



Wangkatha orthography

A unit of work that may be divided into lessons that suit students' needs and that fit timetabling requirements.



CURRICULUM INFORMATION

PHASE OF DEVELOPMENT

Early Childhood	Middle Childhood	Early Adolescence	Late Adolescence
	✓	✓	

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 students with opportunities to study the orthography of traditional Aboriginal languages, and to compare these languages with English as well as other languages from around the world.

STUDENT OUTCOMES

Students will:

- investigate sound structures in different languages, and compare differences between them;
- experience and discuss sound structures of the Western Desert languages; and
- experience and discuss the sound structures of the Wangkatja language.

KEY BACKGROUND POINTS

- Numerous Aboriginal languages were spoken in Australia at the time of the first contact with non Aboriginal (European) people.
- Many languages have been lost due to their verbal nature and the fact that Aboriginal people were forbidden, by the Europeans, from speaking their own languages.
- Some English words do not have literal Aboriginal language translations which provide insights into the way Aboriginal people perceived aspects of the world around them.
- These lessons are designed to explore sounds within Aboriginal languages and to compare them with other languages of the world, especially English. At this stage only look at the sounds that construct the words – see note 4 – lesson steps.
- Employ the use of language speakers/Elders to create the sounds associated with English translations of Aboriginal words.
- Utilise AIEOs either to find a member of the community to demonstrate sound structures, or to do this themselves.
- Utilise language dictionaries of the area, eg Wangkatha dictionary.
- Visit the Karlkurla language and culture Aboriginal corporation (KLC) in Kalgoorlie to discuss issues that arise from the sound structure of the language.





CULTURAL & PROTOCOL CONSIDERATIONS

Acknowledge and respect the local language and language speakers.

It is vital to consult Aboriginal experts in your district (eg in the school community, in the community, District Education Office (DEO) or Aboriginal education advisory council) to learn correct protocols, word pronunciation and spelling, before teaching Aboriginal words.

Local language experts may include Aboriginal and Islander Education Officers (AIEO) who should be involved in two-way teaching as they provide language knowledge and the teacher supplies teaching knowledge.

As there may be Aboriginal students from different language groups in your class it is essential to check out if these students are able to participate in your lessons as it may not be appropriate for some Aboriginal people to speak another group's language.

RESOURCES

Medium	Author, producer, developer etc	Title	Source
book	Karlkurla language and culture Aboriginal corporation (KLC)	<i>Wangkatha dictionary</i>	karlkurla@westnet.com.au
book	KLC	<i>Basic Wangkatja grammar</i>	karlkurla@westnet.com.au
book/CD	KLC	<i>Yilpanha Tjapirnku Thukurrpa</i>	karlkurla@westnet.com.au
book	KLC	<i>Tjina</i>	karlkurla@westnet.com.au
book	KLC	<i>kuṯju, kuṯjarra, marnkurrpa ... pirni</i>	karlkurla@westnet.com.au
CD	Josie Boyle	<i>Thee-thee-goo songs</i>	karlkurla@westnet.com.au
book/CD	KLC	<i>Wankatja language</i>	karlkurla@westnet.com.au

TEACHING AND LEARNING STRATEGIES

TEACHING RESOURCES

- posters
- KLC library
- CD of Wangkatha language (in development).
- Basic Wangkatha grammar (in development)
- large sheet of paper or card for recording points in group discussions
- writing paper and pens/pencils

LESSON STEPS

Preparation

- Depending on students' prior learning / knowledge, these lesson steps may be covered in a week or spread over a term of learning.
- A theme may be developed for the lessons.
- Lesson steps may be adapted for use at phases of development other than Early Adolescence.
- Steps following this lesson would be the study of *Basic Wangkatja grammar*.





- **Consult** Aboriginal experts, AIEOs in your school and community to find the correct protocols and pronunciation for speaking language.
- **Consult** AIEOs or KLC and seek their assistance in organising an appropriate Aboriginal person/Elder to come to the school and speak in Wangkatha.
- **Talk** with the Elder and let them know what you would like them to do: discuss and share cultural knowledge with the students. This may look very different from your expectations, depending on how the Elder works with the students.
- **Prepare** your students for the visit, and make expectations (for both Aboriginal and non Aboriginal students) clear, for demonstrating respect to the Elder.
- **Thank** your visitor for sharing their culture with the students.

Implementation

Whole class – prior to the Elder’s visit

Awareness of languages

- **Brainstorm** students’ prior knowledge of languages (different names of languages, different sounds, different scripts ...)
- **Discuss** some differences between languages.

Working in groups

- **Scribe** differences on a large sheet of paper/card demonstrating knowledge and awareness of languages.
- Each student copies the group’s ideas.
- Students separate and share findings with different groups.
- Students record the similarities/differences from the discussion.

Whole class

- Group reports back to the whole class.

Whole class – prior to the Elder’s visit

Wangkatha sounds

- **Listen to and view** sounds from stories, songs, games.
- **Have a go** at reproducing sounds/words in them.
- **Demonstrate** sounds in pictorial/visual form.
- **Repeat** oral sounds (pronunciation) using:
 - posters
 - sounds pronunciation
 - *Wangkatha dictionary* pp 4-8
 - *Basic Wangkatja grammar* book

Wangkatha words (oral)

- **Repeat** steps in Wangkatha sounds above, with words.
- **Use** words in stories, or Readers theatre.

Whole class

- **Elder’s visit:** shares with students cultural knowledge about language.
- **Encourage** students to ask questions (if the Elder has agreed).
- **Begin** writing Wangkatha sounds in words from the Elder’s talk.
- **Elder** assists children (if previously agreed).

Written Wangkatha sounds

- **Review** listening and viewing sounds and words.
- **Practise** sounds using games.
- **Note** standardisation of ‘th’, ‘tj’, and ‘nh’, ‘ny’ sounds (Wangkatha dictionary pp 5, 66, 71 and 45 – 47).





Written Wangkatha words

- **Repeat** above steps (for sounds) with words.

A student thanks the Elder for visiting your classroom and helping students with the Wangkatha language.

Extension work

- Exposure to other Western Desert words, songs, languages ...
- Investigate cultural significance of language to the land.

Resources for extension work

- Western Desert dictionaries
- Karkurla language and culture Aboriginal corporation
- AIEOs
- Elders/language speakers

Further extension activities

Grammar needs to be learned at this stage before any other extension work is done.
See *Basic Wangkatja grammar book*

ASSESSMENT

- checklists
- oral speaking
- recognition of sounds and words
- writing sounds and words

Acknowledgements / Thanks to contributors.

Karkurla language and culture Aboriginal corporation

Goldfields district education team (writers), Alwyn Evans (editor)

Produced by DUIT Multimedia for the Aboriginal Perspectives across the Curriculum program.

