

Educational resources about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures

Posted by Ara Sarafian |

Monday 9 November 2020, 10:50 AM (AEDT)



Image 1: iStock

Many wonderful organisations provide quality educational resources that can be used to learn about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures.

The following collection of websites and resources is not only valuable for teachers, students and schools, but also all Australians looking to better understand and celebrate Australia's First Peoples and rich Indigenous history.

1. Reconciliation Australia – What is Reconciliation?

Established in 2001, Reconciliation Australia inspires and enables relationships, respect and trust between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and non-Indigenous Australians, for the benefit of all Australians. They have many [great resources](#), including a Reconciliation Timeline, fact sheets about [Sorry Day](#) and the [Mabo Decision](#), and resources to help celebrate [National Reconciliation Week](#), held annually from 27 May to 3 June.

Their [Share our Pride website](#) also provides a great starting point on a number of topics, such as [identity](#), [culture](#), [intergenerational trauma](#), and family and kinship.

2. ABC Education – Classroom resources, mapped to the Australian Curriculum

Discover nearly 200 free resources about [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history and culture](#) in this wonderful collection. Choose from videos, audio clips and footage from the ABC archives that relate to history, geography, science, English, technologies and the arts.

There are also [engaging digibooks](#), which are awesome multimedia resources that teach students about interesting topics, such as [Aboriginal agriculture, technology and ingenuity](#), the [1967 referendum](#), [National Sorry Day](#), [Dreamtime stories](#), [Vincent Lingiari](#) and the [impacts of colonisation on Indigenous Australians](#). The [history of Indigenous rights in Australia](#) have evolved since the 1967 referendum. Learn about the Black Power activists and their involvement with the Mabo decision in 1992 and the formation of the Aboriginal Tent Embassy.

3. Behind The News – Indigenous culture

For more than fifty years, BTN has been broadcasting news for upper primary and lower secondary students, helping them understand issues and events outside their own lives. They have a fantastic collection of [resources about Indigenous culture](#), including [Indigenous recognition](#), the [call for a treaty](#), the [history of the Aboriginal flag](#), [discrimination](#), the [apology to Australia's Indigenous peoples](#), [Aboriginal Anzacs](#) and much more.

4. First Languages Australia – Maintain and revive Australia's first languages

First Languages Australia is working with language centres nationally to develop a map of Australian languages that reflects the names and groupings favoured by community.

Explore the [Gambay map that showcases over 780 languages](#), watch videos, listen to people sharing their languages and use the accompanying [Teachers Notes](#).

First Languages has also worked with each of the states and territories to compile [Nintrianganyi: National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Teaching and Employment Strategy](#) and the companion document [Global lessons: Indigenous languages and multilingualism in school programs](#).

These resources are designed to help education departments, schools and local communities understand what's needed to sustain the provision of a local language curriculum.

5. NAIDOC – Celebrate history, culture and achievements

The National Aboriginal and Islanders Day Observance Committee (NAIDOC) makes key decisions about activities, such as NAIDOC Week. The [NAIDOC teaching resources](#) directly support teachers in addressing the Australian Curriculum's cross-curriculum priority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures. Check out their fabulous [archive of posters](#) dating back to 1972.

6. Healing Foundation – Learn about the Stolen Generations

Developed with Stolen Generations members, teachers, parents and curriculum writers, the [Healing Foundation resources](#) aim to promote greater understanding about an often-overlooked part of Australia's history in a safe and age-appropriate way.

The resource kit includes professional learning tools for teachers, along with suggested lesson plans that have been mapped to the Australian Curriculum (Foundation to Year 9).

When newly elected, Prime Minister Kevin Rudd formally apologised to the Stolen Generations on behalf of the government, and he did this through a motion to the Parliament. (Chapter 7, [National Sorry Day digibook](#))

7. SBS Learn – Perspectives for NAIDOC Week and beyond

Working with the National NAIDOC Committee, [SBS Learn](#) has launched resources for NAIDOC Week.

The resources are relevant to a broad range of learners and topics and provide Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives in classrooms beyond NAIDOC Week. The [resources for primary students](#) cover English, HASS, health and physical education; the [resources for secondary students](#) cover English, history, geography, visual arts and drama.

8. Narragunnawali – Create a RAP for your school

Narragunnawali's online platform provides practical ways to introduce meaningful reconciliation initiatives in the classroom, around the school and with the community.

Schools and early learning services can use the platform to develop a [Reconciliation Action Plan](#) (RAP), and teachers and educators can access [professional learning](#) and [curriculum resources](#) to support the implementation of reconciliation initiatives.

9. Australia's Indigenous languages – Learn, preserve, revive

Australia was once home to hundreds of languages. In the late 18th century, there were between 350 and 750 social groupings, and a similar number of languages. By the start of the 21st century, only 150 languages were spoken daily. Learn and help preserve and revive Indigenous languages with this [fantastic list of classroom resources](#).

10. Reading Australia – Books about Indigenous themes

Reading Australia makes it easier for teachers to spread a love for Australian texts. They present many [great books by Indigenous authors](#) that celebrate Indigenous culture and history and raise awareness about the issues faced today by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Books are accompanied by teacher resources and essays.

Check out their curated books lists for [NAIDOC Week](#) and [Reconciliation Week](#).

When James Cook claimed possession of Australia, he did so under [the principle of terra nullius](#), claiming it was not owned by anyone and ignoring the fact that the First Australians had already been living here for thousands of years.

11. Jarjums – Children's programming on National Indigenous Television (NITV)

[Jarjums](#) is the NITV programming dedicated to children. Catering to all kids – and kids at heart – they have fun and educational Indigenous and First Nations content from Australia and around the world. It includes Little J & Big Cuz, which provides a young Indigenous audience with relatable characters and offers an insight into traditional Aboriginal culture, country and language.

12. AIATSIS – Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies

[AIATSIS](#) is a world-renowned research, collections and publishing organisation. They promote knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, traditions, languages and stories, past and present. Use their subject guides to [find materials relating to specific topics](#) and check out their [Teachers' notes and free resources](#).

13. Respect Relationships Reconciliation – Teacher education

The [Respect Relationships Reconciliation](#) (3Rs) study resources are designed to support teachers and educators in incorporating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content in initial teacher education courses.

There are three study modules: **Know yourself** (know your world), **Know your students** and **Know what you teach**. RRR also provide resources to [help schools review existing units of study](#).

14. First Contact stories – Challenge preconceptions about Indigenous people

In SBS's [First Contact series](#), Ray Martin takes a group of six well-known Australians with diverse, deeply entrenched preconceptions and opinions about our nation's Indigenous people on a journey into Aboriginal Australia.

Take the discussion into the classroom with the [First Contact classroom clips](#) from the series and curriculum-linked activities (history, English and media arts for Years 9–12). There are also [Teacher Notes](#) you can download.

Many Australians believe it is time to [change the Australian Constitution](#) to recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history. This program from 2012 examines the debate about how this change might be achieved.

15. Guidance from Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL)

AITSL have great resources that help identify [what teachers need to know and be able to do](#) in order to teach Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, and to teach all students about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages, history and culture. These resources have been developed to help Initial Teacher Education (ITE) providers and pre-service teachers understand how to meet initial teacher education and ongoing professional learning.

16. National Museum of Australia – Objects with stories

The National Museum of Australia has [free curriculum-linked classroom resources](#) to help bring the stories behind the objects in their collection to life, for students and teachers. Learn about changes to [Indigenous rights and freedoms](#) between 1957 and 1975, [Yirrkala bark petitions](#), the [story of a nation in 12 objects](#) and [the taming the Australian desert](#).

17. Reconciliation Film Club – Documentaries to ignite conversation

Reconciliation Australia, NITV and SBS have proudly partnered to launch the [Reconciliation Film Club](#), an online platform that helps you host screenings of a curated selection of Indigenous documentaries from Australia's leading Indigenous filmmakers. The website has downloadable screening kits, discussion guides, and articles and ideas to support a successful event. Bring people together to develop a deeper understanding of Indigenous people's perspectives and histories, ignite conversation and spark change.

18. Righting Wrongs – The 1967 referendum

On 27 May 1967, [Australians voted in a referendum](#) to change how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were referred to in the Constitution – a record 90.77 per cent of votes said YES to change the Constitution. Explore personal stories, opinions and historical recordings of what happened, what life was like for Indigenous people before the vote and how far we have come since 1967.

[We'll add to this list so check back here for the best free online resources about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures. And if you have any recommendations, please leave them in the comments below.]

Updated 9 November 2020. First published 8 July 2019.

More Resources for Aboriginal Culture

Go to <https://education.abc.net.au/home#!/search/%20Aboriginal%20culture>

For example:

- [Teaching Aboriginal history and truths in the classroom](#)
- [Aboriginal cultures: Sharing, connecting and practising](#)
- [Aboriginal customs like the war cry need to be embraced as part of Australian culture](#)
- [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures](#)
- [Dust Echoes](#)
- [Star stories of The Dreaming](#)
- [In My Blood It Runs](#)
- [Challenge racial stereotyping by teaching students about kinship](#)
- [A history of Aboriginal rights in WA](#)
- [Archie Roach](#)
- [Bruce Pascoe](#)
- [Learning our first words on Country](#)
- [Considerations for cultural safety in the classroom](#)
- [Welcome to Kakadu National Park](#)
- [Introduction to culture with Aunty Julie](#)