



Introducing cave/bark paintings: Wandjina



CURRICULUM INFORMATION

PHASE OF DEVELOPMENT

Early Childhood	Middle Childhood	Early Adolescence	Late Adolescence
	✓	✓	

MAJOR LEARNING AREAS

The Arts	English	H & PE	LOTE	Mathematics	Science	S & E	T & E
✓ ✓	✓					✓	

VALUES

Pursuit of knowledge & commitment to achievement of potential	Self acceptance & respect of self	Respect & concern for others & their rights	Social & civic responsibility	Environmental responsibility
✓		✓		✓

TOPIC INFORMATION

PURPOSE

To provide the opportunity for students to study aspects of traditional Aboriginal art in Australia.
To allow students to view Aboriginal artists' interpretations of 'Wandjina' in traditional and modern settings.

STUDENT OUTCOMES FROM THIS LESSON

- Students view, discuss and compare a series of traditional cave rock art (petroglyphs) and bark paintings.
- Students read/hear a Dreaming story from the Kimberley about the Wandjina.
- Students become aware of usage of Aboriginal words in relation to painting.
- Students discuss how cave rock art (petroglyphs) and bark paintings were created.
- Students identify features of Wandjina figures.
- Students appreciate the importance of traditional cave rock art (petroglyphs) in Australian culture.

KEY BACKGROUND POINTS

- Aboriginal cave rock art (petroglyphs) and bark paintings have an important part in the cultural heritage of Australia.
- Teachers are encouraged to provide a variety of avenues for students to become aware of stories from the Kimberley.
- Teachers may encourage students to hypothesize how marks were made on bark and canvas.
- Become aware of significance of pictorial symbols in the Aboriginal culture.





CULTURAL & PROTOCOL CONSIDERATIONS

- Take in to consideration cultural copyright.
- Be aware of correct terminology when describing Aboriginal artworks.
- Do not attempt to use Aboriginal words without proper instruction by, and permission from, the people from whose language the words are taken. Some sounds in Aboriginal languages do not occur in English and to mispronounce such sounds may be construed as lack of respect.
- Recognise and acknowledge the importance of sacred symbols to Aboriginal people.
- Become aware of significance of pictorial symbols in the Aboriginal culture.

RESOURCES

Medium	Author, producer, developer etc	Title	Source
website	Coo-ee Aboriginal Art Gallery	Wandjina	http://www.cooeeart.com.au/wandjina/
website	Songlines Aboriginal Art	Collections-bark paintings and artifacts	http://www.aboriginal-art.com/collections_toc.html
website	The Bradshaw Foundation	Bradshaw paintings	http://www.bradshawfoundation.com/
website	Australian Stamp and Coin Company	Aboriginal Dreamtime Legends	http://australianstamp.com/Coin-web/feature/history/abdream.htm
book	Nicholas Thieberger and Bill McGregor (eds.)	<i>Macquarie Aboriginal words: a dictionary of words of Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages</i>	Published by Macquarie Library, Sydney, 1994. Available from any good book store.

TEACHING AND LEARNING STRATEGIES

TEACHING RESOURCES

- computers for student use and access to internet
- or, data projector and screen and access to internet
- whiteboard and markers

LESSON STEPS

Preparation:

- **View** websites and/or google 'Kimberley Wandjina story' (also, substitute 'artwork' for 'story' and try again) to read Dreaming stories about the Wandjina, and view artworks.
- **Decide** how many of the websites to have your students view, depending on age and experience.
- **Choose** words from the Wandjina story which may be used to describe artworks, and **write** them on whiteboard but don't have on view at start of lesson. Words like those below, taken from *Maquarie Aboriginal words list*, are suitable (NWSE – points of the compass – indicate the general areas from which words originate).
 - tea tree bark – yumbak (N); yorla (S, W); yorl (S, E); yalu (N)
 - wet – balyan (N, SW)
 - owl – kambigur (SW, E)
 - long tailed goanna – manar
 - red ochre, clay – djuwar/dhuwar (general); bwayil (SE); djunya (SW); djuny (E); mardarr (SE); wilki (N, SW); wilak (S, E)





Implementation

Whole Class

- **Discuss** reasons why Aboriginal cave rock art (petroglyphs) and bark paintings have an important part in the cultural heritage of Australia.

Whole class, or if using computers students may work in pairs

View all websites listed, or choose those most suitable for your students' level of development:

- View website: *Coo-ee Aboriginal Art Gallery*.
 - **Read** the story from the Kimberley region about the Wandjina.
 - **Look** at a variety of artists' paintings of the Wandjina.
 - **Discuss** how these were painted – with brushes? Or ...
- View website: *Songlines – Aboriginal Art*.
 - **Scroll** down to 'Wandjina Paintings'.
 - **Point** out common features of 'Wandjina' (refer to website).
 - **Discuss** differences between paintings on the cave and these bark paintings (colours).
- View website: *Bradshaw Foundation*
 - **Click** on Hugh Brown.
 - **Scroll** down until cave painting of Wandjina appears.
 - **Click** to enlarge.
 - **Discuss** how students think this was painted – brush, sticks, fingers ...
 - **Point** out colours used.
 - **Discuss** why only these colours were used – natural pigment from surroundings.
- Google other websites if you wish, to find Aboriginal cave rock art (petroglyphs)/bark paintings and stories about the Wandjina. I found the Australian Stamps site this way. It includes paintings used for stamps and stories about each.

Whole Class

- **Retell** story about Wandjina in students' words.
- **Discuss** different images of Wandjina viewed on websites.
- **Show** students words relating to rock art and bark paintings on white board, but do not attempt to pronounce them without permission, as this does not show respect for the language groups from which the words come.
- **Explain** that although Aboriginal words may be used by the artists to describe their work it is not respectful for others to use the words without permission.

ASSESSMENT

Assess student participation in activity. The following points may be appropriate:

- Were students able to find websites and artworks, and identify features of Wandjina?
- Could student identify differences and similarities between cave paintings and bark paintings?
- Were students able to retell the Wandjina story?
- Could students discuss the importance of Aboriginal cave rock art (petroglyphs) and bark paintings in the cultural heritage of Australia?

Acknowledgements / Thanks to contributors.

Jane Pisan (writer), Alwyn Evans (editor)

Produced by DUIT Multimedia for the Aboriginal Perspectives across the Curriculum program

