the text illustrate the impact of religion on society and culture in Australia?
* In what ways do the experiences of different religious groups (for example, Muslims, Christians and other faiths) reflect the diversity of Australian society?
* How does the historical context of the text influence the current understanding of religion in Australia?

Write a short reflection (1 to 2 paragraphs) on the following prompt:

How do you think religion shapes individual identities and contributes to the broader cultural landscape of Australia? Provide examples from the texts used above to support your response.

# Learning sequence 2 – Australian Aboriginal Beliefs and Spiritualities – The Dreaming

This learning sequence is designed to take approximately 8 hours. Aboriginal beliefs and spiritualities are the core focus of this topic.

**Note:** cultural sensitivity warning to be communicated:

Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples should be aware that this topic has names, images, voices and quotes from deceased persons. It also may cause sadness or distress and, in some cases, offend against strongly held cultural prohibitions. For further information please refer to the following webpage on [Cultural sensitivity](https://aiatsis.gov.au/cultural-sensitivity).

The historical use of the word ‘Aborigines’ will be found in resources suggested for use in this lesson sequence, however the department acknowledges that the phrase ‘Aboriginal people(s)’ is the correct reference.

Where possible, schools are encouraged to work with local or regional Aboriginal communities. Observing appropriate protocols when working with Aboriginal peoples and their communities is critical to establishing positive and respectful relationships. Engaging with the local or regional community helps develop an understanding of the local context.

It is recommended that teachers develop an understanding of respectful and culturally responsive and safe, community engagement protocols in the NSW education context by accessing the following guides:

* [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander principles and protocols](https://educationstandards.nsw.edu.au/wps/portal/nesa/k-10/diversity-in-learning/aboriginal-education/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-principles-and-protocols)
* [Working with Aboriginal Communities: A Guide to Community Consultation and Protocols](https://ab-ed.nesa.nsw.edu.au/go/partnerships)
* [Strong Strides Together: Meeting the educational goals for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/aec/universal-resources---aboriginal-education/strong-strides-together--meeting-the-educational-goals-for-abori)
* [Walking Together, Working Together 2020-2030 DoE and NSW AECG Partnership](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/aec/universal-resources---aboriginal-education/walking-together--working-together-2020-2030-doe-and-nsw-aecg-pa)
* [How can you engage with your local Aboriginal Community?](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/aec/universal-resources---aboriginal-education/how-can-you-engage-with-your-local-aboriginal-community-)
* [Getting to know local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/aec/universal-resources---aboriginal-education/getting-to-know-local-aboriginal-and-or-torres-strait-islander-h)

Aboriginal Studies 7–10 support resource [Case study guide](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/hsie/planning-programming-and-assessing-hsie-7-10/planning-programming-and-assessing-aboriginal-studies#Support2) has advice for teachers that can be adapted for the context of Preliminary Studies of Religion. Areas of advice include:

* ethical research and protocols for consultation
* Aboriginal community organisations
* working with the local/regional Aboriginal Education Consultative Groups (AECGs)
* working with Aboriginal communities
* community engagement strategies
* acknowledging ownership of cultural knowledges.

For additional advice refer to the policies and procedures for [Controversial issues in schools](https://education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/policies/pd-2002-0045) and [Excursions](https://education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/policies/pd-2004-0010).

## Syllabus content

**Australian Aboriginal Beliefs and Spiritualities – The Dreaming**

Table 4 – syllabus content

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Students learn about: | Students learn to: |
| * nature of the Dreaming * the inextricable connection of the Dreaming, the land and identity | * outline the nature of the Dreaming in relation to: * origins of the universe * sacred sites * stories of the Dreaming * symbolism and art * discuss the diversity of the Dreaming for Aboriginal peoples * recognise the importance of the Dreaming for the life of Aboriginal peoples * investigate the inextricable connection of the Dreaming, the land and identity |

## Learning intentions

**Note:** these learning intentions and success criteria are general and should be contextualised to suit your school and students’ needs.

Students will:

* identify the influence of Aboriginal spiritualities and beliefs on individuals and society.

## Success criteria

Students can:

* describe the characteristics of Aboriginal beliefs and spiritualities
* apply relevant information in an investigation into the inextricable connection of the Dreaming, the land, identity and spirituality.

## The nature of the Dreaming

**Note:** ‘the Dreaming’ is used in this sequence to reflect language from the syllabus, however resources may use Dreamtime. The article [‘Dreamtime’ and ‘The Dreaming’ – an introduction](https://theconversation.com/dreamtime-and-the-dreaming-an-introduction-20833) can be used to extend student understanding of these complex terms. Where possible, work with local communities to interpret sacred sites, stories, symbols and art relevant to the local Dreaming. This can include learning how local Aboriginal communities use language to talk about the Dreaming.

When presenting information and examples, reference the Community, opinion and videos from which the information was derived. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are unique and have difference cultural practices and beliefs which should be distinguished.

At the end of each section have students review their [KWLH](https://app.education.nsw.gov.au/digital-learning-selector/LearningActivity/Card/562#.Y3q3VsVaAsQ.link) chart for the topic ‘The nature of the Dreaming’ and update their columns as necessary.

Begin a [KWLH chart](https://app.education.nsw.gov.au/digital-learning-selector/LearningActivity/Card/562?clearCache=8fda851-1efd-67ee-ffde-868b23068fd4) for the ‘Nature of the Dreaming’ by filling in the ‘Know’ and ‘Want to know’ columns.

### Origins of the universe

**Note:** the 3 C’s thinking routine has been adapted for this activity from Project Zero [4 C’s routine](https://pz.harvard.edu/resources/the-4-cs). The routine provides a structure for making connections, asking questions, identifying key ideas and considering implications. This routine can facilitate a class discussion of the complexity and diversity of the Dreaming as students share their connections, concepts and changes.

[What is Dreamtime? (1:11)](https://youtu.be/fb6ZuGSa3CU) features Aunty Munya Andrews, an Aboriginal Elder from the Kimberly Region of Western Australia and Evolve. Her work is based out of Canberra. More information can be located at [Evolve communities – Aunty Munya Andrews](https://www.evolves.com.au/aunty-munya-andrews/).

Engage with [What is Dreamtime? (1:11)](https://youtu.be/fb6ZuGSa3CU) and complete the adapted [4 C’s routine](https://pz.harvard.edu/resources/the-4-cs).

* What **connections** do you draw from the video and your own experience?
* What key **concepts** or ideas do you think are important and worth holding onto from the video?
* What **changes** in attitudes, thinking or action do you feel are suggested by the video, either for you or for others?

**Note:** the resource [Origin of the universe](https://www.westernsydney.edu.au/campbelltown_observatory/home/areas_of_research_and_teaching/aboriginal_astronomy/origin_of_the_universe) includes use of the term ‘Aborigines’, however the department acknowledges that the phrase ‘Aboriginal people(s)’ is the appropriate reference.

The [Graffiti Board](https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/graffiti-boards-0) strategy allows students to collaborate and write on large sheets of paper or whiteboards, review each other’s contributions and facilitate group discussions based on the ideas presented. For remote learning, virtual platforms like [Google Docs](https://app.education.nsw.gov.au/digital-learning-selector/LearningTool/Card/66?clearCache=5b795d88-3e93-e7f2-b7d1-51395e9755a8) or [Padlet](https://app.education.nsw.gov.au/digital-learning-selector/LearningTool/Card/592?clearCache=f0b585c3-4eb2-25e5-a03-83f1aa0e8955) can be used for the same purpose, allowing feedback and reflection on classmates’ responses.

Examine [Origin of the universe](https://www.westernsydney.edu.au/campbelltown_observatory/home/areas_of_research_and_teaching/aboriginal_astronomy/origin_of_the_universe) and participate in a [Graffiti Board](https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/graffiti-boards-0) routine to share comments or questions you have about ‘the nature of the Dreaming – the origins of the universe’ with your class.

**Note:** the information from [The Dreaming](http://www.workingwithindigenousaustralians.info/content/Culture_2_The_Dreaming.html) represents the Upper Hunter region. Residents, organisations and Muswellbrook Shire Council have been used to provide examples and personal connections to assist users to see the relevance of the information in a local setting. Where possible you may want to do a comparison activity with your local school Aboriginal Communities or a neighbouring community.

Navigate to the webpage [The Dreaming](http://www.workingwithindigenousaustralians.info/content/Culture_2_The_Dreaming.html) and use a note-taking system like [Cornell Notes](https://lsc.cornell.edu/how-to-study/taking-notes/cornell-note-taking-system/) to collate information about the origins of the universe from the tabs:

* The Dreaming
* Explaining creation
* Creating and recreating life
* Video The Dreaming.

Review your [KWLH](https://app.education.nsw.gov.au/digital-learning-selector/LearningActivity/Card/562?clearCache=8fda851-1efd-67ee-ffde-868b23068fd4) chart for the topic ‘The nature of the Dreaming’ and update your columns as necessary.

### Sacred sites

**Note:** students may need to be explicitly taught that sacred texts are not limited to written texts. For example, sacred texts can include art, oral traditions, symbolic performances and music.

[The Importance of Sacred Sites (1:41)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MDWfZVDf848) is a video from Aunty Munya Andrews an Aboriginal Elder from the Kimberly Region of Western Australia and Evolve. Her work is based out of Canberra. More information can be located at [Evolve communities – Aunty Munya Andrews](https://www.evolves.com.au/aunty-munya-andrews/).

Not all Aboriginal Communities allow you to visit Sacred Sites, as some are men’s and women’s business, and hold cultural stories and practices only for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples of that community with the right permissions.

[Bulgandry Aboriginal Art Site – This Place (3:56)](https://youtu.be/l6X6oxKUiXA) is from Brisbane Water National Parks on the Central Coast.

Engage with [The Importance of Sacred Sites (1:41)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MDWfZVDf848) and [Bulgandry Aboriginal Art Site – This Place (3:56)](https://youtu.be/l6X6oxKUiXA).

* In small groups create a concept map that outlines the nature of the Dreaming to sacred sites and other elements of the Dreaming for the communities referenced.

**Note:** the webpage [The Dreaming](http://www.workingwithindigenousaustralians.info/content/Culture_2_The_Dreaming.html#:~:text=of%20Cultural%20Competence-,Sacred%20sites,the%20site%20during%20The%20Dreaming) will also open on the first tab ‘The Dreaming’. Students will need to select the tab **Sacred sites** to access information for the next activity.

Navigate the webpage [The Dreaming](http://www.workingwithindigenousaustralians.info/content/Culture_2_The_Dreaming.html#:~:text=of%20Cultural%20Competence-,Sacred%20sites,the%20site%20during%20The%20Dreaming) and select the tab **Sacred sites**. Summarise the key points in 5 bullet points.

### Stories of the Dreaming

**Note:** Colin Jones, who is on the video [Songlines: Aboriginal Art and Storytelling (3:32)](https://youtu.be/zp_vYfEiuGU), is from Ipswich, Queensland, and is of Kaladoon and Nunuckle tribal descent. More information can be found on the [Aboriginal Art Galleries](https://aboriginalartgalleries.com.au/artist/453-colin-jones) webpage.

Engage with [Songlines: Aboriginal Art and Storytelling (3:32)](https://youtu.be/zp_vYfEiuGU) and contribute to a class [brainstorm](https://app.education.nsw.gov.au/digital-learning-selector/LearningActivity/Card/542#.ZHgnNhqUBmc.link) to outline the nature of the Dreaming in relation to its stories and significance.

**Note:** where possible it is encouraged to use a Dreaming story from your local community.

Use [Aboriginal Dreamtime Stories](https://japingkaaboriginalart.com/aboriginal-dreamtime-stories/), [Dreamtime](https://dreamtime.net.au/dreaming/story-list/) and [Dreaming Stories](https://www.coomaditchie.org.au/dreaming-stories) to access stories of the Dreaming. Choose a Dreaming story from the resources provided to create a presentation that includes the following:

* title of the story
* Ancestral beings – identified in the story and their significance
* summary
* themes and messages
* personal reflection – include a personal reflection on what you learned from the story.

Compare and contrast the story of your choice with the story of your peer’s choice.

* What were the similarities?
* What were the differences?

### Symbolism and art

**Note:** the [Summary Salad](https://lead4ward.com/summary-salad/) supports collaboration between students. You may wish to provide students with a template to create their cards.

**Differentiation:** the 2 suggested texts [ART ARK](https://artark.com.au/pages/aboriginal-art-symbols#:~:text=Dreamtime%20Art%20Symbolism) and [Why Songlines Are Important In Aboriginal Art](https://japingkaaboriginalart.com/articles/songlines-important-aboriginal-art/) allow the activity to be differentiated for students with different literacy capabilities.

Complete a [Summary Salad](https://lead4ward.com/summary-salad/) for [ART ARK](https://artark.com.au/pages/aboriginal-art-symbols#:~:text=Dreamtime%20Art%20Symbolism) or [Why Songlines Are Important In Aboriginal Art](https://japingkaaboriginalart.com/articles/songlines-important-aboriginal-art/).

1. Examine the assigned text ‘[ART ARK](https://artark.com.au/pages/aboriginal-art-symbols#:~:text=Dreamtime%20Art%20Symbolism)’ or ‘[Why Songlines Are Important In Aboriginal Art](https://japingkaaboriginalart.com/articles/songlines-important-aboriginal-art/)’.
2. Collaborate with a peer to create 6 separate cards that summarise the text.
3. Join another pair who chose the same text and mix the 12 cards like a salad.
4. In your group of 4 choose the best 6 cards to summarise the text.
5. Use the 6 selected note cards to write a summary individually.

**Note:** not all Aboriginal Communities use these symbols, and some areas do not paint traditionally either. Please refer to this when discussing their meanings.

Examine the article [Australian Aboriginal Art Symbols and their Meanings](https://japingkaaboriginalart.com/articles/aboriginal-art-symbols/) and participate in a [Think-Pair-Share](https://app.education.nsw.gov.au/digital-learning-selector/LearningActivity/Card/645#.ZHbbpXnfp6s.link) routine to consider how Aboriginal spiritualities and beliefs influence individuals and communities in different ways.

Use the [Aboriginal Dreamtime Stories](https://japingkaaboriginalart.com/aboriginal-dreamtime-stories/) to select 5 ‘Dreamtime stories’ and then:

* select one artwork from each of your 5 chosen stories and complete a [‘See Think Wonder](https://app.education.nsw.gov.au/digital-learning-selector/LearningActivity/Card/662?clearCache=f5487dbd-a6d-13b9-2d5-817d75a69f45)’ activity for each artwork
* select one of your chosen artworks and examine its Dreamtime story
* present a brief description of the how Aboriginal spiritualities and beliefs are reflected in that story to the class.

### Diversity of the Dreaming

Read or listen to [The importance of understanding cultural diversity among Indigenous peoples (11:09)](https://www.sbs.com.au/language/english/en/podcast-episode/the-importance-of-understanding-cultural-diversity-among-indigenous-peoples/t81z4xrhr).

In small groups respond to the question you have been assigned.

* What are some misconceptions people have about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples?
* Why is it important to understand the diversity of Indigenous cultures when building relationships?
* How can acknowledging this diversity improve interactions with Indigenous communities?

Share your group’s response with the class to allow your peers to take notes.

Engage with [Aboriginal Diversity](https://www.evolves.com.au/aboriginal-diversity/) to respond to the following questions.

* How many Indigenous nations are recognised by the Indigenous map of Australia published by the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Studies (AIATSIS)?
* How do those nations relate to the terms Koori, Nunga, Torres Strait Islanders and Murri?
* What are the 4 critical aspects of Aboriginal culture?
* What is the fifth key aspect of Aboriginal culture?
* Summarise the ‘Aboriginal Diversity in Language’ paragraph into 4 bullet points.

Work in small groups to identify how Aboriginal spiritualities and beliefs are similar and different between Indigenous nations. You should draw on your knowledge and understanding of the origins of the universe, sacred sites, stories of the Dreaming and symbolism and art.

Write a PEEL paragraph reflecting on what you learned about the importance of recognising diversity within Aboriginal cultures.

### Recognising the importance of the Dreaming for the life of Aboriginal peoples

**Note:** in line with policy, procedures and context there is an opportunity to invite Aboriginal Community members into the school or take the students out into the community to discuss this with them, in particular Elders of the local community.

[Who We Are: Country/Place (6:30)](https://youtu.be/scPVu7BASeA) follows the lives of 6 young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples’ stories about their communities, histories and cultures. These range across Darwin, Torres Strait Islands, Macquarie River Dubbo, Broome and Victoria.

The historical use of the word ‘Aborigines’ will be found in resources suggested for use in this lesson sequence, however the department acknowledges that the phrase ‘Aboriginal people(s)’ is the correct reference.

Review the article [The Dreaming](http://www.workingwithindigenousaustralians.info/content/Culture_2_The_Dreaming.html) engage with [Who We Are: Country/Place (6:30)](https://youtu.be/scPVu7BASeA) and work in small groups to respond to the question ‘How is the Dreaming important in the life of Aboriginal peoples?’.

### The inextricable connection of the Dreaming, the land and identity

**Note:** in line with policy, procedures and context there is an opportunity to invite Aboriginal Community members into the school or take the students out into the community to discuss this with them, in particular Elders of the local community.

Bob Randall also known as Uncle Bob was an Aboriginal Australian elder from the Yakunytjatjara people from Central Australia. More information can be found on the [Bob Randall (Aboriginal Australian elder)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bob_Randall_(Aboriginal_Australian_elder)) webpage.

Engage with [The Land Owns Us (6:15)](https://youtu.be/w0sWIVR1hXw) and respond to the following questions:

* According to Bob Randell, what does ‘oneness’ include?
* Bob states ‘my people see land ownership as being totally different to the English way of ownership … ours used to be ... the land owns us and it still is that to us’. How does this view differ to that of English land ownership?
* What does Bob Randall mean when he says ‘you can never feel lonely’ in reference to the land?

**Note:** it is important that students are introduced to the concepts before they respond. By watching the video in its entirety students will learn about these practices before breaking it down and delving deeper into the video. Therefore, it is recommended to watch the video 2 times. First in its entirety, secondly at a granular level addressing the components of the table.

Engage with [The beautiful connection between people and Country (5:44)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DAGBVE3V4s0) to complete Table 4 – Welcome to Country and Table 5 – Acknowledgment of Country.

Table 5 – Welcome to Country

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Country | Questions | Responses |
| Wurundjeri Country | * Traditionally, what ceremony is completed before entering Country? * What ritual practices can you identify in that ceremony? * What beliefs are reflected in that ceremony? * How does that ceremony change the relationship between believers? |  |
| Darkinjung Country | * What aspects of the Dreaming can you identify in the Darkinjung Welcome to Country (1:15–2:18)? * What ritual practices can you identify? |  |
| Kaurna Country | * How do leaves reflect significant beliefs in the Welcome to Kaurna Country ceremony? * What ritual practices can you identify? |  |

Table 6 – Acknowledgment of Country

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Country | What ritual behaviour does the speaker perform? | What beliefs are implied by the speaker? |
| Yugambeh Country |  |  |
| Tebrakunna Country |  |  |
| Ngarigo Country |  |  |
| Iarapuna Country |  |  |
| Wurundjeri Country |  |  |

Use the information you have recorded in Table 5 and Table 6 to address the following:

* What connections can you make between the Welcome to Country of different nations?
* Compare the differences between the Acknowledgement of Country of different nations.

Create a comparative analysis chart comparing the importance of the Dreaming and the land in shaping Aboriginal spiritual identity. Identify key aspects of the Dreaming and the land, find examples, and create the chart. Enter the following aspects as column titles for example, significance, beliefs, practices, stories, rituals. Use your chart to answer the question ‘How does the Dreaming and the land both contribute to Aboriginal spiritual identity?’

# Summative task

**Note:** the following activity is a non-formal summative task that can be completed at the end of the topic.

Use [Writing Multiple Choice Questions](https://ctl.utexas.edu/multiple-choice-questions) and [Designing Multiple-Choice Questions](https://uwaterloo.ca/centre-for-teaching-excellence/catalogs/tip-sheets/designing-multiple-choice-questions) to demonstrate to students how to write effective multiple-choice questions. Model 2 questions in class on what makes a good multiple-choice question.

**Suggested multiple-choice question**

Define the supernatural dimension:

What does the ‘supernatural dimension’ refer to in the context of religion?

1. A realm governed by scientific laws
2. A physical aspect of human existence
3. A realm beyond the natural, often involving divine beings or forces
4. A psychological state of mind

Correct answer: c. A realm beyond the natural, often involving divine beings or forces.

This question:

* has a clear stem
* has plausible alternatives
* is concise
* has mutually exclusive options.

Create 10 multiple-choice questions addressing:

* the nature of religion
* Australian Aboriginal beliefs and spiritualities – the Dreaming.

Swap your questions with a peer and answer their questions.

Share your best questions with the class.

You will have 35 minutes to complete the following 4 questions. Each question is worth 5 marks.

1. Identify and describe a transcendent religious worldview which has a belief in a divine power and/or powers beyond the human.
2. Identify and describe an immanent religious worldview which has a belief in a divine being and/or powers dwelling within the individual.
3. Identify and describe the diversity of the Dreaming for Aboriginal peoples.
4. Identify and describe the inextricable connection of the Dreaming, the land and identity.

Swap your responses with a peer and use the marking criteria to assess their work.

## Marking criteria

Question 1 – Identify and describe a transcendent religious worldview which has a belief in a divine power and/or powers beyond the human.

Table 7 – marking criteria for question 1

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Mark | Criteria |
| 5 | * Clearly identifies and provides a detailed and accurate description of a transcendent religious worldview which has a belief in a divine power and/or powers beyond the human * Integrates relevant examples to support the description * Integrates relevant and accurate terminology |
| 4 | * Identifies and provides an accurate description of a transcendent religious worldview which has a belief in a divine power and/or powers beyond the human * Refers to examples to support the description * Integrates relevant terminology |
| 3 | * Provides a description of a transcendent religious worldview which has a belief in a divine power and/or powers beyond the human * May use an example to support description * Integrates terminology |
| 2 | * Makes general statements about transcendent religious worldviews |
| 1 | * Makes limited statements about transcendent religious worldviews |

Question 2 – Identify and describe an immanent religious worldview which has a belief in a divine being and/or powers dwelling within the individual.

Table 8 – marking criteria for question 2

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Mark | Criteria |
| 5 | * Clearly identifies and provides a detailed and accurate description of an immanent religious worldview which has a belief in a divine being and/or powers dwelling within the individual * Integrates relevant examples to support the description * Integrates relevant and accurate terminology |
| 4 | * Identifies and provides an accurate description of an immanent religious worldview which has a belief in a divine being and/or powers dwelling within the individual * Refers to examples to support the description * Integrates relevant terminology |
| 3 | * Provides a description of an immanent religious worldview which has a belief in a divine being and/or powers dwelling within the individual * May use an example to support description * Integrates terminology |
| 2 | * Makes general statements about an immanent religious worldview |
| 1 | * Makes limited statements about an immanent religious worldview |

Question 3 – Identify and describe the diversity of the Dreaming for Aboriginal peoples.

Table 9 – marking criteria for question 3

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Mark | Criteria |
| 5 | * Clearly identifies and provides a detailed and accurate description of the Dreaming for Aboriginal peoples * Integrates relevant examples to support the description * Integrates relevant and accurate terminology |
| 4 | * Identifies and provides an accurate description of the Dreaming for Aboriginal peoples * Refers to examples to support the description * Integrates relevant terminology |
| 3 | * Provides a description of the Dreaming for Aboriginal peoples * May use an example to support description * Integrates terminology |
| 2 | * Makes general statements about the Dreaming |
| 1 | * Makes limited statements about the Dreaming |

Question 4 – Identify and describe the inextricable connection of the Dreaming, the land and identity.

Table 10 – marking criteria for question 4

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Mark | Criteria |
| 5 | * Clearly identifies and provides a detailed and accurate description of the inextricable connection of the Dreaming, the land and identity * Integrates relevant examples to support the description * Integrates relevant and accurate terminology |
| 4 | * Identifies and provides an accurate description of the inextricable connection of the Dreaming, the land and identity * Refers to examples to support the description * Integrates relevant terminology |
| 3 | * Provides a description of the inextricable connection of the Dreaming, the land and identity * May use an example to support description * Integrates terminology |
| 2 | * Makes general statements about the Dreaming, the land or identity |
| 1 | * Makes limited statements about the Dreaming, the land or identity |

# Appendix 1 – capacity matrix

**Note:** a general concept and glossary list has been outlined. However, you may wish to add further terminology to the capacity matrix.

## Key classification

* Information – recall basic facts or heard of this before
* Knowledge – can explain and know what it means
* Know-how – can draw connections between this term or concept and relate them to other concepts or situations
* Wisdom – can use the term or concept in new contexts or teach others

Shade or tick information, knowledge, know-how and wisdom as you progress with your understanding of the religious concept or term. At the end of the learning sequence, reflect on your progress and discuss with your teacher if you observe any areas you can improve.

Table 11 – glossary of key terms and concepts

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Glossary word | Information | Knowledge | Know-how | Wisdom |
| adherent |  |  |  |  |
| belief |  |  |  |  |
| believers |  |  |  |  |
| ceremonies |  |  |  |  |
| culture |  |  |  |  |
| divine |  |  |  |  |
| ethics |  |  |  |  |
| immanent |  |  |  |  |
| mundane |  |  |  |  |
| religion |  |  |  |  |
| rituals |  |  |  |  |
| sacred |  |  |  |  |
| sacred texts |  |  |  |  |
| sacred writings |  |  |  |  |
| secular |  |  |  |  |
| society |  |  |  |  |
| spirituality(ies) |  |  |  |  |
| supernatural dimension |  |  |  |  |
| transcendent |  |  |  |  |
| worldview |  |  |  |  |

# Additional information

The information below can be used to support teachers when using this teaching resource for Studies of Religion.

## Support and alignment

**Resource evaluation and support**: all curriculum resources are prepared through a rigorous process. Resources are periodically reviewed as part of our ongoing evaluation plan to ensure currency, relevance and effectiveness. For additional support or advice, or to provide feedback, contact the 7–12 HSIE Curriculum team by emailing [hsie@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:hsie@det.nsw.edu.au).

**Differentiation**: further advice to support Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students, EAL/D students, students with a disability and/or additional needs and High Potential and gifted students can be found on the [Planning, programming and assessing 7–12](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/planning-programming-and-assessing-k-12/planning-programming-and-assessing-7-12) webpage.

**Explicit teaching:** further advice to support explicit teaching is available on the [Explicit teaching](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/explicit-teaching) webpage. This includes the CESE [Explicit teaching – Driving learning and engagement](https://education.nsw.gov.au/about-us/education-data-and-research/cese/publications/research-reports/what-works-best-2020-update/explicit-teaching-driving-learning-and-engagement) webpage.

**Alignment to system priorities and/or needs**: [School Excellence Policy](https://education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/policies/pd-2016-0468), [Our Plan for NSW Public Education](https://education.nsw.gov.au/about-us/strategies-and-reports/plan-for-nsw-public-education).

**Alignment to the School Excellence Framework**: this resource supports the [School Excellence Framework](https://education.nsw.gov.au/inside-the-department/directory-a-z/strategic-school-improvement/school-excellence-framework) elements of curriculum (curriculum provision) and effective classroom practice (lesson planning, explicit teaching).

**Alignment to Australian Professional Teaching Standards**: this resource supports teachers to address [Australian Professional Teaching Standards](https://educationstandards.nsw.edu.au/wps/portal/nesa/teacher-accreditation/meeting-requirements/the-standards/proficient-teacher) 3.2.2, 3.3.2.

**Consulted with**: Curriculum and Reform, Inclusive Education, Multicultural Education, Aboriginal Outcomes and Partnerships and subject matter experts.

**Creation date**: 16 May 2024

# References

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[Studies of Religion Stage 6 Syllabus](https://educationstandards.nsw.edu.au/wps/portal/nesa/11-12/stage-6-learning-areas/hsie/studies-of-religion-2) © NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) for and on behalf of the Crown in right of the State of New South Wales, 2009.

[National Literacy Learning Progression Version 3](https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/resources/national-literacy-and-numeracy-learning-progressions/version-3-of-national-literacy-and-numeracy-learning-progressions) © Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) 2010 to present, unless otherwise indicated. This material was downloaded from the Australian Curriculum website ([www.australiancurriculum.edu.au](http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/)) (Website) (accessed 5 June 2023) and was not modified.

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