

# MACQUARIE PEN ANTHOLOGY *of* AUSTRALIAN LITERATURE

## TEACHING GUIDE

### Unit 3: Aboriginal Perspectives

for Lower to Middle Secondary English

[www.macquariepenanthology.com.au](http://www.macquariepenanthology.com.au)



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## Aboriginal Perspectives

<b>FOCUS</b>	What do Aboriginal writers have to say about the white people who colonised their land? What do colonisers have to say about Aboriginal people? Is there any common ground between black and white writers on these subjects? In what ways has time altered the expression of these perspectives?
<b>LEVEL</b>	Lower to Middle Secondary
<b>LENGTH</b>	Approximately 15 – 20 lessons
<b>KEY TEXTS</b>	<p>From the <i>Anthology</i>:</p> <p>Astley, Thea: <i>It's Raining in Mango</i>          Bellear, Lisa: 'Women's Liberation'; 'Taxi'          Bennelong: Letter to Mr Philips, 1796          Burnum Burnum: <i>The Burnum Burnum Declaration</i>          Cameron, Bessie: Letter to the Editor, 1886          Dark, Eleanor: <i>The Timeless Land</i>          Davis, Jack: 'The First-born'; 'The Black Tracker'          Furphy, Joseph: <i>Such is Life</i>          Gilbert, Kevin: 'People Are Legends'; <i>The Cherry Pickers</i>          Martiniello, Jennifer: 'Uluru by Champagne'; 'Emily Kngwarreye'          Morgan, Sally: Extract from <i>My Place</i>          Oodgeroo Noonuccal: 'Assimilation – No!'; 'Integration – Yes!'; 'The Dawn is at Hand'; 'We are Going'          Randall, Bob: 'Brown Skin Baby'          Roach, Archie: 'Took the Children Away'          Tench, Watkin: <i>A Complete Account of the Settlement of Port Jackson</i>          Watson, Samuel Wagan: 'Recipe for Metropolis Brisbane'          Worgan, George: <i>Journal of a First Fleet Surgeon</i></p> <p>Supplementary resources:</p> <p><i>Anthology</i> film clip from <a href="http://www.macquariepenanthology.com">www.macquariepenanthology.com</a>          'Aboriginal writing: literature as a political tool' – Anita Heiss</p> <p>Hill, Anthony: <i>Captain Cook's Apprentice</i></p> <p>Additional list of texts in <b>Student Handout 1(a)</b></p>

	<p>Films (extension work):</p> <p>One Night, the Moon (2001; Rated M)  The Tracker (2002; Rated M)  Ten Canoes (2006; Rated M)  Australia (2008; Rated M)</p>
<p><b>LEARNING &amp; TEACHING ACTIVITIES</b></p> <p><b>Introduction</b></p>	<p>This unit of work will introduce students to a range of texts which reflect the varying perspectives of black and white authors since white colonisation and provide opportunities to explore how these have changed over time.</p>
<p><b>1. Library – Representing Aboriginal people in written texts</b></p> <p><b>(2 lessons + home time)</b></p>	<p>Ask your teacher librarian to introduce students to a range of texts written by Aboriginal authors as well as texts written by white authors that include Aboriginal characters. Arrange to have extra copies available for students to borrow.</p> <p>Have him/her explain that these texts can add to our understanding of the ways in which Aboriginal people have been perceived and represented in Australian literature over time.</p> <p>Talk with the students about the ways in which the background of an author, the cultural context, and the period of time in which a text is written all help to shape an author’s ideas and their way of writing.</p> <p><b>Activity 1(a)</b></p> <p>Students to read a text written by an Aboriginal author and a text by a non-Aboriginal author selected from the list on <b>Student Handout 1(a)</b> with a view to presenting a short talk to the class. You may wish to amend or alter this list according to your resources. It is important, however, to have a balance of Aboriginal and non Aboriginal authors included.</p> <p>In their talk students are to discuss the perspectives offered by their chosen authors on the Aboriginal and white characters and/or the relations between them. Select a suitable time limit for the talk.</p> <p>The talks can be presented towards the end of the unit when the students have had time to read their books and prepare their talks.</p>

<p><b>2. Earliest contact</b></p> <p><b>(3 lessons)</b></p>	<p>One of the earliest contacts between Aboriginal Australians and whites was with Captain Cook, who sailed along the east coast of Australia in 1770, followed later by the arrival of the First Fleet and other immigrants from 1788 to today. This section aims to give an historical perspective to the changing viewpoint of black and white writers.</p> <p><b>Activity 2(a)</b> The first encounter between black and white on the east coast of Australia (New Holland) was with Captain Cook. Provide students with a copy of chapter 9 of Anthony Hill’s <i>Captain Cook’s Apprentice</i> to allow students to take it home to read for themselves.</p> <p>Discuss Captain Cook’s view of the Aboriginal people with the class. Was he different from other explorers of the same time? In retrospect, many people are disparaging of Captain Cook and his encounters with Aboriginal people. Lead your students to ask why.</p> <p><b>Activity 2(b)</b> <i>Role Play:</i> Ask students to work with a partner taking the roles of an Aboriginal person and a sailor and to role play a meeting between them. Explain to each other your perspective of what has happened and your experience of encountering one another. Swap partners and roles and repeat the activity.</p> <p>Discuss what emerges from the role plays with the class.</p> <p><b>Activity 2(c)</b> Students to read the extracts from George Worgan, the surgeon on the First Fleet, and Watkin Tench.</p> <p>Discuss what these texts reveal about their writers. What are the writers’ attitudes towards Aboriginal people?</p> <p><b>Activity 2(d)</b> Tell the students about Bennelong of the Wangal people who was captured in November 1789 by order of Governor Phillip.</p> <p>An outline of his life and times can be found at: <a href="http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/barani/themes/theme7.htm">www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/barani/themes/theme7.htm</a>.</p> <p><i>The Australian Dictionary of Biography</i> gives a full account of Bennelong: <a href="http://www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/biogs/A010083b.htm">http://www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/biogs/A010083b.htm</a></p>
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	<p>Ask students to read Bennelong’s letter (‘Letter to Mr Philips, Sydney Cove’) to another student.</p> <p>As a class discuss the students’ responses to Bennelong’s letter. How do they view Bennelong and his attitude to white people?</p>
<p><b>3. Changing viewpoints</b> <b>(2-4 lessons)</b></p>	<p>The viewpoints of Aboriginal people, their self-representation, and their perspectives on how others perceive them have been expressed in many different ways over time. Their voices are now increasingly being heard in the international arena.</p> <p>Similarly, white people’s perspectives on Aboriginal people have been given voice in their literature and the arts over time and these have ranged from the racist and intolerant to the conciliatory, sympathetic and respectful. In this section, students will be asked to read and discuss texts that express these varying attitudes.</p> <p><b>Activity 3(a)</b> Read the excerpt from <i>Such is Life</i> by Joseph Furphy with your class.</p> <p>In groups, ask students to highlight the language used by the author when talking about Aboriginal people. Have them discuss Furphy’s choice of language for this purpose and the attitudes that are conveyed.</p> <p>Read Bessie Cameron’s Letter to the Editor, 1886.</p> <p>In groups, students to discuss how Aboriginal and white people are portrayed in her letter. As a class discuss the differences in the use of language and the writing styles of the two texts.</p> <p><b>Activity 3(b)</b> Students to read the extracts from Eleanor Dark’s <i>The Timeless Land</i> and Thea Astley’s <i>It’s Raining in Mango</i> for homework. Discuss which extract they find more powerful and the reasons for their choice.</p> <p>[Note that the extract from <i>It’s Raining in Mango</i> is also included in Unit 1, Make ’em laugh, Make ’em cry.]</p> <p><b>Activity 3(c)</b> Read the extract from Sally Morgan’s <i>My Place</i> to the class. Draw up a family tree together using the information that Sally gets from her visit to Aunt Judy and her conversations with her mother</p>

	<p>and Arthur. What does Sally reveal about her feelings as she searches for her identity and her family history? Why is this information so important to her?</p> <p><b>Activity 3(d)</b> Provide the class with some poems written by Aboriginal writers in recent times. The following are examples from the <i>Anthology</i>:</p> <p>Randall, Bob: ‘Brown Skin Baby’ (1990) Belleair, Lisa: ‘Women’s Liberation’ (1996); ‘Taxi’ (1996) Martiniello, Jennifer: ‘Uluru by Champagne’ (1999); ‘Emily Kngwarreye’ (2002) Watson, Samuel Wagan: ‘Recipe for Metropolis Brisbane’ (2002)</p> <p>Students to read the author’s biographical entries from the <i>Anthology</i> before they begin their group work. Have students answer these questions in groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do these poems have any distinctive characteristics or qualities in common?</li> <li>• If so, how would you describe them?</li> <li>• If not, what individual characteristics or qualities can you identify?</li> </ul> <p>Prepare your ideas for reporting back to a whole class discussion.</p>
<p><b>4. Controversy and reconciliation</b>  (3-4 lessons)</p>	<p>The aim of these activities is to explore some of the controversy that erupted in the 1970s occasioning changes in policies, attitudes and the law in relation to Aboriginal and white communities, and to see this in relation to Prime Minister Kevin Rudd’s Apology to the Aboriginal people in February 2008.</p> <p>In the 1960s and 1970s, many people became active in promoting Aboriginal issues. Aboriginal people at this time did not have a vote, and were not included in the census. Voices were raised to further their rights, and a tent embassy was set up in the lawns outside the (now) Old Parliament House in Canberra. Poets, writers, political activists, politicians and ordinary people made their voices heard about Aboriginal people. The first census to include Aboriginal people was 1966, and after a referendum, Aboriginal people were able to vote in 1967.</p> <p>Those with subscriptions to AustLit may wish to direct students to the Black Words Literary Calendar of events at: <a href="http://www.austlit.edu.au/">www.austlit.edu.au/</a>.</p>

**Activity 4(a)**

Read Oodgeroo Noonuccal's poem, 'We are Going' (1964) to your class.

Explain that Oodgeroo Noonuccal returned her MBE and took her Aboriginal name in 1988. Brainstorm possible reasons why she took this unprecedented step. You may refer to the following website for her reasons: [www.womenaustralia.info/biogs/IMP0082b.htm](http://www.womenaustralia.info/biogs/IMP0082b.htm).

**Activity 4(b)**

Divide students into small groups. Ask the students to choose one group member to learn Burnum Burnum's declaration and then work together to do a dramatic recitation for the class.

**Activity 4(c)**

Discuss with the students what was happening at that time (1988) to stimulate the actions of Oodgeroo Noonuccal and Burnum Burnum.

**Activity 4(d)**

Pre-teach the following vocabulary to help with the comprehension of the poems by Jack Davis and Kevin Gilbert. This may take the form of a glossary, a matching exercise or a discussion. For example:

- From Kevin Gilbert's 'People Are Legends': cynicisms, superfluties, obliterate, hypocrisies, atheism, primal, miscegenation, sophistry, rhetoric, condescension, vitiate.
- From Jack Davis' 'The Black Tracker': lithe, siphoned.

Put the class into small groups to read the poems aloud to each other. Have students discuss what these poems suggest about the relations between black and white people.

**Activity 4(e)**

Read Archie Roach's 'Took the Children Away' to the students and discuss their responses. You may wish to have them prepare a choral reading of the poem that can be presented to another class.

**Activity 4(f)**

Students to read Kevin Rudd's 'Sorry' speech:  
[www.abc.net.au/news/events/apology/text.htm](http://www.abc.net.au/news/events/apology/text.htm)  
or view its delivery on YouTube:  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=b3TZOGpG6cM](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b3TZOGpG6cM).



	<p>Ask students to discuss the speech’s significance and talk about whether it could have been made earlier in Australia’s history. What are some of the different perspectives that listeners (Aboriginal and white, for example) might have had on this speech? Why?</p> <p>Visit the National Sorry Day Committee website at <a href="http://www.nsd.org.au/">www.nsd.org.au/</a>. Choose from the suggested activities for schools. Discuss how students view the ideas behind the Stolen Generations Track Home project described on this website.</p>
<p><b>5. Representing Aboriginal people in film</b></p> <p><b>(2-4 lessons + home time)</b></p>	<p><b>Activity 5(a)</b> Discuss with students any films they can recall that include Aboriginal characters. What memories do they have of these characters?</p> <p>Watch an episode from: <i>Werde! Welcome to UsMob</i>: <a href="http://www.abc.net.au/usmob/">www.abc.net.au/usmob/</a>. Ask students about their reactions to this episode. Do the filmmakers succeed in making viewers feel welcome? Would the students like to watch further episodes? Why or why not?</p> <p><b>Activity 5(b) (extension work)</b> Watch a selection of films, or excerpts from films, that include Aboriginal characters. Films you might consider include:</p> <p><i>One Night, the Moon</i> (2001) Rated M. For clips see: <a href="http://www.australianscreen.com.au/titles/one-night-moon/">www.australianscreen.com.au/titles/one-night-moon/</a>.</p> <p><i>The Tracker</i> (2002). Rated M. For clips and Teacher’s Notes see: <a href="http://www.australianscreen.com.au/titles/tracker/">www.australianscreen.com.au/titles/tracker/</a>.</p> <p><i>Ten Canoes</i> (2006). Rated M. For a trailer and study guide suggestions see: <a href="http://www.tencanoes.com.au/tencanoes">www.tencanoes.com.au/tencanoes</a>.</p> <p><i>Australia</i> (2008). Rated M. Search the web for reviews and commentary. Be sure to include reviews by indigenous people.</p> <p>Discuss with the students how modern filmmakers are dealing with the relationship between Aboriginal and white people in their films. Be careful to consider by whom the films have been written, directed and produced as this provides a lens through which film makers view Aboriginal people and present them on screen.</p>

	<p><b>Activity 5(c) (extension work)</b> Students to work in groups on one of the following tasks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Find out more information about the rise of Aboriginal film makers</li> <li>• Choose an Aboriginal film maker and carry out research into his or her life and work, and the inspiration behind their film-making.</li> </ul> <p>Allow students to present their findings in their own choice of media.</p>
<p><b>6. Drawing conclusions</b>  <b>(2 lessons)</b></p>	<p><b>Activity 6(a)</b> Each student should have completed reading their choice of texts presented at the start of the unit by now. Set aside these lessons for students to talk about the perspectives offered on the Aboriginal and white characters and/or the relations between them by their chosen authors.</p> <p><b>Activity 6 (b)</b> Watch the short film clip ‘Aboriginal writing: literature as a political tool’ available on the website <a href="http://www.macquariepenanthology.com.au">www.macquariepenanthology.com.au</a>. Initiate a class discussion about the issues brought up by <i>Anthology</i> contributing editor Anita Heiss in the film clip.</p>

# Aboriginal Perspectives

## Student Handout 1(a)

Some suggestions of texts for you to read for your talk on Aboriginal perspectives include:

<b>Aboriginal authors:</b>
Bayet-Charlton, Fabienne: <i>Finding Ullagundahi Island</i>
Davis, Jack: <i>A Boy's Life</i>
Frankland, Richard J: <i>Digger J Jones</i>
Heiss, Anita: <i>Who Am I? The Diary of Mary Talence, Sydney, 1937</i>
Lucashenko, Melissa: <i>Too Flash</i>
Morgan, Sally: <i>My Place</i>
Pilkington Nugi Garimara, Doris: <i>Follow the Rabbit-Proof Fence</i>
Pryor, Boori: <i>Maybe Tomorrow</i>
<b>White authors:</b>
Baillie, Allan: <i>Songman</i>
Crew, Gary: <i>The Rabbits</i> (picture book)
Gwynne, Phillip: <i>Deadly Unna</i>
Hooper, Meredith: <i>The Journal of Watkin Tench</i>
Hutchins, Elizabeth: <i>Bring Back the Songs</i>
Hill, Anthony: <i>The Burnt Stick</i>
Kidd, Diana: <i>Two Hands Together</i>