

Year 7

Lesson 8

ATSI & water

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Learning Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Gain perspective on the importance of water resources to Indigenous Australians.
- Understand how drawings and other graphical representations by Indigenous Australians provide information on water resources and other geographic features.
- Understand how symbols can be used to provide information in maps and incorporate this knowledge in the development of a map.

Learning outcomes

Subject	Strand & Content Descriptors
Science	<p>Science Understanding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Water is an important resource that cycles through the environment (ACSSU222) <p>Science as a Human Endeavour</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Science understanding influences the development of practices in areas of human activity such as industry, agriculture and marine and terrestrial resource management (ACSHE121)
Geography	<p>Geographical Knowledge and Understanding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Water is a resource that links places together as it moves through the water cycle• Aboriginal Peoples and Torres Strait Islander Peoples have contributed to the knowledge about water resource management within Australia <p>Geographical Skills and Inquiry</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop geographical texts using appropriate geographical vocabulary, concepts and geographical conventions to communicate effectively in one or more of the following forms: written, oral, visual and graphic• Select appropriate methods, including the use of ICT to display data in graphs, tables, maps or statistics.

Important Questions

- How did Indigenous Australians find water and preserve water resources?
- What information can be incorporated into drawings and maps by Indigenous Australians?
- What can we learn from Indigenous Australians practices for caring for water environments?
- What environments associated with water are important to you; why are they important?



Lesson Plan

Ask students to imagine they were transported to an unfamiliar natural environment. Their first task is to find water – what ‘signs’ in the landscape could indicate a supply of water (for example: pockets of eucalypts could indicate a creek line; certain plants such as reeds could indicate water; flocks of birds gathered together could indicate a nearby billabong).

Could there be other sources of moisture? (For example: digging for water below the soil; moisture from fruit).

Once they had located water (and other supplies) how could they remember where these things were or tell other people how to find them?

Introduce paintings by Indigenous Australians and discuss how the paintings, along with telling stories about ancestors, the stars and planets, also showed camps sites and clan borders, landforms such as water holes and creeks and travel journeys or paths.

Investigate the paintings and identify what various symbols represent and what information the painting provides. Compare with modern maps: do modern maps still use symbols? What types of symbols are used?

Water sites and associated environments were special to Indigenous Australians and may have cultural, ceremonial significance, as well as a place to gather food, water and medicine.

Students undertake research into the uses and significance of water resources and the part Indigenous Australians played in maintaining the health and function of these sites.

Allotting specific regions of Queensland and Australia and providing instruction to collect information under the same key headings will enable the development of comprehensive overview of Indigenous connection with water.

Suggested research headings could include:

- Region, location, size and other details of water resources
- Lifestyle significance (food, water, medicine)
- Cultural significance (ceremony; culture)
- Management: how the resource was protected or sustained

As a culminating activity, students develop a water map that illustrates a water place of significance to them (for example a beach; fishing spot, dam or river).

Using symbols to represent key points, including geographic, human and journey aspects, students develop a map in the style of an Indigenous Map that tells the story of the students connection and use of the site and how it is ‘symbolic’ or special to them and their family.



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Resource Requirements

- Prior internet research or similar for copies of Indigenous art and explanations of common symbols
- Contemporary maps (street directory or similar)
- Materials for map making

Additional Activities

How did Indigenous Australians collect and transport water? Research tools for water use (such as woven baskets or coolamons); replicate these tools through drawing or modelling using papier mache; flexible plastic or similar materials. How well does your coolamon hold water?

Research local perspectives and uses of water by Indigenous Australians in South East Queensland; for example: Yugambeh Museum (<http://www.yugambeh.com/>).

Investigate opportunities for relevant excursions or invite a local elder to speak to your class.