

Waterworks

Indigenous perspectives curriculum links

Engage

Lesson 1 Wondering about water

For traditional Indigenous people life is often nomadic and based on the availability of both water and food. Knowing the locality and reliability of different sources of water in the arid landscape is a vital part of Indigenous knowledge. This includes knowing the location of underground water and how to obtain water from the roots of particular trees and plants. On journeys between water sources, containers such as coolamons or sewn-up kangaroo skins are often used to carry water.

- View this clip www.australianscreen.com.au/titles/5-seasons/clip3. Discuss the problems caused in the town by the excess water. Ask students questions such as:
 - Have you experienced weather like this?
 - What problems do you think too much rain could cause?
 - What are the good things about the rain coming?

Explore

Lesson 2 Water walk

Many indigenous stories involve water with people gathering food or fishing.

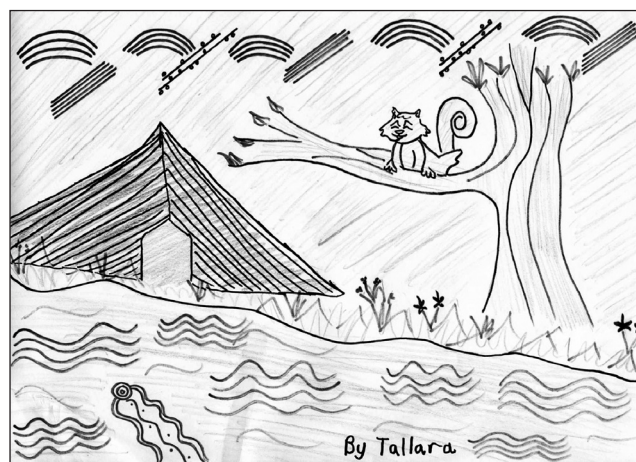
- Contact the local Indigenous Land Council or cultural heritage centre to make contact with local Indigenous community members and invite them to speak with the students about Indigenous peoples' use of water.
- Read stories about Indigenous people and water. Make pictorial representations such as annotated drawings of one of the stories.
 - *The Origin of Water*. www.didjshop.com/stories/bluetongue.html
 - See www.dreamtime.net.au/dreaming/storylist.htm for more stories from the Dreaming about Indigenous people and water.

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Lesson 3 Rain, rain

- Read stories about Indigenous people and rain, such as *Big Rain Coming*.
(Germein, K. (1999). *Big Rain Coming*. New York: Clarion Books.)
- Explore symbols used to represent water and water sources, for example 'rain', in Indigenous art. Create a picture using some of the symbols.
See www.aboriginalartstore.com.au/aboriginal-art-culture/aboriginal-symbols-glossary



Work sample using indigenous art symbols

Lesson 4 Go with the flow

- Create storyboards or mobiles to illustrate the story, *How the water got to the plains*. See www.dreamtime.net.au/water/text.htm

Explain

Lesson 5 My water story

- Invite local Indigenous community members to share their knowledge with students about local water sources. With permission, take photographs to add to the class science journal.

Organise students to prepare questions such as:

- How do you find water in the desert?
- Where are the local water sources?
- What plants grow around the local water sources?
- How do Indigenous people look after water sources?
- Do you know an Indigenous story about water?

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Evaluate

Lesson 8 Informative interviews

Storytelling is an integral part of Indigenous peoples' lives – both past and contemporary.

- Ask students to present a short play on one of the water stories they have heard during the unit. Students might present their play to the class or other classes in the school.