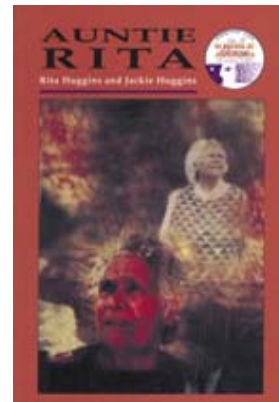
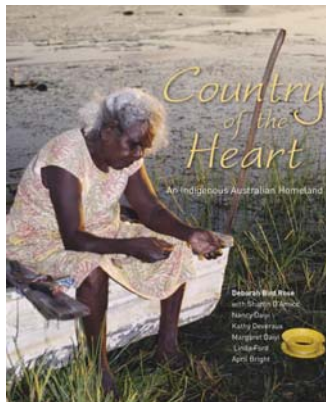
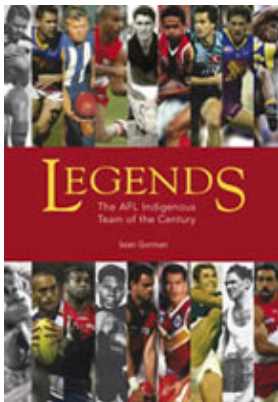


Teachers' Notes: Aboriginal Identity (Legends, Country of the Heart, Auntie Rita)

Aboriginal Studies Press



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[Aboriginal Identity: Legends, Country of the Heart and Auntie Rita](#)

[Indigenous Voices: Thinking Black, The 1967 Referendum, Back on the Block and Doreen Kartinyeri](#)

Aboriginal Identity in Australia:

Student activities to support Year 9-10 English in the Australian Curriculum

For teachers

This learning resource enables Year 9-10 students to explore Aboriginal identity in Australia through three texts that present strong Aboriginal voices. The learning sequence is aligned to the Australian Curriculum: English, and supports the requirement that:

The range of literary texts for Foundation to Year 10 comprises Australian literature, including the oral narrative traditions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, as well as the contemporary literature of these two cultural groups...

This resource allows students to develop several of the general capabilities identified in the Australian Curriculum including literacy; critical and creative thinking; and intercultural understanding. It also relates to the cross curriculum priority Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures.

An exploration of Aboriginal Australian identity is valuable for all young Australians. Aboriginality plays an important role in the construction of a broader Australian identity; the appropriation of Indigenous imagery in film, fashion and advertising attests to this. Identity for most Aboriginal Australians is informed by both the broad Australian culture and their own Aboriginal connections and practices. The history of interactions between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians has also impacted profoundly on Aboriginal notions of identity.

Aboriginal Studies Press (ASP) is uniquely placed to provide publications that present an authentic Indigenous voice to explore this theme. Three titles, available from ASP, have been selected to support this learning resource.

Legends: The AFL Indigenous Team of the Century, Sean Gorman, Aboriginal Studies Press, 2011

Indigenous Australians have given us some of our greatest football champions. With names like Winmar, Long, Rioli and Goodes, the stories of Indigenous footballers are some of the most compelling in the game of AFL. The journey for some has been one of great struggle and difficulty. For them, football was the only way out. Identity is a central theme in this book of short inspirational biographies that will fully engage your students.

Country of the Heart, Aboriginal Studies Press, 2011

Through the wonderful photographic images and the stories of the Mak Mak clan, readers are led into the heart of country: the people, the animals, the plants, the ancestors, the seasons – and the

intimate relationships which tie them together. For the Mak Mak people, whose homelands are south west of Darwin, identity and country are inextricably linked.

***Auntie Rita*, Aboriginal Studies Press, 1994 (reprinted 2010)**

This book explores the life of Rita Huggins, beginning with her family being stolen from her 'born country' and taken to a mission. Told through the perceptive, witty and honest voices of both Rita Huggins and her daughter Jackie, this title explores the richness and challenges of Rita's life as an Aboriginal Australian.

The learning resource supports each of these titles with a sequence of learning activities:

- **Shaping identity** activities focus on the formation and portrayal of identity
- **Shaping text** activities explore how structure and language create meanings within texts
- **Shaping your self** activities ask students to create texts which explore aspects of their own identities.

The relevant Australian Curriculum: English content descriptions for Years 9 and 10 for these learning activities are outlined below.

Language	Literature	Literacy
<p>Year 9</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Understand that roles and relationships are developed and challenged through language and interpersonal skills. - Understand that authors innovate with text structures and language for specific purposes and effects. - Analyse and explain the use of symbols, icons and myth in still and moving images and how these augment meaning. - Identify how vocabulary choices contribute to specificity, abstraction and stylistic effectiveness. <p>Year 10</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Understand how language use can have inclusive and exclusive social effects, and can empower or disempower people. - Understand that people's evaluations of texts are influenced by their value systems, the context and the purpose and mode of communication. - Compare the purposes, text structures and language features of traditional and contemporary texts in different media. - Evaluate the impact on audiences of different choices in the representation of still and moving images. 	<p>Year 9</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interpret and compare how representations of people and culture in literary texts are drawn from different historical, social and cultural contexts. - Explore and reflect on personal understanding of the world and significant human experience gained from interpreting various representations of life matters in texts. - Analyse texts from familiar and unfamiliar contexts, and discuss and evaluate their content and the appeal of an individual author's literary style. - Analyse text structures and language features of literary texts, and make relevant comparisons with other texts. - Create literary texts, including hybrid texts, that innovate on aspects of other texts, for example by using parody, allusion and appropriation. <p>Year 10</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Analyse and explain how text structures, language features and visual features of texts and the context in which texts are experienced may influence audience response. - Identify, explain and discuss how narrative viewpoint, structure, characterisation and devices including 	<p>Year 9</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Analyse how the construction and interpretation of texts, including media texts, can be influenced by cultural perspectives and other texts. - Interpret, analyse and evaluate how different perspectives of issue, event, situation, individuals or groups are constructed to serve specific purposes in texts. - Use comprehension strategies to interpret and analyse texts, comparing and evaluating representations of an event, issue, situation or character in different texts. - Explore and explain the combinations of language and visual choices that authors make to present information, opinions and perspectives in different texts. - Create imaginative, informative and persuasive texts that present a point of view and advance or illustrate arguments, including texts that integrate visual, print and/or audio features. <p>Year 10</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Analyse and evaluate how people, cultures, places, events, objects and concepts are represented in texts, including media texts, through

	<p>analogy and satire shape different interpretations and responses to a text</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Create literary texts with a sustained 'voice', selecting and adapting appropriate text structures, literary devices, language, auditory and visual structures and features for a specific purpose and intended audience. 	<p>language, structural and/or visual choices.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify and explore the purposes and effects of different text structures and language features of spoken texts, and use this knowledge to create purposeful texts that inform, persuade and engage. - Identify and analyse implicit or explicit values, beliefs and assumptions in texts and how these are influenced by purposes and likely audiences. - Use comprehension strategies to compare and contrast information within and between texts, identifying and analysing embedded perspectives, and evaluating supporting evidence. - Create sustained texts, including texts that combine specific digital or media content, for imaginative, informative, or persuasive purposes that reflect upon challenging and complex issues.
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For students

The complex nature of identity is an issue that many Aboriginal Australians, in particular, are familiar with. In many instances, Indigenous people are aligned to country or language groups, and this is interwoven with their identity as Australians in the broader society. This resource uses three texts to explore Aboriginal identity and its portrayal in Australia.

Thinking about identity

Let's start by thinking about your own identity. While we often talk about 'identity' using the singular form of the word, our identity is actually a complex mix of identities all of which come together to help define us.

Brainstorm and list all the ways that your identity is defined by thinking of the communities or groups that you identify with e.g. soccer player, Australian, Facebook user, Muslim, friend. Consider how you behave in each of these groups and how other people perceive you in each of these roles. Complete a chart similar to the one below.

Group	In this group I behave/feel...	People in this group see me as...

Discuss the following questions:

- Why do you behave and feel differently in different groups to which you belong?
- In what ways does belonging to many groups reflect and shape your identity?
- How much do we shape our own identity and how much is it shaped by others?

Footy legends

Legends: The AFL Indigenous Team of the Century

In *Legends: The AFL Indigenous Team of the Century*, Sean Gorman presents biographies of the greatest Indigenous AFL footballers who played between 1905 and 2005.

Shaping identity: A moment in time

This activity focuses on formation and portrayal of identity.

A: Read the Nicky Winmar biography and answer the following questions about AFL and its role in shaping Winmar's identity. **Answer the following questions:**

1. What does the opening quotation tell you about the place of AFL in Nicky Winmar's life?
2. Look at the photo of Winmar taken after the 1993 St Kilda game against Collingwood. [Do an internet search for the image]. What does this image say to you? Imagine that you were in the crowd when this photo was taken. How would you have interpreted Winmar's action?
3. What aspects of his life has Winmar used to explain his identity in the following quotation?
I am Noongar. I was born in Kellerberrin. Dad's family comes from Quairading and Mum was born in Beverley. Mum and Dad got married in Doodlakine. We moved to Pingelly and grew up as a young kid there. I still remember the days of growing up on the reserve that was good. (p. 125)
4. Place is an important aspect of Winmar's identity. How did living on an Aboriginal reserve impact on his early life?
5. What role did sport play in the way that Winmar saw himself as he was growing up?
6. How important was family to Winmar when he started his football career?
7. Winmar reflects that his move to Melbourne was difficult. What were the main factors that caused him hardship during this time?
8. What role did sporting clubs play in developing Winmar's sense of identity and belonging?
9. In what ways is race related to identity? Why is racial abuse often damaging to a person's sense of identity?
10. In what ways do you think the one moment after the game against Collingwood in 1993 defines the rest of Winmar's life?
11. This biography of Winmar starts with an anecdote. What does this anecdote tell you about Winmar's life after football?

B: Our identity is formed by the way we see ourselves and also the way others perceive us.

Select one of the AFL players who are featured in *Legends: the AFL Indigenous Team of the Century* and read their short biography.

Create a visual representation of the player's identity, from outside and within. Do this by drawing an outline of an AFL player. Using the information in your selected biography, collect all of the words and phrases that describe how your chosen player may define their own identity and write these inside the outline of the player.

Around the outside of the player, write all of the words and phrases that other people may use to describe the player's identity. This may include perceptions from family, team-mates, coaches, AFL supporters and people who have only known him since he stopped playing football.

Discuss these questions:

- How are the words inside and outside the outline the same and different?
- What does this tell you about identity?

Shaping text: a telling biography

Oral traditions are important to all Aboriginal cultures. Knowledge, beliefs and practices have been passed from generation to generation for thousands of years through talking and the telling of stories. Gorman, in his introduction to *Legends: The AFL Indigenous Team of the Century* notes that 'this book began life as an oral history archive'. In this activity you will explore Gorman's biography of footballer Andrew McLeod and see how oral traditions are respected and reflected in his text.

Read the short biography of Andrew McLeod in *Legends: The AFL Indigenous Team of the Century*, and **answer the following questions:**

1. What sort of a narrative voice does author Sean Gorman bring to his writing in this profile of Andrew McLeod? How do you think that Gorman feels about AFL? How does he feel about McLeod? How does this affect the way that he tells the story?
2. Read the description of the end of the 1997 AFL grand final. What do we learn about the author from this description? What do we learn about McLeod?
3. Why do you think that Gorman starts this short biography with a direct quotation from McLeod?
4. How would you describe the style of language used by McLeod in terms such as 'my old man'? How do the quotations affect the reader's understanding of McLeod? How important do you think that the use of quotations is in a biography? Is this particularly pertinent to Indigenous biographies? Why?
5. Gorman and McLeod both discuss McLeod's life as a football player. How do their two voices reflect different aspects of McLeod's identity?
6. Gorman uses an anecdote early in this biography. What purpose does this serve in engaging the reader?

Shaping your self: *poetic identity*

How would you shape a poem about you? A shape poem can take many forms. Its distinctive feature is that the physical shape of the poem reflects the content explored in the poem.

Identify a shape that represents one or more aspects of your identity. For example, the shape might reflect an aspect of your personality or it might take the form of an object that holds significance to you. Experiment with the arrangement of words, font, and colour to **create a shape poem** about you.

Identity and country

Country of the Heart

Country and identity are inextricably linked for many Aboriginal people, including the Mak Mak clan whose homelands are south west of Darwin. *Country of the Heart* explores this connection.

Shaping identity: *my country, myself*

Read the 'Homelands' section of *Country of the heart* on pages 12-14 and **answer the following questions**:

1. Why do you think that this book is called 'Country of the Heart'?
2. What do Kathy's words say about the relationship the Mak Mak people have with their land?
3. What does the word 'country' mean to you? What does it mean to the Mak Mak people?
What are the similarities and differences between your responses to these two questions?
4. April describes her mother's relationship to the land. How do you think that this relationship might shape her mother's identity?
5. What does the caption on page 12 (referring to the image on page 13) tell you about Mak Mak people and their country? What caption would you use to describe the image on page 13?
6. Analyse the image on page 14. Why do you think that this picture has been selected to portray the relationship between Mak Mak people and their land?

Shaping text: *many modes of meaning*

The textual devices and structure adopted by Deborah Bird Rose in *Country of the Heart* were chosen to reflect the 'real world quality of life in an Indigenous homeland'.

Read the 'Kinship with animals' section on pages 82-90 and **answer the following questions** to explore how the cultural perspectives of the Mak Mak people are reflected in the approach adopted by the author.

1. How have different text fonts and colours been used within this section of the book? Why have these choices been made?
2. How is the voice of the Mak Mak people presented within the book? How does this reflect the oral tradition of this clan?
3. How does the voice in the expository text differ from the voice of the Mak Mak people?

4. Look at the images in the 'Kinship with animals' section. Why do you think that these images have been selected? How do they relate to the identity of the Mak Mak people? Why do you think that so much imagery has been used in this text?
5. Why do you think that quotations from the Mak Mak people have been used to caption some of the images?
6. Look at the imagery, captions and quotations on pages 86 and 87. Why have each of these elements been used in this way? How does this structure help the reader to understand the ideas being conveyed?
7. Non-Indigenous woman, Deborah Bird Rose has chosen to use several literary devices including images, captions, quotations and expository texts in this book. In what ways does this approach reflect the beliefs and culture of the Mak Mak people?

Shaping your self: *your places*

Country of the Heart uses a photo essay to highlight and represent the connection that the Mak Mak people have with their country.

Connection to place can have different meanings for different people. What are the places that are important to you? In what ways do these places reflect your identity? Locate and select images of these places.

Use the images to **create a pictorial presentation**. Enhance your images with captions; as with *Country of the Heart* these can take the form of quotations. The captions should explain and explore your connection to the place depicted in each image.

Auntie Rita's story

Auntie Rita

Auntie Rita tells the story of Rita Huggins' life through the voices of Rita and her daughter Jackie. The story starts in the 1920s when Rita Huggins and her family were stolen from their country and taken to live on an Aboriginal reserve.

Shaping identity: *Don't Cry, Gundubberries*

Read 'Don't Cry, Gundubberries', the first chapter of *Auntie Rita*. Rita Huggins and her daughter Jackie Huggins tell this story; Jackie's 'voice' is identified in italics. Use the text to **answer the following questions** about identity:

1. What does the term 'born country' mean? What does her born country mean to Rita?
2. Why was knowledge of country so significant for traditional Aboriginal families such as Rita's?
3. 'Half caste', 'full blood', 'wild bush blacks' and 'quadroon' were words used to identify Huggins' family members and to determine their destination when they were removed from her born country. What sort of identity did these words define? Why are these terms considered offensive today?
4. Why do you think that Aboriginal people used the words 'prison' and 'concentration camp' to describe Cherbourg?
5. On page 12, Rita Huggins writes:
No one had the right to remove us from our traditional lands and to do what they did to us. We were once the proud custodians of our land and now our way of life became controlled by insensitive people who knew nothing about us but thought they knew everything.
To what extent do you think that this influenced Rita's identity as an Aboriginal and as an Australian?
6. What did Jackie Huggins learn about her own 'identity and belonging' by watching her mother's experience of returning to her born country?

Shaping text: *one story, two voices*

Auntie Rita captures conversations between Rita and Jackie Huggins, reflecting their oral traditions and their mutual Aboriginality. In this activity, you will explore how these traditions are reflected in text structure and language use.

Read 'The Grand Experience', the fifth chapter of *Auntie Rita* and **answer the following questions**:

1. Reflect on the language that is used by both Rita and Jackie Huggins in this chapter. How would you describe Rita's language? How would you describe Jackie's language? How are they similar and different? To what extent do these differences reflect factors such as their ages and life experiences?
2. On pages 71 and 72, Rita reflects on a low period of her life when she and her children were evicted from their home. How does this section make you feel about Rita? Jackie adds her perspective on this time on page 73. How does this second perspective add to your understanding of Rita?
3. On pages 72 and 73, Rita and Jackie use the words 'muntha', 'bookah' and 'thimbun'. Why do you think that they have chosen to use words that need to be explained in a glossary? How important is choice of language in expressing your own identity?
4. In telling Rita's story, Rita and Jackie Huggins are each keen to bring authentic Aboriginal voice to the text. Jackie tells us:
For instance, for Rita, 'Black' is used only among ourselves and with those non-Aboriginal people we trust, because to use it publicly raises negative connotations and prejudice, whereas for my generation Black has been reclaimed with pride. (page 3)
What does this tell us about the way that different readers might interpret the word 'black' in a text?
5. The blurb on the back of *Auntie Rita* reads:
Rita Huggins told her memories to her daughter Jackie, and some of their conversation is in this book. We witness their intimacy, their similarities and their differences, the 'fighting with their tongues'. Two voices, two views on a shared life.
Why do you think that the book about Rita's life includes two voices? What purpose do you think that creating this book has served for Rita? And for Jackie?
6. In the introduction to this book, Rita Huggins says:
We want the book to be a record for my children and their children and other members of my family. Hopefully it will speak to other people too, including the white people who want to know what the story looks like from the Aboriginal side (page 1)
What do you think this book offers to readers?

Shaping your self: stories of self

In this learning resource you have looked at how identity is explored in texts and also how texts can be structured to reflect different aspects of identity. Use these insights as you decide how to **create a text about you**.

What are the events and stories that have helped to make you the person you are today? Think about the text from the perspectives of content, mode of presentation, structure and language:

- What are the defining events and stories from your life? Which will you include? Which will you leave out?
- Which combination of visual, written and digital elements will best express your identity?

- Do you want to use a thematic approach, a chronological approach or some other structure?
Which approach will best reflect the way you think about or live your life?
- How will your identity be reflected in the language choices that you make?

Writing about identity

Write an essay

1. What are some of the factors that shape Aboriginal identity today? How have these been represented in *Legends: The AFL Indigenous Team of the Century*, *Country of the Heart* and *Auntie Rita*?

OR

2. Some Aboriginal writers have referred to the challenge of putting 'black words on white paper'. Discuss this challenge with reference to *Legends: The AFL Indigenous Team of the Century*, *Country of the Heart* and *Auntie Rita*.