An introduction to Aboriginal studies 7-10

This resource has been designed to introduce students to important terminology, concepts and protocols for engaging with Aboriginal communities. It is not designed to cover syllabus content or meet outcomes. Its purpose is to ensure that students are prepared for the Aboriginal studies course and improve their engagement and appreciation of the experiences presented.

## Country

In Aboriginal cultures, connection to country is a significant part of individual and collective identity and culture. Aboriginal Peoples regard themselves as custodians of the land rather than land owners.

### Welcome to, or Acknowledgement of, Country?

**Teachers note:** resources to support student understanding and appreciation for Acknowledgement and Welcome to country can be found at:

[NSW Department of Education, Aboriginal education and communities](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/aec/aboriginal-education-in-nsw-public-schools)

[NSW AECG](https://www.aecg.nsw.edu.au/about/partnership-agreement/)

The picture book, [‘Welcome to Country’](https://readingaustralia.com.au/lesson/welcome-to-country/) by Aunty Joy Murphy is an excellent resource and may be used to support learning in these activities.

An example of an Acknowledgement of Country is included below:

I would like to pay my respect and acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which we gather. I pay respect to Elders past and present and extend that respect to other Aboriginal Peoples here today.

* Research and define the term Country.
* Using the [Map of Indigenous Australia](https://aiatsis.gov.au/explore/map-indigenous-australia) to identify the Country where your school is located.
* Watch the [Wominjeka (Welcome to Country)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NeBWuItrpW8&feature=youtu.be) (duration 2:53) by Aunty Joy Murphy. Write a [PEEL](https://www.virtuallibrary.info/peel-paragraph-writing.html) paragraph explaining the difference between a Welcome to Country and an Acknowledgement of country.
* Identify the importance of Welcome to, and Acknowledgement of, Country. Has the role of Welcome to, and Acknowledgement of, Country changed over time?
* Create a personal Acknowledgement of Country (or Welcome if appropriate) that could be used at school. Additionally, prepare an Acknowledgement of Country that you could use if you were visiting another Country.

## Terminology

Australia has two Indigenous Peoples – Aboriginal Peoples and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. Aboriginal Peoples are the custodians of the oldest continuous cultures in the world and are represented by more than 250 language groups, each associated with a particular Country or territory. Torres Strait Islander Peoples are represented by five major island groups, and are associated with island territories to the north of Australia’s Cape York, which were annexed by Queensland in 1879.

An Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person is someone who:

* is of Aboriginal and or Torres Strait Islander descent
* identifies as an Aboriginal person and or Torres Strait Islander person, and
* is accepted as such by the Aboriginal and or Torres Strait Islander community(ies) in which they live.

**Teachers note:** A separate resource has been developed to give further understanding of key terms used in the Aboriginal Studies Years 7-10 syllabus. A number of terms which are not in current use will be identified during the course. Students will need to be familiar with their historical use and why they are no longer appropriate.

* Identify the reasons why Aboriginal Peoples is plural and not singular.
* Define and discuss the term First Nations Peoples and why this may also be used by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.
* Undertake a [peer discussion](https://app.education.nsw.gov.au/digital-learning-selector/LearningActivity/Card/547#.X5tBQpLM0Xw.link) of the terminology included in the following documents:
  + [Aborigines Protection Act](https://www.nma.gov.au/defining-moments/resources/aborigines-protection-act) (1909)
  + [United Aborigines mission home](https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/heritageapp/ViewHeritageItemDetails.aspx?ID=5061330)
  + [Parramatta and Blacktown Native institutions](https://dictionaryofsydney.org/entry/parramatta_and_black_town_native_institutions)
* Complete a [3 things I learned today](https://app.education.nsw.gov.au/digital-learning-selector/LearningActivity/Card/558#.X5tBQuboXqE.link) activity to reflect on the use of culturally appropriate terminology.

## Elders and engaging with the community

The Department of Education and the NSW AECG have a [partnership agreement](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/aec/aboriginal-education-consultative-group-partnership-agreement) which is designed to strengthen collaboration between Aboriginal Communities and schools.

**Teachers note:** In addition to the partnership agreement, the office of Prime Minister and Cabinet have a resource for [communicating with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander audiences](https://pmc.gov.au/resource-centre/indigenous-affairs/communicating-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-audiences) which containsuseful guidelines.

* Read the information provided on [Connection to Elders](https://www.supportingcarers.snaicc.org.au/connecting-to-culture/connection-to-elders/) and watch the interview with [Emma Schuh on Culture](https://www.supportingcarers.snaicc.org.au/connecting-to-culture/connection-to-elders/#fvp_vid-3,5m50s) (duration 6:06).
* Discuss the role that Elders play in Aboriginal communities.
* How are the roles of Aunties and Uncles important to the younger member of Aboriginal communities?
* Identify the steps to engaging with Aboriginal Elders within your community. Explain how you might be able to connect with an Elder to support your learning in this course.
* Write a letter to introduce the class to local community or Elders that you wish to engage with during your Aboriginal Studies course.

## Additional Resources

NSW Department of Education, Aboriginal education and communities [education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/aec/aboriginal-education-in-nsw-public-schools](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/aec/aboriginal-education-in-nsw-public-schools)

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

Working in Partnership [education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/aec/aboriginal-education-consultative-group-partnership-agreement](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/aec/aboriginal-education-consultative-group-partnership-agreement)

Communicating with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander audiences [pmc.gov.au/resource-centre/indigenous-affairs/communicating-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-audiences](https://pmc.gov.au/resource-centre/indigenous-affairs/communicating-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-audiences)

Map of Indigenous Australia [aiatsis.gov.au/explore/map-indigenous-australia](https://aiatsis.gov.au/explore/map-indigenous-australia)

Digital Learning Selector [app.education.nsw.gov.au/digital-learning-selector/](https://app.education.nsw.gov.au/digital-learning-selector/)

Connection to Elders [supportingcarers.snaicc.org.au/connecting-to-culture/connection-to-elders/](https://www.supportingcarers.snaicc.org.au/connecting-to-culture/connection-to-elders/)

Welcome to Country by Aunty Joy Murphy [readingaustralia.com.au/lesson/welcome-to-country/](https://readingaustralia.com.au/lesson/welcome-to-country/)