

# Teachers Notes for Primary and Secondary

By Nadia Wheatley & Melissa Hamilton

# Playground

Compiled by Nadia Wheatley

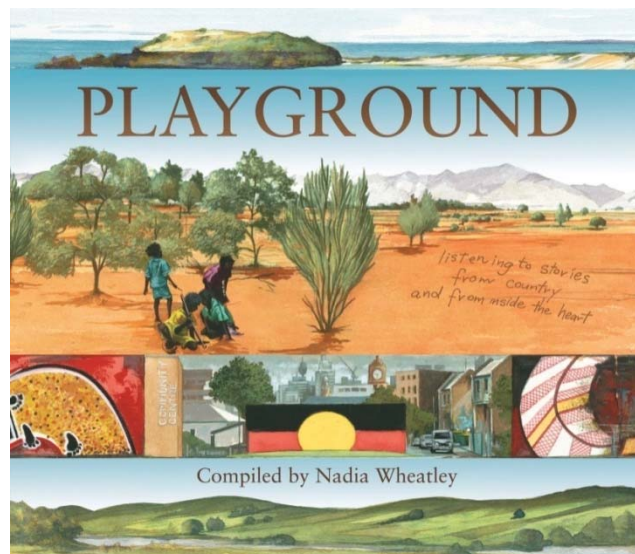
Illustrator & designer: Ken Searle  
Indigenous consultant: Dr Jackie Huggins

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Recommended for age 10 yrs and over

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## Key Learning Areas:

*Playground* is suitable for use in schools from middle primary through to upper secondary.

As well as providing essential grounding in Aboriginal Studies, it also offers many opportunities for introducing Aboriginal content across the whole curriculum, including subject areas of English, History, Geography, Science, HSIE/SOSE, Mathematics, LOTE, Creative Arts, Music, Drama, Religion, Health and Sport.

## INTRODUCTION

With historical and contemporary photographs, artwork by leading Indigenous artists, and colour illustrations throughout, *Playground* gives a fascinating insight into Aboriginal childhood, both traditional and contemporary.

The eighty Elders who have contributed their words or artwork to this book include prominent community leaders, educators and artists. As well, twenty secondary school students share their experience of growing up today. Alongside reminiscences of playing games, building cubbies and having fun, there are descriptions of getting bush tucker, going fishing and learning through art and ceremony. The warmth of home, the love of family, and the strength of community shine through every story.

### *For teachers & librarians*

*Playground* has great potential as an educational resource for study in Teacher Education Training and Teachers' Professional Development programs.

### *For students*

While *Playground* encourages readers to listen to Indigenous people in a new way, it also has the potential to transform students' thinking and assumptions about themselves and their relationship to their environment.

Readers are welcome to read the book from start to finish, or to move around as they please. Suggest that students start at something that seems familiar (e.g. sport; swimming; families; homes) or something that takes their interest (e.g. hunting, dance). Alternatively, ask students to find a piece of artwork that they like, and move from that into the stories on the same page.

More important than any individual topic is the book's focus on the 'Right Way of Learning', as practised by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people over many generations. Some of the key principles of Indigenous education are indicated below. You will see that they all make sound teaching practice, whatever cultural background students come from.

- Putting country at the centre of learning — the first step towards sustainability
- Valuing the knowledge which children bring from home and community
- Deep listening
- Learning through observation and exploration, copying and doing
- Collaborative learning (rather than competitive learning)
- Respecting Elders and their wisdom
- Listening to stories from country, and from inside our hearts

### Using these notes at primary and secondary level

As Indigenous education is holistic, *Playground* is extremely well suited to the cross-curricular, project-based classroom. A model for this way of learning is provided in the 'Circle Stories' section of these notes (pp 5 to 10).

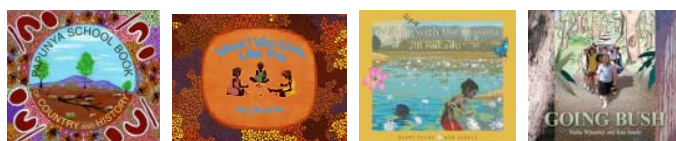
**Clearly marked curriculum links** have been provided throughout the Circle Story section, to enable secondary teachers to choose the activities that fit their subjects.

Additional activities, for both primary and secondary, are included under subject headings (pp 11-19).

Extension activities for Years 11 and 12 are indicated by a **boxed area**.

### Extra reading

It is recommended that *Playground* is used in conjunction with the following books, which *Nadia Wheatley* and *Ken Searle* helped to produce, whether as author, illustrator, designer, or mentor. All are available from Allen & Unwin, and teacher's notes for each of these books are available at [www.allenandunwin.com](http://www.allenandunwin.com).



- Papunya School, *The Papunya School Book of Country & History*, A&U, 2001.
- Mary Malbunka, *When I Was Little, Like You*, A&U, 2003.
- Diane Lucas, illus. Ken Searle, *Walking with the Seasons in Kakadu*, A&U, 2003.
- Nadia Wheatley, illus. Ken Searle, *Going Bush*, A&U, 2007.

## BEFORE READING *PLAYGROUND*

### Discussing the cover

Before opening and reading the book, show the front and back cover to students and look at the illustration. You will see that it takes the form of a series of strips or layers. Discuss the following:

- What different types of environments are represented on the cover? Where would you expect to find these environments in Australia?
- Identify the flag on the front cover. Discuss where this fits into the design of the cover and its meaning in this context.
- What sort of people would you expect to find in this book?
- What is 'welcoming' about the front cover and how does it invite you into the book? Look at features such as the children, footprints and words used. What do you think the children on the cover might be doing? (Are they just playing, or are they doing something else as well?)

What is a playground? Ask students to discuss what this word means to them. What sort of pictures come to mind when they hear it? What is suggested by the book's title? Will it be about a school playground or something more?

Identify features on the cover such as the title and subtitle. As well as the title, the cover includes the words "*Listening to stories from country and from inside the heart*". Does this change students' expectations of what the book will contain? What sort of stories come from country? What sort of stories come from inside the heart?

EXT: Discuss the typography of the subtitle on the front cover. It appears as if it is 'inscribed' on the land. How does this further enhance the meaning of the words?

EXT: The centre of Australia is often called the 'red heart'. Discuss this analogy. How might it relate to the cover and the subtitle of this book?

### Reading the blurb

#### *Read the front inside blurb*

Discuss with students who the contributors to this book are. How does the description in the blurb compare to the ideas about the book that students gained from looking at the cover? Discuss and define some of the key words that are used in this description: community; responsibility; respect; sharing; learning. What sort of wisdom does the book contain?

#### *Read the back inside blurb*

Discuss the role of the compiler with students. How is this different from the role of author? What is the role of the book's illustrator and designer? What is the role of the book's Indigenous consultant? Why is it important that a book such as *Playground* has an Indigenous consultant?

### Acknowledging the traditional custodians

Turn to the acknowledgement of country facing the title page of *Playground*. Show the illustration to the class, and read the words out loud. Better still, make copies or display the page on an interactive whiteboard so that the class can read it together.

Discuss the background colour of this page and whether the picture of the children sitting in a circle reinforces the idea of the book being 'stories from country and inside the heart'. Look at the strips of illustration at top and bottom of the page. Do they reinforce the idea of country?

Now look at the strip of illustration below the title on the facing page. Can an urban area such as this still be part of Aboriginal country?

If you do not already know the name of the Traditional Custodians of your part of Australia try to find this out. Find a language map to display and help identify the traditional custodians of different areas. An interactive map is available at: <http://www.abc.net.au/indigenous/map/default.htm>

Make it part of your class journey with this book that students say the acknowledgement of country every time they begin one of the learning activities.

# 1. LEARNING ABOUT LEARNING

1. Open at the Introduction (pp 6-7). Look at the illustration. How does this relate to the cover? Now turn to the book's Conclusion (pp 86-87). Is the illustration the same, or a bit different? Why might the book design repeat these same images of country?
2. Read out the passage in which *Arthur Shadforth* describes his childhood and education in the Borrooloola area of the Northern Territory in the 1960s (p 7): "When I was a child we'd go out and play all day without taking any lunch. We always had food in the bush. We used to practise our bush skills. As a child out playing, you picked it up. We use the bush as our school and as our playground." What pictures come to mind when *Arthur Shadforth* uses the word 'playground'. Compare this with earlier discussions of this topic in the *Before Reading* section.
3. Discuss with students: What is *your* playground? How do you learn from the environment around you? Read *Charlotte Phillipus's* statement (p 7), with particular focus on the last sentence: "We learn by doing, copying, mimicking, watching, acting, taking part in ceremonies and listening to stories from country and inside our hearts."

Hold a group discussion with students:

- What sort of learning do you think works best?
- What sort of learning do you most enjoy? (Are the first two answers the same?)
- What sort of things do you learn at school? From family? From your community?
- What sort of things do you learn when you are playing?
- What do you learn from listening to stories? Do you listen to stories in your family?

## Learning Aboriginal-way

1. Read the introduction to 'First Lessons' (p 28) and discuss some of the 'essential lessons' learned by Aboriginal children. How does *Daisy Utemorrh* (p 29) explain a child's first experiences of learning?

Do you remember some of the early lessons that you were taught (both practical and moral)? Discuss these in groups, and see if there are any similarities between you and your peers. Are there any similarities with the lessons described in this section of *Playground*? How might your environment affect the early lessons you are taught?

2. Read the introduction to 'The Right Way of Learning' (p 30). Aboriginal learning is described as 'collaborative' rather than 'competitive'. Discuss these words in class. What do they mean? What are the advantages of learning in a collaborative way? When you play sport, which is more important: the collaboration with your team-mates or the competition with the other team? Discuss.
3. Read *Hazel Brown's* statement (p 31): "In the past, there were no books or computers to store information. People had to remember everything they needed to know for their survival." Discuss the kinds of things that an Aboriginal child would have had to remember if she/he was living a traditional life in the playground of the bush.

Play a memory game: in small groups, put 15 (or more) classroom and/or playground objects on a desk. Give students a minute to memorise them. While two students are blindfolded, others remove one object, and re-arrange the order. Then remove the blindfolds and ask the two students to help each other remember the missing item. Have other students take turns and repeat.

4. Read the passages from *Gloria Templar*, *Muriel Maynard* and *Lola Greeno* (p 32), describing how the making of shell necklaces is passed down through women, and *Wandjuk Marika's* story (p 33) about the things that he learned from his father. How is learning passed on from generation to generation? Is it important that some things are passed on by women to girls and some things by men to boys?

Are there traditions in your family that have been passed down over generations? E.g. games, recipes or customs for special occasions. What do you learn from these traditions? At home, ask parents and grandparents about traditions that they learned as children. Share these stories orally with the class, perhaps illustrating your presentation with copies of family photos or memorabilia. (Do not bring precious family items.) Then write the story and illustrate. Take it home to share with your family.

5. Read *Andy Tjilari's* description of how he learned to make a spear (p 31) and look at the photo that goes with this story. From this information, can you now describe how to make a spear? In what subjects at school do you learn by using the methods of observation and copying? (Sport, science, dance, mathematics, home economics...)
6. Read *Evelyn Crawford* (p 31): "The Elders believed that to be really skilled in anything you had to devote all your time and interest to it... Then we 'specialised' in the thing we were best at, or were really interested in." Do you agree with this statement? Is there anything you would like to be skilled in or specialize in? How could you achieve this? What would be the best way to learn about it?

## Young people teaching each other

In Aboriginal way, children teach other children. Read the stories from *Tommy Kngwarraye Thompson* (p 61), *Rita Huggins* (p 69) and *Kim Holten* (p 71). Discuss the following: Is it sometimes easier to learn things from other young people, rather than from adults? What sorts of good lessons do you learn from older siblings or friends? (Can you sometimes learn bad lessons from other young people? How do you avoid this?)

1. **Link English.** Ask students in small groups to choose different chapters of *Playground*. After careful reading and discussion within the group, decide how best to teach/share this information with your classmates. Plan your lesson. What method will you use? (E.g. A practical demonstration? Words alone? Diagrams? Pictures? A software program such as PowerPoint?) Will this method work best in the classroom or outdoors in the playground?
2. **Link LOTE.** If students speak a LOTE at home, they could teach a greeting and some simple words and phrases to others who don't speak the language. Discuss the methods they choose to use. (Spoken only? Using flash cards?) Now read the first column of the story by *Linda Anderson* (p 25) about how she acquired her first words in Luritja.
3. **Link Design/Technology.** Read 'Cubbies and Toys' (pp 60-63). What home-made toys are described? Ask students to walk around the playground or their backyard and collect found materials that they could use to make toys. Students can then share their toys in groups – teaching each other how to play with them. This is also an opportunity to discuss freedom and responsibility, e.g. students need to be careful and watch out for each other when playing with things such as sticks.
4. **Link Health, English.** This way of learning provides a great model for students to join together across peer groups of the school. Following Aboriginal learning practice, older students work in pairs or small groups with younger students, teaching them a game or a skill, or maybe sharing a story from *Playground*.
5. **Link Art/Health.** Set aside an area of the school playground for the building of cubbies. These can be made of soft materials (e.g. cloth, cardboard) as well as wood etc. Designate this as a special area for children to pass on wisdom to each other. Encourage children to develop a set of their own rules for how to behave towards each other in the cubby area.

## 2. CIRCLE STORIES: mapping country, history and identity

In this activity, each student makes a poster-sized story of their family, country and history. This form of mapping is a way for students of all ages and levels of ability to develop an understanding of identity and belonging as they place themselves in the environment of their home, community and environment.

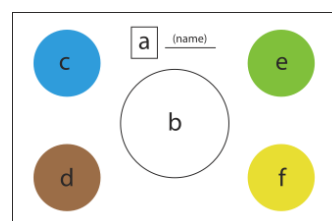
This activity was first developed at Papunya School in the late 1990s, when Nadia Wheatley and Ken Searle were working there with Aboriginal staff and students. While it is based on the Papunya Curriculum Model<sup>1</sup>, Nadia and Ken reinterpreted it for culturally diverse urban children while working on the *Going Bush* project. Nadia has also successfully used this activity with secondary students, from Year 7 right up to Year 12 students.

This task should be done over a number of lessons or even over a whole term.

Materials for each student: 1 white A2-size piece of cardboard; 1 circle white paper, the size of a dinner plate; 4 circles coloured paper, each the size of a bread-and-butter-plate. Use pale blue, green, brown and yellow as in template below. (Do not use dark colours as students' writing needs to be legible.)

At the top of the poster, include student's name and a recent portrait-photo if possible.

- a) Students portrait photo and name
- b) White: Central circle: The place where you live
- c) Blue: Your family and community
- d) Brown: Geography and history of the place where you live
- e) Green: Seasons, animals and plants of your local environment
- f) Yellow: How you keep healthy and happy



<sup>1</sup> See *The Papunya School Book of Country and History* (p 44)



## Circle Story Stage 1: Belonging to country... developing identity through mapping.

### 1. Link Geography, Mathematics, English, Art/Design.

(a) There are several different types of maps used in *Playground* e.g. maps by *Nicole* (p 59); *Tamara* (p 61); art by *Badger Bates* (p 23); *Mick Namerari Tjapaltjarri* (p 43) and *Ian Abdulla* (p 65). Identify and discuss the different ways in which these maps give information.

(b) Extend this by looking at maps in *The Papunya School Book of Country and History* (pp 27; 29; 35), *Going Bush* (endpapers), and also the maps on each spread of *My Place* by Nadia Wheatley and Donna Rawlins (published by Walker Books). Focus on the writing in these maps. How do the map-makers (real or fictional) show their sense of belonging to their home and environment?

### 2. Link English, HSIE/SOSE, LOTE, Geography, Health.

(a) Read out loud the introduction to the *Playground* chapter 'Homes'. This states: 'For Aboriginal Australians, home is much bigger than just a house and garden... 'Home' means the homeland and everything in it.' What does this mean?

(b) On a map of Aboriginal languages (see Acknowledgement activity) find the homelands of the contributors to the 'Homes' chapter. (Check 'Notes on Contributors' at the back of *Playground*).

(c) Read the story from *Bob Randall* (p 19). How does he describe home for the first seven years of his life? What does it mean when he says, "The stars were the ceiling of my house and the earth was the floor"? Would you like to live in a house like this? Continue reading the stories on pp 20-23. What different types of homes are described? From these descriptions, can you draw or map them? Did the storytellers enjoy living in these homes? Were the homes suited to the environment?

(d) Ask students to discuss what 'home' means to them, and where they feel they belong. As well as the house or flat where students live, what is important to them personally in the local environment? Workshop a list of possibilities, and then ask students to make a personal list: e.g. school; library; friends' homes; park; sports field; shops; public transport; favourite place.

### 3. Link Health.

(a) In his description of his desert home, *Bob Randall* (p 19) links freedom with safety, caring and responsibility. *Rita Huggins* (p 20) describes the safety of the caves. *Russel Mullett* (p 21) says 'we were free', and also talks about the old people protecting the children. *Linda Anderson Tjonggarda* (p 22) describes the outstation as 'a happier, quieter place' than the main settlement. *Rininya* describes her home as 'a safe place' as well as 'a good place'. As a class identify and discuss these passages. Then make a personal list of the things that make you feel safe and happy in your home and area. How does being free connect with safety and responsibility?

### 4. Link English, HSIE/SOSE.

(a) *Rininya* is a contemporary Aboriginal girl. She describes her home on page 23. Read her story and then write about where you live. Describe what your home is made of, how long your family has been there, the areas in your neighborhood that you can and can't go to and why you like living there.

### The circle of home and homeland

#### Link Geography, Mathematics, English, History, Art/Design, HSIE/SOSE.

Now students apply the things they have learned in the orientation stage of this activity.

Onto the big white circle, using lead and coloured pencils, students make personal maps showing the area that they regard as 'home' — the place where they feel they belong. These maps should be done in a single lesson from memory, without reference to a street directory.

Students should include writing on the map, using the lists made in the orientation activities to note places and people that are important to them in both practical and emotional ways. The aim is to produce a meaningful map, rather than a beautiful artifact. When these circles are complete, students glue them onto the central area of their Circle Story chart.



## Circle Story Stage 2: Belonging to family and community.

### 1. Link HSIE/SOSE, Religion, Art.

(a) Begin by reading around the class the *Playground* chapter 'Welcoming the New Arrival' (pp 10-11). Discuss: What are four different ways in which the babies are welcomed in these stories? What sort of plant do you think might be illustrated on these pages? Why is there an illustration of emus? How old do you think the babies are in the photos? Find the coolamon. Draw one. What might you carry in it, instead of a baby? See photo and illustration p 45.

(b) When you were a baby, was there some sort of welcoming ceremony? Have you ever welcomed a baby into your family with a ceremony, a party, or maybe a gathering at the hospital? Share your story orally with the class, then discuss further with family members. Write a description and illustrate with drawings and/or photos.

## 2. **Link English, HSIE/SOSE, Sport, Art/Design, Health, History.**

(a) Read around the class the *Playground* chapter 'Family Relationships' (pp 12-17). Some of this material is a bit complex for young children, so select stories that are suitable for your students.

*Alice Bilari Smith* (p 14) says: 'Those days we used to be one family all the time. Every family like that. They never say, "You not belong here."' Use this to initiate discussion about who 'belongs' in the students' families. Is this just close relatives, or are there friends who also belong to the family?

How wide is a student's circle of belonging? Do students and/or their families also belong to other groups in their community (e.g. to a sports team or club; a religious or cultural organization; a reading group; a group of friends that hang out together)? Make it clear that a big circle of friends is not necessarily better: it is the depth of feeling that is important.

(b) *Andrew*, a young Aboriginal student from inner Sydney, describes learning his heritage from family (p 16). What are four things that his grandfather has taught him? Read the account of playing football which Andrew and his cousin Matt give (p 64). Why are these family games different from team games played with people outside family? List some of the things that you have learned from Elders in your family and community. What games do you play with cousins or other family members?

(c) *Gloria Templar* (p 17) describes how Christmas was celebrated on Cape Barren Island by her family and community in the 1940s. What does the illustration on this page show?

Describe (orally, in writing, or in a drawing) how a cultural or religious festival is celebrated by your family and/or community or school. These occasions could include events such as Ramadan, NAIDOC Week, or Anzac Day. Does your school have any special celebrations? How do these bring community together?

EXT: Look at the traditional painting by *Dhuwarrwarr Marika* (p 13) and read the caption. Identify the elements in this picture. Read the stories by other members of the Marika family (*Wandjuk* pp 33, 83 and *Läkläk* pp 8, 46). Use the internet and books to research the significance of this Arnhem Land family both in terms of art and Law.

EXT: When Stolen Child *Donna Meehan* describes being reunited with her family (p 15), she says, 'I had an overwhelming sense of belonging.' Read Donna's story out loud, and discuss the elements that she describes as being part of 'belonging'. Ask students to find other references to the Stolen Generation in *Playground*. Compare the recounts of *Hilda Muir* (pp 14, 57) and *Bob Randall* (pp 19, 52). How did the lives of these two children change? Ask students to further research this topic in groups. Students should discuss their thoughts and feelings.

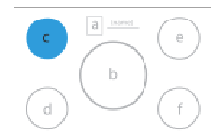
View the photo on page 15. Read the caption to the photo on this page. What is Donna Meehan's response to the Apology? Discuss the significance of *Sorry Day*. Ask students to also read the speech given by then Prime Minister Kevin Rudd on 13 February 2008 and then further research the different attitudes towards this event.

Read *Lola James's* comments (p 17). How does recording family history help Stolen Children?

### **The circle story of family and community**

#### **Link English, Mathematics, Health, Art/Design, HSIE/SOSE, Religion.**

Now students apply in a practical way the things that they have learned in the orientation stage of this activity. Onto the small blue circle, using lead and coloured pencils, each student uses a symbolic diagram such as the spokes of a wheel to show the people who belong to her or his family and community. Younger students might simply do drawings. As well as family members students could include family friends, neighbours, teachers, sports coaches, and other role models who are personally known to the student (i.e. not sports heroes etc.) Remember to say what language you speak at home.



Teachers should be aware of students' differing family circumstances and the need for sensitivity in this area. Note that the traditional design of the family tree does not work for this exercise. When these circles are complete, students glue them onto the top left area of their chart.

### Circle Story Stage 3. Learning About the Local Environment

Now that students have mapped their homes and communities, it is time to learn more about the history and geography of their 'country' — their local environment. The extent and depth of this activity will depend on the age of students and time available.

#### 1. **Link Geography, Science, HSIE/SOSE.**

(a) Begin by reading around the class the *Playground* chapter 'Getting Water' (pp 40-41). Discuss: How did *Charlotte Phillipus* learn to find water when she was a child? What are the children doing in the photo? Did *Jack Mirritji* use the same method? Or did he have another method as well? Why do you think Aboriginal people such as *Lola Young* respect the places where water never dries up?

(b) As a first step to understanding the geography and history of your 'country' (your local area), find out where the fresh watercourses are. These might include rivers and creeks, or if you live in the city these might have turned into storm water drains. You might find some by walking and looking, and others by looking at old maps. Using these explorations, try to make a map of where there was fresh water in your area before European settlement. As you explore, discuss whether your country is flat, hilly, swampy, dry, coastal, arid etc. If you live in a town or city, what is the natural environment of your area? Draw a quick sketch of how your country would have looked before there were buildings on it. (Reference: cover of *My Place*, by Nadia Wheatley and Donna Rawlins.)

#### 2. **Link Geography, Science, Mathematics.**

(a) Why did Aboriginal people make their homes and campsites close to fresh water? Why did the first European settlers want to use these same places for their homes? Weigh a bucket, then fill it with water and weigh it again. Try to carry it. Does this help explain why people often choose to live near water? Do some research into the Aboriginal and settlement history of your area. Link this with work already done in *Acknowledging Country* (re language groups in your area).

(b) Working in pairs, make a coolamon and carry water in it. Use paperbark or strong cardboard from a waxed cardboard carton, and string. Look at *Going Bush* (p 7) for a coolamon made by urban children.

#### 3. **Link Geography, LOTE.**

(a) Read *Playground* stories from a few contributors who come from different types of country or environment. E.g. *Jenny Giles* from the Murray River (p 39); *Goobalathaldin* from Mornington Island (p 55); *Yami Lester* from the Central Desert (pp 30, 45); *Galarrwuy Yunupingu, Lăklăk Marika and Bunthami (I) Yunupingu* from Arnhem Land (pp 39, 46). Find these people's homelands on your map of Aboriginal language groups.

(b) Compare the environments in these stories. How did they affect the experience of growing up? E.g. in the story from *Goobalathaldin* (p 55): Why would it be important for coastal children to learn information about the tides and the weather from their family? How does the tide affect when *Goobalathaldin's* family hunt and what they hunt for? What kind of environment do you live in? How does it affect the way in which you grow up?

#### 4. **Link History, Geography, Science, Mathematics.**

(a) Find out about the impact of settlement in your area on land; water; plants; animals; air quality. Check your local paper for current issues concerning urban planning and pollution. Read *My Place* by Nadia Wheatley and Donna Rawlins to see a semi-fictionalized account of environmental change in an urban microcosm. (What happens to the fresh water creek, between 1788 and 1988?).

(b) Working as a class, make a large-scale timeline of your local environmental history. Display down a wall of your school. Take parents and community members (including local politicians) for a walk along it, and tell the story.

### **The circle story of geography and history**

#### **Link Geography, History, LOTE.**

Onto the small brown circle, using lead and coloured pencils, each student presents a few vital pieces of information about the history and geography of their local environment, using the information they have gathered during the orientation activities. The lack of available space on the circle is a good way to encourage students to select and edit their material.



Information should include: the name of the Aboriginal language group who are the traditional owners; the type of country/environment; an indication of the watercourses; date of European settlement, and why settlement occurred there. Find ways to illustrate or represent symbolically.

When these circles are complete, students glue them onto the bottom left area of their chart.



## Circle Story Stage 4. Learning About Seasons, Animals and Plants

In traditional times, Aboriginal people across the continent lived according to the seasons, organising food-getting and religious ceremony to suit. When Europeans came to Australia, they brought the European model of four seasons with them. In many parts of the continent this does not fit very well. These days, with most Australians living in cities and depending on supermarkets for fruit and vegetables, many children have no idea how the seasons work. *Playground* can be a step to understanding the connection between plants, animals and seasons in the students' own environment. This is an important part of belonging.

### 1. Link Geography, Science.

(a) Begin by reading around the class the introduction and stories in *Journeying* (pp 36-39). Why was it important for Aboriginal Australians to have a thorough understanding of their country and the seasonal changes? Discuss.

(b) What is the difference between having a holiday and 'going walkabout'? Read the story from *Margaret Tucker* (p 37). How does this show an understanding of the environment? What sort of journeys are described by *Molly Mallett* (p 37), *Hazel Brown* (p 37), *Shirley Smith* (p 38) and *Deanna McGowan* (p 39)? How did these families travel? (You could draw some of the different forms of transport used.) What kinds of different things did they eat?

### 2. Link Science, Art, Drama.

(a) Ken Searle's illustrations in *Playground* show many different creatures. Working in small groups, leaf through the pages of the book and make an illustrated chart, divided into the following categories: animals, birds, insects, fish, shellfish. Try to add the names, but if you don't know the name of a particular creature or shell, just draw it and put the page number.

Discuss as a class: which of these creatures are indigenous to your part of Australia? Research other animals, birds, insects, fish etc, that are indigenous to your area. Make a list.

(b) Read the story from *Felicia and Selina* (p 75). What do they do in their dance group? In class groups, choose different indigenous animals and discuss how they move. Practice doing it, and then take turns in groups, presenting animals to the class. Try to guess what the other groups are representing. Which of these animals were in your area before settlement?

### 3. Link Science, Geography, Mathematics

(a) What are the seasons in your local area? How do they change? A good way to start is to use the terms of the school year. What do students wear? What games and sports are played in different seasons? Do you eat different food in different seasons?

(b) Ask students to keep daily records of temperature and rainfall at your school and then make graphs. Discuss the data with students.

(c) Ask students to read *Walking with the Seasons in Kakadu*, written by Diane Lucas and illustrated by Ken Searle. How do these six seasons of the Top End of the continent compare with the seasons with which students are familiar?

### 4. Link Science, History

(a) Find out what plants are indigenous to your area and which ones are introduced. Begin by walking around the school playground. If possible, walk to a local park or area of bushland. Collect leaves and bark that you find on the way. Back in the classroom, use books and the internet to identify them. Draw the plants. Make a chart of local plants. Can you find out about seasonal changes?

(b) Compare historical pictures of your area (drawings or photographs – your municipal library should have some) to these actual areas now. What changes have occurred to the land and the vegetation?

### The circle story of seasons, animals and plants

#### Link Science, Mathematics

Onto the small green circle, using lead and coloured pencils, each student presents a few vital pieces of information about the seasons, animals and plants of their local environment, using the information they have gathered during the orientation activities.



Information should include: names and illustrations of some indigenous plants, animals, birds, insects etc from your area, as well as the student's response to the seasons. (When is it hot or cold? When do they play soccer? When do they go swimming? etc)

When these circles are complete, students glue them onto the top right area of their chart.

## Circle Story Stage 5. How You Keep Healthy and Happy

### 1. *Link English, History, Science.*

Divide the class into six groups, and ask each group to read together the introduction and stories in one of the following chapters: 'Getting Bush Tucker', 'Going Hunting', 'Going Fishing', 'Cubbies and Toys', 'Playing Sport' and 'Playing in the Water'. Be sure to read the pictures as well as the words.

While reading, each group should make a chart of things that Aboriginal people traditionally ate and/or did to keep healthy, including food, sports, games, outdoor activities. What measures were taken to keep children safe? Charts can be illustrated, if you like. Display the charts on the wall.

Over a number of lessons, the groups then present and share their knowledge to classmates.

### 2. *Link Health.*

Discuss: How did Aboriginal children and adolescents keep healthy, safe and happy in their traditional way of life? Are these things similar to or different from how students keep healthy, safe, and happy?

### 3. *Link History, HSIE/SOSE.*

After reading the sections on 'Getting Bush tucker' and 'Going Fishing', make a list of some different hunting and gathering tools created and used by Aboriginal people (traditional & post-contact). Draw these tools and write a description on how they were used and what they were used for. Use the table below to help you record your research.

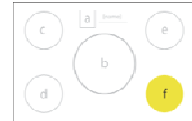
Picture of tool	Description of tool / page number

### *The circle story of health and happiness*

#### *Link health, home economics, sport, religion*

Onto the small yellow circle, using lead and coloured pencils, each student presents a few vital pieces of information about what they do to keep healthy, safe and happy.

Information should include healthy foods eaten, sports and games played, hygiene practices, and some activities that make them happy e.g. reading, playing music, having friends. Students might also include religious or community activities. How do they keep safe? Depending on students' age, this could include anything from road safety to saying NO to drugs.



## Circle Story Stage 6. Completion and Presentation of Circle Stories

The empty spaces on the circles can now be filled with photos of family and school friends and the local environment, and/or with illustrations appropriate to the stories.

When the circle stories are completed, they should be used as a basis for oral presentation. Divide the class into small groups and take turns sharing stories, using the map and information in the circles as prompts.

In the next lesson, regroup into different combinations, and present your story again. As the stories are re-told, students develop greater confidence. These groups could work across classes, and peer groups.

Sharing these Circle Stories is also a terrific thing to do when parents come for Open Day, or they can be displayed for Parent Teacher Night.

### 3: ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES ACCORDING TO SUBJECT

#### English

*Playground* provides a variety of texts and language features that can be linked to English curriculum requirements. The written text includes Standard Australian English, Aboriginal English, and examples of words from various Indigenous languages.

#### Exploring genre, story and voice

##### 1. *Link Art/Design.*

(a) What type of book is this and where would you expect to find it in a library? Is this a picture book, anthology, or reference book? Define each of these. Does *Playground* fit a variety of genres?

(b) How is the book organised and how is our reading affected by the way in which the material is set out? Open *Playground* at a couple of the spreads that introduce a new topic e.g. 'Cubbies and Toys' (pp 60-61); 'Going Hunting' (pp 48-49). Look at the different colours used for text. Can students identify the pattern? (Red ochre for compiler; black for Aboriginal contributors; yellow ochre for captions.) What is being signaled by the different colours of the text? Why do you think these particular colours were chosen?

(c) Where do we hear the compiler's voice? Is she writing in first or third person narrative? Do her passages help us understand the subject matter? How do the descriptions of the contributors help us understand their stories? Do the descriptions use persuasive text or take a particular viewpoint? Discuss.

##### 2. *Link History (oral history).*

(a) Ask students to read out loud a sample of stories from *Playground* e.g. *Nicole* (p 59), *Jade* (p 84), *Oodgeroo Noonucal* (p 56), *Paddy Japaljarri Stewart* (p 77), *Mary Malbunka* (p 11), *Bob Randall* (p 19), *Donna Meehan* (p 15). Discuss the different voices in these stories. Do they change because of people's age or the era in which they grew up? Is subject matter a factor? Any other reasons?

(b) What sort of voice is used in personal stories like these, as opposed to a recount? How do we feel about these sorts of stories and do we trust that the people telling them are speaking the truth? Discuss the difference between opinions, feelings and facts. Ask students to identify examples of these in the stories told in the section 'Homes' (pp 18-23). Ask students to re-write one of these personal stories as a newspaper report, in the third person. How does the language need to change? Is this story changed by this change in voice? (How?)

#### Exploring autobiography

##### 1. *Link History, HSIE/SOSE, Health*

Ask students to use a first person narrative (like that of *Playground's* contributors) to write their own personal story about some aspect of their own lives. They could choose one of the topics from the book such as: family; home; sport; playing in water; cubbies; toys; growing up. The length of the story will depend on the age of students, but it can be as short as the passages in *Playground*. Students can illustrate their story with maps, drawings and photographs.

##### 2. *Link History*

Read Mary Malbunka's *When I was Little, Like You* as an example of an Aboriginal autobiography. Compare this author's personal account of growing up in Papunya in the 1960s with the history of that community given in the *Papunya School Book of Country and History* (pp 28-31). Which way of writing is easier for the reader to engage with? Which seems more truthful? Which has more information?

#### Studying different text forms

##### 1. *Link Art/Design:*

(a) As the class reads *Playground*, make a list of examples of the different text-forms found in the book, such as: visual texts (traditional art; contemporary art; graphic design; symbols etc); written texts (factual or descriptive text; oral histories; map text etc). Why do you think the book uses different text forms? How many text forms do you use in your school-work?

(b) Discuss the juxtaposition of word and image in *Playground*. Ask students, in small groups, to select various chapters of *Playground* and discuss how the stories are arranged. Do the storytellers follow on from one another? E.g. historically, emotionally, geographically. Are there contrasts between gender, age and language? How are images/graphics used to explain or reinforce the written story?

## History and Aboriginal Studies

### Story-telling and the Recording of History

While some of the stories in *Playground* come from written memoirs, many were recorded in the form of oral history interviews.

#### 1. Link English (Exploring Autobiography)

(a) Read the story from *Jaleesa Donovan* (p 81). What kind of project is she doing? In the second column she says, "I love it. To me, it isn't like a boring history thing." What are the reasons Jaleesa gives for enjoying her job?

Jaleesa uses a tape recorder and a video camera. Is the kind of history that she is doing something new and modern, or is she in fact working within a tradition that Aboriginal people have followed for thousands of years? To answer this question, read the chapters 'Learning through Song and Ceremony' (pp 72-75) and 'Learning through stories and pictures' (pp 76-81). Then discuss the different ways in which Indigenous Australians traditionally told and recorded their stories and histories. Is there a difference between story and history?

(b) "They had no pen or paper to record things, so everything was kept alive by the people passing on their history and beliefs to their children..." *Betty Lockyer* (p 47). Discuss this quote with students, then read the story from *Leah Purcell* (p 80).

- How has Indigenous storytelling and attitudes towards it changed over time?
- Why is it important to embrace both traditional and modern means of storytelling?

(c) What contemporary methods do Aboriginal people use to tell stories? View some examples of Indigenous television programs. E.g. *Message Stick* (ABC), *Living Black* (SBS)

#### 2. Link Mathematics, Media Studies.

Using information from the chapters *Learning through Song and Ceremony* (pp 72-75) and *Learning through stories and pictures* (pp 76-81), ask students to create a timeline of communication to show the changes in Aboriginal methods of story-telling and recording history, from paintings on rock to social media. Discuss how technology and media have influenced Indigenous methods of communication over time.

## Australian History before or during first contact with Europeans

*Playground* provides a wealth of first-hand information that can be used for studying patterns of change and continuity in the history of Indigenous Australians.

#### 1. Link English, HSIE/SOSE.

(a) Begin by reading stories in *Playground* that describe growing up in the time before contact with Europeans, and/or in the time of early contact. E.g. *Alice Bilari Smith* (pp 14 & 83); *Hilda Muir* (p 14); *Bob Randall* (pp 19 & 52); *Rita Huggins* (p 20); *Russell Mullett* (p 21); *Linda Anderson Tjonggarda* (p 22); *Yami Lester* (p 30); *Wandjuk Marika* (p 33); *Margaret Tucker* (p 37); *Goobalathaldin* (p 55); *Wenten Rubuntja* (p 73).

Working together in small groups, students could focus on one of these stories, and present it to the rest of the class. Using specific examples from these stories, discuss some of the main features of the Aboriginal way of life before contact with Europeans. What are some of the changes that happened during the early time of contact?

(b) Working again in small groups read stories by *Bronwyn Penrith* (p 29); *Sheridan* (p 34); *Nicole* (p 59); *Tommy Kngwarraye Thompson* (p 64); *Felicia and Selina* (p 75); *Tess Napaljarri Ross* (p 78); *Kim Holten* (p 79); *Mayrah Sonter* (p 85). Discuss: What similarities and continuities are there between the traditional way of life and the ways in which Indigenous Australians live today?

(c) Find photographs in *Playground* that relate to living in the time of early contact. E.g. pp 11,16, 29, 31, 62, 82. Read the captions as well. What do we learn from these photos? Now find more contemporary photos. E.g. pp 9, 10, 15, 24, 27, 28, 32, 34, 35, 40, 45, 46, 49, 50, 52, 53, 55, 56, 58, 63, 66, 68, 73, 74, 76, 78, 79, 84, 85. What similarities and continuities between the traditional and contemporary way of life of Indigenous Australians are shown in these photos?

EXT: Write an essay on this topic, using examples from the stories and from photos in activity 1c.

EXT: Extend your knowledge of the history of contact, settlement and assimilation by reading *The Papunya School Book of Country and History* and Mary Malbunka's *When I was Little, Like You*.

## 2. Link English, Media Studies.

(a) Use *Playground* to start discussion about a variety of Australian history topics. Have students further research these topics and provide their research in a number of ways e.g. poems, newspaper reports, oral presentations, posters, pamphlets, PowerPoint presentations etc.

A sample of topics and references to them in *Playground* are listed below:

- *Schooling & Education*: see introduction to 'First Lessons'; 'The Right Way of Learning' and stories from *Linda Anderson Tjonggarda* (p 22 & 25); *Raymond* (p 26); *Ricky* (p 27 & 84); *Evelyn Crawford* (p 31); *Linda Burney* (p 35); *Kim Holten* (p 79); *Mayrah Sonter* (p 85). Also look at the following images and describe the kind of learning that is going on: photos pp 9, 24, 26-27, 28, 30-31, 32, 34, 35, 40, 45, 46, 49, 51, 55, 58, 60, 62, 66 (bottom), 68, 72-73, 74, 76-77, 78, 79, 81, 82, 85.
- *Housing*: See *Circle Story Stage 1, Notes p 6*.
- *Transport*: See *activity 1b in Circle Story Stage 4, Notes p 9*.
- *Roles of men & women*: See introduction 'Growing up' (p 82); and stories by *Alice Bilari Smith* (p 14 & 83); *Darby Jampijinpa Ross* (p 42); *Läklak Marika and Bunthami (I) Yunupingu* (p 46); *Eileen Alberts* (p 50).

EXT: Ask students to research key events from Indigenous history and prepare an essay based on their findings. They could include topics such as; the Citizenship Referendum; Aboriginal Embassy; Mabo Decision; Report on Stolen Children; Reconciliation Marches. Students should include quotes and excerpts from *Playground* and other sources of information such as websites newspaper reports and interviews.

3. Create a timeline. See *Mathematics*.

4. History of sport. See *Sport*.

## Geography / Science

In Indigenous education, all learning begins with the land. In this form of experiential learning, students use skills of observation, investigation, and imaginative guesswork before going to other sources of information.

*Playground* can also be a springboard for a comparative study of Indigenous and Western concepts and beliefs about Thinking Scientifically and how that affects our world-view. As well, *Playground* can be a starting point for practical scientific study and research in students' local area.

Many science and geography activities have been included in Circle stories e.g. Circle Stories Stages 3 and 4. A few additional activities are included here.

### Land Care and Sustainability

This way of thinking enables schools to meet curriculum requirements regarding sustainability.

#### 1. Link English, HSIE/SOSE.

(a) Read the story from *Hazel Brown* (p 43). Discuss and define the word 'conservation' in class. Why would it be important for Hazel and her brother not to take all the eggs from the mallee hen's nest and never to kill a mother mallee hen? Read the stories from *Troy and Geoffrey* (p 47) and *Oodgeroo Noonuccal* (p 56). How are these examples of conservation?

EXT: Further research methods of conservation by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Discuss Indigenous people's attitudes to land and land care and further research traditional methods used to help manage their biophysical environment. (See *Walking with the Seasons in Kakadu*, especially the season called Yegge, when the land is burned.)

(b) View the photo on page 16. The caption describes this family as being "completely self-sufficient". What does this mean in regards to this family? How would they live? Ask students in groups to discuss self-sufficiency and sustainable living. Can students describe anything they do at home as being self-sufficient or sustainable living? How could they implement sustainable practices in their homes? At their school?

#### 2. Link English.

(a) Read the section on 'Getting Water' (pp 40-41). List some of the methods mentioned for getting water. Why is water so important to survival? How do Aboriginal children avoid pollution of the water? How do these stories show a deep spiritual connection and respect for the land?



(b) Read 'Going Bush' (pp 8-9), in which comparisons are made between fresh and salty water, clean and dirty water in an urban environment. Read the students' water poems on these pages, then write your own short haiku-style poems about the way water is used by plants and animals.

### 3. **Link History.**

Discuss the impact of European settlement, including farms and pastoral stations, on the ecological balance. Read *Playground* (pp 18-20) and *Papunya School Book of Country and History* (pp 2-9, 18, 42-43). Compare the ecological impact of settlement in the Western Desert with impact in a coastal region of the continent which developed as a city, e.g. compare with environmental degradation depicted in *My Place*, by Nadia Wheatley and Donna Rawlins (published by Walker Books).

**Studying environment** See *Circle Story Stage 3, Notes* (p 8)

**Studying habitats** See *Circle Story Stage 4, Notes* (p 9)

1. *Playground* shows many different types of animals and plants throughout the book. Research these as you come across them. Ask students to create a wildlife guide as a class or individually, based on the different animals and plants you come across as you are reading.
2. Read the introduction on page 48 to 'Going Hunting'. What are some of the signs to look for when tracking animals? Read the story from *Mary Malbunka* and view the photo of *Tjama Freda Napanangka* making snake tracks and footprints (p 51). Research and create a visual bank of animal tracks, then (drawing images out of a hat) give small groups of students an animal track image. Ask students to go out into the playground and in groups draw their image for their classmates to see. Can classmates identify what the track is?
3. Read the section on 'Getting Bush Tucker' pp 42-47. What are some of the different foods that are described and collected? Further research these providing pictures and descriptions to the rest of the class. Walk around your area/backyard/playground and observe local plants then discuss the following questions: Which plants are 'introduced' and which are 'native'? Which plants are 'weeds' or 'pests'? What are the advantages of knowing what is edible in your environment?

## LOTE (Languages Other Than English)

A number of the speakers in *Playground* use their local Indigenous words. When you are reading, don't allow any concerns about pronunciation to interrupt your reading. The important thing is to understand the words *in context*.

### 1. **Link English, Health, History, Geography.**

(a) Begin by reading the introduction to the chapter 'Mother Tongue' (p 24). Discuss the meaning of the term 'mother tongue'. Do your parents, grandparents, or neighbours in your community have a different 'mother tongue' to you? Do you know anyone who is bilingual? What languages are spoken in your school, and/or in your local community?

(b) Display a map of Aboriginal languages e.g. <http://www.abc.net.au/indigenous/map/default.htm> How many were spoken in 1788? (See *Playground* p 24.) What is the language for the part of Australia where you live? Is it still spoken? If not, can you find any local words in place-names? Can you find out their meaning?

(c) What languages do the contributors to *Playground* identify with? Read the 'Notes on Contributors' at the back of the book, and see if you can find some of the languages on your language map. Working together in small groups, make a list of 10 contributors, cross-referencing the person, language and place (e.g. *Alice Bilari Smith* comes from north-west Western Australia, and is both Banyjima and Kurrama. *Jade* is from the Biripi nation, from coastal New South Wales.)

(d) Look at a geographic map of Australia and identify Aboriginal place-names e.g. Canberra, Wagga Wagga, Yarra River. See if you can find out what any of the words mean, and what language they come from. Are there any places that have bilingual names? E.g. Uluru / Ayres Rock; Gariwerd / Grampians. Discuss whether we should use the Aboriginal name or the English name. What other Aboriginal words are used in everyday Australian-English? E.g. kookaburra, coolamon, didgeridoo, coroboree. As a class activity make a picture dictionary of these words.

EXT: What impact did the introduction of the English language have on Aboriginal people? How did this affect the use of their own language. Read the story from *Linda Anderson* (p 25) and *Donna Daly* (p 26). Discuss in groups how you would feel if you were forbidden to speak your language. How are language and land connected for Aboriginal people? Read the stories by *Raymond* (p 26), *Ricky* (p 27) and *Evelyn* (p 27). Discuss how important it is for Aboriginal children to learn their language.

## Health

Use *Playground* as a starting point for discussing health issues and practices among Indigenous people in both traditional life and contemporary life.

Move on from this to discuss issues concerning health and wellness in your students' lives and in your own community.

See also *Circle Story Stage 5, Notes* (p 10).

### 1. **Link History - Change and Continuity, Home Economics.**

(a) Working in small groups, find references in *Playground* to Aboriginal people living a healthy life in traditional times from examples in chapters 'Getting Bush Tucker', 'Going Hunting', 'Going Fishing'. List or make a chart of the healthy foods eaten. Illustrate (using art in *Playground* as a model).

(b) Ask students if they have ever eaten any bush tucker. Most have, but may not realise it, e.g. fish; macadamia nuts. Find out about bush tucker that is local to your area.

(c) Discuss and research the health issues and practices that would have arisen for Aboriginal people before contact with white people. What sort of foods were there? Were there healers? What sort of medicines were there? Were there addictive substances? What sort of illnesses did people suffer?

Now find references in *Playground* to the kinds of food that Aboriginal people were given in rations after European settlement. E.g. introduction to 'Getting Bush Tucker' (p 42); *Diane Phillips* (p 43); *Yami Lester* (p 45); *Oodgeroo Noonuccal* (p 50); *Ronnie Mason* (p 53). How did these people feel about the ration food? Did they continue to eat bush food if possible?

(d) Discuss food groups with students. What did the ration food lack? What other foods would you need to support a healthy diet? What was the effect of flour, sugar, preservatives, alcohol and other drugs?

EXT: Ask students to further research this change in diet and effects. You can supplement this with a close reading of *Papunya School Book of Country and History*, pp 8-9; 16-19; 26-31; 34; 40; 43; 44-45. A wonderful account of this is also given in *When I Was Little, Like You* by Mary Malbunka.

### 2. **Link Science.**

Read the stories from *Wenten Rubuntja* and *Mary Malbunka* on page 11. What do the women do to help the health of the baby when it is born? How does this relate to other modern day medical health practices? Discuss.

### 3. **Link History, HSIE/SOSE.**

EXT: What new diseases were brought to Australia with white contact? Why were Indigenous people particularly vulnerable to them?

EXT: Ask students to research Aboriginal health services available in your city or town, or nearest capital city. What special needs do these services cater for?

### 4. **Link HSIE/SOSE.**

(a) Read the introduction to 'Playing in the Water' (p 68), and stories by *Rita Huggins*, *Sandy Atkinson* and *June Barker* (p 69) and *Nicole* (p 59). How do young Aboriginal children learn to keep safe when playing in the water? Are these particular Aboriginal ways of learning, or do these rules make sense whatever a person's cultural background? Why is it important to be responsible when swimming?

(b) Read the story from *Kain* on page 63. What unique skill does he have and how does he use this to help other people? How does he feel about this and what effect would this have on his self-esteem? What skills do you have that you have used to help others? Discuss how this can help your health (spiritually, mentally, physically).

### 5. **Link History.**

EXT: Read *Donna Meehan's* story (p 15) and *Rita Huggins's* story (p 20). Consider issues of mental and spiritual health. What emotional impact would family separation and loss of land or homesickness have on health? How do issues of land rights connect with community health? (Students whose families have a recent history of migration could provide interesting comparisons and insights.)

## Religion

### 1. Link English, Legal Studies.

(a) Read the Glossary and Index at the back of *Playground* to look up definitions and references for 'Law; and 'Dreaming, Dreamtime'. Read the accounts cited in these references. What are three different Aboriginal words used for these concepts? Use other texts to find out about traditional Aboriginal religious beliefs. A number of picture books of Law (or Dreaming) stories are available, but make sure you use authentic ones, produced either by Indigenous people themselves or with the approval of the relevant community.

(b) In class, compare Aboriginal Creation and Law stories with Creation and Law stories from other religions (including the Old Testament and the Koran). Write an essay about this.

EXT: Find examples of Aboriginal law throughout the book. Discuss laws and rules and the importance of these to any culture. What do you feel should be the basic laws of any society?

(c) Read and discuss references to Christianity or Christian beliefs in *Playground* ("Adam and Eve" p 7, "baptism" p 10, "Christmas time" p 17). Also find references in *Papunya School Book of Country and History* (pp 12-13, 18-19, 22-29, 38-39). Ask students to research how Christianity was introduced to Aboriginal people. Look at similarities and differences between the beliefs of these cultures.

### 2. Link English, HSIE/SOSE, Home Economics.

Read the story from *Gloria Templar* (p 17) about her celebrations at Christmas time. Write your own description of a religious holiday/event that is significant to your family or community. Follow the example of Gloria's writing style and include information about what you do and the foods you eat on this day. Do you play any special games?

### 3. Link Science.

EXT: Read 'Where babies come from' (pp 8-9). Discuss these beliefs about the creation of babies and the importance of the spirit totem. How do these stories differ and what is their underlying similarity? Discuss how these stories show a strong connection to the land and environment. How do stories such as these build strength of family and community? Is it possible to understand something in both scientific and spiritual terms? Discuss.

## Music, Dance and Drama

Ceremonial song and dance is an important aspect of Indigenous culture. Use *Playground* as a resource to encourage study and discussion of both traditional and contemporary Indigenous music and dance. Begin by reading the section on 'Learning through Song and Ceremony' (pp 72-75).

### 1. Link History, HSIE/SOSE, Religion.

(a) Read the description from *Roy Kebisu* (p 28). How are dance and song an important part of his life? Ask students to discuss in groups their favourite music and how they feel about music and song. Read the story from *David Ned David* (p 74). How have song and dance been passed down from one generation to the next in the Torres Strait? How does *David Ned David* describe his uncle? Are there any songs/dances that you learnt as a child, or that are part of your cultural tradition? What do they mean to you? Share with the class.

### 2. Link Art, History, Geography, English.

(a) Study the traditional bark painting by *Thompson Yulidjirri* (p 75). What musical instruments are depicted in this painting? What sounds and rhythm would you expect them to make (ask students to mimic the sound with their voices)?

Ask students to research traditional Aboriginal musical instruments and traditional music forms including clap sticks, didgeridoo and voice. You should be able to find some traditional music on tape. Be careful to make distinctions between instruments used by different groups of Aboriginal people. For example, in traditional life didgeridoos are used only in certain areas and only by men. Make some clap sticks, and play them.

(b) Discuss the purposes for which music was used in traditional Aboriginal society and how they were used to record history and geography. Find examples from other primarily oral cultures in which songs were used to record history and geography e.g. Homer, *The Odyssey*; *The Iliad*; Viking Sagas. Discuss traditional Aboriginal music as a form of sacred storytelling. Compare with the role of contemporary Aboriginal Gospel music.

(c) Read the description about *Thompson Yulidjirri* in the 'Notes on Contributors', and use it as a starting point for some research about him as a ceremonial leader. What was his role in the Sydney Olympics in 2000? What other Aboriginal musicians were involved in the Sydney Olympics? (Yothu Yindi; Christine Anu.) Listen to some of the music they played.

(d) Research and listen to a wide variety of contemporary Indigenous performers e.g. Archie Roach, Christine Anu, Kev Carmody, Frank Yamma, Jimmy Little, Yothu Yindi, Troy Cassar-Daley, Tiddas, Jessica Mauboy... the list is endless! Research Aboriginal musical groups, dance groups and productions such as *Songlines* <http://www.songlines.net.au/>, the Bangarra Dance Theatre, and *Bran Nue Dae* <http://www.brannuedaemovie.com/>.

Find out if there is an Aboriginal radio station in the city or town where you live. For information on ABC Indigenous radio and television programs check <http://www.abc.net.au/indigenous/>. Listen to *Away!* <http://www.abc.net.au/rn/away/> or the latest Indigenous performers on *Deadly Sounds* radio program at <http://www.vibe.com.au>.

### 3. **Link Art/Design, English.**

(a) View the image of the dancers performing at Woggan-magule (pp 72-73) and read the story by *Gapala and Dharpaloco* (p 73). How do the photo and story connect?

EXT: The caption to the photo on pages 72-73 describes this event as taking place on 'Survival Day (26 January) 2009'. This is also known as Australia Day. Research and discuss differing views on Survival Day/Australia Day. What are your views on this subject?  
<http://www.australiaday.com.au/studentresources/indigenous.aspx>

## Mathematics

See also *Circle Story Stage 3, Activity 4, Notes (p 8)*. Discuss mapping language and mathematical concepts such as direction, distance, scale, symbols, legends, keys and signs with students.

### 1. **Link Sport & Games.**

Read the story from *Don Ross* (p 62). What is the game that the children created using a matchbox and how does this teach math skills? Re-create this game in the classroom or playground. Ask students to discuss other games they play that involve mathematic skills.

### 2. **Link Art, Science, HSIE/SOSE.**

(a) View the painting on page 38. What does it depict? Why was the night sky very important to Aboriginal travellers? Discuss how Aboriginal people tell the time without clocks. (Include research on the movement of stars in the sky, shadows, height of the sun and varying lengths of days).

(b) Measure shadows in your school playground at various times to observe the relationship between time, the sun and seasons.

### 3. **Link History.**

While reading *Playground* ask students to record the different decades that are noted at the beginning of each story. Discuss the following: What age would you expect the storytellers to be now? Why is understanding time and period an important aspect of historical recording and understanding?

### 4. **Link History.**

(a) Read again the statement by *Charlotte Phillips* (p 7). What does she mean when she refers to "thousands of years?" Discuss the time in which Aboriginal people have lived in the continent and looked after the land. An acceptable minimum estimate is 50,000 or 40,000 years.

(b) As a mathematical exercise, make a timeline of Aboriginal history with coloured chalk in the school playground, allowing one metre for 1000 years. If you wish, you can add certain landmark dates from other histories, as a benchmark e.g. building of pyramids; Persian Wars; birth of Jesus; birth of Mohammed; Roman and Norman conquests of Britain. Add post-Settlement history to the timeline in a different colour. Discuss how long this section should be, keeping ratio of 1 m = 1000 years. Help students grasp the significance of the two time spans and ask them to discuss how this relates to Aboriginal people's sense of belonging to country.

### 5. **Link Health.**

Visit the Australian Bureau of Statistics website and view statistical data on the Indigenous population. You can look up data such as The Health and Welfare of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples [www.abs.gov.au](http://www.abs.gov.au)

Ask students to choose a topic from one of these reports, look at this data and prepare a short report to the class on the findings. Ask students to include a graph of their data with the report.

## Creative Arts

*Playground* offers an opportunity to explore various traditions of Aboriginal art, and to raise issues concerning when and why art is used in traditional cultural activities. Make sure students understand that Aboriginal art takes different forms when done by different people in different parts of the continent.

1. Ask students to leaf through *Playground*, studying the variety of forms or styles of art used. Make sure that students differentiate between the illustrations done by *Playground*'s non-Indigenous illustrator, Ken Searle, and the art by Aboriginal artists. (Tip: the illustrations don't have captions.)

Make a table of *Playground*'s artworks, differentiating between examples of traditional art, contemporary art etc as well as a use of different mediums. Also note the language group or country from which the artist comes. Example:

Page	Artist	Language group & country	Title and/or subject of artwork and date of production (if known)	Medium	Comments re colours, conventions, style, effectiveness etc
23	Badger Bates	Paakantji, Darling River, north-west NSW	'Mission Mob and Bend Mob, Wilcannia 1950s', produced 2009	Linocut	Black and white; contemporary style; is like a map or story of the place; contrasts tight houses with free river
75	Thompson Yulidjirri	Kunwinjku, Arnhem Land, NT	'Wubarr Ceremony', produced 1989	Bark painting	Black and white paint on brown bark; traditional style; shows musicians and performers

Tip: you might need to check the Notes on Contributors and also the Acknowledgements re Images.

2. Now read the chapter 'Learning through stories and pictures' (pp 76-81). Ask students to discuss some of the different ways in which art is used in Aboriginal culture. (E.g. as a way to relate stories, to document oral history, to demonstrate identity and relationships between people, to demonstrate links between people and the land, and to demonstrate the Law.)

(a) In the passage by *Leah Purcell* (p 80), what different methods of story-telling does she discuss and what are her attitudes towards these?

(b) View the image of *Arone Meeks* (p 79). What does he mean when he says 'using traditional colours'? What are the traditional colours for Aboriginal art and why? Ask students to paint a colour chart showing these. What other colours do they associate with the environment around them?

EXT: View the paintings by *Punata Stockman* (p 38) and *Mick Namerari Tjapaltjarri* (p 43). Read about the artists in the 'Notes on Contributors'. Both Mick himself and Punata's father are described as 'original Papunya Tula artists'. Ask students to research the origins of the Papunya art movement. A good way to start is with the *Papunya School Book of Country and History*, especially pp 32-33. Which other contributors to *Playground* come from Papunya?

3. Read out loud the passage by *Naminapu Maymaru* (p 78), paying attention to these words: 'My clan design... can't be changed.... It's got to be exactly the same.'

Discuss issues of appropriation and cultural respect. It is important that students understand that many of the symbols used and stories told can have sacred or secret meanings. There are also issues of cultural ownership. Some traditional people feel that it is dangerous or wrong for these to be reproduced by people without permission. Encourage students to respect Indigenous sensitivities.

Rather than copying Indigenous symbols and styles, ask students to follow the convention of Indigenous art by producing paintings of their own 'country' — the area in which they are growing up. In an accompanying statement describe what meaning this place has for them. Discuss forms of symbolic language that students see in their city or town. (E.g. Road signs, logos, graffiti tags...) Make a visual dictionary of these symbols.

4. (a) Leaf again through *Playground*, this time looking at Ken Searle's illustrations. What is the purpose of these? How do they hold together the elements of the book?

(b) Ask students to discuss how they feel about the mix of mediums used: photographs, artwork and illustrations.

5. Find out more about Aboriginal art by visiting art galleries, libraries and websites. Research different styles and discuss how art links with land. Why might art take different forms in different places?



## Sport

See also *Circle Story Stage 5, Notes (p 10)*.

### 1. **Link HSIE/SOSE.**

(a) Read the chapters on 'Playing sport' (pp 64-67) and 'Playing in the water' (pp 68-71). Discuss the importance of sport in building community.

(b) "This is how we lived; this is how we were taught. It wasn't just a game, it was an important way of learning." Peter Skipper (p 64). What does sport teach you? Ask students to recount a sport they have played. What skills have they learned through this sport? Create a word bank to describe the values of playing sport e.g. teamwork, sharing, collaboration and fun.

### 2. **Link Art.**

View the picture from *Ian Abdulla* (p 65). Is this a kind of map of the event? Does this picture remind you of a ceremony or dance? Can you find something in the picture that looks like a football? Is there something that makes you think of the Aboriginal flag? Why do you think the artist may have put words in the picture? Draw your own picture of a sporting game or community event that you have been to, incorporating some words into the picture.

### 3. **Link Health, History.**

(a) Read the story from *Tjimarri Sanderson-Milera* (p 67). Why does the 'parent member' of the club call the police? Why is her assumption wrong? Research other examples of racism in Australia sport. Discuss: Why does it happen? Why is it wrong? What can be done to prevent it?

(b) View the image of Aboriginal activist *Charles Perkins* (p 69), and read the introduction to 'Playing in the water' (p 68). Research the background of this story (the Freedom Ride). Research the work of Charles Perkins. Discuss racism towards Indigenous people. What examples do we see in Australia today?

### 4. **Link Music/Dance.**

Read the story from *Mayrah Sonter* (p 67). Ask students to create their own poster for the Vibe 3on3® festival. More information on the festival can be found at <http://www.vibe.com.au/events/vibe-3on3r.html> which includes a YouTube video of the 2010 festival. Ask students to watch the video and discuss the values of the festival.

### 5. **Link History, Mathematics.**

(a) Ask students, in groups, to research traditional Indigenous sports & games. Visit the following websites for further information on this topic:

- <http://www.creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/sport/traditional-aboriginal-games.html>
- [http://www.ausport.gov.au/participating/indigenous/resources/games\\_and\\_activities](http://www.ausport.gov.au/participating/indigenous/resources/games_and_activities)

Have students present their findings to the class, and then teach each other how to play the games.

(b) Ask students, working in groups, to research Indigenous sports players who have represented Australia, from the time of the first Australian cricket team to tour England up to today. Make a time line and illustrate with photos.

(c) Can you find a photo of Lionel Rose in *Playground*? Who was he? Using the story by *Russel Mullett* (p 21) as reference, write a short description of the sort of childhood that Lionel Rose might have had. How might the values learned in his community have helped him become a sporting legend?

(d) "One very popular game, know by many different names across the continent, was so similar to Australian Rules football that some historians believe AFL is derived from this Indigenous game." (p 64). Research and debate the origins of AFL.

## AFTER READING *PLAYGROUND*

1. Write an essay on the topic *Playground*. Ask students to discuss this in relation to the book, including quotes. What is the meaning of this word in the book and has this changed their perceptions of learning, living and relationship with country?

2. Write an essay on the “Right Way of Learning”. What do you believe are the right ways to learn e.g. to be self-taught, to learn through community, to read books, to listen to stories. Read the quotes below from *Playground* and reference these in your essay. Do you agree/disagree with these statements?

“I have always said that there are many things in Aboriginal culture that it would serve the broader community well to adopt.” *Linda Burney* (p 35).

“You start sitting in the one place and you raise the child, and you’re stuck in the white man’s style, white man’s type of schooling, and you just read the maps and all that. It doesn’t relate to a child.” *Galarrwuy Yunupingu* (p 39).

“Nature [is] telling stories and we’re connected to these natural stories. We don’t write it down and give it to the kids; we teach through talking, telling and showing. That’s Yolngu way.” *Läkläk Marika and Bunthami (I) Yunupingu* (p 46).

## BIOGRAPHY NOTES

NADIA WHEATLEY, the compiler of *Playground*, is an award-winning author and historian whose books over some thirty years reflect a commitment to issues of Reconciliation, social justice and the conservation of the environment.

Together with KEN SEARLE, the book’s illustrator and designer, Nadia worked as a consultant at Papunya School (Northern Territory) during the late 1990s, when the school was developing its own two-way model of education. At this time, Ken and Nadia were privileged to experience Indigenous principles of learning in action.

In *Playground*, Nadia Wheatley and Ken Searle move outwards from the centre of Australia to continue their journey of listening to Aboriginal people and learning from country.

DR JACKIE HUGGINS AM is of the Bidjara and Birri-Gubba Juru people of Queensland. As well as being a renowned historian, Jackie has held leadership positions in many Indigenous organisations across the country for over two decades, and she is a former Co-Chair of Reconciliation Australia.

In her role as Indigenous Consultant to *Playground*, Jackie acted as adviser and ‘critical friend’ to the book’s compiler, Nadia Wheatley.