ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER
HISTORIES AND CULTURES

LIVING CULTURES – FIBRES

DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION
learners first

YEAR 6

Department of Education

Tasmanian
Government

The
Orb
FIBRES

SACRED NOT SECRET

Learners explore the concepts of culture for Tasmania's Aboriginal people and consider when they might share their cultural connections with other people. They examine the concept of sacredness and consider why culture might be sacred.

CROSS CURRICULUM PRIORITY

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures

Organising idea 5

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' ways of life are uniquely expressed through ways of being, knowing, thinking and doing.

ACHIEVEMENT STANDARDS

Humanities and Social Sciences (HASS)

Students identify and describe continuities and changes for different groups in the past and present. They describe the causes and effects of change on society. They compare the experiences of different people in the past. Students describe, compare and explain the diverse characteristics of different places in different locations from local to global scales.

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They collaboratively generate alternative responses to an issue, use criteria to make decisions and identify the advantages and disadvantages of preferring one decision over others.

CONTENT DESCRIPTORS

Humanities and Social Sciences (HASS)

Examine different viewpoints on actions, events, issues and phenomena in the past and present (ACHASSI127).

Use criteria to make decisions and judgements and consider advantages and disadvantages of preferring one decision over others (ACHASSI131).

GENERAL CAPABILITIES

Critical and Creative Thinking

Generating ideas, possibilities and actions

Imagine possibilities and connect ideas

Level 4 – combine ideas in a variety of ways and from a range of sources to create new possibilities

Ethical Understanding

Understanding ethical concepts and issues

Explore ethical concepts in context

Level 4 – explain what constitutes an ethically better or worse outcome and how it might be accomplished

Intercultural Understanding

Recognising culture and developing respect

Explore and compare cultural knowledge, beliefs and practices

Level 4 – describe and compare the knowledge, beliefs and practices of various cultural groups in relation to a specific time, event or custom

Learning Goals

Learners will:

» Explore ethical decision making.

» Establish a protocol to ensure decisions are ethical and responsive to cultural sensitivities.

» Identify ways that ethical decision making changes over time.

» Respect differences of opinion.

» Compare the importance of things remaining sacred, and compare with the need for secrecy.

Learning Sequence

Activating and Engaging

Learning Maps

Discuss the statement:

'Culture is sacred, not secret'.

Ask learners:

» What does sacred mean?

» What is the difference between something being sacred and something being secret?

Organise learners into groups and ask each group to establish a list of guidelines for ways we can manage culture to maintain its sacred aspects.

Give each group a topic:

- » land management
- » song and music
- » art (including cave art)
- » dance
- » tools and materials
- » stories
- » symbols
- » ceremony and cultural practices
- » astronomy and scientific understanding
- » remains and artefacts
- » languages

Have learners establish a set of norms that determine when a practice/aspect of culture is sacred/secret.

Ask learners to share their norms with the rest of the class.

Ask learners:

- » How can we ensure we make ethical decisions around culture?
- » What questions can we ask to ensure we are making ethical decisions?

Pose the scenario:

You have found a ballawinne stone in situ when you are walking on a class bushwalk. What is the ethical thing to do?

Ask learners to discuss in pairs/small groups and share responses back to the class.

Apply the set of norms established by the class and see whether this question is supported by these norms/questions.

Name culturally significant sites.

Ask learners:

- » When is it appropriate for 'secrets'?
- » When is it OK to share?

Pose the scenario:

When you found the ballawinne stone in situ, one of your classmates took a photo of the stone and placed it on their Instagram account. The location was provided, and some of the comments made by others showed a lack of sensitivity to culture. What would you do?

Have learners discuss in pairs/small groups.

Ask learners:

- » Are you morally responsible for the actions of others?
- » When is it OK to do nothing when you see an injustice occur?

Exploring and Discovering

Community Links

Have learners research sacred places and investigate how they are protected.

Research cultural practice protocols and compare with the class set of norms to check for ethical thinking.

Invite an Aboriginal Sharer of Knowledge via the ASK program, into the classroom to share their views on cultural knowledge sharing.

Ask learners:

- » Why is it important to respect the wishes of cultural groups in our society?
- » Who should control how cultural artefacts and heritage are managed?

Have learners research other cultures – and how their knowledge is treated and shared.

Synthesising and Applying

Community Links

Deconstruct-Reconstruct

Conduct a debate:

Should all cultural knowledge be made public?

Have learners use the norms to assess student language and ideas.

Discuss:

- » Which team had the more ethical response to the topic?
- » Which team was more persuasive and why?

Success Criteria

Learners:

- » Create a list of norms to ensure ethical thinking is occurring.
- » Research how cultural practices and artefacts are managed.
- » Practice thinking ethically by using real life scenarios.
- » Share their thinking with respect and cultural sensitivity.

Resources

- » [The Orb](#)
- » [Australian Curriculum](#)
- » [Aboriginal Sharers of Knowledge (ASK Program) Guidelines](#)
- » [Aboriginal Sharers of Knowledge (ASK Program) Application Form](#)
- » The Aboriginal Education Library: email Aboriginal.education.library@education.tas.gov.au or telephone 03 6165 5480 for more resources, including the ones listed below.
- » The Eight-Way Framework of Aboriginal Pedagogy
- » Aboriginal Heritage Tasmania: [Cultural Heritage](#)
- » Oxfam: [Cultural Protocols](#)

Glossary

Artefacts

An object made by a human being, typically one of cultural or historical interest. O

Beliefs

The feeling of being certain that something exists or is true. C

Community

A social group of any size whose members reside in a specific locality, share government, and often have a common cultural and historical heritage. D

Country

In Aboriginal English, a person's land, sea, sky, rivers, sites, seasons, plants and animals; place of heritage, belonging and spirituality; is called 'Country'. AM

Cultural Practice

Objects, events, activities, social groupings and language that participants use, produce and reproduce in the context of making meaning in everyday life. IGI

Culture

The way of life, especially the general customs and beliefs, of a particular group of people at a particular time. C

Debate

A discussion about a subject on which people have different views. O

Ethics

Moral principles that govern a person's behaviour or the conducting of an activity. O

National Heritage List

The national heritage list is Australia's list of natural, historic and Indigenous places of outstanding significance to the nation. G

Policy

A set of ideas or a plan of what to do in particular situations that has been agreed to officially by a group of people, a business organisation, a government, or a political party. C

Traditional

Following or belonging to the customs or ways of behaving that have continued in a group of people or society for a long time without changing. C

AM	Australian Museum
C	Cambridge Dictionary
D	[Dictionary.com](#)
G	General understanding
IGI	IGI Global
O	[Oxford Online Dictionary](#)