

Learning about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures

Introduction

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures are the oldest, continuous cultures in the world, having existed in Australia for at least 50,000 years. The uniqueness of these cultures and the wisdom and knowledge embedded in them are things to be highly valued by all Victorians.

The Victorian Curriculum includes the knowledge and skills students are expected to develop about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders histories and cultures, given their particular and enduring importance.

Protocols

All teachers must follow the relevant protocols when teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures. The protocols provide guidelines about how to protect the integrity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural expressions and enable all Victorian teachers and students to engage respectfully and feel connected to this identity. For advice, please refer to the Department of Education and Training's [Koorie Cross-Curricular Protocols](#).

Further advice is also available from the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Inc., (VAEAI), who have produced [Protocols for Koorie Education in Victorian Primary and Secondary schools](#). These protocols include advice to assist schools to provide a welcoming environment for Aboriginal community members and how to work respectfully with the Koorie community to enrich schools' teaching and learning programs.

Mapping the Victorian Curriculum F-10 content

Below is a table that maps content descriptions that explicitly include references to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures, plus content descriptions whose elaborations also make explicit references. Teachers can take the opportunity to explore these elaborations further as they highlight a range of approaches that could be used in the classroom to teach Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures.

The table is organised by curriculum areas beginning with Victorian Aboriginal Languages, which schools can offer as part of their 'Languages' program. Given every content description in Victorian Aboriginal Languages is relevant, a single link has been provided to this curriculum area, rather than repeating them all.

Mapping references to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures within the Victorian Curriculum

| | Foundation to Level 2 | Levels 3 and 4 | Levels 5 and 6 | Levels 7 and 8 | Levels 9 and 10 |
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| Victorian Aboriginal Languages | See the Victorian Aboriginal Languages curriculum: http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/languages/victorian-aboriginal-languages/introduction/rationale-and-aims | | | | |
| The Arts: Dance | Foundation: Respond to dance, expressing what they enjoy and why (VCADAR020) Levels 1 and 2: Respond to dance, expressing what they enjoy, and where and why people in their local area dance including dances of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (VCADAR024) | Identify how the elements of dance and production elements express ideas in dance they make, perform and view including in dances from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (VCADAR028) | Explain how the elements of dance and production elements communicate ideas in dances from different contexts they make, perform and view including in dances by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (VCADAR032) | Analyse how choreographers use elements of dance and production elements to communicate intent (VCADAR038) Identify and connect specific features of dance from different times and locations including dance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to explore viewpoints and enrich their dance making (VCADAR039) | Analyse a range of dance from contemporary and past times, including dance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, to explore differing viewpoints and develop understanding of dance practice across local, national and international contexts (VCADAR046) |
| The Arts: Drama | Foundation: Explore ideas for characters and situations through dramatic play (VCADRE017) Levels 1 and 2: Respond to drama, expressing what they enjoy and why, and why people in their local area make and perform drama including drama of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples (VCADRR024) | Shape and perform dramatic action using narrative structures and tension in devised and scripted drama (VCADRP027) Identify intended purposes and meaning of drama, including the drama of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples (VCADRR028) | Perform devised and scripted drama that develops narrative and uses performance styles and design elements to engage an audience (VCADRP031) Explain how the elements of drama and production elements communicate meaning by comparing drama from different social, cultural and historical contexts including in the drama of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples (VCADRR032) | Develop and refine expressive skills in voice and movement to communicate ideas and dramatic action in different performance styles and conventions (VCADRD036) Identify and connect specific features and purposes of drama from contemporary and past times, including the drama of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to explore viewpoints and enrich their drama making (VCADRR039) | Manipulate combinations of the elements of drama to develop and convey the physical and psychological aspects of roles and characters consistent with intentions in dramatic forms and performance styles (VCADRE041) Practise and refine the expressive capacity of voice and movement to communicate ideas and dramatic action in a range of forms, styles and performances spaces (VCADRD042) Analyse a range of drama from contemporary and past times, including the drama of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to explore differing viewpoints and develop understanding of drama practice across local, national and international contexts (VCADRR046) |

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| The Arts: Media Arts | <p>Foundation: Respond to visual artworks and consider where and why people make visual artworks (VCAMAR020)</p> <p>Levels 1 and 2: Create and present media artworks that communicate ideas and stories to an audience (VCAMAP023)</p> <p>Respond to media artworks and consider where and why people in their local area, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, make media artworks (VCAMAR024)</p> | <p>Identify intended purposes and meanings of media artworks considering who makes media artworks and the characteristics of audiences who view them in different social, historical and cultural contexts, including media artworks of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (VCAMAR028)</p> | <p>Plan, produce and present media artworks for specific audiences and purposes using responsible media practice (VCAMAP031)</p> <p>Explain how the elements of media arts and story principles communicate meaning and viewpoints by comparing media artworks from different social, cultural and historical contexts, including media artworks of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples (VCAMAR032)</p> | <p>Develop and refine media production skills using the technical and symbolic elements of images, sounds and text to represent a specific story, purpose and meaning (VCAMAM035)</p> <p>Present media artworks within different community and institutional contexts for different audiences, with consideration of ethical and regulatory issues (VCAMAP037)</p> <p>Identify specific features and purposes of media artworks from contemporary and past times to explore viewpoints and enrich their media arts making, including those of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (VCAMAR039)</p> | <p>Manipulate media representations to identify and examine social and cultural values and beliefs (VCAMAE041)</p> <p>Analyse and evaluate how technical and symbolic elements are manipulated in media artworks to challenge representations framed by social beliefs and values in different community and institutional contexts (VCAMAR045)</p> <p>Analyse and evaluate a range of media artworks from contemporary and past times, including the media artworks of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, to explore differing viewpoints and enrich their media arts making (VCAMAR046)</p> |
| The Arts: Music | <p>Foundation: Sing and play instruments to create and practise chants, songs and rhymes including those used by cultural groups in the local community (VCAMUM018)</p> <p>Levels 1 and 2: Sing and play instruments to improvise, compose and practise a repertoire of chants, songs and rhymes, including those used by cultural groups in the local community (VCAMUM022)</p> <p>Respond to music, communicating their preferences and discussing where and why people in their local area make and perform music, including the music of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (VCAMUR024)</p> | <p>Identify features of the music they listen to, compose and perform, and discuss the purposes it was created for including the music of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, using music terminology (VCAMUR028)</p> | <p>Rehearse and perform songs and music they have learnt, including their own compositions, combining aspects of the elements of music and using performance skills, to communicate ideas and intentions to an audience (VCAMUP031)</p> <p>Explain how aspects of the elements of music are combined to communicate ideas, concepts and feelings by comparing music from different cultures, times and locations including the music of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (VCAMUR032)</p> | <p>Identify and connect specific features and purposes of music from contemporary and past times including music of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, to explore viewpoints and enrich their music making (VCAMUR039)</p> | <p>Plan, develop and notate compositions with an understanding of style and convention (VCAMUM043)</p> <p>Analyse a range of music from contemporary and past times, including the music of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples to explore differing viewpoints, enrich their music making, and develop understanding of music practice in local, national and international contexts (VCAMUR046)</p> |

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| The Arts: Visual Arts | <p>Foundation: Respond to visual artworks and consider where and why people make visual artworks (VCAVAR020)</p> <p>Levels 1 and 2: Explore ideas, experiences, observations and imagination and express them through subject matter in visual artworks they create (VCAVAE021)</p> <p>Respond to visual artworks, including artworks by local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, by describing subject matter and ideas (VCAVAR024)</p> | <p>Explore ideas and artworks from different cultures and times as inspiration to create visual artworks (VCAVAE025)</p> <p>Identify and discuss how ideas are expressed in artworks from a range of places, times and cultures, including artworks by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (VCAVAR028)</p> | <p>Create and display art work considering how ideas can be expressed to an audience (VCAVAP031)</p> <p>Identify and describe how ideas are expressed in artworks by comparing artworks from different contemporary, historical and cultural contexts, including artworks by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (VCAVAR032)</p> | <p>Explore how artists use materials, techniques, technologies and processes to realize their intentions in art works (VCAVAE034)</p> <p>Create and display artworks, describing how ideas are expressed to an audience (VCAVAP037)</p> <p>Analyse how ideas and viewpoints are expressed in art works and how they are viewed by audiences (VCAVAR038)</p> <p>Identify and connect specific features of visual artworks from different cultures, historical and contemporary times, including artworks by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (VCAVAR039)</p> | <p>Conceptualize, plan and design artworks that express ideas, concepts and artistic intentions (VCAVAV043)</p> <p>Analyse and interpret artworks to explore the different forms of expression, intentions and viewpoints of artists and how they are viewed by audiences (VCAVAR045)</p> <p>Analyse, interpret and evaluate a range of visual artworks from different cultures, historical and contemporary contexts, including artworks by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to explore differing viewpoints (VCAVAR046)</p> |
| The Arts: Visual Communication Design | | | | <p>Identify and describe the use of methods, media, materials, design elements and design principles in visual communications from different historical, social and cultural contexts (VCAVCDR005)</p> | <p>Analyse and evaluate the use of methods, media, materials, design elements and design principles in visual communications from different historical, social and cultural contexts, including presentations by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (VCAVCDR011)</p> |

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| Civics and Citizenship | | Describe the different cultural, religious and/or social groups to which they and others in the community may belong VCCCC007 | | <p>Examine how national identity can shape a sense of belonging and examine different perspectives about Australia's national identity, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' perspectives VCCCC027</p> <p>Compare how laws are made in Australia, including through parliaments (statutory law) and courts (common law), and explain different types of laws, including executive law (delegated law), criminal law, civil law and the place of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander customary law VCCCL023</p> <p>Describe the process of constitutional change through a referendum VCCCG021</p> <p>Explain how groups express their identities, including religious and cultural identity, and how this expression can influence their perceptions of others and others' perception of them VCCCC026</p> | Explain how Australia's international legal obligations shape Australian law and government policies, including in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples VCCCL032 |

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| Design and Technologies | <p>Explore how food is selected and prepared for healthy eating (VCDSTC016)</p> <p>Explore how technologies use forces to create movement in designed solutions (VCDSTC014)</p> | <p>Critique needs or opportunities for designing and explore and test a variety of materials, components, tools and equipment and the techniques needed to create designed solutions (VCDSCD028)</p> <p>Investigate food and fibre production used in modern or traditional societies (VCDSTC025)</p> | <p>Investigate the role of food preparation in maintaining good health and the importance of food safety and hygiene (VCDSTC036)</p> <p>Investigate how people in design and technologies occupations address competing considerations, including sustainability, in the design of solutions for current and future use (VCDSTS033)</p> | <p>Examine and prioritise competing factors including social, ethical, economic and sustainability considerations in the development of technologies and designed solutions to meet community needs for preferred futures (VCDSTS043)</p> <p>Investigate the ways in which designed solutions evolve locally, nationally, regionally and globally through the creativity, innovation and enterprise of individuals and groups (VCDSTS044)</p> <p>Analyse how food and fibre are produced when creating managed environments and how these can become more sustainable (VCDSTC046)</p> | <p>Critically analyse factors, including social, ethical and sustainability considerations, that impact on designed solutions for global preferred futures and the complex design and production processes involved (VCDSTS054)</p> |
| Digital Technologies | <p>Independently and with others create and organise ideas and information using information systems, and share these with known people in safe online environments (VCDTDI016)</p> <p>Collect, explore and sort data, and use digital systems to present the data creatively (VCDTDI015)</p> | <p>Recognise different types of data and explore how the same data can be represented in different ways (VCDTDI020)</p> | | | <p>Manage and collaboratively create interactive solutions for sharing ideas and information online, taking into account social contexts and legal responsibilities (VCDTDI049)</p> |

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| English | <p>Foundation Level: Recognise that texts are created by authors who tell stories and share experiences that may be similar or different to students' own experiences (VCELT148)</p> <p>Understand that English is one of many languages spoken in Australia and that different languages may be spoken by family, classmates and community (VCELA164)</p> <p>Level 1: Listen to, recite and perform poems, chants, rhymes and songs, imitating and inventing sound patterns including alliteration and rhyme (VCELT209)</p> <p>Recreate texts imaginatively using drawing, writing, performance and digital forms of communication (VCELT192)</p> <p>Discuss how authors create characters using language and images (VCELT205)</p> <p>Level 2: Understand that spoken, visual and written forms of language are different modes of communication with different features and their use varies according to the audience, purpose, context and cultural background (VCELA234)</p> <p>Discuss how depictions of characters in print, sound and images reflect the contexts in which they were created (VCELT240)</p> <p>Discuss different texts on a similar topic, identifying similarities and differences between the texts (VCELY220)</p> | <p>Level 3: Create texts that adapt language features and patterns encountered in literary texts (VCELT265)</p> <p>Discuss texts in which characters, events and settings are portrayed in different ways, and speculate on the authors' reasons (VCELT274)</p> <p>Level 4: Understand that Standard Australian English is one of many social dialects used in Australia, and that while it originated in England it has been influenced by many other languages (VCELA303)</p> | <p>Level 6: Understand that different social and geographical dialects or accents are used in Australia in addition to Standard Australian English (VCELA362)</p> | <p>Level 7: Identify and explore ideas and viewpoints about events, issues and characters represented in texts drawn from different historical, social and cultural contexts (VCELT393)</p> <p>Level 8: Explore the interconnectedness of Country and Place, People, Identity and Culture in texts including those by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander authors (VCELT404)</p> <p>Explore the ways that ideas and viewpoints in literary texts drawn from different historical, social and cultural contexts may reflect or challenge the values of individuals and groups (VCELT403)</p> | <p>Level 9: Analyse how the construction and interpretation of texts, including media texts, can be influenced by cultural perspectives and other texts (VCELY441)</p> |

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| Geography | <p>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Country/Place on which the school is located and why Country/Place is important to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and the ways in which they maintain special connections to particular Country/Place (VCGGK066)</p> <p>Weather and seasons and the ways in which different cultural groups, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, describe them (VCGGK067)</p> <p>Identify and describe the features of places at a local scale and how they change, recognising that people describe the features of places differently (VCGGK057)</p> <p>Definition of places as parts of the Earth's surface that have been given meaning by people, and how places can be defined at a variety of scales (VCGGK064)</p> | <p>The many Countries/Places of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples throughout Australia, and the custodial responsibility they have for Country/Place, and how this influences views about sustainability (VCGGK080)</p> <p>Similarities and differences in individuals' and groups' feelings and perceptions about places, and how they influence views about the protection of these places (VCGGK083)</p> | <p>Influence of people, including the influence of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, on the environmental characteristics of Australian places (VCGGK094)</p> | <p>The spiritual, economic, cultural and aesthetic value of water for people, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and peoples of the Asia region, that influence the significance of places (VCGGK109)</p> <p>Spiritual, cultural and aesthetic value of landscapes and landforms for people, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, that influence the significance of places, and ways of protecting significant landscapes (VCGGK120)</p> <p>Different types of landscapes and their distinctive landform features (VCGGK116)</p> <p>Factors that influence the decisions people make about where to live and their perceptions of the liveability of places (VCGGK111)</p> | <p>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' approaches to custodial responsibility and environmental management in different regions of Australia (VCGGK148)</p> <p>Land and resource management strategies used by Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander peoples to achieve food security over time (VCGGK137)</p> <p>Reasons and consequences for spatial variations in human wellbeing on a regional scale within India or another country of the Asia region; and on a local scale in Australia (VCGGK151)</p> <p>Role of initiatives by international and national government and non-government organisations to improve human wellbeing in Australia and other countries (VCGGK154)</p> <p>Different ways of measuring and mapping human wellbeing and development, and how these can be applied to measure differences between places (VCGGK152)</p> |
| Health and Physical Education | | <p>Perform movement sequences which link fundamental movement skills (VCHPEM098)</p> | <p>Explore how participation in outdoor activities supports personal and community health and wellbeing and creates connections to the natural and built environment (VCHPEP113)</p> | <p>Plan and implement strategies for connecting to natural and built environments to promote the health and wellbeing of their communities (VCHPEP131)</p> | <p>Plan and evaluate new and creative interventions that promote their own and others' connection to community and natural and built environments (VCHPEP150)</p> <p>Examine the role physical activity, outdoor recreation and sport play in the lives of Australians and investigate how this has changed over time (VCHPEM157)</p> |

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| History | | <p>The significance of Country and Place to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who belong to a local area (VCHHK072)</p> <p>The nature of contact between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and others, for example, the Macassans and the Europeans, and the effects of these interactions (VCHHK081)</p> <p>The diversity and longevity of Australia's first peoples and the significant ways Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are connected to Country and Place (land, sea, waterways and skies) and the effects on their daily lives (VCHHK078)</p> <p>Significance of days and weeks celebrated or commemorated in Australia and the importance of symbols and emblems, including Australia Day, ANZAC Day, Harmony Week, National Reconciliation Week, NAIDOC week and National Sorry Day (VCHHK076)</p> <p>Identify and explain the causes and effects of European settlement and exploration (VCHHC070)</p> <p>Describe the significance of Australian celebrations, symbols and emblems (VCHHC071)</p> <p>Identify and describe continuity and change over time in the local community, region or state and as a result of the effects of European exploration (VCHHC069)</p> | <p>Significant contributions of individuals and groups, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and migrants, to changing Australian society (VCHHK096)</p> <p>Identify and describe patterns of continuity and change in daily life for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, 'native born' and migrants in the Australian colonies (VCHHC085)</p> <p>Explain the causes of significant events that shaped the Australian colonies, contributed to Australian Federation and the effects of these on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and migrants (VCHHC086)</p> <p>The different experiences and perspectives of Australian democracy and citizenship, including the status and rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, migrants, women, and children (VCHHK094)</p> <p>The nature of convict or colonial presence, including the factors that influenced changing patterns of development, how the environment changed, and aspects of the daily life of the inhabitants, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (VCHHK089)</p> | <p>The importance of conserving the remains of the ancient past, including the heritage, culture and artefacts of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (VCHHK108)</p> <p>The significant beliefs, values and practices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and cultures including trade with other communities, causes and effects of warfare, and death and funerary customs (VCHHK106)</p> <p>How physical or geographical features influenced the development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' communities, foundational stories and land management practices (VCHHK105)</p> <p>The nature of sources of evidence about ancient Australia and what they reveal about Australia's ancient past, such as the use of resources (VCHHK107)</p> | <p>Intended and unintended causes and effects of contact and extension of settlement of European power(s), including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (VCHHK134)</p> <p>Continuity and change for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in securing and achieving civil rights and freedoms in Australia (VCHHK156)</p> <p>Causes of the struggle of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples for rights and freedoms before 1965 (VCHHK152)</p> <p>Effects of methods used by civil rights activists to achieve change for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and the role of one individual or group in the struggle (VCHHK155)</p> <p>Significance of the following events in changing society: 1962 right to vote federally, 1967 Referendum, Reconciliation, Mabo decision, Bringing Them Home Report (the Stolen Generations), the Apology and the different perspectives of these events (VCHHK154)</p> <p>Effects of the US civil rights movement and its influence on Australia (VCHHK153)</p> |

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| Mathematics | <p>Foundation: Represent practical situations to model addition and subtraction (VCMNA073)</p> <p>Level 2: Name and order months and seasons (VCMMG118)</p> | <p>Level 2: Group, partition and rearrange collections up to 1000 in hundreds, tens and ones to facilitate more efficient counting (VCMNA105)</p> <p>Level 3: Identify symmetry in the environment (VCMMG144)</p> | <p>Level 5: Compare 12- and 24-hour time systems and convert between them (VCMMG197)</p> | | <p>Level 10: Evaluate statistical reports in the media and other places by linking claims to displays, statistics and representative data (VCMSP354)</p> <p>Construct and interpret box plots and use them to compare data sets (VCMSP350)</p> |
| Science | | | | <p>Interactions between organisms can be described in terms of food chains and food webs and can be affected by human activity (VCSSU093)</p> <p>Scientific knowledge and understanding of the world changes as new evidence becomes available; science knowledge can develop through collaboration and connecting ideas across the disciplines and practice of science (VCSSU089)</p> | |