

Weather in my world

Indigenous perspectives curriculum links

Engage

Lesson 1 Wondering about the weather

Through thousands of years of observation, Indigenous culture has developed a deep understanding of environmental indicators to predict weather patterns. Some Indigenous people use their own seasonal calendars based on knowledge of the sequence of events in their local environment.

This understanding can be important for knowing what food is available at different times of the year.

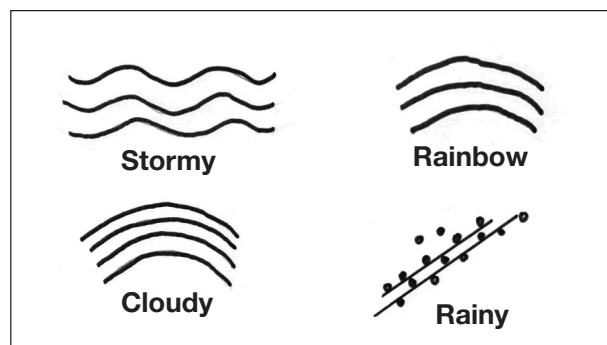
- View the Nunggubuyu people's *Everything has a cycle* clip at www.australianscreen.com.au/titles/5-seasons/clip1 or the 12 Canoes *Seasons* clip at www.12canoes.com.au

Explore

Lesson 2 Watching the weather

Some Indigenous people use symbols in art to represent weather phenomena. There are some common symbols used in Indigenous art. Consult your local Indigenous community members for specific information for your area.

- Explore Indigenous symbols used for weather phenomena such as rainbow, rain, cloud and lightning. See www.aboriginalartonline.com/culture/symbols.php Use Indigenous symbols for weather phenomena on the 'Weather watch' table.



Work sample of Indigenous weather symbols

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Lesson 4 What's the weather like today?

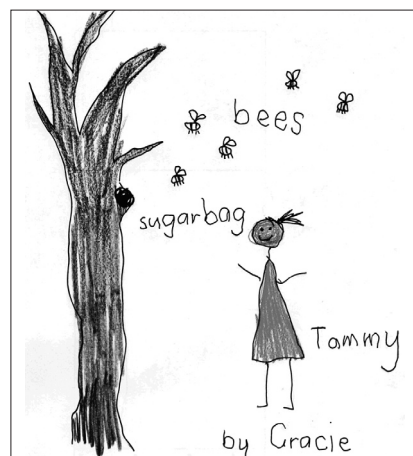
Indigenous seasons are based on observations of the environment over thousands of years. They often have more than the four seasons – summer, autumn, winter, spring – that are described in southern areas of Australia or the two seasons – wet and dry – described in the tropics.

- Explore how Indigenous seasons are organised, for example, seasons are often depicted in a circle and focus on environmental indicators such as the presence of particular plants or animals rather than specific dates. See www.bom.gov.au/iwk/climate_culture/Indig_seasons.shtml http://livingknowledge.anu.edu.au/learningsites/seacountry/10_observing.htm and www.abc.net.au/science/features/indigenous
- Explore the Noongar six seasons (Southwest Western Australia). See www.det.wa.gov.au/education/abled/apac/lessons/pdfs/apac115.pdf

Explain

Lesson 5 My weather book

- Use Indigenous weather symbols in students' weather books and include observations about plants and animals in the environment.
- Read stories incorporating Indigenous ideas about the weather. Examples include:
 - *My home in Kakadu.*
(Christophersen, J. (2005). *My home in Kakadu*. Broome: Magabala Books.)
 - *Ernie dances to the didgeridoo.*
(Lester, A. (2000). *Ernie dances to the didgeridoo*. Sydney: Hodder Children's Books.)
 - *Walking with the seasons in Kakadu.*
(Lucas, D. and Searle, K. (2003). *Walking with the seasons in Kakadu*. Sydney: Allen & Unwin.)
 - *Big Rain Coming.*
(Germein, K. (1999). *Big Rain Coming*. New York: Clarion Books.)
- Create a class mural or annotated drawings about the stories.



Work sample of an annotated drawing

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An Indigenous approach to weather includes environmental indicators such as what animals are around and what plants are in flower or in fruit. Sometimes these indicators are shown on various seasonal calendars. See www.abc.net.au/science/features/indigenous

- Invite local Indigenous community members to share their knowledge about environmental indicators in the local area. Create annotated drawings to illustrate the environmental indicators.

Elaborate

Lesson 6 Investigating the wind

The wind is important to some Indigenous people who hunt for food. The direction and strength of the wind can affect the use of hunting implements, for example, spears.

- Use confetti to demonstrate how releasing it shows the direction and strength of the wind. Provide natural materials, such as sand, grass, leaves and stones, for students to investigate which types of materials are most effective for determining wind direction and strength.