

Spinning in space

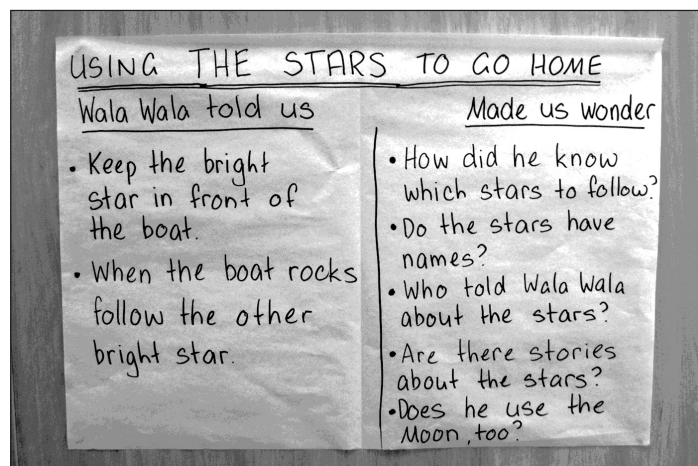
Indigenous perspectives curriculum links

Engage

Lesson 1 Our place in space

Indigenous people have been observing the sky for many thousands of years. Some Indigenous people still use the stars as a guide for hunting and food gathering. Astronomical observations of the positions of stars and constellations and their apparent movement across the sky correlate with particular weather conditions and the availability of certain foods. This Indigenous knowledge is preserved through storytelling, ceremony and visual representations.

- View *Burarra Gathering*. See <http://burarra.questacon.edu.au/home.html> Select the Dry season which contains information about navigating using the stars. Listen to Wala Wala as he uses the stars to go home. As a whole class or in small groups complete a 'Told us... Made us wonder' sheet.



Work sample of 'Told us... Made us wonder' sheet

Explore

Lesson 2 Sizes and shapes

Indigenous people have been observing the Sun, Moon and their cycles of movement for thousands of years. Certain stars and constellations, representing various spirits, are like celestial noticeboards acting as a reminder of the social rules of the group. Most Australian Indigenous legends represent the Sun as a woman and the Moon as a man, unlike other Indigenous cultures. The stories often give the Moon greater powers linked to tribal law and rules of behaviour.

- Establish links with local Indigenous community members and/or Indigenous Education Officers to access Indigenous knowledge about the Sun, Moon and the day and night sky. Invite them to speak with students about Indigenous peoples' use of the stars, Moon and Sun. Record local Indigenous names of the Sun, Moon, stars and sky on coloured cards and add to the word wall.

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For information and activities about Indigenous peoples' use of astronomy access *Astronomy and Australian Indigenous People* written by Adele Pring from the Astronomical Association of South Australia. See www.assa.org.au/nacaa/aaaip.pdf

Explore

Lesson 3 Shadows at play

Indigenous people recognise that there are dark areas or shadows in the sky and they include them when they are describing their constellations or patterns of stars. Astronomers now realise these are large areas of gases which create shadows. They are called dark nebulae.

- Explore the *Emu in the sky* constellation and its significance for Indigenous people.
See www.questacon.edu.au/starlab/the_emu.html
www.atnf.csiro.au/research/AboriginalAstronomy/about.htm
www.abc.net.au/science/news/stories/s1437646.htm

Elaborate

Lesson 5 Investigating shadows

Indigenous peoples' traditional shelters were constructed to take advantage of the Sun and its seasonal path.

- Construct a model of a traditional shelter and conduct an investigation into the amount of shadow within the shelter during a day. See *House design which takes advantage of the Sun* in: www.aboriginaleducation.sa.edu.au/files/links/The_Sun_and_Moon_Aborigin_1.pdf