


35

Reconciliation  NSW

**SCHOOLS
RECONCILIATION
CHALLENGE 2026**

ALL IN
FOR RECONCILIATION

Belonging Today. Building Tomorrow

LESSON PLAN



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ALL IN for Reconciliation: Belonging Today. Building Tomorrow

ALL IN for Reconciliation: Belonging Today. Building Tomorrow invites students to consider reconciliation not as a distant goal, but as a shared responsibility lived out in the present. Reconciliation grows when people feel that they truly belong – when their identities, cultures and voices are respected, valued and included. Belonging is not passive; it is created through action, courage and collective commitment.

At its heart, this theme recognises that the future is being shaped right now. The choices we make in our classrooms, schools and communities determine whether Australia becomes more inclusive, more just, and more united. Reconciliation is strengthened when individuals and communities are “all in” – when we move beyond words and actively contribute to fairness, understanding and respect.

For First Nations Peoples, belonging is deeply connected to Country, culture, community and identity. True reconciliation honours this enduring connection, while ensuring that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices are central in shaping the nation’s future. When we listen, learn and act with integrity, we create spaces where everyone can stand strong in who they are.

This theme encourages students to reflect on their role as leaders and changemakers today. Young people hold extraordinary power to influence culture, challenge injustice, and build stronger communities. Through everyday acts of courage, empathy and responsibility, they help shape a future grounded in shared respect and opportunity.

Belonging is built through relationships – through trust, inclusion and a willingness to stand alongside one another. When communities commit to fairness and shared responsibility, reconciliation becomes a living practice rather than a single event. It becomes visible in how we treat each other, how we make decisions, and how we imagine our future together.

Through creative expression, storytelling and bold visual thinking, students are invited to explore what it means to be truly “all in.” Their work can illuminate what belonging looks and feels like, challenge exclusion, and envision hopeful futures. In doing so, they remind us that reconciliation is not only about acknowledging the past – it is about building tomorrow, together.

Belonging starts today.

The future we build depends on the actions we take now.

About this resource

To prepare for taking part in the Schools Reconciliation Challenge 2026, students learn about the following interconnected focus areas:

- responsibility, courage, hope, and youth leadership
- inclusion, fairness
- shared futures
- relationship
- leadership
- commitment.

Students are encouraged to consider both personal actions and collective responsibility, reflecting on how belonging is created through everyday choices, relationships and leadership.

Belonging starts today. The future we build depends on the actions we take now.

Our lesson resources are thoughtfully designed with Australian teachers and First Nations cultural advisers to support students across different age groups, from early primary to senior secondary. Each topic is explored in age-appropriate ways, with increasing depth and complexity to match students' learning levels and developmental stages. This allows educators to revisit key themes, such as reconciliation, cultural identity and sustainability, from different perspectives, as students progress through their schooling.

Below, you'll find an overview of how the resources are structured by age group. The following pages contain printable lesson plans for each topic, including ideas, classroom activities and suggestions to support meaningful discussion and creative exploration.

To see how these lesson plans align with the curriculum, please refer to the curriculum connections section at the end of this brochure, where links to key learning outcomes across subject areas are provided.

Topic	Age Group	Focus	Key Activities	Learning Outcome
Belonging Today. Building Tomorrow: collective responsibility	Years 3-6 and 7-10	Groups: belonging and responsibility. Collaboration and inclusion. Belonging through language and Country	Explore concepts through collective brainstorm, sports and drama. Engage with and respond to First Nations perspectives and devise a plan for caring for Country together.	Understand the impacts of belonging and the responsibilities humans have for each other and Country.
All in for Reconciliation: personal actions	Years 3-6 and 7-10	Shared past, shared future. Courage and relationships. Leadership and action.	Build knowledge of history, Country and culture. Examine how to build relationships. Research and respond creatively to inspiring leaders. Complete a statement of commitment.	Take personal action to deepen understanding of our shared history and take inspiration from First Nations leaders.

Before teaching

Learning as we teach

Many teachers express their concern that they may do the wrong thing when it comes to teaching First Nations histories, cultures and perspectives. This resource has been created to provide you with trustworthy activities and materials so you can teach with confidence. That said, it's really important when working in this space to be ready to make mistakes, apologise if and when we get things wrong, and be ready to learn from our mistakes. This approach is one that we recommend our students take in their learning and it's an approach we need to be ready to take ourselves. Here are some guidelines relevant to the teaching and learning provided.

✔ Okay for all

The following activities are generally appropriate without prior permission:

- Using maps and reliable sources to learn about the Country your school is located on and its Traditional Custodians, and recognising diversity
- Encouraging students to observe nature, reflect on their connection to place, and build respect for the environment
- Looking to First Nations pedagogical frameworks (i.e. as [8 Ways](#)) as a guide for inclusive and differentiated teaching and learning, such as taking students outside to learn on Country

★ Good practice

The following activities and approaches are recommended:

- Draw on the voices of First Nations Peoples to help your students to learn about First Nations cultures – look for authorised, reliable videos, articles, picture books, songs, etc.
- Ensure students recognise the diversity of First Nations perspectives: “many Torres Strait Islander people believe ...” ; “this is how some Aboriginal people learn ...”
- Be transparent with students about what you do know, what requires permission or deeper cultural knowledge, and that they're learning about First Nations cultures from First Nations people
- Where possible, connect with a local Aboriginal land council, community organisation or cultural educator.

! Needs permission

The following activities require permission, consultation or direct community involvement to complete:

- Teaching specific local cultural knowledge about the Country you are on, local stories, songlines, or cultural practices or protocol if you're not sure about the [source](#)
- Conducting cultural practices or ceremonies in the classroom or outdoors; for example, a yarning circle – instructions for a talking circle are provided in this resource
- Using cultural frameworks (like 8 Ways) without understanding their intent
- Teaching a local First Nations language – be sure to connect with and consult local language custodians (try a local land council) and work according to local cultural principles and protocols
- Using local First Nations pedagogies as if they are universal, without checking cultural context
- Presenting yourself as teaching “on-Country learning” in a cultural sense without community involvement

Belonging Today. Building Tomorrow: collective responsibility

Years 3-6

You'll need:

- a whiteboard and markers
- a copy of the handout, 'Collective responsibility thinking routine' Y chart for each student pair
- open space to act out created scenarios
- outdoor space to play a game
- equipment and game card/s for the selected game/s
- a shared device to present online content to the class
- a copy of the meditation exercise 'Connecting with Place 3' teacher resource.

Understand collective identity

Brainstorm belonging

Brainstorm with students, 'What groups do we belong to?'. Prompt them to consider ways they'd group people – family, friends, sports, music, art, Australia, their state or territory, human, children and adults, etc. – any group, big or small.

Help them understand that:

- the biggest group we belong to, after the human race, is perhaps where we're from in the whole world, and that's Australia
- this continent was first home to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, who did and still do take responsibility to take care of it, and we all can take pride in that, as well as play our own role and to care for Country together
- pride in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures makes us all strong!

Ask them to consider and discuss:

- What's our responsibility to our group?
- How do individuals make a group interact smoothly?
- How does belonging contribute to our sense of self and our wellbeing?
- How can we ensure others feel they belong?

Make responsibility visible

Complete a Y-chart thinking routine

Explain to students:

In First Nations cultures and communities, each person has a connection to or responsibility for everyone else. Professor Deen Sanders OAM, a proud Worimi man, explains that when making a decision, the person must consider the impacts that decision will have on the next seven generations, not just right now (DCA 2024).

Place students in pairs and ask them to discuss the following question:

What responsibilities do humans have for each other?

Give each pair a copy of the handout, 'Collective responsibility thinking routine' to answer the question:

What does that responsibility look like, sound like, feel like?

Discuss pair ideas as a class.

Act out collective responsibility

Have students move into small groups and create a silent enactment of a scenario to demonstrate to others how to be a good human – showing care, respect and empathy.

What can we do together?

Play a First Nations game

Go outside and play a cooperative game from the [Yulunga Traditional Indigenous Games](#) collection. The games chuboochuboo, juluhy, kai or kai-wed, keentan, koolchee koolchee, and wana, or Noongar wana, are just a few of those suitable for Y3–6 students. Use this resource to find First Nations games to play throughout the year.

Whichever game you choose, before playing be sure to discuss the Country the game is from and other information provided on the game card. Pronunciation for some game names may be found with an online search.

After the game, sit in a talking circle and ask:

- How does playing First Nations games help us celebrate First Nations cultures?
- How do the rules of this game encourage us to work together?
- How does playing this game help us come together and feel we belong?
- How does the game compare to life?
- What can we do to take the cooperation and respect from sport into our daily lives?
-

Belonging through activity

Teach a First Nations game

Each class demonstrates the rules of a First Nations game without using words. They need to help the other class understand how the game increases togetherness, still without words.

After demonstrating and playing the game, share the information provided on the game card about the game, Country and People.



This activity could form the basis of a Reconciliation on Screen submission for the Schools Reconciliation Challenge – students could document on film their reasoning/motivation, planning and execution of the activity as a demonstration of a student-led reconciliation and the idea of 'Belonging Today. Building Tomorrow'.

Belonging through language

Recognise local language

Explain to students that First Nations cultures are oral cultures – where stories, songs and knowledges have been passed down through language for 50- to 65,000 years (ABC 2023). Stories and song help keep knowledge, Country and culture strong. Some stories are part of Dreaming or songlines – connecting people, places, beliefs and customs through language. Language creates a sense of belonging.

Find out about local language/s spoken on the Country your school is located on using the Gambay '[First Languages Map](#)', the AIATSIS '[Map of Indigenous Australia](#)' and the Reconciliation NSW PDF map of '[Aboriginal Nations/Languages in NSW & ACT](#)', that show the breadth of language groups.

You may be able to find an episode of the ABC's program [Mother Tongue](#) that's relevant to the language spoken where your students live.

 **Needs permission**

Learn greetings and other words

Read the 'Before teaching' sections on belonging through language and permission so you can explain this to students. This is especially important if permission has not yet been received to learn local language.

Then with permission:

- Watch the video, [Language program takes students out of classroom and on country](#) (05:00) from ABC Australia, and learn some words about the Country your school is on.
- Help students learn greetings in local language to show respect to local First Nations People/s, at events and in the classroom every day.
- Find out language words related to belonging, such as *together* and *talk*.

Belonging to Country

Watch and draw

Watch the first part of the clip, '[Country - what it means for Aboriginal communities](#)', from Heritage NSW, stopping at 01:14.

Discuss these questions as a class:

- What do you understand Country means to First Nations Peoples?
- What does Country or land mean to you?

Have students draw or write about a natural place that:

- Is important to them OR
- they'd like to visit and get to know.

Get back to nature

Take students to a place of natural beauty or find a spot in the school grounds (that may happen to be beautiful!) and lead students through the meditation exercise 'Connecting with Place 3' from *Copyright (c) Paul Callaghan 2022, Callaghan P and Gordon P The Dreaming Path: Indigenous Thinking to Change Your Life, Published by Pantera Press, an imprint of Hardie Grant Publishing Pty Ltd. 2022 p. 91-93 - see page 23 of this resource*) to acknowledge and connect with the Country they're on. Be sure to also acknowledge the source.

If in the classroom, play either:

- the 8- or 5-minute meditation provided on Red Room Poetry's [Ngarayamūrah - Listening to Country meditation](#), by Nicole Smede, a multi-disciplinary artist of Warrimay/Birribay and colonial descent

or

- the movement based [Wayapa Wuurrk meditation 1: Your special place](#) (17:51), by Jamie Marloo Thomas, a GunaiKurnai man and Maara descendant, during which "participants are led through poses that represent all the elements of nature".



Caring for Country – sharing the caring, sharing the future

Working together to build tomorrow

Work as a class to decide on and plan a project to care for Country in or near their school. It could be as simple as an emu parade of the playground to collect rubbish, or sprinkling native flower seeds in the school garden beds, or something more ambitious, such as building and planting a garden to attract native insects.

Consider to what extent this project could involve the wider school community and/or community beyond the school.

This activity could form the basis of a Reconciliation on Screen or Reconciliation Stories submission for the Schools Reconciliation Challenge – students could document on film or in writing their reasoning/motivation, planning and execution of the activity as a demonstration of a student-led reconciliation and the idea of 'Belonging Today. Building Tomorrow'.

References

ABC (2023) '[Gerard Rennick says there's no archaeological evidence to prove Indigenous Australians have been here for 60,000 years. What are the facts?](#)', RMIT ABC Fact Check, accessed 4 March 2026.

DCA (Diversity Council Australia) (2024) '[Lessons from First Nations' leadership](#)', DCA website, accessed 5 March 2026.

Belonging Today. Building Tomorrow: collective responsibility

Years 7-9

You'll need:

- a whiteboard and markers
- a copy of the handout, 'Collective responsibility thinking routine' Y chart for each student pair
- art materials – coloured pencils and paper
- outdoor space to play a game
- equipment and game card/s for the selected game/s
- a shared device to present online content to the class
- a copy of the meditation exercise 'Connecting with Place 3' teacher resource.

Understand collective identity

Brainstorm belonging

Brainstorm with students, 'What groups do we belong to?'. Prompt them to consider ways they'd group people – family, friends, sports, music, art, Australia, their state or territory, human, children and adults, etc. – any group, big or small.

Help them understand that:

- the biggest group we belong to, after the human race, is perhaps where we're from in the whole world, and that's Australia
- this continent was first home to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, who did and still do take responsibility to take care of it, and we all can take pride in that, as well as play our own role and to care for Country together
- pride in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures makes us all strong!

Ask them to consider and discuss:

- What's our responsibility to our group?
- How do individuals make a group interact smoothly?
- How does belonging contribute to our sense of self and our wellbeing?
- How can we ensure others feel they belong?

Make responsibility visible

Complete a Y-chart thinking routine

Explain to students:

In First Nations cultures and communities, each person has a connection to or responsibility for everyone else. Professor Deen Sanders OAM, a proud Worimi man, explains that when making a decision, the person must consider the impacts that decision will have on the next seven generations, not just right now (DCA 2024).

Place students in pairs and ask them to discuss the following question:

What responsibilities do humans have for each other?

Give each pair a copy of the handout, 'Collective responsibility thinking routine' to answer the question:

What does that responsibility look like, sound like, feel like?

Discuss pair ideas as a class.

Draw collective responsibility

Have students move into small groups and create visual depictions to explain to others how to be a good human – showing care, respect and empathy.

What can we do together?

Play a First Nations game

Go outside and play a cooperative game from the [Yulunga Traditional Indigenous Games](#) collection. The games bowitgee, kabi kabi buroinjini, marn-grook, millim baeyeetch and parndo are just a few of those suitable for Y7–10 students. Use this resource to find First Nations games to play throughout the year.

Whichever game you choose, before playing be sure to discuss the Country the game is from and other information provided on the game card. Pronunciation for some game names may be found with an online search.

After the game, sit in a talking circle and ask:

- How does playing First Nations games help us celebrate First Nations cultures?
- How do the rules of this game encourage us to collaborate?
- How is this game an effective way to promote togetherness and belonging?
- How does the game compare to life?
- What can we do to take the cooperation and respect from sport into our daily lives?

Belonging through activity

Design a collaborative sports event

Students work in small groups or as a class to plan a collaborative games day based on the Yulunga Indigenous Games to promote connection and belonging.

Individual students or groups can consider:

- possible attendees – ages, skills, abilities
- weather implications
- which games would be most collaborative
- what equipment would be needed
- how to share information about the games' First Nations origins
- where the games could be played
- required facilities
- how the event will have the desired impact.

A finalised plan could be presented to the PE staff and principal for approval.

This activity could form the basis of a Reconciliation on Screen submission for the Schools Reconciliation Challenge – students could document on film their reasoning/motivation, planning and execution of the activity as a demonstration of a student-led reconciliation and the idea of 'Belonging Today. Building Tomorrow'.

Belonging through language

Recognise local language

Explain to students that First Nations cultures are oral cultures – where stories, songs and knowledges have been passed down through language for 50- to 65,000 years (ABC 2023). Stories and song help keep knowledge, Country and culture strong. Some stories are part of Dreaming or songlines – connecting people, places, beliefs and customs through language. Language creates a sense of belonging.

Find out about local language/s spoken on the Country your school is located on using the Gambay '[First Languages Map](#)', the AIATSIS '[Map of Indigenous Australia](#)' and the Reconciliation NSW PDF map of '[Aboriginal Nations/Languages in NSW & ACT](#)', that show the breadth of language groups.

You may be able to find an episode of the ABC's program [Mother Tongue](#) that's relevant to the language spoken where your students live.

⚠ Needs permission

Learn greetings and other words

Read the 'Before teaching' sections on belonging through language and permission so you can explain this to students. This is especially important if permission has not yet been received to learn local language.

Then with permission:

- Watch the video, [Language program takes students out of classroom and on country](#) (05:00) from ABC Australia, and learn some words about the Country your school is on.
- Help students learn greetings in local language to show respect to local First Nations People/s, at events and in the classroom every day.
- Find out language words related to belonging, such as *together* and *talk*.

Belonging to Country

Watch Back to Nature

As a class, watch the first part of the clip, '[How to listen when Country speaks](#)' (00:00 to 02:06), from the ABC TV series Back to Nature, which describes the meaning Country to First Nations Peoples.

Remind students that there may be subtle differences to this meaning from culture to culture.

Discuss as a class your combined understanding of what Country means to First Nations Peoples based on this and other sources you and your students may have engaged with.

Prompts:

- What do you understand Country means to First Nations Peoples?
- What does Country or land mean to you?
- What natural places are important to you?
- When was the last time you listened to Country 'speak' to you? Have you ever?

Get back to nature

Take students to a place of natural beauty or find a spot in the school grounds (that may happen to be beautiful!) and

lead students through the meditation exercise 'Connecting with Place 3' from The Dreaming path: Indigenous thinking to change your life (2022 p. 91-93) to acknowledge and connect with the Country they're on. Be sure to also acknowledge the source.

If in the classroom, play either:

- the 8- or 5-minute meditation provided on Red Room Poetry's [Ngarayamūrah - Listening to Country meditation](#), by Nicole Smede, a multi-disciplinary artist of Warrimay/Birribay and colonial descent

or

- the movement based [Wayapa Wuurrk meditation 1: Your special place](#) (17:51), by Jamie Marloo Thomas, a GunaiKurnai man and Maara descendant, during which "participants are led through poses that represent all the elements of nature".



Caring for Country – sharing the caring, sharing the future

Working together to build tomorrow

Work as a class to decide on and plan a project to care for Country in or near their school. It could be as simple as an emu parade of the grounds to collect rubbish, or sprinkling native flower seeds in the school garden beds, or something more ambitious, such as building and planting a garden to attract native insects.

Consider to what extent this project could involve the wider school community and/or community beyond the school.

This activity could form the basis of a Reconciliation on Screen or Reconciliation Stories submission for the Schools Reconciliation Challenge – students could document on film or in writing their reasoning/motivation, planning and execution of the activity as a demonstration of a student-led reconciliation and the idea of ‘Belonging Today. Building Tomorrow’.

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DCA (Diversity Council Australia) (2024) '[Lessons from First Nations' leadership](#)', DCA website, accessed 5 March 2026.

All in for Reconciliation: personal actions

Years 3-6

You'll need:

- copies of the books *For 60,000 Years* and *Come Together*
- a shared device to present online content to the class
- student devices to access online content, or printed copies
- an open space for a talking circle
- copies of the books *Heroes, Rebels and Innovators*; *This Book Thinks Ya Deadly! A celebration of Blak Excellence*; and *Amazing Australian Women: Twelve Women Who Shaped History*
- a variety of art materials – pencils, paints and brushes, magazines for collage, natural and found objects.

What can I do to go 'all in'?

Know our history

As a class, read *For 60,000 Years* by Marlee Silva, a skilled Gamilaroi and Dunghutti author, activist and podcaster; and Rhys Paddick a talented Yamatji illustrator, artist and storyteller.

As a class, discuss:

- What does this book teach us? (purpose)
- What did you learn that was new or interesting to you?
- Who is the book for and why? (audience)
- How does understanding First Nations history and our shared history help bring people together?
- Some of our history is very sad and it's important to recognise what has happened in the past, but where do you see examples of courage and hope in the book?

Share our history

Place students into small groups and allocate or allow them to select a historical events from the National Museum of Australia's [Defining Moments](#) collection (First Nations filter applied).

Either print out the information on the selected events and people, or have students access them online.

Each group gets to know their topic then converts what they know into a short narrative, fact-checking their story to ensure it is reliable.

Help students find out more information, if needed, to be able to end their narrative on a positive note.

The students' historical narratives could be shared within the school or with the wider community.

This activity could form the basis of a Reconciliation Stories submission for the Schools Reconciliation Challenge – students could share their narratives and reflect on them in relation to the prompt, 'Belonging Today. Building Tomorrow. Have them consider how understanding history may create a sense of belonging today and how that in turn may positively impact our tomorrow.

Know and recognise Country

Use the AIATSIS '[Map of Indigenous Australia](#)' and the '[Gambay First Languages Map](#)' to identify and recognise the Country you live and learn on, and to know the Countries you like to visit, or where you have family or a friend/s.

Help them to recognise that the diversity of colours represents the diversity of First Nations Peoples, and understand that this is part of reconciliation and belonging – knowing who and where we are.

Take a little time to discuss any questions students have.

Ask students:

Why may knowing about the hundreds of Countries there are on this continent be a way of showing respect?

Extend your recognition

If you haven't already, consider:

- displaying the name of the Country you're on in the classroom, perhaps on a 'welcome table' in the entrance to your space or in an area where you gather as a class
- undertaking a class research project to learn as much as possible about Traditional Custodians of the Country you're on, such as language/s, clan groups and Dreaming; create a repository of carefully checked information others can learn from
- co-creating an Acknowledgement of Country with the guidance of an Elder or other local community member; make sure to remunerate people for the time and cultural expertise they provide.

Understand and celebrate First Nations cultures

Read *Come together*



As a class, read the picture book, *Come Together*, by [Yorta Yorta](#) and [Gunditjmarra](#) man Isaiah Firebrace and [Mununjali](#) and Fijian illustrator Jaelyn Biumaiwai.

It builds understanding of First Nations knowledges about Elders, Dreaming and National Reconciliation Week, and was winner of the 2023 CBCA Book of the Year.

Discuss the following:

- What does this book teach us? (purpose)
- Who is the book for and why? (audience)
- What do the illustrations tell us? What do you like about them?
- What did you learn that was new or interesting to you?
- How does understanding and celebrating First Nations cultures help bring people together?

If you have First Nations students in your class and they're keen, let them share connections to their own cultures.

Have students write their own poem on one of the topics from the book.

The Tweetspeak Poetry website has a useful '[How to write an acrostic poem infographic](#)' that students may like to use for inspiration.

This activity could form the basis of a Reconciliation Stories submission for the Schools Reconciliation Challenge – students could share their poems and reflect on them in relation to the prompt, 'Belonging Today. Building Tomorrow'. Have them consider how reading their poem may help contribute to a sense of belonging for the reader today and how that in turn may positively impact our tomorrow.

Build relationships: what does coming together look like?

Hold an 'all in' talking circle

To conduct the activity, have the students sit in a circle with as much space between each other as possible.

Explain to students that the space in the middle represents where we can all come together to listen to and learn from each other.

Ask students:

- What needs to happen to get us into that space?
- What has courage got to do with it?

Ask and instruct students:

Write your idea/s on a piece of paper and decorate it if you want.

Place all pieces of paper in the middle and discuss a selection of the ideas – what’s a personal action, what’s a collective responsibility?

All in for Reconciliation – students could consider and discuss how they could go ‘all in’ by identifying one thing they would like to focus on for today, tomorrow, next week, etc.

Leadership: an example to others

Research First Nations leaders

Belonging is created through:

- everyday choices
- relationships
- leadership.

Students work in pairs or threes to research and write a biography of a First Nations leader in any area they’re interested – culture (a local Elder), politics, activism, sport, art, music, environment, etc.

Students may find inspiration and information in the following First Nations authored texts:

- [*Heroes, Rebels and Innovators*](#) by Karen Wyld and Jaelyn Biumaiwai
- [*This Book Thinks Ya Deadly! A celebration of Blak Excellence*](#) by Corey Tutt and illustrated by Molly Hunt
- [*Amazing Australian Women: Twelve Women Who Shaped History*](#) – which includes information on [*Tarenore*](#), a Tommeginne resistance fighter, and [*Anmatyerre*](#) Elder and artist, Emily Kame Kngwarreye.

Research prompt:

How does this person provide leadership, build relationships and act as a role model in their everyday choices?

This activity could form the basis of a Reconciliation Stories submission for the Schools Reconciliation Challenge – students could share their biographies and reflect on them in relation to the prompt, ‘Belonging Today. Building Tomorrow’. Have them consider how understanding the lives of First Nations leaders may create a sense of belonging today and how that in turn may positively impact our tomorrow.

Create an artwork

Students create a visual celebration of the First Nations leader they researched to show how the person provides leadership, builds relationships and acts as a role model in their everyday choices.

Younger students may simply incorporate words and phrases to do this. Older students may write a short paragraph on each of the three elements of the research prompt.

Provide students with:

- research materials, links and support as needed



- a variety of art materials – pencils, paints and brushes, magazines for collage, natural and found objects.

Display the artworks in the classroom or elsewhere in the school.

Younger classes may be interested in hearing from your students about the great leaders they've researched.

This activity could form the basis of a Reconciliation Visions submission for the Schools Reconciliation Challenge – students could share their artworks and reflect on them in relation to the prompt, 'Belonging Today. Building Tomorrow'. Have them consider how understanding the lives of First Nations leaders may create a sense of belonging today and how that in turn may positively impact our tomorrow.

Write an 'All in' statement

Work as a class to write an 'All in' statement that declares their commitment to togetherness, building understanding and celebrating First Nations cultures.

If your school is holding an assembly during Reconciliation Week this would be a great time for students to share their 'All in' statements as a way of modelling to the school community how we can all approach reconciliation.

This activity could form the basis of a Reconciliation Stories submission for the Schools Reconciliation Challenge – students could share their statements and reflect on them in relation to the prompt, 'Belonging Today. Building Tomorrow'. Have them consider how writing and sharing their statements may create a sense of belonging today and how that in turn may positively impact our tomorrow.

All in for Reconciliation: personal actions

Years 7-9

You'll need:

- a shared device to present online content to the class
- student devices to access online content, or printed copies
- printed copies of selected poems
- an open space for a talking circle
- a variety of art materials – pencils, paints and brushes, magazines for collage, natural and found objects.

OR

- audiovisual recording devices.

What can I do to go 'all in'?

Know our history, share our history

Place students into small groups and allocate or allow them to select a historical event from the National Museum of Australia's [Defining Moments](#) collection (First Nations filter applied).

Either print out the information on the selected events and people, or have students access them online.

Once students have read about their topic, have them discuss and answer these questions:

- What does this resource teach us? What is its purpose?
- What did you learn that was new or interesting to you?
- Who is the resource for and why? Who is the audience?
- How does understanding First Nations history and our shared history help bring people together?
- Some of our history is distressing and it's important to recognise what has happened in the past, but where do you see expressions of courage and hope?

Share our history

Following the discussion, each group converts what they know into a short narrative, fact-checking their story to ensure it is reliable. They may need to research further to be able to end their narrative on a positive note.

The students' historical narratives could be shared within the school or with the wider community.

This activity could form the basis of a Reconciliation Stories submission for the Schools Reconciliation Challenge – students could share their narratives and reflect on them in relation to the prompt, 'Belonging Today. Building Tomorrow. Have them consider how understanding history may create a sense of belonging today and how that in turn may positively impact our tomorrow.

Know and recognise Country

Use the AIATSIS '[Map of Indigenous Australia](#)' and the '[Gambay First Languages Map](#)' to identify and recognise the Country you live and learn on, and to know the Countries you like to visit, or where you have family or a friend/s.

Help them to recognise that the diversity of colours represents the diversity of First Nations Peoples, and understand that this is part of reconciliation and belonging – knowing who and where we are.

Take a little time to discuss any questions students have.

Ask students:

How might knowing about the hundreds of Countries there are on this continent increase connection and belonging?

Extend your recognition

If you haven't already, consider:

- displaying the name of the Country you're on in the classroom, perhaps on a 'welcome table' in the entrance to your space or in an area where you gather as a class
- undertaking a class research project to learn as much as possible about Traditional Custodians of the Country you're on, such as language/s, clan groups and Dreaming; create a repository of carefully checked information others can learn from
- co-creating an Acknowledgement of Country with the guidance of an Elder or other local community member; make sure to remunerate people for the time and cultural expertise they provide.

Engage with First Nations perspectives and cultures

Read and discuss poetry

Provide printed copies and listen to one or all of the First Nations poetry below:

- '[Prime petals](#)' by [Gunai](#) poet Kirli Saunders, audio reading only (00:20)
- '[Conduit](#)' by [Ngunawal](#) poet Nick Paton
- '[Ningimpi Nungampi Paywuta Manta](#)' by pakana poet Theresa Sainty, which includes audio reading of the poem (03:02)
- '[The Wounded Brave](#)' Joel Davison, a [Gadigal](#) and [Dunghutti](#) poet, which includes an audio reading (02:02)

Then discuss answers to the prompting questions:

- Who is the narrator in the poem?
- What is the purpose of the poem? What is its message?
- Who could the audience be and why?
- How does each poem reflect First Nations ways of being, knowing and doing?
- In what ways could each poem teach us all something about courage, belonging, togetherness, relationship and/or connection?

Have students write their own poem to express the value, need or experience of belonging, togetherness and/or connection.

The Tweetspeak Poetry website has a useful '[How to write an acrostic poem infographic](#)' that students may like to use for inspiration.

This activity could form the basis of a Reconciliation Stories submission for the Schools Reconciliation Challenge – students could share their poems and reflect on them in relation to the prompt, 'Belonging Today. Building Tomorrow'. Have them consider how their poem may communicate the need for belonging today and how that in turn may positively impact our tomorrow.

Build relationships: what does coming together look like?

Hold an 'all in' talking circle

To conduct the activity, have the students sit in a circle with as much space between each other as possible.

Explain to students that the space in the middle represents where we can all come together to listen to and learn from each other.

Ask students:

- What needs to happen to get us into that space?
- What has courage got to do with it?

Ask and instruct students:

Write your idea/s on a piece of paper and decorate it if you want.

Place all pieces of paper in the middle and discuss a selection of the ideas – what does doing that look like, sound like, feel like?

All in for Reconciliation – students could consider and discuss how they could go 'all in' by identifying one thing they would like to focus on for today, tomorrow, next week, etc.

Leadership: an example to others

Research First Nations leaders

Belonging is created through:

- everyday choices
- relationships
- leadership.

Students work in pairs or threes to research and write a biography of a First Nations leader in any area they're interested – culture (a local Elder), politics, activism, sport, art, music, environment, etc.

Some well-known political and activism figures significant to the Y10 History curriculum include Neville Bonner, William Cooper, Fred Maynard (AAPA), Jack Patten, Sir Douglas Nicholls, Lady Gladys Nicholls, Vincent Lingiari, Charles Perkins, Shirley Smith, Gladys Elphick, Essie Coffee, Joyce Clague, Daisy Bindi, Gary Foley, Michael Anderson, Eddie Koiki Mabo and Lowitja O'Donoghue.

Research prompt:

How does this person provide leadership, build relationships and act as a role model in their everyday choices?

This activity could form the basis of a Reconciliation Stories submission for the Schools Reconciliation Challenge – students could share their biographies and reflect on them in relation to the prompt, 'Belonging Today. Building Tomorrow'. Have them consider how understanding the lives of First Nations leaders may create a sense of belonging today and how that in turn may positively impact our tomorrow.

Create an artwork/video

Students create a visual celebration – either an artwork with a written component, or a short film with a spoken component – of the First Nations leader they researched to show how the person provides leadership, builds relationships and acts as a role model in their everyday choices.

Provide your students with:

- an appropriate expected word count for the written/spoken component
- a variety of art materials – pencils, paints and brushes, magazines for collage, natural and found objects



- audiovisual devices to record their short films.

Display the artworks/videos in the classroom or elsewhere in the school.

Younger classes may be interested in hearing from your students about the great leaders they've researched.

This activity could form the basis of a Reconciliation Visions submission for the Schools Reconciliation Challenge – students could share their artworks and reflect on them in relation to the prompt, 'Belonging Today. Building Tomorrow'. Have them consider how understanding the lives of First Nations leaders may create a sense of belonging today and how that in turn may positively impact our tomorrow.

Write an 'All in' statement

Work as a class to write an 'All in' statement that declares their commitment to togetherness, building understanding and celebrating First Nations cultures.

If your school is holding an assembly during Reconciliation Week this would be a great time for students to share their 'All in' statements as a way of modelling to the school community how we can all approach reconciliation.

This activity could form the basis of a Reconciliation Stories submission for the Schools Reconciliation Challenge – students could share their statements and reflect on them in relation to the prompt, 'Belonging Today. Building Tomorrow'. Have them consider how writing and sharing their statements may create a sense of belonging today and how that in turn may positively impact our tomorrow.



Student Handout: Collective responsibility thinking routine Y chart

Make responsibility visible

What responsibility do humans have for each other?

What does that responsibility look like, sound like, feel like?

Looks like

Feels like

Sounds like

Teacher Resource: Connecting with Place

Exercise

The aim of this exercise is to help you connect with place. It might help if you record the words so you can listen to them with your eyes closed or perhaps have someone read the script to you.

Find a comfortable place outside where you can connect with nature. It could be in your yard if you have one. It could be somewhere close by that you connect to or it could be a very special place away from any sign of human impact.

Find a place to sit in comfort.

Let the chatter of your mind slip into the background. There are always things to think about in the now, but for the moment, you can let it all disappear.

With all the time in the world, look around you.

What can you see?

What can you hear?

Now close your eyes and focus on the ground below you. Notice how your bare feet are connected to the ground and how good it feels. Notice how the way you are seated feels so strong and connected to the earth that nothing could knock you over.

When you are ready, imagine gathering a ball of light around your belly button. This energy represents your love and thanks for everything the Mother gives you. Let it build and build ... feel how joyous the light is in your belly.

When it feels right, send this light in a gentle stream down through you into the ground with as much love as you can summon. Let it flow and flow deeper and deeper. Let it flow into the centre of the earth.

When you have emptied your belly of the light, give thanks to the earth and all the things the earth gives you that keep you alive ... food, oxygen, water, shelter ... all these things are from the Mother.

When the time feels right, imagine an energy beam coming from the centre of the earth. This energy is solely for you; no one else. This is a time for you; no one else. You are worthy of this time ... so relax and enjoy it.

Imagine the light gently coming up from the earth, through you into your belly button region. As it builds, feel the joy and feel the peace creating a warm glow right across your midsection.

Let the ball of energy flow gently through your entire body ... notice what you are feeling ... you might feel a tingling sensation ... you might feel contentment ... you might feel other things ... you might not feel anything at all. If you don't feel anything, there is no need to worry ... just trust that this energy is real and that it is there for you.

When you are ready ... gently and in no particular rush ... let the connection go and, in your own time, come back to the now.

How do you feel? How did you feel during the exercise? If you felt a sense of peace or perhaps joy or perhaps love, or perhaps all of these things, you have connected with the love of the Mother. If you haven't felt a sense of peace, that's OK. Keep on carrying out the exercise without pressuring yourself to achieve any particular outcome. You might be making great progress but just not feeling it, so trust the process and try to let go of the destination. It took me a while to totally connect, but it was a great investment.

Source:

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Curriculum Connections

YEAR 3

English, Year 3

Language | Language for interacting with others

AC9E3LA01

Understand that cooperation with others depends on shared understanding of social conventions, including turn-taking language, which vary according to the degree of formality

Elaborations

Understanding some First Nations Australian cultural protocols, cultural practices, specific roles, and ways of interacting and speaking (CCP)

YEAR 4

English, Year 4

Literature | Examining literature

AC9E4LE03

Discuss how authors and illustrators make stories engaging by the way they develop character, setting and plot tensions

Elaborations

Identifying how illustrations contribute to the meaning of stories by First Nations Australian authors (CCP)

HASS F-6, Year 4

Knowledge and understanding | History

AC9HS4K01

The diversity of First Nations Australians, their social organisation and their continuous connection to Country/Place (CCP)

Elaborations

Recognising that First Nations Australians include two distinct cultural groups – Aboriginal Peoples and Torres Strait Islander Peoples – and there is considerable diversity within these groups (CCP)

Knowledge and understanding | Civics and Citizenship

AC9HS4K09

Diversity of cultural, religious and/or social groups to which they and others in the community belong, and their importance to identity

Elaborations

Identifying diversity through the different social, cultural and religious groups students belong to and describing what makes them feel that they belong to the groups

Recognising that the identity of First Nations Australians is shaped by Country/Place, language and knowledge traditions (CCP)



Skills | Questioning and researching

AC9HS4S02

Locate, collect and record information and data from a range of sources, including annotated timelines and maps

Elaborations

Exploring stories about the groups people belong to; for example, cultural groups such as groups that value First Nations Australian or Asian heritage; interest and community groups such as recreational and volunteering organisations; and gender or religious groups (CCP)

YEARS 3 AND 4

Health and Physical Education, Years 3 and 4

Personal, social and community health | Identities and change

AC9HP4P01

Investigate how success, challenge, setbacks and failure strengthen resilience and identities in a range of contexts

Elaborations

Investigating how First Nations Australians' pride in cultural background strengthens identities (CCP)

Personal, social and community health | Interacting with others

AC9HP4P04

Select, use and refine personal and social skills to establish, manage and strengthen relationships

Elaborations

Discussing how demonstrating respect and empathy for First Nations Australians can build positive relationships (CCP)

Personal, social and community health | Making healthy and safe choices

AC9HP4P10

Investigate and apply behaviours that contribute to their own and others' health, safety, relationships and wellbeing

Elaborations

Discussing the importance of a sense of belonging and connection in promoting mental health and wellbeing

Identifying ways they can change their behaviours to support the sustainability of the Earth's systems; for example, recycling or composting systems to minimise waste in the school, and community fruit and vegetable gardens to create healthy and sustainable lunches or snacks

Movement and physical activity | Learning through movement

AC9HP4M08

Apply rules and scoring systems to promote fair play when participating or designing physical activities

Elaborations



Exploring rules and scoring systems used in traditional games of First Nations Australians and comparing them to rules and systems used in other games they have played (CCP)

The Arts, Years 3 and 4

Visual Arts | Developing practices and skills

AC9AVA4D01

Experiment with a range of ways to use visual conventions, visual arts processes and materials

Elaborations

Manipulating and experimenting with combinations of various materials and technologies to create visual effects; for example, using crosshatching to create tone, or using design elements to focus the viewer's attention on a composition [...]

YEAR 5

English, Year 5

Literature | Literature and contexts

AC9E5LE01

Identify aspects of literary texts that represent details or information about historical, social and cultural contexts in literature by First Nations Australian, and wide-ranging Australian and world authors (CCP)

Elaborations

Exploring and discussing texts written by First Nations Australian authors about the events that shaped or had an impact on their lives (CCP)

Exploring aspects of literature that represent historical context in texts by First Nations Australian authors (CCP)

HASS, Year 5

Skills | Interpreting, analysing and evaluating

AC9HS5S03

Evaluate information and data in a range of formats to identify and describe patterns and trends, or to infer relationships

Elaborations

Exploring maps and sources showing First Nations Australians' language groups and Countries/Places, to explain the diversity of their connections to Country/Place (CCP)

YEAR 6

English, Year 6

Literacy | Phonic and word knowledge

AC9E6LY09

Use knowledge of known words, word origins including some Latin and Greek roots, base words, prefixes, suffixes, letter patterns and spelling generalisations to spell new words including technical words



Elaborations

Investigating the meanings of words in languages of First Nations Australians using dictionaries or online resources from state libraries or universities (CCP)

YEARS 5 and 6

Health and Physical Education, Years 5 and 6

Personal, social and community health | Making healthy and safe choices

AC9HP6P10

Analyse how behaviours influence the health, safety, relationships and wellbeing of individuals and communities

Elaborations

Describing strategies to support a sense of belonging and connection, and recognising the importance of social support for enhancing mental health and wellbeing

Personal, social and community health | Interacting with others

AC9HP6P05

Describe and implement strategies to value diversity in their communities

Elaborations

Examining how beliefs, values and cultural practices convey meaning and influence peoples' sense of identity and belonging, including Australians of Asian heritage

Movement and physical activity | Learning through movement

AC9HP6M08

Devise and test alternative rules and game modifications to support fair play and inclusive participation

Elaborations

Investigating the effectiveness of rules used in traditional games of First Nations Australians to promote participation, such as Inkanyi: a cooperative running game played by the Pitjantjatjara / Yankunytjatjara of central Australia where there are no winners and Barambah gimbe: a throwing and catching game from the lands of the Wakka Wakka where catchers can be nominated to increase participation (CCP)

The Arts, Years 5 and 6

Visual Art | Creating and making

AC9AVA6C01

Use visual conventions, visual arts processes and materials to plan and create artworks that communicate ideas, perspectives and/or meaning

Elaborations

Using visual conventions and visual arts processes to communicate ideas and meaning in their artwork [...]



YEAR 7

English, Year 7

Literature | Literature and contexts

AC9E7LE01

Identify and explore ideas, points of view, characters, events and/or issues in literary texts, drawn from historical, social and/or cultural contexts, by First Nations Australian, and wide-ranging Australian and world authors (CCP)

Elaborations

Exploring representations of characters and events in literary texts by First Nations Australians (CCP)

Geography 7–10, Year 7

Knowledge and understanding | Place and liveability

AC9HG7K07

The cultural connectedness of people to places and how this influences their identity, sense of belonging and perceptions of a place, in particular the cultural connectedness of First Nations Australians to Country/Place (CCP)

Elaborations

Discussing the cultural connectedness and belonging that First Nations Australians have to a number of places through family, Country/Place, dispossession, relocation and employment (CCP)

YEAR 8

English, Year 8

Literacy | Word knowledge

AC9E8LY08

Apply learnt knowledge to spell accurately and to learn new words

Elaborations

Understanding where to obtain the spelling of Aboriginal language words and Torres Strait Islander language words; for example, the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies Map of Indigenous Australia, and the local First Nations Australian community (CCP)

Civics and citizenship, Year 8

Knowledge and understanding | Government and democracy

AC9HC8K01

How Australians are informed about and participate in democracy

Elaborations

Analysing case studies of citizen participation in political campaigns such as the Uluru Statement from the Heart (CCP)



YEARS 7 and 8

Health and Physical Education, Years 7 and 8

Movement and physical activity | Learning through movement

AC9HP8M08

Investigate modifications to equipment, rules and scoring systems that support fair play and inclusive participation

Elaborations

Exploring rules, equipment and scoring systems of traditional games of First Nations Australians and investigating how they support skill development and fair and inclusive play (CCP)

Personal, social and community health | Interacting with others

AC9HP8P05

Investigate strategies that influence how communities value diversity and propose actions they can take to promote inclusion in their communities

Elaborations

Investigating events and strategies that value the contributions of First Nations Australians and strengthen relationships, such as Indigenous rounds in sporting codes and NAIDOC Week (CCP)

The Arts, Years 7 and 8

Visual Arts | Creating and making

AC9AVA8C02

Select and manipulate visual conventions, visual arts processes and/or materials to create artworks that represent ideas, perspectives and/or meaning

Elaborations

Working independently and/or in groups to create artworks that tell stories or create awareness about issues that are significant and important to them/the group

Media Arts | Developing practices and skills

AC9AMA8D01

Develop media production skills throughout the production process to construct representations using media languages and media technologies

Elaborations

Exploring ways to use media languages and media technologies to create representations that perpetuate or challenge relationships, or address issues such as stereotyping, bias, identity or sustainable ways of living

Experimenting with digital tools such as cameras, sound recording equipment or editing/coding/animation software to construct representations of people, places or concepts for various genres or media platforms



YEAR 9

English, Year 9

[Literature | Literature and contexts](#)

AC9E9LE01

Analyse the representations of people and places in literary texts, drawn from historical, social and cultural contexts, by First Nations Australian, and wide-ranging Australian and world authors (CCP)

Elaborations

Exploring how texts by First Nations Australian authors reflect unique ways of being, knowing, thinking and doing (CCP)

History, Year 9

[Knowledge and understanding | Making and transforming the Australian nation \(1750–1914\)](#)

AC9HH9K06

Different experiences and perspectives of colonisers, settlers and First Nations Australians and the impact of these experiences on changes to Australian society's, ideas, beliefs and values (CCP)

Elaborations

Exploring the perspectives and experiences of First Nations Australians, including discussing terms in relation to Australian history such as “invasion”, “colonisation” and “settlement”, and why these continue to be contested within society today (CCP)

YEAR 10

English, Year 10

[Literacy | Texts in context](#)

AC9E10LY01

Analyse and evaluate how people, places, events and concepts are represented in texts and reflect contexts

Elaborations

Analysing representations of events and issues in First Nations [authored texts] (CCP)

History, Year 10

[Knowledge and understanding | Building modern Australia](#)

AC9HH10K10

The contributions of significant individuals and groups in the campaign for the recognition of the rights of First Nations Australians and the extent to which they brought change to Australian society (CCP)

Elaborations

Investigating the lives of significant First Nations Australians and other Australians who contributed to the rights and freedoms of First Nations Australians, such as Neville Bonner, William Cooper, Fred Maynard (AAPA), Jack Patten, Sir Douglas Nicholls, Lady Gladys Nicholls, Vincent Lingiari, Charles Perkins, Shirley Smith, Gladys Elphick, Essie Coffee, Joyce Clague, Daisy Bindi, Gary Foley, Michael Anderson, Eddie Koiki Mabo and Lowitja O'Donoghue (CCP)



AC9HH10K11

The significant events and methods in the movement for the civil rights of First Nations Australians and the extent to which they contributed to change (CCP)

Elaborations

Explaining how significant events contributed to change; for example, legal changes, especially land rights, as a result of the Pilbara Strike, Palm Island Strike, Wave Hill Walk-Off, the Mabo decision, the Wik decision and the Tent Embassy; political changes as a result of the right to vote federally in 1962 and the 1967 Referendum; social changes as a result of the Freedom Rides; changes to advance Reconciliation as a result of the Redfern Speech, the *Bringing Them Home* report, the Royal Commission into Deaths in Custody and the Apology to the Stolen Generations (CCP)

Discussing how Reconciliation is not a single significant event or change, but an ongoing process of truth-telling and healing between First Nations Australians and other Australians (CCP)

YEARS 9 and 10

[Health and Physical Education, Years 9 and 10](#)

[Personal, social and community health | Interacting with others](#)

AC9HP10P04

Evaluate the influence of respect, empathy, power and coercion on establishing and maintaining respectful relationships

Elaborations

Identifying the ways in which historical patterns of inequity, violence and discrimination can have lasting intergenerational effects on wellbeing, and considering strategies to build the cultural awareness, empathy, compassion and respect that contribute to reconciliation (CCP)

[Personal, social and community health | Interacting with others](#)

AC9HP10P05

Propose strategies and actions individuals and groups can implement to challenge biases, stereotypes, prejudices and discrimination, and promote inclusion in their communities

Elaborations

Designing strategies and actions they can implement to challenge stereotypes, prejudices and discrimination, and publicly acknowledge the contributions First Nations Australians make to Australia's sporting and health fields (CCP)

[Movement and physical activity | Making active choices](#)

AC9HP10M05

Participate in physical activities that promote health and social outcomes to design and evaluate participation strategies for themselves and others

Elaborations

Designing and critiquing a strategy to involve family, friends and members of the community in celebrations based around culturally significant physical activities to promote a sense of connection with and belonging to the community

[Movement and physical activity | Learning through movement](#)



AC9HP10M09

Devise, implement and refine strategies for decision-making when working in groups or teams that demonstrate leadership and collaboration skills

Elaborations

Evaluating the contribution they make as an individual to teamwork, leadership and enjoyable participation for all

The Arts, Years 9 and 10

Visual Arts | Creating and making

AC9AVA10C02

Select and manipulate visual conventions, visual arts processes and/or materials to create artworks that reflect personal expression, and represent and/or challenge, ideas, perspectives and/or meaning

Elaborations

Creating their own artworks in response to a specific subject, theme or idea, using material, techniques and conventions in intentional, interpretative and personal ways

Media Arts | Creating and making

AC9AMA10C02

Apply production processes and use media arts concepts to construct representations and produce media arts works that communicate ideas, perspectives and/or meaning and confirm or challenge the expectations of specific audiences

Elaborations

Filming a short sequence [...] and selecting camera angles, lighting and costume to convey meaning through silent film, music video, stop motion or computer animation, experimenting with filming and framing the subject, and using basic shot types, angles and lighting to control picture space and mood