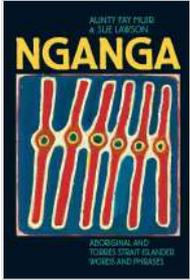




Walker Books Classroom Ideas



Nganga: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Words and Phrases

Aunty Fay Muir & Sue Lawson
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*Notes may be downloaded and printed for regular classroom use only.

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Outline:

Nganga (ng gar na): To see and understand.

Aunty, Uncle, sorry business, deadly, women's business, marngrook, dreamtime, Elders, songlines. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander words have become part of our everyday vocabulary but we may not know their true meaning or where the words come from. In *Nganga*, Aunty Fay Muir and Sue Lawson have brought together these words, their meanings and their history. Engage with the rich and unique culture of Aboriginal Australians through this authoritative and concise collection.

Author/Illustrator Information:

Aunty Fay Muir is an Elder and Traditional Owner of Boon Wurrung Country. She is the senior linguist at the Victorian Aboriginal Corporation for Languages in Melbourne. Fay is working with her own Boon Wurrung language, recording and putting language into the database for future and present generations. She presents language-related workshops to community members who are reclaiming their languages, as well as universities and TAFEs that are interested in understanding the many and challenging aspects of language reclamation. She also goes out to schools to educate the students about language and culture and to teach language. *Nganga* is her first children's book.

Sue Lawson writes books for children and young adults. She has won the Australian Family Therapists' Award for Children's Literature and was short-listed for the Prime Minister's Literary Awards and the Children's Book Council of Australia Book of the Year Awards.

How to Use These Notes:

This story works on many levels. The suggested activities are therefore for a wide age and ability range. Please select accordingly.

These notes are for:

- Primary years 4-6
- Secondary years 7-12
- Ages 9+

Key Learning Areas:

- English
- History
- Geography

Example of:

- Non Fiction
- Reference book

Themes/Ideas:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Histories and Cultures
 - Country
 - Australia
- Australian history



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Discussion Questions and Activities:

There are "...over 250 different Aboriginal nations Australia-wide and approximately 18 communities living on 17 islands in the Torres Strait." (p12) Who are the traditional owners of the area where you live?

Acknowledgement of Country (p18). What does acknowledgement to country mean to you? What is the Acknowledgement of Country that you should use for events in your school? Can you write one of your own for your school? Perform the Acknowledgement of Country as a class or as individuals at your next school assembly. Invite a local Aboriginal Elder to perform a Welcome to Country at a school event.

Assimilation (p22). Have a class discussion on what makes a culture. Consider history, language, shared experience, art, place, people, etc. Consider your own culture – how do you think you and your family would be affected if certain elements of your culture were taken away from you? Do you think any group should have the right to control another group's culture? Why or why not?

There are certain words or phrases that can mean different things depending on who says them (see "blackfella" p27). Why do you think some groups, especially minority groups, have some language that is only acceptable when used by other members of that group? Why is it important to respect the wishes of that group and not use their language inappropriately?

Bunyips are common in Aboriginal dreaming stories "...though the creature's name and its appearance varies nation to nation." (p29). Find examples of bunyips or bunyip-like creatures in Aboriginal Dreaming stories.

Research the term "Country" (p37) as it applies to First Nation people of Australia. Find examples of text, paintings or videos that explore First Nation people of Australia's understanding of and connection to Country.

"Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are recognised as the traditional custodians of Australia." (p41). What does the word "custodian" mean in this sense?

Discrimination (p47) and *racism* (p91). What is your school's policy on discrimination and racism? Why is discrimination and racism hurtful and illegal? Why do you think certain groups or individuals discriminate against others?

What is the difference between "law" (p63) and "lore" (p64)? With regards to Aboriginal law and lore, is there any overlap between the two terms?

Min Min Lights (p74). Can you think of any stories your parents or grandparents told you that were intended to guide your behaviour? Why do you think parents/guardians tell stories like these to children?

NAIDOC Week (p81). How have you celebrated NAIDOC Week in the past? As a class, discuss and plan an event in your school or local community for the next NAIDOC Week. *Nganga* (p84). Why do you think Nganga was chosen for the title of this book?

Create a large map of Australia and mark on it key information from the book, such as the areas of Aboriginal clans.

Resistance (p97). What does the term "resistance" mean? How did Aboriginal people resist the European settlers? What are some other forms of resistance that Aboriginal people have used against the Federal Government in modern times? Use the texts listed at the end of these notes as a starting point for further research.

Smoking ceremony (p104). View videos online that show a traditional smoking ceremony, for example https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=erJaQ_b09zI and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-dYyYpWJfyM>. What are some of the ways that smoking ceremonies are used?

Further reading:



Our Stories: Protest in Australia
Sue Lawson
PB 9781922244543
Classroom ideas available



Freedom Ride
Sue Lawson
PB 9781925126365
Classroom ideas available



Welcome to Country
Aunty Joy Murphy
Lisa Kennedy
HB 9781922244871
Classroom ideas available



The Lost Girl
Ambelin Kwaymullina
Leanne Tobin
PB 9781921977060
Classroom ideas available