

# EXPLORING AUSTRALIAN INDIGENOUS CULTURE THROUGH AFL



TWO LESSON  
PLANS FOR  
FOUNDATION  
TO YEAR 6.



We hope the following information and lesson plans enriches your student's understanding of Australian Indigenous culture and fosters a deeper appreciation for diversity and links to the AFL community.

Please feel free to adapt the activities to suit your students' needs and interests.

*“More than 90,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples contribute to the AFL. Our great game unites the country extending from grassroots in urban, regional and remote communities, to the big stage at the elite level. Football creates a foundation to build stronger relationships and bridge the gap between Torres Strait Islander peoples with the wider community. By deepening these relationships the AFL can continue to actively demonstrate institutional commitment to the reconciliation agenda and show respect for the contributions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in football and the life of the nation”. The AFL*

## SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

**There are some significant events in the calendar and some that are linked directly to the AFL. Please refer to the following websites for further information:**

- **Sir Doug Nicholls Round (16-26 May)**- Celebrate and recognise those moments forged by First Nations at this year's Sir Doug Nicholls Round across Rounds 10 and 11 of the 2024 Toyota AFL Premiership Season.
- **National Reconciliation Week (27 May- 3 June)** - National Reconciliation Week (NRW) is a time for all Australians to learn about our shared histories, cultures, and achievements, and to explore how each of us can contribute to achieving reconciliation in Australia.
- **The Long Walk (25 May)** -The Long Walk is a charity inspired by Michael Long's walk to Canberra, to get the lives of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people back on the national agenda.
- **NAIDOC (7-14 July)**- National NAIDOC Week celebrations are held across Australia in the first week of July each year (Sunday to Sunday), to celebrate and recognise the history, culture and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. NAIDOC Week is an opportunity for all Australians to learn about First Nations cultures and histories and participate in celebrations of the oldest, continuous living cultures on Earth.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

At the beginning of each session, read and have students recite this student friendly Acknowledgement of Country.

**Whose Country am I on? | AIATSIS** - If you need assistance to locate the name of the Country that you are working from, this website can provide some guidance.

If a digital device is available, play this video to students as the official Acknowledgement of Country **Welcome to Country video**.

### CURRICULUM LINKS

**Australian Curriculum  
Aboriginal and Torres  
Strait Islander  
Histories and Cultures  
V9 Australian  
Curriculum**

In Health and Physical Education, students can explore the roles identity and connection play in the health and wellbeing of the oldest continuous living cultures in the world.

Students have opportunities to investigate the lived experiences of First Nations Australians and their impact on identities, connection to Country/Place, and the health and wellbeing of individuals and communities. Students gain insights into the impact systemic racism and discrimination have had on Australian First Nations Peoples. They can investigate strategies that promote truth-telling and build cultural awareness to develop empathy and respectful relationships.

#### Australian Curriculum V9

For further information:  
[F-10 Curriculum | Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures \(australiancurriculum.edu.au\)](#)

#### The Victorian Curriculum F-10

For further information:  
[Teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture \(education.vic.gov.au\)](#)

#### NSW Curriculum

For further information:  
[Aboriginal Education | About the curriculum | NSW Curriculum | NSW Education Standards Authority](#)



## Lesson Title: Exploring Australian Indigenous Culture through AFL (Recommended Levels- Years F-2)

### Objective:

- Exploring the connection between Aussie Rules Football and Indigenous communities.
- To recognise the contributions of Indigenous players to the sport.
- To promote cultural awareness and appreciation.

### Introduction (10 minutes):

Begin by doing an Acknowledgement of Country.

Play the following video.

#### Welcome to Country video

Please note that this Acknowledgement of County is a student-friendly version that you can read and recite with your students. Talk through the meaning with students.

Open a discussion about the origins of Australian Rules Football and its significance to Australian culture.

Introduce the theme of the lesson: Exploring Australian Indigenous culture through AFL.

Engage students with thought-provoking questions: What do they know about Indigenous Australian history and culture? How do they think Indigenous people have contributed to AFL?

### Cultural Significance Activity (20 minutes):

Refer to the “**Watch them soar**” lesson resource.

This lesson supports student learning by introducing an artwork that depicts aspects of the Marngrook, the early form of Australian Rules Football. The accompanying PowerPoint provides guided instruction and discussion prompts. Explore the symbolism behind the artwork entitled “Watch them Soar” created by Indigenous artist Tahnee Lynette, a proud Yorta Yorta, Gunditjmara and Wemba Wemba woman.

As a class, work sequentially through the PowerPoint presentation. Follow the discussion prompts and create opportunities for individuals to reflect on the art and the symbolism depicted. As a follow up activity, students may like to have a printed copy of the art and cut up the features to label each part, demonstrating their understanding of the features.

#### Watch Them Soar Resource

### Reflection and Conclusion (10 minutes):

Lead a class discussion reflecting on what students have learnt about Australian Indigenous culture and its connection to AFL. Emphasise the importance of respect, understanding, and appreciation for Indigenous perspectives. Conclude the lesson by encouraging students to continue exploring Indigenous culture and its contributions to Australian society.

## Lesson Title: Exploring Australian Indigenous Culture through AFL (Recommended Levels- Years 3-6)

### Objective:

- To understand the cultural significance of Australian Rules Football to Indigenous communities.
- To recognise the contributions of Indigenous players to the sport.
- To promote cultural awareness and appreciation.

### Introduction (10 minutes):

Begin by doing an Acknowledgement of Country. Play the following video. [Welcome to Country video.](#)

In addition, this Acknowledgement of County is a student-friendly version that you can read and recite with your students. Talk through the meaning with students.

Open a discussion about the origins of Australian Rules Football and its significance to Australian culture. Introduce the theme of the lesson: Exploring Australian Indigenous culture through AFL.

Engage students with thought-provoking questions: What do they know about Indigenous Australian history and culture? How do they think Indigenous people have contributed to AFL?

### Cultural Significance Activity (20 minutes):

Provide a brief overview of the history of Indigenous Australians' involvement in AFL. Discuss the challenges faced by Indigenous players and the significance of their contributions to the sport. There are video stories that depict the lives of famous players. [Stories - AFL On Demand.](#) An option could be to watch this as a class and students take notes. A series about some of the players is linked here: [The Deadliest Files \(afl.com.au\)](#)

Research prominent Indigenous AFL players both past and current. Allow students to read about the players' backgrounds, achievements, and contributions to the sport.

Facilitate a discussion on the importance of representation and diversity in AFL. Students may like to share the information and present back to their peers and via various graphic organisers or create a digital display.

### Reflection and Conclusion (10 minutes):

Divide students into small groups and provide each group with an AFL football (if available).

Instruct students to brainstorm and discuss the cultural significance of AFL to Indigenous communities. Sharing ideas through passing the ball from one player to another. Encourage creative thinking and exploration of themes such as community, identity, and resilience. Groups can present their findings to the class or create visual representations of their ideas.



**Reflection and Conclusion (10 minutes):**

Lead a class discussion reflecting on what students have learned about Australian Indigenous culture and its connection to AFL.

Emphasize the importance of respect, understanding, and appreciation for Indigenous perspectives.

Conclude the lesson by encouraging students to continue exploring Indigenous culture and its contributions to Australian society.

**For further learning:**

**Option 1 - “Everyone Matters”** is a teaching and learning program that comprises four lessons about Indigenous Games, highlighting concepts about inclusion, diversity and cultural identity.

**Option 2** - Students can complete a **written response** to an image that depicts Nicky Winmar, a Noongar man and a player for the St Kilda Football team, who stood in front of spectators who had been yelling out racial abuse, saying the words “I’m black and I’m proud to be black”. This iconic moment prompted action to combat racism in Australia. Students can choose how to respond to this image, either writing a letter to Nicky, creating an awareness campaign about racism, imagining that they are a spectator at the game and write a recount or pretending to be a news reporter witnessing this event.

**Option 3** - Students can research the significant events that honour Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples such as Sir Doug Nicholl’s Round and The Long Walk.

You may want to do a group acknowledgement of Country, where you ask the children to repeat each line as follows:

**“ HERE IS THE LAND, HERE IS THE SKY  
HERE ARE MY FRIENDS AND HERE AM I.  
WE STAND TOGETHER, HAND IN HAND  
TO RESPECT AND ACKNOWLEDGE THE  
TRADITIONAL OWNERS OF THIS LAND”**

For further information and links to additional resources please visit: [Schools - Play AFL](#)