



FISHING WITH YOUR FEET

Kuti Fishing on Ngarrindjeri Country

Teacher resources - Lesson plan



Recycle me



Australian Curriculum Objectives

Geography - Years 1 & 2 (Stage 1)

[AC9HS1K03](#)

the natural, managed and constructed features of local places, and their location

[AC9HS1K04](#)

how places change and how they can be cared for by different groups including First Nations Australians

[AC9HS2K04](#)

the interconnections of Australian First Nations Peoples to a local Country/Place

[AC9HS1S05](#) / [AC9HS2S05](#)

draw conclusions and make proposals

[AC9HS1S01](#) / [AC9HS2S01](#)

develop questions about objects, people, places and events in the past and present

[AC9HS1S04](#) / [AC9HS2S04](#)

discuss perspectives related to objects, people, places and events

This lesson supports learning under cross-curriculum priorities: **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures**

[A TSICP1](#)

First Nations communities of Australia maintain a deep connection to, and responsibility for, Country/Place and have holistic values and belief systems that are connected to the land, sea, sky and waterways.

[A TSIC1](#)

First Nations Australian societies are diverse and have distinct cultural expressions such as language, customs and beliefs. As First Nations Peoples of Australia, they have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their cultural expressions, while also maintaining the right to control, protect and develop culture as Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property.

[A TSIC2](#)

First Nations Australians' ways of life reflect unique ways of being, knowing, thinking and doing.

This lesson supports learning under cross-curriculum priorities: **Sustainability**


[SS2](#)

Sustainable patterns of living require the responsible use of resources, maintenance of clean air, water and soils, and preservation or restoration of healthy environments.

[SW1](#)

World views that recognise the interdependence of Earth's systems, and value diversity, equity and social justice, are essential for achieving sustainability.





This resource is also relevant for:

Visual Arts - Years 1&2 (Stage 1)

[AC9AVA2E01](#)

explore where, why and how people across cultures, communities and/or other contexts experience visual arts

[AC9AVA2E02](#)

explore examples of visual arts created by First Nations Australians

Design & Technology (Food and Fibre Production) - Years 1&2 (Stage 1)

[AC9TDE2K03](#)

explore how plants and animals are grown for food, clothing and shelter

[AC9TDE2K04](#)

explore how food can be selected and prepared for healthy eating

Health and Physical Education - Years 1&2 (Stage 1)

[AC9HP2M02](#)

investigate different ways of moving their body, and manipulating objects and space, and draw conclusions about their effectiveness

[AC9HP2M03](#)

participate in a range of physical activities in natural and outdoor settings, and investigate factors and settings that make physical activity enjoyable



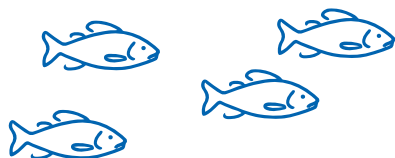
In this lesson for ages 7-9+, learners will learn about pipi, or *kuti* fishing practices by the Ngarrindjeri people in South Australia. Students will explore concepts of working on lands and waters, care for Country, and connections with place.

Key terms

- Country
- Ngarrindjeri
- Kuti / Pipi
- Fishing
- Sustainable Fishing
- Care, Respect
- Culture
- Ocean, Water

You will need

- Access to the video [Back to Country: A Kuti Co. Story](#)
- Access to [scenic video from the Coorong](#)
- Access to [video of Cedric's artwork](#)
- Art materials for drawing
- Printed copies of the worksheets (PAGES)
- Recipe ingredients to cook pipis (extension activity)



Key questions

- What are the natural features of the landscape on Ngarrindjeri Country?
- How do kuti fishers care for Country?
- How do kuti fishers practice sustainable fishing?
- What can you see in a mural by Ngarrindjeri artist Cedric Varcoe?
- What is a water place that is important to you, and how can you help to care for it?

Class Activities

- Learners will watch a short video about kuti fishers at Goolwa, Coorong region, South Australia
- Learners draw and label the natural features of the landscape and waters that they see
- Learners discuss how the kuti fishers care for Country
- Learners interpret an artistic mural by Cedric Varcoe
- Learners speak about a place that is important to them





Appropriate Terminology



Language is a powerful tool for communication. The words we use are active, and can impact on the attitudes of those we speak to. Reconciliation Australia has created [the following guidance](#) around appropriate and respectful terminology to use when teaching about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures. Below is an abridged version of this guidance, however teachers are encouraged to read the entire document at <https://www.reconciliation.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/inclusive-and-respectful-language.pdf>

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

Using 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander' is most often considered best practice.

- 'Aboriginal' (and less commonly accepted variants such as 'Aboriginals' or 'Aborigines') alone is also not inclusive of the diversity of cultures and identities across Australia
- As a stand-alone term, 'Aboriginal' is not inclusive of Torres Strait Islander peoples, and reference to both peoples should be spelt out where necessary.

First Nations and First Peoples

Other pluralised terms such as 'First Nations' or 'First Peoples' are also acceptable language, and respectfully encompass the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and identities.

Acknowledging diversity

Pluralisation should extend to generalised reference to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander 'histories,' 'perspectives,' 'ways of being,' 'contributions,' and so forth. This acknowledges that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are not homogenous

Indigenous

In some parts of the country, the term 'Indigenous' can be considered offensive. That is, it has scientific connotations that have been used historically to describe Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as part of the 'flora/fauna' rather than the human population of Australia. It can be seen as a problematically universalising or homogenising label for what are, in reality, highly diverse identities.

Unacceptable terms

Assimilationist terms such as 'full-blood,' 'half-caste' and 'quarter-caste' are extremely offensive and should never be used. Other terms which carry negative connotations and should never be used include Aborigines, native/native Australians, disadvantaged, lost (e.g. Lost language, cultures)



Lesson plan: Fishing with your Feet

Starter (10 mins)



Begin this lesson with an Acknowledgement to Country. You can find out which country you are on by using the [AIATSIS Map of Indigenous Australia](#).

Note: The difference between a Welcome to Country and an Acknowledgement to Country is that a Welcome is only given by a First Nations person who is local to the country you are on. A person of any background can make an Acknowledgement to Country.

Explain to students that they are going to learn about kuti (pipi) fishing on Ngarrindjeri Country, which happens in a place called Goolwa in South Australia. Begin by showing students the short video [Back to Country: A Kutu Co. Story](#) (6:30).

Main Activities



Complete one or more of the activities below,

Activity 1 - Identifying Natural Features (15 mins)

Ask students what words they would use to describe the lands and waters of Ngarrindjeri Sea Country, that they see in the video. Students draw or paint the natural features that they see, writing a label for each of the unique features. Natural features may include sand dunes, river, ocean, vegetation and shells. You can also show students this [video of scenic footage from the Coorong](#) to inspire them (0:59).

Activity 2 - Caring for Country (10 mins)

Re-watch the video [Back to Country: A Kutu Co Story](#) from the time code 2:59 to 3:55, or read the following quote from Anthony to the class:

I remember Summer years and years ago when we were kids, the whole family would do 3 or 4 boat trips across the Coorong, down a bit further towards Parker. We'd come across and grab a feed. And all the little ones - all the Aunties and Uncles would be like "No you must put them back in, because that's the next lot that's gonna grow up and have more". So having that bond as a kid was great, so now every time I get a chance, if I've gotta come over and do maintenance on vehicles I bring my kids over and do it as a day trip. So we go and hike the dunes, teach them how to cockle, then on the way home we'll end up running the net and get a quick feed of fish, and so then we've got cockles and fish for tea. We only take whatever we need, so if there's a family of 5 we only take about 300g and that's it, that'll do.





Activity 2 (continued).

Discuss as a class, How do Anthony and his family care for Sea Country?

Discussion points may include:

- Anthony and his family put back the small fish that they catch, allowing them to grow bigger and reproduce
- They only take as many cockles and fish as they need for dinner, not taking too much so that there are some left for other people, birds and animals to eat
- They visit the Coorong as a family, and teach the young children how to fish, sharing stories about the land, so that they can visit, see changes, and look after the Country in the future.

If students have completed activity 1, ask them to draw the kutii fishers into their artwork.

Students then complete the worksheet on page 8.

Activity 3 - Artistic interpretations (15-30 mins)

Ask students to consider, Why is Coorong Country significant to Ngarrindjeri people?

Students watch this short [video showing Cedric Varcoe's artwork](#) (0:46) about Ngarrindjeri Country, and write down what they can see in the artwork. Using a 'snowball' approach, students first share their ideas with a partner, and then students combine groups into 4, 8, and 16 students until the whole class joins together in a discussion about their interpretation of the artwork. Students will get an understanding of how we all see and interpret place and artworks differently.

Some examples of the symbols found within this mural include:

- The sun
- Ngarrindjeri people (fishing, gathering, hunting, eating, meeting)
- Water holes and shell middens (circles)
- Green vegetation
- Fish bones
- Hunting tools (boomerangs, spears, fishing nets)
- Song lines / journey paths
- Animal tracks
- Murray River mouth
- Sand dunes

Students can use the activity worksheet on page 9 to note their ideas
(*worksheet is best printed in colour*)



Activity 3 (continued).

To understand Cedric's perspective, you can then re-watch the video [Back to Country: A Kuti Co Story](#) from the time code 4:20 -5:28, or read the following quote from Cedric to the class:

I think about our old people, back then til right up til now, and what they have given us and created for us. They've given us fire, given us tools, given us resources like food, plants for medicine. They've given all this to us. So when I paint that in my artwork I'm painting all that we have that was given to us. I paint about our old people when they gather in these places, like where we are today, like Coorong. The place of the cockle. And my artwork on the Kuti Shack is representing that coming together, coming from all over our Ruwi. Coming together, to gather at Goolwa to collect the cockles and feast on them cockles, and I share that with the world. So when you come and visit Country, that you'll take back a bit of an idea of how it was when there was no roads, no cars, just Ngarrindjeri living here.

Activity 4 - Connections with Place (20 mins)

Students work in pairs to interview each other about a place of water (e.g. an ocean, river, lake etc.) that is special or meaningful to them. They begin by writing down 5 questions that they want to ask to their partner about that place.

Question examples might include:

- What does the place look like?
- How far away is the place?
- Have you visited the place?
- How does the place make you feel?
- How are you connected to the place?
- How can you care for the place?

Students then take turns interviewing one another, and report to the class what they have learned about their partner's chosen water place.

Discussion (10 mins)

No matter where we live we are all connected with Country, and all waters on the land eventually flow into the ocean.

Discuss as a class,

- *What are some of the interesting knowledges we learned about Ngarrindjeri fishing culture?*
- *Why are the lands and seas at the Coorong, South Australia significant to Ngarrindjeri people?*
- *How are we connected to Ngarrindjeri Country?*
- *How can we all help to care for Country?*





Extension Activities

1. Do the pipi shuffle - Physical Health and Education

Watch the video to see how kuti fishers catch kuti / pipis with their feet. Take students outside, ideally to a place with sand (e.g. beach, river bank, or sand pit). Practice the pipi shuffle together, and see what you can feel with your feet. Discuss as a group, why might this movement be effective for harvesting pipis? What other movements might be used to fish for pipis?



2. Weaving with Cedric - Visual Art

Organise a cultural weaving lesson with Ngarrindjeri artists Cedric Varcoe or Ellen Trevorrow. Students will use native grasses or rafia to learn weaving skills, as used by the Ngarrindjeri people for fishing nets, baskets, and other crafts. For assistance coordinating a workshop, please contact alexis.farr@msc.org.



3. Cooking with pipis - Design & Technology (Food and Fibre Production)

Use one of the simple recipes below to make your own sustainable seafood dish. You can buy MSC-certified sustainable pipis from Goolwa Pipi Co. at a [supplier near you](#).

- [Wild black pepper pipis](#)
- [South Australian pipis with saffron butter](#)

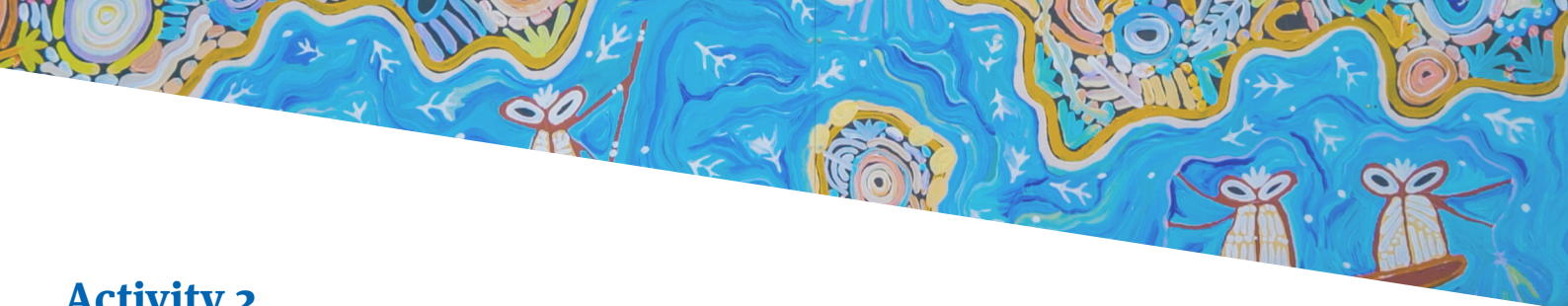
Students write one paragraph that describes the flavour, smells and tastes of the kuti, eaten by Ngarrindjeri people for over 19,000 years.



Activity 1

Draw the natural features that you see in the video, writing a label for each of the different features. For example sand dunes, river, ocean, vegetation and shells.

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for a student to draw and label natural features from a video.



Activity 2

What is the **Ngarrindjeri** word for pipi?

Why are pipis important to the Ngarrindjeri people?

What are three ways that pipi fishers **care for Country**?

1.

2.

3.





Activity 3

What do you see in Cedric Varcoe's artwork of Coorong Country?





Activity 4

Write down 5 questions to ask your partner about a water place that is special to them

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Write some notes about your partner's water place

