

Stolen Generation



CURRICULUM INFORMATION

PHASE OF DEVELOPMENT

Early Childhood	Middle Childhood	Early Adolescence	Late Adolescence
		✓	✓

This topic is recommended for use with students aged 12–15 years

MAJOR LEARNING AREAS

The Arts	English	H & PE	LOTE	Mathematics	Science	S & E	T & E
✓ ✓	✓ ✓					✓ ✓	

VALUES

Pursuit of knowledge & commitment to achievement of potential	Self acceptance & respect of self	Respect & concern for others & their rights	Social & civic responsibility	Environmental responsibility
		✓	✓	

DISTRICT

This lesson has been developed by teachers in the following district:
West Coast

TOPIC INFORMATION

PURPOSE

To give students opportunities to understand issues of the Stolen Generation through resources that enable Aboriginal people to tell their personal stories.

STUDENT OUTCOMES

English:

Writing

- 3.1a Interacts to express opinions and perceptions, participates in problem solving discussions with peers and gives brief reports and summaries.
- 3.1b Obtains specific information from informational and expressive spoken texts; follows peer discourse in group discussions; and identifies key information in an audio or video text.
- 4.1a Develops and presents familiar ideas and information and supports opinions with some detail.
- 4.1b Identifies the main ideas and supporting details of clearly structured spoken informational or expressive texts and identifies alternative viewpoints in spoken, audio and video texts on an issue relating to a familiar topic.
- 4.2 Considers the appropriateness of text form and register and the conventions of non-verbal communication in relation to audience when speaking and listening in familiar situations.

Society & Environment:

Time, continuity and change

- 3.1 Understands that the stories of people, important people and events are woven into the narrative history of particular periods of time.
- 4.3 Understands that people and events in a time period are linked through the impact each has on the other and that there are different perspectives on people and events of the past.





Art:

Drama:

Communicates art ideas

- 3 Explores and uses ideas, experiences and observations to make art works within the structure of given tasks, a limited range of choices and a clear sense of purpose.
- 4 Solves problems within given structures to complete art works which show clearly developed ideas.

KEY BACKGROUND POINTS

Overview of topic

Ideally, this topic would follow lessons on Government policies such as the Western Australian 1905 Act.

In order to help students empathise with Aboriginal people on whom the Stolen Generation impacted, we have selected resources that present stories and issues from an Aboriginal perspective. During the suggested learning experiences students participate in enquiry learning as they examine the effects of government policies of forced removal of Aboriginal children. The recommended resources, and many others now available, stimulate further questions for students to explore. Teachers may guide students to apply insights gained to other issues requiring empathy.

Aboriginal people use the term ‘Stolen Generation’ to describe how their children’s lives were ‘stolen’ by the government policies of forced removal of Aboriginal children.

- **Stolen** does not cover the multitude of ways that Aboriginal children were separated from their families although many children were indeed stolen in the sense of being snatched and forcibly removed. In other cases, government agencies and missions took children on the premise of helping them attend school. Aboriginal families albeit reluctantly, often understood that education may be for the better, however children were taken under false pretences as they never came home.
- **Generation** does not adequately describe the time period over which children were forcibly and otherwise removed from their families. Such policies were enforced not for a single generation but for several generations. The HREOC report into the Stolen Generation estimates over 100 000 Aboriginal children were taken between the early 1900s and the 1970s.

Karen and Stephen Reys

Karen Reys is an Aboriginal artist now residing in the Yanchep area. At a time when her father, Stephen, felt alone, Karen encouraged him to write stories about his earlier life. Stephen wrote powerful accounts of his childhood, family, his experiences as a cattleman in Queensland, and his Aboriginality.

Karen notes that once her father started writing poems his persona changed immediately. She recalls him reading his stories and poems as if it were the first time he had shared them with her. Although her father knew only a few guitar chords he also began to sing and record his work onto audio cassettes.

Karen and Stephen Reys exhibited their second collaborative art piece in *Where is My Place of Belonging*, an exhibition showcased in 2004 at Gomboc Gallery. Since her father’s death, Karen says, “one of the many treasured memories since Dad’s passing has been the stories and cassettes he left for us to remember him”.

CULTURAL & PROTOCOL CONSIDERATIONS

These lessons explore links between past government policies and practices and their impact and effects on local Aboriginal people. When investigating whether there are local Aboriginal families who have been affected, and where they are living, it would help schools to ask themselves questions like the following:

- Are any of our students from original local Aboriginal families?
- Are there Aboriginal students in the class/school who identify as ATSI? If so, find out the location of their particular culture and the Aboriginal name and pronunciation for the ‘place’ or country that your student/s come from/belong to.
- Do we have a relationship with the ATSI families in the school? If not, try to develop healthy interactive relationships.
- Can we ask if the school’s ATSI families can link us up with a family friend or relative who is willing to plan these lessons with us so we ‘do it right’ and follow recommendations and protocols that have been developed by Aboriginal people and other educators?
- Are there teachers or school staff who have Aboriginal friends or relatives who can assist us?

If the answer is ‘no’ to these questions, contact the West Coast District Education Office Aboriginal Education Team for advice and assistance.





RESOURCES

Medium	Author, producer, developer etc	Title	Source
CD ROM	CD: DUIT Multimedia, Songwriter/singer: Archie Roach	<i>Moorditj</i> – Australian Indigenous Cultural Expression; Songs by Archie Roach: <i>Took the Children Away</i> <i>From Paradise</i>	DUIT Multimedia, University of Western Australia; West Coast District Education Office Resource Centre
CD or taped music	Archie Roach	<i>Weeping in the Forest</i>	retail outlets
video/DVD	Director: Phillip Noyes	<i>Rabbit Proof Fence</i> (90 minute film shown over 2-3 lessons)	school libraries, DVD rental, or purchase price: \$19.95; study guide for Rabbit Proof Fence can be downloaded at: http://www.metromagazine.com.au/metro/studyguides/files/Rabbit-proofFence.pdf

TEACHING AND LEARNING STRATEGIES

TEACHING RESOURCES

- student copies of **Learning Guide 1: *Waiting* by Stephen Reys**
- student copies of **Learning Guide 2: *Annie Hunter (My Mother)* by Stephen Reys**
- student copies of **Learning Guide 3: Poem sections to mime**
- data projector and screen for class viewing of dvds
- CD player for class listening
- writing materials for relevant lessons
- lined paper for answering questions on Learning guides

LESSON STEPS.

The content below covers at least 4 x 1 hour lessons. Please feel free to develop and present the lessons in any way that suits your students' and timetabling requirements. To follow this, we recommend you plan a series of lessons studying *Rabbit Proof Fence* as this movie tells one (extended) family's story of the Stolen Generation.

Preparation

- **Liaise** with AEIO and/or DEO Aboriginal Education team to help identify and invite a local Elder to provide further (and maybe personal) information about this topic, and visit your class to talk to students, if possible. The DEO team will also advise you about protocols which need to be observed when arranging and during the visit.
- **Meet with** your invited Elder **and discuss** your proposed series of lessons, asking for their input and if they'd feel comfortable presenting to the students. Also ask if they'd be happy to answer students' questions.
- **Discuss** with students how to behave for the visit.
- **Select and prepare** students to welcome and thank your visitor.
- **Discuss** proposed visit with your principal and staff, alerting them to required protocols.
- **Read** KEY BACKGROUND POINTS and CULTURAL & PROTOCOL CONSIDERATIONS above.
- **Read/watch** recommended resources and plan how best to share information with your students.

Implementation

Introduction of topic – If possible, invite a local Elder to share stories/information about the Stolen Generation as the first session in this series (and follow with Session 1). The personal approach is powerful way to raise awareness and kindle



interest. If it's not possible to arrange a visit, begin with Session 1.

Session 1 – introducing Archie Roach and studying his songs

Whole class

- **Introduce** Archie Roach using *Moorditj* CD ROM (or, play and discuss Archie Roach's songs on a CD).
- **Read and discuss** his biographical information provided on *Moorditj*.
- **Play** his songs on *Moorditj*, *Took the Children Away* and *From Paradise*.
- **View and discuss** the songs' lyrics as provided on *Moorditj*.

Working individually

- **Write** in student's own words the stories told in each song.

Working in small groups

- **Share** students' versions of the stories.
- **Discuss** similarities, differences and issues arising.

Session 2 – guided reading of *Waiting* by Stephen Reys and completion of **Learning Guide 1: *Waiting* by Stephen Reys**

Whole class

- **Introduce** by giving background information (from above section) about Stephen Reys and his daughter Karen.
- **Explain** that students will read two of Stephen's poems: *Waiting* and *Annie Hunter*.
- **Distribute** student copies of **Learning Guide 1: *Waiting* by Stephen Reys**.
- **Read aloud** *Waiting* and students silently follow words on their copies.
- **Ask** questions to get students thinking about the poem, such as:
 - Who is doing the waiting?
 - Who is she waiting for?
 - How long ago did this happen?
 - Who took the child away?
- **Ask** class to think about what is being said in the poem, e. g. What has taken place? Who is it happening to?

Working individually

- **Ask** students to read carefully and complete questions on Learning Guide 1, on lined paper.

Whole class

- **Share** answers, discuss them, decide on acceptable answers and extend as necessary.

Session 3 – guided reading of *Annie Hunter* by Stephen Reys and completion of **Learning Guide 2: *Annie Hunter* by Stephen Reys**

Whole class

- **Distribute** student copies of **Learning Guide 2: *Annie Hunter (My Mother)* by Stephen Reys**.
- **Read aloud** *Annie Hunter* and students silently follow words on their copies.
- **Re-read** and ask students to join in, or ask for volunteer/s with loud clear voices to read the poem.
- **Ask** students to explain in their own words what the poem is saying.

Working individually

- **Ask** students to read carefully and complete questions on Learning Guide 2, on lined paper.

Whole class

- **Share** answers, discuss them, decide on acceptable answers and extend as necessary.

Session 4 – group activity using **Learning Guide 3: Poem sections to mime**

Whole class

- **Distribute** student copies of **Learning Guide 3: Poem sections to mime**, and explain that in groups, students will mime the poems.





- **Divide** class into groups of 3 - 5 and give each group a different section of the two poems to mime.

Working in groups

- **Allow** groups five to ten minutes to discuss and practise how they will act their section of the poem as a two-minute mime.
- **Ensure** students are clear that mimes involve no speaking, and must cover the main points in their allotted paragraph.

Whole class

- **Give** each group two minutes to present their mime to the class, in order of each story told.
- **Discuss** presentations at end of each, asking for positive and/or constructive points (e. g. It was great that all group members were involved, but the mime would be improved if all actors looked at the audience.)
- **Recap** on activities asking how students feel about the impact of the Stolen Generation on people they have studied, and whether their feelings have changed because of what they've discovered.
- **Explain** that poetry is one medium Aboriginal people use to tell their story of the Stolen Generation, and songs another. Archie Roach's songs are an example of putting story, sometimes in poetry form, to music.
- **Ask** students to suggest other ways Aboriginal people tell their stories. *Moorditj* contains examples of other art forms used, students can find these by entering the key words, 'Stolen Generation'.
- **Ask** students for questions or feedback, and whether other related issues have arisen that they could investigate further.

Further studies

Plan a unit of work based on the movie *Rabbit Proof Fence*.

ASSESSMENT

Observe and record details (as required) about aspects like:

Whole group discussion on impact of poem

- Extent to which class members show interest by volunteering questions giving feedback and asking questions.

Class presentation through role-play

- Extent of involvement and coverage of selected sections of poem.

Answer questions from worksheet

- Extent of comprehension in answers and understanding of different points of view discussed by others.

Write description in own words

- Extent to which empathy is expressed through understanding. Chance here for extension by applying previous knowledge.

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Karen and Steven Reys, Archie Roach

Jasmine Harris (writers), Alwyn Evans (editor)

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LEARNING GUIDE 1: *Waiting* by Stephen Reys

She sits and she waits staring down the old dirt track
in waiting she is for her one and only child to come back.
It's been almost thirty years since they took her child away
and all those in that very spot she sits and she waits every day.

Every now and again she looks towards the old pine tree.
It was her child's playground up until she was three.
That was long ago and yet it seems only yesterday
that the law man came and took her three year-old away.

It was because of skin colour and that mum was to blame.
If they only knew that she was used and abused and let carry the shame.
How do I know what this woman is going through?
Because it's my neighbour that this happened to.

She still sits and waits staring down the old dirt track
in waiting she is for her one and only child to come back.
Little does she know that her husband sits at the rear of the house every day
hoping that their baby will surprise them by coming home the back way.

1. Write down your initial response to the poem.
2. What particular Australian people does the poem refer to?
3. What term is used for the forcible removal of Aboriginal children?
4. Using evidence in the poem, who is the person who 'sits and waits'?
5. How old was her child when she was taken?
6. Who came and took the child and what title do we usually give to them?
7. What authority did he have to remove the child?
8. What two reasons does the author give for the child being taken?
9. Does the author think she was to blame? Give your reasons.
10. What shame did the mother carry?
11. Do you think that her husband is also the child's father? Give your reasons.
12. Describe in your own words how the forcible removal of her child has affected this woman, and what 'waiting' symbolises in her life.



LEARNING GUIDE 2: *Annie Hunter (My Mother)* by Stephen Reys

They got warning the police were coming.

The mothers gathered their babies and sent the older ones running.

Told to follow the river and never return.

The children heard gun shots, yells and screams and saw their bark hut burn.

They followed the river for three days, three nights,
mourned, shivered and feared snake bites.

Found by woodcutters who did them no harm.

They took them to Shaw's Hill to the nearest farm.

The owners kept them there worked them without pay.

They never saw their parents again to this very day.

The words in this poem are so very true because this is what happened to my mother, two aunties and uncle.

I now live in sorrow for what they went through.

1. What is your initial response to this poem (thoughts, feelings)?
2. Why do you think the warning about police coming was acted on so urgently?
3. It seems very drastic to tell your children never to return. Why do you think the mothers told their children this?
4. Describe how the children may have felt hearing gun shots, yells and screams, and seeing their bark hut burn.
5. The author wrote, 'mourned, shivered and feared snake bites'. Describe in your own words how you imagine the children survived those three days and how they felt.
6. How were the children treated by the woodcutters?
7. Using evidence in the poem to write a description of what life was like for the children at the farm.
8. Did the children return to their families?
9. Why do you think nobody rescued these children?
10. Using evidence from *Waiting, Annie Hunter* and what you know about Stephen Reys's life, explain what era you estimate that this took place?
11. Retell the story from the point of view of one of the children. Your story should include fleeing their home and their time at the Shaw Hill farm. Use the information provided in the poem to describe your ideas of what the children endured. Write your narrative on a separate page.



LEARNING GUIDE 3: Poem sections to mime.

Highlight the section your group will mime.

From *Waiting* by Stephen Reys

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From *Annie Hunter* by Stephen Reys

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