

Aboriginal Studies Hands-on Session

Stages 1-3 Education Kit

1 William Street, Sydney, NSW 2010
www.australianmuseum.net.au



Teacher Notes

Briefing

On arrival at the Museum the students will be met and briefed by a Museum staff member about the Museum. Please ensure all students and accompanying adults attend this short this briefing.

Bag Storage

Museum staff will securely store the students' bags.

Exhibitions

Outside of any educator-led sessions students and teachers may explore the Museum's exhibitions. Some special exhibitions incur an extra charge. We suggest that you divide the students into small groups to move through the exhibitions to prevent overcrowding of the displays.

Lunch

We recommend that students bring their recess and lunch and eat it in Hyde Park. Alternative locations will be provided in wet weather.

Photography

Students are welcome to bring mobile devices to record their excursion. There may be some photography restrictions for special exhibitions.

Free Wi-fi at the Museum

The Museum offers free Wi-fi for onsite visitors. It is available in 30 minute sessions. Students and teachers can log on for more than one session.

Photocopying

Please photocopy the following materials for accompanying adults:

- [Australian Museum Guide Map](#)

Further information

<http://australianmuseum.net.au/education-services>

Syllabus links

History				
	Early Stage One	Stage One	Stage Two	Stage Three
Outcomes	HTe-1 Communicates stories of their own family and heritage and the heritage of others HTe-2 Demonstrates developing skills of historical inquiry and communication	HT1-1 Communicates an understanding of change and continuity in family life using appropriate historical terms HT1-2 Identifies and describes significant people, events, places and sites in the local community over time HT1-4 Demonstrates skills of historical inquiry and communication	HT2-1 Identifies celebrations and commemorations of significance in Australia and the world HT2-2 Describes and explains how significant individuals, groups and events contributed to changes in the local community over time HT2-3 Describes people, events and actions related to world exploration and its effects HT2-4 Describes and explains effects of British colonisation in Australia HT2-5 Applies skills of historical inquiry and communication	HT3-1 Describes and explains the significance of people, groups, places and events to the development of Australia HT3-2 Describes and explains different experiences of people living in Australia over time HT3-3 Identifies change and continuity and describes the causes and effects of change on Australian society HT3-4 Describes and explains the struggles for rights and freedoms in Australia, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples HT3-5 Applies a variety of skills of historical inquiry and communication
Content	Personal and Family Histories Engage in and respond to stories about families in other places, including those of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups	Present and Past Family Life Define and use terms relating to time, sequencing objects or photographs from the past, eg. then and now, past and present, a long time ago The Past in the Present Investigate an aspect of local	Community and Remembrance Identify the special relationship that Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples have to Country and Place First Contacts Investigate, drawing on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community representatives (where possible) and	The Australian Colonies Discuss the impact of settlement on local Aboriginal peoples and the environment Discuss the diverse relationships between Aboriginal peoples and the British Identify events that have shaped Australia's identity and discuss why they

		history Examine local or regional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sites	other sources, the traditional Aboriginal way of life, focusing on people, their beliefs, food, shelter, tools and weapons, customs and ceremonies, art works, dance, music, and relationship to country	were significant. Australia as a Nation Using a range of sources, research and describe the contribution of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other groups to Australian society.
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Science			
	Stage One	Stage Two	Stage Three
Outcomes	ST1-2VA Demonstrates a willingness to engage with local, national and global issues relevant to their lives, and to shaping sustainable futures ST1- 8ES Describes some observable changes that occur in the sky and landscape ST1-9ES Identifies ways that people use science in their daily lives to care for the environment and the Earth's resources ST1-10LW Describes external features, changes in and growth of living things ST1-11LW Identifies ways that different places in the environment provide for the needs of living things ST1-12MW Identifies ways that everyday materials can be physically changed and combined for a particular purpose	ST2-2VA Demonstrates a willingness to engage with local, national and global issues relevant to their lives, and to shaping sustainable futures ST2-8ES Describes some observable changes over time on the Earth's surface that result from natural processes and human activity ST2-10LW Describes that living things have life cycles, can be distinguished from non-living things and grouped, based on their observable features ST2-11LW Describes ways that science knowledge helps people understand the effect of their actions on the environment and on the survival of livings ST2-13MW Identifies the physical properties of natural and processed materials, and how these properties influence their use ST2-16P Describes how products are designed and produced, and the ways people use them	ST3-8ES Describes how discoveries by people from different cultures and times have contributed to advancing scientific understanding of the solar system ST3-13MW Describes how the properties of materials determine their use for specific purposes
Content	Earth and Space Explore ways in which people use science knowledge and skills in their daily lives to care for the environment and use resources sustainably. Material World Identify a range of natural	Earth and Space Investigate how change in the environment is used by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to develop seasonal calendars. Material World Generate ideas about how	Earth and Space Describe how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples use observations of the night sky to inform decisions about some everyday activities eg. food gathering and

	materials used by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and share ideas about the ways they are used to suit a particular purpose, eg. the use of wood, stone and fibres in the build environment. Information Explore communication methods used by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to share ideas and information eg. dance, stories, music and art. Products Describe a variety of ways in which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have used or continue to use natural materials to make products that meet their needs.	the physical properties of some natural and processed materials influence their use. Living Things Describe some examples of how science knowledge helps people to understand the effect of their actions on the environment and the survival of living things. Products Explore the ways existing products can be reused and recycled to incorporate environmental considerations.	ceremonies. Material World Identify the properties of materials used in a familiar product and relate them to its use.
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Visual Art				
	Early Stage One	Stage One	Stage Two	Stage Three
Outcomes	VAES1.1 Makes simple pictures and other kinds of artworks about things and experiences. VAES1.3 Recognises some of the qualities of different artworks and begins to realise that artists make artworks. VAES1.4 Communicates their ideas about pictures and other kinds of artworks.	VAS1.1 Makes artworks in a particular way about experiences of real and imaginary things. VAS1.2 Uses the forms to make artworks according to varying requirements. VAS1.3 Realises what artists do, who they are and what they make. VAS1.4 Begins to interpret the meaning of artworks, acknowledging the roles of artist and audience.	VAS2.1 Represents the qualities of experiences and things that are interesting or beautiful* by choosing among aspects of subject matter VAS2.2 Uses the forms to suggest the qualities of subject matter AS2.3 Acknowledges that artists make artworks for different reasons and that various interpretations are possible. VAS2.4 Identifies connections between subject matter in artworks and what they refer to, and appreciates the use of particular techniques.	VAS3.1 Investigates subject matter in an attempt to represent likenesses of things in the world. VAS3.3 Acknowledges that audiences respond in different ways to artworks and that there are different opinions about the value of artworks. VAS3.4 Communicates about the ways in which subject matter is represented in artworks.

On-site activities

The Aboriginal Studies Hands-on Session takes place in a learning space designed to introduce students to the lifestyle of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people prior to European contact. The space has a number of activity centres which offer students the unique opportunity to handle real artefacts.

Students have the opportunity to:

- try their hand at cave painting
- play a didgeridoo
- grind seeds
- learn how to use a fire stick

The session begins with an introduction by a Museum Education Officer. Students then break into small groups and rotate around the various activities.

Each session lasts approximately one hour and adult involvement is warmly welcomed.

Activities focus on the themes of:

Men's gear

A vast array of tools and weapons used by men, as the hunters, are available to observe and investigate including spears, clubs, stone tools, axes, cores and flakes, boomerangs and grinding stones.

Women's gear

Women were the gatherers. Equipment such as coolamons, song and dance boards, digging sticks, dilly bags, and head pads are available to explore.

Music and dance

Students can make their own music using didgeridoos, emu callers and clap sticks.

Technology

Aboriginal people used woomeras to throw spears further, utilised plant material as glue, made sharp edged tools from flaking stone and used fire sticks to create fire. These and more are available to explore.

Art

Students can create their own Aboriginal art by painting in the cave.

Aboriginal Australia today

Students can learn about Aboriginal languages and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island flags.

Please advise your students to handle objects in the Aboriginal Hands-on Session with care.

Background notes for teachers

Lifestyle

Men were the hunters, hunting large animals such as kangaroo and emu. Women and children were the gatherers.

Men's Gear

Spears – Used for hunting and fishing.

Clubs – Used for combat. During the European contact period the clubs were made with horseshoe nails.

Shields – Parrying shields (NSW) were used for protection in combat. The points were used as a weapon from front to back.

Boomerangs – Hunting boomerang were used to hunt large game. Returning boomerangs were used for sport and to frighten small game towards traps.

Women's Gear

Dilly bag – Net dilly bags, carried on the back for easy access, are used when gathering food in the water (sea and rivers). Hard dilly bags are made from the leaves from the Pandanus plant. The leaves are boiled and then woven into bags.

Coolamon – A carrying dish used for carrying babies, food, firewood, personal goods and water.

Head pads – Used for supporting the coolamon. The pad was originally made of human hair. After European contact, they were made from wool.

Digging Sticks – Used mainly by women for food gathering. Used for opening termite nests, digging reptiles out of burrows and looking for witchetty grubs.

Song and Dance Boards – Used in women's corroborees and ceremonies. The front of the dance board is painted with ochres and when the ceremony is finished the design is erased. This way the design is kept secret and sacred.

String Games – Used by boys and girls. These games teach boys to weave fishing nets and girls to weave baskets and dilly bags.

Music and Dance

Clap Sticks – Made from carved pieces of wood and were often decorated with painted designs. They were used as a pair to tap rhythm for a song or dance.

Didgeridoo – Originates from the Top End of Australia. (Yidarki is the real name for the didgeridoo). They are made from hollow logs eaten out by termites. When used for ceremonial performances, didgeridoos were decorated with traditional designs in ochre.

Boomerangs – There are two types of boomerangs, the hunting and returning boomerang. Boomerangs were also used for making music.

Art

Artworks – Aboriginal artwork is one of the oldest art traditions in the world. At the centre of Aboriginal culture is a rich system of beliefs expressed in art, music, dance and song – all part of the process of linking life to the past, present and future. The artworks in the Aboriginal hands on rock vary from dot art, x-ray and contemporary art. Paintings on rock, bark, wood, ground, bodies and tools are a major means of passing on information from generation to generation. They often define the relationship of a particular group to their land. In recent years, paintings

have been used in Land Rights claims to prove people's links with the land. Contemporary art reflects the diversity of Aboriginal life in Australia.

Technology

Bees wax, sap from trees and spinifex grass - At certain times of the year the blades of spinifex grass can be beaten to produce a thick gum. The gum is heated and, when soft and pliable, it can be used as a glue as it sets hard when dry. Bees wax and sap are also used as glue when making tools.

Glass spear points – Glass bottles were broken and fragments were filed down on rocks. Kangaroo teeth and animal bone were used to chip out the edges giving the point the jagged appearance.

Woomeras – The woomera is a spear thrower and can make the spear travel the length of a football field. These were made all over Australia but differ in each area.

Fire Stick - Used to make fire.

Ground edge axe – Made by flaking or grinding to produce the required shape and edge. They were used for chopping and cutting and removing bark from trees.

Grinding Stone – Used for grinding grass seeds to make damper. Small grinding stones were used to grind ochres for ceremonial purposes.

Flakes – Flaking involved the removal of controlled pieces of stone from a larger piece that is called a core. Flakes are used for many things such as cutting, shaping, carving and engraving.

Small Grinding Stones – Used for grinding ochres to decorate the body and shields.

Aboriginal Australia Today

Aboriginal Flag – Designed by Harold Thomas in 1971 (a Luritja man from Central Australia). Black represents the people, yellow represents the sun, and red represents the giver of life, and the relationship with mother earth.

Torres Strait Island Flag – Designed by Berond Namok from Thursday Island. The white deri (head-dress) represents the people and is worn on the head during ceremonies. The five-pointed star represents the island groups and is used in navigation for sea-faring people. Green represents the land.

Map of Language Groups – Before European contact there were over 700 different Language Groups in Australia. There is a map showing all the different Language Groups.