

## Aboriginal Art

Does anyone know what Aboriginal Art is?  
Do you know who or where the Aboriginals live?

Aboriginal people live in Australia. They have been living in Australia for over 40,000 years. This makes them one of the oldest cultures in the world.

Aboriginal people who live in the Central Desert region get all their food from the land they live in. They eat seeds, fruit, vegetables, reptiles and insects.

Aboriginals move around a lot. People that move around and do not settle in one place are called nomads.

Australian Aboriginals spoke different languages, but had the same religious beliefs that focused on the natural environment around them.

Traditionally, they have a map of their landscape that is passed on to each new generation verbally through their Dreamtime stories.

Dreamtime stories tell of when the world was created and their art shows these stories through secret symbols.

Aboriginals do not have a written language like we do, so their art stands for a written language. They have layers of hidden meanings.

Their paintings are used for teaching and there are different ones for children or adults.

Aboriginal artists are not allowed to painting a story that does not belong to them.

Aboriginal art comes in three regional styles:

1- geometrical style found in central Australia; circles, arcs and dots

2-simple figurative style found in Queensland

3-complex figurative style found in Arnhem land and Kimberley which includes X-ray art.

Some Aboriginal paintings on rock surfaces are probably the earliest discovered in the world. Some are negative prints made by spraying pigment over ones hand to leave the shape of it. Some are animals or plants. Some of the paintings of fish, show what it looks like on the outside but also what it looks like on the inside - now called x-ray art.

Painting was also done on baskets, shields and boomerangs. They even painted designs on themselves for special occasions.

Painting these designs was a way of life and very important in their communities and brought them all together.

What stories can you tell from your art using Colour, Pattern and Symbols?

What is a symbol? A symbol is a picture or object that represents something else. For example if you were in a restaurant and you saw a door with a small picture of a lady or man on it, what do you think it means?

A picture tells 1000 words. What does yours say?

Art activities:

Creating your own Aboriginal art works.

Perhaps you can use this activity as a cross-curricular lesson of English and Art.

Give them print outs of the two sheets of Aboriginal symbols. Ask them to pretend they are living thousands of years ago and get them to make with the symbols a piece of art work they will pass down to their ancestors. To make it less complicated get them to pick out 3 symbols that will use to create their storyline and art work. Show them some of the Aboriginal art work to help inspire them.

-On one sheet, get them to draw out the three symbols they have chosen. Now create patterns from those symbols. On the back of your art work, once it is dry, write down your story explaining what your art work shows.

Another cross-curricular idea is with Geography or biology. If you have a trip to the zoo or a forest, get them to create a story focused on animals, or things they saw in the forest. Get them to think about the colours that they saw on these trips and use those colours in their work. Maybe they want to bring back some leaves they found to incorporate into their work. If there are animals without Aboriginal symbols, get them to design their own symbols. Did they see animal tracks on their trip? Did they look different to kangaroo tracks? What did they look like?

Display purposes:

If you have in mind that you want to make a big display with their art work, get them to include at the end of each sheet tracks, or river symbols so that you can connect all their work into one long map, journey and story on the wall.

OR

A really cool display would be to make each child do their art work on brown paper to emulate Aboriginal art on bark. To display get the children to collect one of two small branches/twigs (about the size of their art work). Making little holes in the art work, put string through and tie the wood to it and then with the sting make a hanging bit so that it looks like this -



Taken from Pinterest.com