

Package it better

Indigenous perspectives curriculum links

Engage

Lesson 1 Packaging pandemonium

The craft of making containers from natural materials is practised by Indigenous people throughout Australia but the materials and purpose of the containers depends on the availability of plants and food within a region. Where plant fibre is plentiful, it is spun, twisted, coiled or knotted to make functional articles needed for daily activities. In the desert areas, animal-based material is used to construct objects for those same purposes. In Tasmania, bull kelp is used to make water containers.

- View a clip of women collecting leaves and seeds in preparation for weaving and dyeing twine for fibre craft. See www.australianscreen.com.au/titles/merrepen/clip2 and www.australianscreen.com.au/titles/merrepen/clip3

Explore

Lesson 2 Peering at packages

- Collect images of baskets or nets used by Indigenous people that have been made using different materials and techniques. Discuss the properties that make these materials suitable for their uses and from which area of Australia the items have originated.
See www.nga.gov.au/Exhibition/Tactility/Default.cfm
www.bulabula-arts.com/Site/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=18&Itemid=33
www.textiletravels.com/australia/aboriginal.htm

Lesson 3 Plenty of properties

- Contact the local Indigenous Land Council or cultural heritage centre to make contact with local Indigenous community members. Consult with them about collecting natural materials and how they might be used for packaging or other practical purposes.
- Collect natural materials from the schoolyard, for example palm leaves, strappy grass plants, vines or bark. In consultation with local Indigenous community members and/or Indigenous education officers, investigate how some of these materials might have to be prepared before using them. See www.anbg.gov.au/education/pdfs/aboriginal_plant_use_and_technology.pdf

Elaborate

Lesson 7 Package performance



- In consultation with local Indigenous community members and/or Indigenous education officers, discuss the process of making glue using natural materials such as combining kangaroo scats, resin, ash and water. Investigate the properties of Indigenous glue and commercial glue.