



TIPIAC
EDUCATION FOR
RECONCILIATION

COUNTRY IS OUR FIRST TEACHER

EARLY YEARS LEARNING THROUGH CONNECTION

Country is where we are, who we are and how we care for all things. It holds stories, people, animals, plants and places. When young children connect with Country, they build belonging, respect and responsibility.



Country
is our home.
It teaches us.
We care for it.
It cares for us.

WAYS TO EXPLORE COUNTRY WITH YOUNG CHILDREN

- Walk softly and listen
- Notice plants, animals and seasons
- Explore water, sand, rocks and mud
- Care for Country together
- Learn stories from First Nations peoples

START SMALL. STAY LOCAL. BUILD RELATIONSHIPS.
Strong connections to Country in early years build a foundation for lifelong respect, responsibility and reconciliation.



WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE IN EARLY YEARS

BELONGING
We belong to Country and Country belongs to us.

CONNECTION
We explore, observe and build relationships with the land, water, plants and animals.

CARE
We show care by looking after Country, each other and our community.

RESPECT
We listen to stories, follow cultural protocols and show respect always.

COMMUNITY
We learn together with Local Traditional Custodians and community.

QUESTIONS TO GUIDE LEARNING

- What can we see, hear and feel on Country?
- Who looks after this Country?
- How can we show care and respect?
- What stories does this place hold?

COUNTRY ISN'T JUST SOMETHING WE LEARN ABOUT. IT'S SOMETHING WE LEARN WITH.



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PLACE BASED RESPONSIBILITY REFLECTION

WHERE WE ARE STANDING MATTERS

RECONCILIATION BECOMES LOCAL. NOT ABSTRACT.



START WITH PLACE

Ask students:

What does responsibility look like where we are standing?



EXPLORE LOCAL COUNTRY

Where is our school?
What Country are we on?



WHO ARE THE TRADITIONAL CUSTODIANS?

Who are the Traditional Custodians of this land?



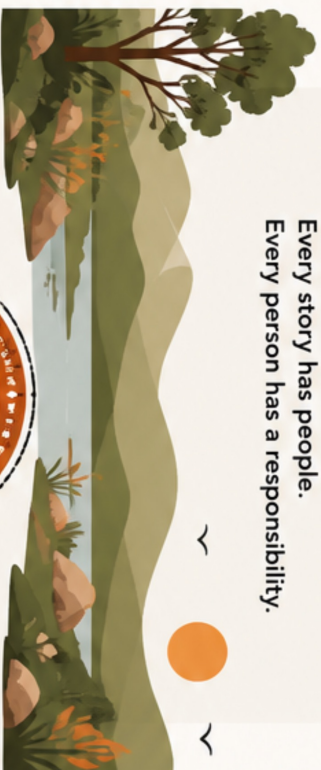
WHAT DOES NATIVE TITLE MEAN HERE?

How does Native Title exist in our local area?



CONNECT TO COUNTRY

Every place has a story.
Every story has people.
Every person has a responsibility.



We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians.
We learn from their knowledge and continue to listen.



We understand our history and strive for a better future.

We care for Country, culture and community.

LINKS TO THE 8 WAYS FRAMEWORK



LAND LINKS

Deepening understanding of the connection between Country, people and culture.



COMMUNITY LINKS

Building respectful relationships through local knowledge, partnership and reciprocity.



REFLECT + RESPOND

Use these prompts to guide discussion, journaling or creative responses.

- What does Country mean to the Traditional Custodians of this land?
- How can we show respect for Country, people and culture every day?
- What actions can we take as a class or school to contribute positively to our local community?
- How does understanding our place help us build stronger, more respectful relationships?



TAKE ACTION

Small actions, local impact. Respect. Learn. Connect. Responsibility in action.





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BEYOND THE TIMELINE

What **shifted** – and what **still needs to?**

We often learn the dates. Now let's unpack what really changed – and what didn't. Move the conversation from 'What happened?' to 'What shifted and what still needs to?'

8 WAYS APPROACH
Deconstruct
+
Reconstruct
Unpack dominant narratives and rebuild understanding with complexity.



LEGAL SHIFT
What changed in law, policy or recognition?

LIVED REALITY
What did not change for First Nations peoples and communities?



27 MAY 1967
REFERENDUM



- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples counted in the census.
 - The Commonwealth gained power to make laws for Aboriginal people.
 - Symbolic recognition in the Constitution.
- Why was this significant?

- Racism, discrimination and inequality continued.
 - Limited access to justice, education, housing and health.
 - Removal policies, child separation and police violence did not end.
- What did everyday life still look like?



3 JUNE 1992
MABO
DECISION



- High Court rejected terra nullius.
 - Recognised Native Title exists.
 - Acknowledged connection to land under traditional laws.
- Why was this significant?

- Native Title was not automatic – it had to be proven in complex legal systems.
 - Land rights remain limited.
 - Ongoing dispossession and cultural damage continues.
- What did everyday life still look like?



LET'S RECONSTRUCT TOGETHER.



- REFLECT + RECONSTRUCT**
- What did these moments change?
 - What did they not change?
 - What does this tell us about the work that **still needs to** happen?



Reconciliation is not a moment in time. It's an ongoing commitment.





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STORY AS EVIDENCE

SEEING LAW THROUGH LIVED EXPERIENCE

Instead of teaching Mabo only as a court case, examine Eddie Mabo's persistence, family and community context.

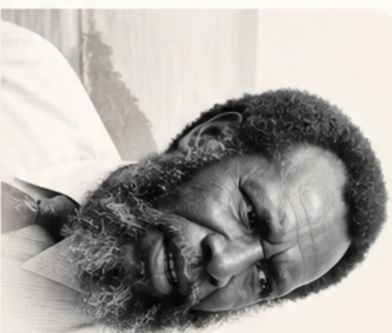
STUDENTS BEGIN TO SEE
LAW AS
LIVED EXPERIENCE.

IT'S MORE THAN A CASE

The Mabo decision (1992) is an important legal milestone. But it was the result of a long struggle led by a man, his family and his community.



This is about Country.
This is about people.
This is about persistence.



EDDIE MABO (1936–1992)

Meriam man. Teacher. Activist. Leader. A man who refused to accept that his people had no connection to their land.

“Our Islands are a part of us, as we are a part of them.”

– Eddie Mabo

THE JOURNEY



GUIDING QUESTIONS

- ? Who carried this struggle?
- ? How long did it take?
- ? What resistance did they face?
- ? What does this story tell us about strength, leadership and community?

STORY ELEMENTS TO EXPLORE

- COUNTRY**
The Meriam people's deep connection to their Islands in the Torres Strait.
- FAMILY & COMMUNITY**
Eddie was supported by his family and community every step of the way.
- PERSISTENCE**
A 15-year legal battle that required unwavering determination.
- RESISTANCE**
Legal, political and social resistance from systems that denied their rights.
- OUTCOME**
A decision that changed Australian law and acknowledged First Nations rights.

FROM LAW TO LIVED EXPERIENCE



Law is not neutral. It is shaped by stories, voices and power.



Understanding the story builds empathy, respect and critical thinking.



Story sharing is a legitimate knowledge framework, not just legal doctrine.



STORY SHARING
Centres First Nations voices and lived experience.

CONNECTION TO THE 8 WAYS



DECONSTRUCT & RECONSTRUCT
Unpack dominant narratives and rebuild understanding with truth and complexity.



RECONCILIATION IS HISTORY. RECONCILIATION IS PRACTICE. RECONCILIATION IS OUR FUTURE.

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