



Society and culture 7: identifying personal responsibilities



Number seven in a series of eight lessons:

- Society and culture 1: responsibilities and obligations
- Society and culture 2: guest speaker – roles, responsibilities and obligations
- Society and culture 3: family roles of men and women in Aboriginal society
- Society and culture 4: what is an extended family?
- Society and culture 5: men’s roles, responsibilities and obligations in traditional and contemporary societies
- Society and culture 6: women’s roles, responsibilities and obligations in traditional and contemporary societies
- **Society and culture 7: identifying personal responsibilities**
- Society and culture 8: year 1 class visit

CURRICULUM INFORMATION

PHASE OF DEVELOPMENT

Early Childhood (typically ages 4 – 8 years)	Middle Childhood (typically ages 9 – 12 years)	Early Adolescence (typically ages 13 – 15 years)	Late Adolescence (typically 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
✓	✓	✓	✓	

TOPIC INFORMATION

PURPOSE

To provide opportunities for students to identify and explore roles, relationships and obligations in traditional Aboriginal communities, and to compare them with relationships in contemporary society.

STUDENT OUTCOMES

Students:

- identify responsibilities and obligations in traditional Aboriginal communities and in our contemporary society;
- identify roles of men and women then and now;
- discuss families: their own, those in traditional Aboriginal communities, and those in our contemporary society;
- identify family roles, responsibilities and obligations; and
- demonstrate understanding of extended families and roles, responsibilities and obligations of extended family members.





KEY BACKGROUND POINTS

This series of lessons examines roles, responsibilities, and obligations of men and women in traditional Aboriginal communities and in our contemporary society.

The Education Department of Western Australia's curriculum document, *Aboriginal studies, 1996*, Level 3 states:

Responsibilities and obligations are important aspects of Aboriginal culture. Both exist in the social structure through the 'kinship system'.

Responsibility differs from obligation in that responsibility can be delegated to others who are in the same relationship category. For example:

- *older siblings are responsible for looking after young siblings; and*
- *grandparents have responsibility for grandchildren – rearing and teaching and appropriate behaviour.*

Any of these responsibilities can be delegated to relatives classified as siblings (cousins) and grandparents (cousins/sisters/brothers of grandparents).

Obligations, on the other hand, are expectations of the moral order. In accordance with rules of etiquette within the value system, obligations cannot be delegated.

In traditional Aboriginal society, leadership of each group varied according to the situation. Various people knew different parts of the law and could perform the rites or songs. Other people would know of renewal practices and rituals concerned with the maintenance of the environment and food resources. Elders exerted some control, but the group could also contribute to decisions.

Most aspects of daily life were governed by the kinship system. This gave order to the maintenance of social control and power to families to ensure that laws were observed and customs obeyed.

Kinship responsibilities and obligations encouraged people to conform to the norm, which in turn suppressed individual deviations. Importantly, the kinship system was the basis of social structure and gave Aboriginal people group cohesion and identity.

In contemporary Aboriginal society, the understanding of the importance of the kinship system continues to be recognised.

It is not easy for all Aboriginal people to still live by the kinship rules. In some areas, the rules have been forgotten and the social group's basic structure of the kinship no longer exists.

For teachers who are in areas where the kinship system does not operate, it would be advisable to concentrate on extended family groupings, which in itself is a part of the kinship system.

And, the same document discusses roles as follows:

In traditional Aboriginal societies the roles of men and women were clearly defined. Men made tools, weapons, implements and hunted for larger game. Women reared children, looked after the aged and collected plant foods and smaller game such as goannas, lizards and marsupials.

Women supplied most of the food that the group consumed. About 80% of the day's food supply was provided by women. As well as collecting food supplies, women cared for younger children and taught the children necessary ceremonial skills.

Children were taught to assume male/female work roles through everyday activities. Once boys were old enough, they were taught by the men who were responsible for teaching them how to manufacture weapons, tools, etc and to hunt game.

In today's society, Aboriginal men and women live and work in environments that are usually vastly different to traditional cultural environments. The expectations these environments place on them do not allow for definitive men's and women's roles in a traditional Aboriginal way.

CULTURAL & PROTOCOL CONSIDERATIONS

Plan your lessons, and where possible team-teach, with your school's AIEO, a member of the local Aboriginal community, or a member of the District Office's Aboriginal Education team, to ensure you have not only accurate information but also you respect/observe any relevant cultural practices.





RESOURCES

Medium	Author, producer, developer etc	Title	Source
curriculum materials	Education Department of WA	<i>Aboriginal studies</i>	schools have these documents, also the Aboriginal Studies branch of DET WA
book	UWA Press – writers: Angus Wallam & Susan Kelly, 2004	<i>Corroboree</i>	booksellers and libraries
blackline masters	Elton publications	<i>About Aboriginal people – books 1 – 3</i>	educational booksellers
blackline masters	RIC publications	<i>Australian Aboriginal culture</i>	educational booksellers
book	Omnibus, 1993 – writer: Jeanie Adams	<i>Going for oysters</i>	libraries, bookshops

TEACHING AND LEARNING STRATEGIES

TEACHING RESOURCES

- charts completed previously showing roles, responsibilities and obligations
- writing materials
- writing paper
- each student requires a photo of themselves
- digital camera, computer to download photos and printer (or photos of each student taken prior to this lesson)

LESSON STEPS

Preparation

- **Read** KEY BACKGROUND POINTS and CULTURAL AND PROTOCOL CONSIDERATIONS sections above. Note the section discussing roles.
- **Work** with your AIEO, other Aboriginal staff members, or the Aboriginal Education team at your District Education office to ensure your lesson planning is appropriate, and to supply Aboriginal English words as required.
- **Display** charts listing roles, responsibilities and obligations (from previous lessons).
- **Organise** for students to take each other's photos to send to younger students ahead of the shared lesson, and explain the purpose of the lesson (see PURPOSE section above).
- **Arrange** with a Year 1 or 2 teacher a time for your students to 'share a lesson' with their students, explain the reasons for this lesson, and discuss how to structure and present the lesson.
- **Ask** for list of Year 1 or 2 names and pair each child with a student from your class.
- **Liaise** with the other teacher about preparing her students for the activity.

Implementation

Whole class

- **Revise** general roles, responsibilities and obligations from charts compiled in previous lessons.
- **Brainstorm** members of a contemporary extended family (encourage students to use their own families as a 'model').
- **Brainstorm** a list of contemporary children's responsibilities (not obligations – be sure to make the distinction) within their extended families (to parents, siblings, grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins ...).
- **Compare** these lists with those on charts and add any new points to the charts, writing 'now' next to the new additions.
- **Discuss** students' own families and responsibilities between members.





- **Ask** students to identify their own responsibilities to different family members.
- **Explain** to students that they will have a chance to experience some of those responsibilities when they work with a Year 1 or 2 child, planning and sharing an activity (oral reading) and morning tea.
- **Give** students the name of their child.
- **Distribute** photos previously taken of each student to send to the younger child, their partner, before the day of shared activities. This helps to ensure a smooth start with little shyness on the part of the younger children.
- **List** on board steps to prepare:
 - Find a suitable book to read to younger child.
 - Find out how to ‘hear’ the younger child read (be encouraging, help them with words they struggle with ...)
 - Plan your lesson. It has three stages: reading to your child, hearing the child read, and sharing morning tea.

Working individually

- **Ask** students to write a letter to their child, introducing themselves and inviting child to share reading (bring their reading book) and morning tea, on the chosen day.
- **Ask** students to take an envelope and write their child’s name and class name on it, then place their letter and photo in the envelope and to hand it in to be delivered to the younger children’s classroom.

Whole class

- **Arrange to deliver** letters to relevant class.

ASSESSMENT

Observe students’ participation in class discussions and activities.

Observe students’ preparation for the activity – how successfully did they follow the required steps?

Assess students’ letters in terms of: content, structure, accurate spelling, use of appropriate grammar and punctuation conventions.

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