



Learning notes for Palm Island & Our People

Senior secondary (years 10, 11, & 12)

State Library of Queensland acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land on which State Library is located and the Manbarra and Bwgcolman people of Palm Island. We pay respects to their Ancestors who came before them and to their Elders past, present and future. The location of State Library, on Kurilpa Point, was historically a significant meeting, gathering and sharing place for Aboriginal people. We proudly continue that tradition here today.

English activities:

- Explore and unpack why telling your own story is so powerful
- Explore and investigate the purpose of story for Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people
- Explore and investigate the importance of Country / Place to Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people
- Investigate the 'Big Snake' creation story and then explore other creation stories from around Australia
- Ask students to read *First steps, making footprints* by Dr Geia (2012)

Guiding questions:

- Ask students to reflect on the online stories
- What have students learnt that they didn't know before?
- How are stories linked to the land and explain the landscape in an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspective?
- How are stories used to pass on cultural knowledge to each new generation?
- Explore and unpack concepts addressed in Dr Geia's 2012 research

Resources:

- The stories from the *Palm Island & Our People* showcase:
<https://slq.qld.gov.au/discover/exhibitions/palm-island-our-people>
- More creation stories can be investigated through the link below with study guides included: <http://education.abc.net.au/home#!/media/2570616/morning-star>
- Contemporary stories from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people can be accessed here: <http://www.slq.qld.gov.au/resources/atsi/contemporary-stories>

- Story custodians: <http://www.australianstorytelling.org.au/storytelling-articles/a-d/australian-aboriginal-storytelling-helen-mckay>
- Dr Leynora Geia (2012) *First steps, making footprints*, PhD thesis, JCU: <https://researchonline.jcu.edu.au/25465/>
- SBS article: <https://www.sbs.com.au/nitv/living-black/article/2018/06/25/long-road-paradise-street-100-years-palm-island>
- Personal stories: <http://www.rqi.org.au/palm-island-history-comes-to-life/>
- Joanne Watson (2010) *Palm Island: Through a long lens*, Canberra: Aboriginal Studies Press: http://onsearch.slg.qld.gov.au/primo-explore/fulldisplay?docid=slq_alma21106092840002061&context=L&vid=SLQ&search_scope=DT&isFrbr=true&tab=dt&lang=en_US

HASS activities:

- Using the Gumbay languages map locate the Bwgcolman Nation. Students can then use the map to find out about the Traditional Custodians of the special places they know.
- Find and discuss the different nations / language groups where people originated before they were moved to Palm Island.
- Use the personal stories from the exhibition to explore different perspectives
- Why is Country / Place so important to Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people?

Guiding questions:

- Do the students know any of the places discussed in the online stories and exhibition?
- What do they already know about some of these places?
- What were reserves and missions? Why did they exist? Why were people moved to these places?

Resources:

- First Languages Australia, Gumbay language map: <http://www.gumbay.com.au/> (this resource includes teacher notes)
- State Library website: <http://www.slg.qld.gov.au/resources/atsi/languages/indigenous-languages-map>
- History about reserves and missions in Queensland: <http://www.slg.qld.gov.au/resources/atsi/community-history/missions>

Design and technology activities:

- Discuss and investigate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's understanding of their Country and place, and their use of natural fibres. Use the photos of the baskets, wooden implements and weapons for reference.
- Explore the characteristics and properties of materials that were used. Provide a range of natural materials for the students to design and produce a functional item of their own. In the development stage, ask them to identify what need they are designing for e.g. a vessel to carry water.

Guiding questions:

- How did Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people use the environment around them?
- Have the students seen any similar objects made from natural fibres in other places?

Resources

- Resource from the exhibition (view activity sheet)
- The Orb <https://www.theorb.tas.gov.au/living-cultures/fibres>

Dance activities:

- Watch the video footage of the Bwgcolman Dancers and Nunukul Yuggera Aboriginal Dancers at the launch of Palm Island & Our People.
- Watch the videos of the Bwgcolman Dancers as they prepared the Palm Island community to learn a dance to be performed at the Deadly Didge n Dance fest. Discuss and practise specific dance moves.
- Find other dances by Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people, watch and discuss what the dances symbolise.
- Invite a member of an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander dance or cultural group to explain the significance of song and dance in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures.

Resources:

- Footage of opening of *Palm Island & Our People*
<https://slq.qld.gov.au/discover/exhibitions/palm-island-our-people>
- Bangarra teachers' notes provide background and information about the purpose of dance for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
<https://www.bangarra.com.au/whatson/productions/patyegarang>
- View Ken Thaiday Snr's artwork and discuss the artist's connections to culture, art, language and dance <https://youtu.be/IBjGkT7o0vw>

Visual arts activities:

- Explore the artwork of the Community monument. The rocks that are embedded into the map represent all the Countries where people were taken.
- Investigate and explore the artwork by a local artist's four steel totem poles – to symbolise north, east, west and south because people were from. The poles reflect language names of the 70+ different Nations/ language groups to remind people of the history of Bwgcolman and the struggle the old people went through
- Ask students to read *First steps, making footprints* by Dr Geia (2012) and explain the relevance of the artwork as art of the explanation of her thesis

Guiding questions:

- Explore the concept of connection to Country/ Place through visual arts
- Why are these artworks significant to the people of Palm Island?

Resources:

- BIMA podcast talks about artwork in the community – specifically the community monument and the totem poles artworks (time stamp):
<https://989fm.com.au/podcasts/lets-talk/lets-talk-mayor-alf-lacey-aunty-ienifer-ketchell/>
- Dr Leynora Geia (2012) *First steps, making footprints*, PhD thesis, JCU
<https://researchonline.jcu.edu.au/25465/>
- Lost art of Palm Island
<http://campbellpage.com.au/launching-lost-artists-of-palm-island-exhibition/>