



CONNECTION TO COUNTRY

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For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, the word 'country' means the area from which they and their family come. But **connection** to country isn't just about the land. It is everything in and on the land as well. Mountains, hills, rivers, plants, animals and people are all part of country.

Many **Europeans** think of land as something that can be owned, but **Indigenous** Australians have a different view. They believe that they are a part of the land. They believe that the land is their mother and that she takes care of them. In return, they have to take care of the land, and everything else that is a part of their country.

Scan the code to link to the video about Indigenous Australians' connection to country.



▲ Kangaroos are very important to Indigenous Australians, and many Dreaming stories feature kangaroos.



FACT!

Indigenous peoples have lived in Australia for more than 50 000 years, caring for the environment.

Caring for country

Indigenous Australians have always lived in **harmony** with the land. The land gives them everything they need, such as shelter, food, clothing and ways to make art. Over time, different Indigenous groups learned to live with what the land could provide



them. Most groups moved around their country from season to season to find food. They were careful not to take too much of anything. They were careful not to waste anything. The land took care of them and, in return, they took care of the land.

◀ Witchetty grubs are a rich source of **protein**.

Spiritual home

Indigenous Australians have deep **spiritual** connections to their country. Everything in the **landscape** has a history and a meaning. Everything has a spirit. People, plants and animals are all part of the land, and the land is a part of them.

Connection to country is at the heart of life for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Aboriginal people express their spiritual connection to country through dance. ▶



QUESTIONS



1. Write a paragraph describing what 'land' means to you.
2. If Indigenous Australians have been living in Australia for over 50 000 years, why was it important for them to learn to live off the land?
3. The word 'careful' is used on the topic card; *-ful* is a suffix meaning 'full of'. Can you think of three other words that use the suffix *-ful*?
4. Use the QR code (or <http://qrs.ly/4t4zb1k>) to watch a video about Indigenous Australians' connection to the land. What do you think the phrase 'the land owns us' means?
5. Create a mind map that shows how Indigenous Australians lived off the land. Start with the heading 'Land' in the middle. The first branches could be 'Food', 'Tools', 'Shelter' and so on. Brainstorm ideas for each topic.
6. Write a piece of poetry that reflects how Indigenous Australians feel about their connection to the land.



THE IMPORTANCE OF TOTEMS

In Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, a totem is something from nature that is used as a symbol of a **community**, a person or a place. Totems are chosen because they are important to the people and their **country** in some way. People who live near the hills or the forest might have an eagle totem, while desert people might have a snake. People living near the sea could have a shark or a turtle.

Totems are seen as the **descendants** of the **creation ancestors**. These were the beings who made the world and everything in it. Their spirits still **exist** in the world as parts of nature. Totems connect people to their country and their community. They help to **define** people's roles and responsibilities to their group and to their country.



▲ Totems connect people to their country and clan.

FACT!

Plants, the stars and elements of the weather, such as rain and wind, can also be totems.



▼ Caring for the environment helps care for totems.



▼ A community may have numerous totems.



Group totems

Each community is **responsible** for their country and for their totem. This means that they do not hunt or eat their animal totem. They look after the environment and **sacred** sites in their country, which helps their totem thrive. Smaller family units also have their own totems.

Personal totems

Every child is given a **personal** totem by their mother or father when they are born. The totem is from their country and its spirit is seen as an **essential** part of them. These children learn songs, dances and **ceremonies** to do with their totem.

Environment and family

Within a community, people will have a range of totems. Each person will protect a number of animals and plants in their country, which in turn protects the whole environment. There are also some totems that are shared by certain people within a community. People with the same totems are seen as family or 'skin' and cannot marry each other.

QUESTIONS



1. Explain the importance of totems to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
2. List three criteria that are used to select a totem.
3. There are two words on the card where the plural is formed by changing the 'y' to 'ies'. Can you locate them?
4. Use the QR code (or <http://qrs.ly/hp4zb1m>) to watch a video about totems. Make a list of the animals that were totems and what they represented.
5. Find an image of a totem, and either print or paste it into a software program and label the symbols. For each label, write a short explanation of why that totem may have been chosen.
6. Draw a totem that you think would be suitable for you or your family, based on how totems were chosen by Indigenous Australians. Write an explanation of the totem and include an illustration.



PRECIOUS PEPPER

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Pepper is a **spice** that grows in South and South-East Asia. Although pepper may not seem very **rare** or special today, for centuries it was one of the most important and **valuable** trading goods on the planet.

Until the late 1400s, pepper and other spices were brought to Europe **overland** through the Middle East. However, these trade routes, later known as the Silk Road, were **unreliable**. This meant that spices were not always available and could be very expensive. Europeans were unhappy with these routes and searched for another way to travel to Asia by sea. This finally happened in 1498 when Portuguese explorer Vasco da Gama reached India by sailing around Africa.



▲ The Silk Road was a trade route that connected Europe and Asia.



◀ Whole peppercorns

FACT!



Spices and silk weren't the only items traded on the Silk Road. The trade route also allowed for the exchange of culture, religion and science. Merchants had to learn the different languages and customs of the countries they travelled through.



▲ The Cape of Good Hope

In the 1400s, Portuguese explorers began to sail south along the west coast of Africa. No Europeans had ever travelled this far before. In 1488, Bartolomeu Dias sailed around the Cape of Good Hope at the southern tip of Africa, becoming the first European to see the Indian Ocean. He turned back as his crew **refused** to go further. Ten years later, Vasco da Gama continued this journey, sailing up the African east coast and on to India.



▼ Vasco da Gama

Da Gama had sailed from Portugal in July 1497 with 4 ships and 170 crew. By the time he returned, they had lost a ship and more than 80 sailors. But their voyage had opened up the way to better trade with India and other parts of Asia. This meant that spices, such as pepper, became cheaper and more available to more people. Today, pepper makes up 20 per cent of the world's spice trade.

I QUESTIONS



1. Why do you think spices were so important to Europeans in the 1400s?
2. What are some spices you eat? Would you travel on one of these voyages and risk your life to obtain some of them?
3. The prefix *un-* means 'not' and is added to adjectives to make the antonym (or opposite meaning) of the root word. Locate two words that use *un-* on the topic card, and then think of two other examples of your own.
4. Use the QR code (or <http://qrs.ly/ln4zb1p>) to watch a video about Vasco da Gama. What were some of the difficulties and challenges that the explorer faced during his expedition?
5. Write five questions that you would like answered about Vasco da Gama's life. Complete some research on the Internet to find answers to your questions.
6. Use the information gathered in Question 5 to write a short biography about Vasco da Gama.

Scan the code to link to a video about Vasco da Gama.

