5 YEARS OF

FIRST NATIONS BEDTIME STORIES

LEARNING RESOURCE



INTRODUCTION | USING THIS RESOURCE | THEME 1 – *COUNTRY* | THEME 2 – *FAMILY* | THEME 3 – *LAW* | THEME 4 – *DREAMING* | THEME 5 – *ANCESTORS* | CONNECTION | RESOURCE OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

OVERVIEW

FIRST NATIONS BEDTIME STORIES LAUNCHED IN 2019 AND THIS YEAR COMMON GROUND CELEBRATES FIVE YEARS OF WORKING WITH DIFFERENT FIRST NATIONS CREATIVES AND COMMUNITIES TO CAPTURE AND SHARE STORIES AS OLD AS TIME AND BRING THEM TO YOUR CLASSROOM, HOME OR WORKPLACE.

TO MARK THIS SPECIAL OCCASION IN FIRST NATIONS STORYTELLING, WE ARE REFLECTING AND SHARING STORIES FROM EACH YEAR IN CELEBRATION OF THE VAST, DIVERSE AND PROFOUND WISDOM OF FIRST NATIONS COMMUNITIES ACROSS THE CONTINENT. WE WILL HEAR BEAUTIFUL STORIES FOR PEOPLE OF ALL AGES FROM PLACES INCLUDING NOONGAR, WIRADJURI, NYIKINA, WARLPIRI AND LURITJA NATIONS.

THE INITIATIVE IS CALLED FIRST NATIONS BEDTIME STORIES TO HONOUR THIS AGE-OLD PRACTICE OF ORAL STORYTELLING, HOWEVER, EVERYONE CAN LEARN FROM THE STORIES BEYOND BEDTIME AND AT ANY TIME DURING THE DAY.

First Nations Definition

At Common Ground, the terminology we use that refers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are 'First Nations people'. Before colonisation, there were hundreds of Nations each with their own language, culture and Law, and by using 'First Nations' we recognise and acknowledge the many diverse and unique sovereign people of the continent and surrounding islands we now call Australia.

Read this article for further information.

CULTURAL SENSITIVITY WARNING:
First Nations people are advised this resource and the films may contain the names and images of people who have passed.

THEMES

THIS YEAR, WE HAVE CHOSEN FIVE STORIES, ONE FROM EACH YEAR OF FIRST NATIONS BEDTIME STORIES SO FAR, TO HELP YOU EXPLORE THE FOLLOWING FIRST NATIONS THEMES.

COUNTRY

STORY	The One-Eyed Rainbow Serpent Told by Garrard Anderson
YEAR	2019
COUNTRY	Luritja

FAMILY

STORY	The Lost Joey Told by Robin Japanangka Granites
YEAR	2020
COUNTRY	Warlpiri

LAW

STORY	The Boys Who Broke the Law Told by Mark Coles Smith
YEAR	2021
COUNTRY	Nyikina

DREAMING

STORY	The Rainbow Serpent Told by Ricky Ah-See
YEAR	2022
COUNTRY	Wiradjuri

ANCESTORS

STORY	Djinda Midariny Told by Aunty Kerry-Ann Winmar
YEAR	2023
COUNTRY	Noongar



"RELATIONALITY REFERS TO THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EVERYTHING AND THE STRENGTH OF EACH OF THESE RELATIONSHIPS. THROUGH RELATIONALITY WE KNOW THAT EVERYTHING IS INTERCONNECTED AND SHIFTING IN A NON-STATIC WAY." – RONA GLYNN-MCDONALD'S ARTICLE FIRST NATIONS SYSTEMS THINKING

WHILE EACH THEME IS EXPLORED SEPARATELY, ALL THEMES INEVITABLY CONNECT AND OVERLAP (E.G. ANCESTORS ARE OUR FAMILY THAT HAVE PASSED AND RETURNED TO THE DREAMING). THESE CONNECTIONS BETWEEN THEMES ARE SIGNIFICANT AND HIGHLIGHT HOW RELATIONALITY UNDERPINS ALL FIRST NATIONS CULTURES.

BECAUSE OF THIS, WE HAVE INCLUDED A FINAL ACTIVITY AT THE END OF THE RESOURCE TO EXPLORE THE CONNECTIONS BETWEEN THEMES. AS YOU EXPLORE THE THEMES, WATCH THE FILMS AND COMPLETE THE ACTIVITIES, MAKE SURE TO LOOK FOR WAYS THE THEMES LINK TO ONE ANOTHER, AND RECORD THESE CONNECTIONS IN THE FINAL ACTIVITY ON PAGE 15.

USING THIS RESOURCE

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

We have displayed all learning activities for all year levels and learning contexts on one page (per theme) so that you have the opportunity to see all activities and choose which activity is the most appropriate for students or young people.

ACTIVITY CUSTOMISATION

You can modify any activity to best suit the maturity and abilities of your students. For example, when preparing for the Country learning activities, you realise that you have already explored Country as a living thing with your Year 2 students earlier in the year. Instead, modify the Year 3-6 activity 'Relationships with Country' for your students.

ACTIVITY CARD PRINTING

The layout of this document has been designed to provide the option to print certain pages as Activity Cards (optional). We recommend printing pages 5 and 6 back-to-back on thick card, followed by pages 7 and 8, 9 and 10, 11 and 12, 13 and 14, and lastly, page 15 by itself.

ACTIVITY CARD STORAGE

Store the six Activity Cards (with the title/introduction card on top) somewhere convenient in your classroom so you can easily access them on the go. Save a digital copy of the entire resource to your desktop, laptop or tablet.

TEACHER PREPARATION

PLEASE COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING TASKS PRIOR TO COMPLETING THE SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES WITH STUDENTS:

- [ ] Read all pages of this learning resource.
- [ ] Watch all films.
- [ ] Read all suggested Common Ground articles to support your understanding of the themes.
- [ ] **Optional:** Print pages 5 and 6, 7 and 8, 9 and 10, 11 and 12, 13 and 14 back-to-back, and page 15 separately, on thick card to create physical Activity Cards.
- [ ] Choose which activities you would like to complete with students. Decide whether you need to modify the activities to suit the learning needs of your students.
- [ ] Plan how you intend to unpack new vocabulary (Country, Family, Law, Dreaming, Ancestors) with students. Read the blogpost 'Fun Ways to Introduce Vocabulary in the Early Years' from Teach Starter and explore the following vocabulary resources that Teach Starter have generously made available to download for free specifically for First Nations Bedtime Stories this year:
  - [ ] Word of the Week Poster
  - [ ] Vocabulary Activities Bulletin Board

1 www.teachstarter.com/au/blog/fun-ways-to-introduce-new-vocabulary-in-the-early-years
2 www.teachstarter.com/au/teaching-resource/word-of-the-week-poster/
3 www.teachstarter.com/au/teaching-resource/vocabulary-activities-bulletin-board/

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COUNTRY

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

SHORT DEFINITION

Country is a word that holds many different meanings for First Nations people. Country is a proper noun, which is why it is usually capitalised. It can be used by First Nations people to refer to the lands, waters and skies to which they are connected through ancestral ties and family origins. It can also be used to refer to the land, waterways, seas and skies around us as well as the energy and space in between.

LONG DEFINITION

Please read the following Common Ground article 'What is Country'[1] by Gemma Pol to learn more about the ways in which First Nations people refer to Country in the same way we would a person, and also how Country encompasses relationships; relationships with plants, relationships with animals and relationships with Ancestors (to name a few).

HOW TO EXPLAIN COUNTRY FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

First Nations people often use the word Country in a different way to how you might use the word. We typically use the word Country to describe a Nation with its own government, occupying a particular territory – like Australia. First Nations people can use it to describe the land, waterways, seas and skies around us, and also to show an ongoing relationship they have to particular areas through ancestral ties and family origins. For example, a Worimi person from the mid-north coast of NSW might say, "I am from Worimi Country" or "my Country is Worimi."

HOW IT LINKS TO THE STORY:

The story, 'The One-Eyed Rainbow Serpent'[2] was told in 2019 on Luritja Country by Luritja, Pintupi, Arrernte and Warlpiri man Garrard Anderson. It is about the natural environment and teaches us the importance of looking after Country, so that it can look after us. In the story, the One-Eyed Rainbow Serpent gave the local people water, life, and everything that they needed to live. The Serpent also protected the place and its people. For a long time, Elders told people not to go close to the Serpent's resting place. Today, the Luritja people feel sad, because they know the One-Eyed Rainbow Serpent has left and believe this is why the land has changed. When the Serpent was around there was water flowing in every direction. But today, there's no water.

LURITJA COUNTRY



WATCH THE STORY

1 www.commonground.org.au/article/what-is-country
2 www.commonground.org.au/bedtime-stories/the-one-eyed-rainbow-serpent

COUNTRY ACTIVITIES

PREPARATION

UNPACK THE VOCABULARY

Model how to say and write the word 'Country'. Read the definition for young people above and share examples from the Common Ground article 'What is Country'[1] of how the word can be used. Support students to share their own sentence examples.

LOCATE COUNTRY

Luritja Country on the AIATSIS Map of Indigenous Australia[2]



WATCH THE FILM

The One-Eyed Rainbow Serpent [00:04:50]

UNDERSTAND THE STORY

Ask and discuss the following comprehension questions:

- Where is this story told? *Papunya, Luritja Country.*
- What does the Country look like where this story takes place? *Rocky hills, gum trees, orange/red earth, small brown waterways.*
- Why does Garrard Anderson call out to Country? *To let Country know who he is, that he is approaching. He waits for Country to show him he's welcome.*

1 www.commonground.org.au/article/what-is-country
2 www.aiatsis.gov.au/explore/map-indigenous-australia
3 www.commonground.org.au/article/acknowledgement-of-country

EARLY CHILDHOOD

COUNTRY IS ALL AROUND US

Support young children to understand that Country surrounds them.

Walk outside with children to see, hear, feel, smell and taste Country.

Use chalk to draw a senses diagram on a nearby concrete area. It could look like a circle divided into five equal parts like a pizza. In each section, draw a symbol to represent each sense (e.g. an eye for sight).

Explore Country in silence. Allow students to wander around quietly observing and listening to Country.

Let them touch and smell Country, and if there are native plants that you know are safe to taste, you can encourage students to taste the edible leaves and/or flowers.

Return to the drawing on the concrete and take turns in sharing what they noticed with each of their senses.

FOUNDATION – YEAR 2

COUNTRY AS A LIVING THING

Garrard talks about Country being sick.

Discuss with students.

- Garrard talks about Country being sick. What does this mean?
- What contributes to Country being sick and damaged?
- What does Country need to thrive and flourish?
- Consider the Country where your school is located. How do people contribute to either a healthy or unhealthy Country?

Draw a T-Chart on a whiteboard and write 'Healthy Country' on one side and 'Sick Country' on the other. List student responses to the above questions on either side.

Support students to create a landscape portrait of Country where one half of the portrait shows Country as healthy as it can be, and the other side showing how sick Country can be if we don't care for her.

First Nations people often refer to Country as Mother.

You might like to show an image of a significant landmark in the local area for students to recreate, or take students outside on Country to draw their own landscapes based on what they see.

Ensure students fold their piece of paper in half so they can see where the two sides will be.

Remind students the two sides of the paper aren't meant to look identical, or a mirror image of each other. They are two halves of a whole landscape, as they see it naturally.

YEAR 3 – 6

RELATIONSHIPS WITH COUNTRY

Garrard talks to and about Country as if it were human.

Go for a walk around your school and explore the many different elements of Country, from the smallest stone to the largest tree and the sky above.

Encourage students to talk to Country, just like Garrard does. For example, they could introduce themselves to Country.

Use tablet devices with a camera (such as iPads) **to take photos of Country** as you walk around. Photos could be of trees, the sky, a leaf, a puddle, grass etc.

Students choose one image to draw on using the "edit" option when viewing the image on their device.

Support students to draw human features on different elements of Country in the image. For example, a face in a puddle of water or an arm and hand on a branch. This artwork will help students think of Country like a person.

Alternatively, if tablets are not available, you can take a photo yourself and print multiple copies for students to draw on directly.

Sit with students in a Yarning Circle. Support each student to share a comment about the activity . For example, how they felt about it, whether it felt strange to talk to Country, or whether it was easy to imagine Country being alive.

Discuss how they think and feel about Country now. Has learning from this story changed how they view the world around them?

HOME

WHAT COUNTRY DO WE LIVE ON?

This story is told at Papunya on Luritja Country.

Do you know the name of the Country where you live? If not, use the AIATSIS Map of Indigenous Australia[2] to begin researching this information.

While this map is a useful visual, it is not definitive and is not the only information available to learn about language groups or Nations.

After locating the name of the Country where you live on the map, it is always beneficial to complete a Google search (e.g. "What is the name of the Country where [town] is located?") as well as contact local, reputable First Nations organisations for further information (such as Local Aboriginal Land Councils, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander medical services, First Nations cultural centres, and so on). Please note these organisations can be very busy and with limited resources.

Once you know the name of the Country where you live, **create a unique and meaningful Acknowledgement of Country as a family.**

You can **display your Acknowledgement as an artwork or poster in your home.**

Read the Common Ground article 'Acknowledgement of Country'[3] for more information about what an Acknowledgement of Country is and how you can word your Acknowledgement.

Please see the Resource Overview on page 16 for a summary of all suggested resources to explore Country.

FAMILY

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

SHORT DEFINITION

First Nations people have family and kinship systems that may be confusing or complex to western societies, but they are a way of life for many of us. Kinship runs deep beyond the western constructs of family, and extends to our community.

Kinship is about caring for one another, and our lines of connection. We often refer to those who are or are not biologically related to us, but connected through kinship, as our cousins, mums, dads, aunties, uncles, sons or daughters.

LONG DEFINITION

Please read the following Common Ground article about 'First Nations Family and Kinship Systems'[1] to learn more about our systems of care and kinship. In First Nations communities, kinship goes beyond traditional western family structures and biological relationships.

The following video clip by Reconciliation Australia further explains First Nations family structures and kinship: Family and Kinship[2].

HOW TO EXPLAIN FAMILY FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Family is incredibly important to First Nations people. Children are often raised by their parents, but also their aunties, uncles and grandparents. It is common for First Nations children to live with their parents, and extended family members all in the one house. In some families, First Nations children refer to their mother's sister as mum or their father's brother as dad, and their cousins as brothers and sisters. This reflects the close bonds between family members.

First Nations people may have people in their lives who are not biologically related to them, but still considered family, and they may also consider elements of Country as family too. For example, Father Sky and Mother Earth.

HOW IT LINKS TO THE STORY:

The story, 'The Lost Joey'[2] was filmed in 2020 on Arrernte Country, but is a story from Warlpiri man Robin Japanangka Granites. 'The Lost Joey' tells the story of a lost joey (baby kangaroo) as he searches for his mother. It is a story about family and Country, and teaches children the importance of knowing who your family is and your connection to Country. Robin shares a song in the story, in Warlpiri language.

WARLPIRI COUNTRY



WATCH THE STORY

1 www.commonground.org.au/article/family
2 www.youtube.com/watch?v=mNtPcW4t1PY

FAMILY ACTIVITIES

PREPARATION

UNPACK THE VOCABULARY

Model how to say and write the word 'family'. Read the definition for young people above, share examples from the Common Ground article 'First Nations Family and Kinship Systems'[1] and discuss how the word can be used from a First Nations perspective. Support students to share their own sentence examples.

LOCATE COUNTRY

Warlpiri Country on the AIATSIS Map of Indigenous Australia[2]



WATCH THE FILM

The Lost Joey [00:04:51]

UNDERSTAND THE STORY

Ask and discuss the following comprehension questions:

- What did the Joey look for in the ground to help find his mother? *He looked for her kangaroo tracks.*
- What were the other animals the Joey came across when looking for his mother? *A euro, a perentie, a bush turkey.*
- Where did the Joey find his mother and how do you think he felt when he found her? *In the desert where the spinifex grass is. He probably felt happy, relieved and safe.*

1 www.commonground.org.au/article/family
2 www.aiatsis.gov.au/explore/map-indigenous-australia
3 www.teachstarter.com/au/teaching-resource/families-come-in-all-shapes-and-sizes-classroom-display
4 www.teachstarter.com/au/teaching-resource/class-family-tree-display
5 www.healingfoundation.org.au
6 www.healingfoundation.org.au/schools
7 www.canva.com/graphs/family-trees

EARLY CHILDHOOD

BELONGING

Being part of a family is feeling a sense of belonging.

"*Experiencing belonging – knowing where and with whom you belong – is integral to human existence. Children belong to diverse families, neighbourhoods, local and global communities… In early childhood, and throughout life, trusting relationships and affirming experiences are crucial to a sense of belonging.*" – from 'Belonging, Being & Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework V2.0'

Sit in a Yarning Circle with children and take turns in sharing what it feels like to belong. The children might say they feel happy, warm, fuzzy or smiley. Discuss where they feel they belong. For example, at home, in a sporting team, outside on Country and hopefully, in your room with you and their friends.

Create a collaborative artwork where each and every child contributes something to the piece. First Nations people sometimes use handprints or hand stencils/outlines to show their belonging to a place.

This collaborative activity is designed to be a happy, nurturing, wholesome activity to encourage children to feel they belong together – so care less about mess and organisation.

Proudly display the artwork in the room and talk with parents about the entire lesson – from the film, to the discussion about belonging, and then to the collaborative artwork. Invite parents to view the artwork when they come to pick up their child/children.

FOUNDATION – YEAR 2

WHAT MAKES A FAMILY?

Students may have opinions about what a 'normal' family looks like (e.g. nuclear families). Some students may realise that perhaps their own family structure is different to those of their friends and peers.

This is an important opportunity to **discuss how families are diverse and take many shapes and forms** – and they are all 'normal'.

Ask students to brainstorm what they believe defines a family. Unpack this by exploring how we can belong to different types of 'families' such as sporting teams or classes.

Create a 'Classroom Family' display with students.

Teach Starter has two great display ideas you can use (if you have a Teach Starter subscription) or you may be inspired by these and make your own display:

- Families Come in All Shapes and Sizes - Classroom Display[3]
- Class Family Tree Display[4]

YEAR 3 – 6

STOLEN GENERATIONS

"*Around Australia, there are so many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who carry a burden of trauma they had no say in carrying, as a legacy of the removal and separation policies that resulted in the Stolen Generations. Yet few Australians understand the ongoing impact of unresolved trauma in this context. This knowledge and understanding is important for every young person learning about our history.*"– Professor Steve Larkin, Chair, The Healing Foundation

Use this story and the theme of 'family' to learn about the Stolen Generations with students.

The Healing Foundation[5] website is a great source of information and we encourage teachers to **choose activities** from the 'Stolen Generations Resource Kit for Teachers and Students'[6]. There are lesson plans, PowerPoint presentations and educator guides for all year levels (Foundation - Year 12). Here are the lesson plans for:

- Year 3
- Year 4
- Year 5
- Year 6

There is advice provided in the 'Preparing Your Classroom' documents for each year level that will help you navigate situations where some students may find this topic triggering. For example, students currently in or with a history of being in out-of-home care, descendants of Stolen Generations survivors, First Nations students, students with significant grief and loss histories.

HOME

WHO'S IN MY FAMILY?

Have a yarn with your child/ children about the people in your family. Explain your family as being made up of different generations.

Create a visual record (e.g. a family tree or a layered circle) to demonstrate the generations of your family. You can use paper or cardboard and include photographs for each person if available.

Alternatively, you could use a tablet, laptop or desktop to create your visual family record on Microsoft Word, Pages or Canva[7].

LAW

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

SHORT DEFINITION

First Nations groups has 'Law' that provides rules for protecting their particular place and environment. These Laws have existed in First Nations communities since the beginning of time. That are responsible for maintaining respectful relationships with everyone and everything. They teach us to care for Country, each other and our non-human kin, resolve conflicts and design peace-maintaining agreements.

LONG DEFINITION

Some First Nations people use 'Law' to refer to our rules, recognising these systems as equally valid to non-Indigenous laws. Others use 'Lore' to connect our rules to our Dreaming, recognising these systems as distinct from non-Indigenous Law. Please read Common Ground article 'First Nations Legal Systems'[1] by Phoebe McIlwraith to learn about the diverse terminology used by First Nations people to describe our legal systems. It's important to acknowledge that First Nations people have been governed by functioning legal systems since before invasion.

HOW TO EXPLAIN LAW FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

First Nations Law, also known as Lore, are rules that have been passed down by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people for thousands of years. These rules guide how First Nations people interact with and respect each other and Country. Law teaches people how to live in harmony, take care of each other, fulfil our responsibilities and keep our communities and cultures strong for future generations.

1 www.commonground.org.au/article/first-nations-legal-systems
2 www.commonground.org.au/bedtime-stories/the-boys-who-broke-the-law
3 www.commonground.org.au/bedtime-stories/the-cockatoo-sisters-and-the-magic-digging-stick

HOW IT LINKS TO THE STORY:

The story, 'The Boys Who Broke the Law'[2] was filmed in 2021 on Nyikina Country, and told by Nyikina Warrwa man, Mark Coles Smith. This story is about the importance of Law and the consequences of breaking the Law. It tells the story of two young men, Babaga Mandana (bub-ah-gah-mun-dun-ah) and Bua Buaga (bo-ah-bo-ah-gah), who are going through cultural initiation where they must abide by strict rules and Law. The boys start to believe they are above the Law, but little do they know Yoongoorrookoo, the magic water serpent, is watching them.

NYIKINA COUNTRY



WATCH THE STORY

CONTENT WARNING: 'The Boys Who Broke the Law' includes a description of young men hunting and killing animals for food. While there are no graphic scenes, please preview this film and consider if it is appropriate for your particular students. An alternative story for younger children is 'The Cockatoo Sisters and the Magic Digging Stick'[3]. You will need to adapt the learning activities if using this story instead.



LAW ACTIVITIES

PREPARATION

UNPACK THE VOCABULARY

Model how to say and write the word 'Law'. Read the definition for young people above and share examples from the Common Ground article 'First Nations Legal Systems'[1] of how the words 'Lore' and 'Our Ways' can also be used to describe legal systems. Support students to share their own examples.

LOCATE COUNTRY

Nyikina Country on the AIATSIS Map of Indigenous Australia[2] and use Google Maps to find Dampier Downs where the two brothers originated from.



WATCH THE FILM

'The Boys Who Broke the Law' [00:04:50] or 'The Cockatoo Sisters and the Magic Digging Stick' [00:06:02] for young students.

UNDERSTAND THE STORY

Ask and discuss the following comprehension questions:

- Who usually decided the punishments for breaking the Law in Nyikina community, and who decided the punishment for the two brothers in the story? *Typically punishments were decided by Elders… But in this story, it was Country who decided the consequences.*
- Why do you think it was against the Law to kill and eat a kijkij (baby kangaroo, joey)? *It was not yet an adult kangaroo. If baby animals are eaten before they have the chance to grow and reproduce, the population of that species would decrease, potentially leading to endangerment or extinction.*
- How do the brothers, who are now clouds in the sky, show their sadness and regret for having broken the Law? *They cry and their tears become rain.*

1 www.commonground.org.au/article/first-nations-legal-systems
2 www.aiatsis.gov.au/explore/map-indigenous-australia
3 www.rqi.org.au/defying-brisbanes-2019/
4 www.dcceew.gov.au/parks-heritage/heritage/places/national/moree-baths#:~:text=The%20Freedom%20Riders%20arrived%20in,the%20Moree%20Baths%20and%20Pool
5 www.noongarculture.org.au/war-service/
6 www.australianstogether.org.au/assets/Curriculum-Resources/Y3-HASS-ACHASSK072-060-056-Community-Teacher-Guide.pdf

EARLY CHILDHOOD

RIGHT AND WRONG

There were multiple moments in the story where the brothers had to choose between right and wrong.

Explain to children that they can identify the right thing to do by considering:

- How their actions will affect others.
- Asking themselves if it aligns with the values they've learned, such as kindness and respect.
- How they would feel if someone did the same thing to them in a similar situation.

On the flip side, children may sense what a wrong choice is by considering:

- If an action could hurt someone's feelings, cause harm, or go against the rules they've been taught.
- Whether the choice would make them feel guilty or uncomfortable afterward.

Present children with a range of scenarios where they need to choose the best decision based on the criteria above.

Complete the activity by asking children to describe how they feel when they do the right thing, reiterating that the most important part of doing the right thing is how it positively impacts both ourselves and others, rather than doing it out of obligation or because we "have to".

FOUNDATION – YEAR 2

WHAT IS A RULE?

Ask students to discuss with a partner what they think a rule is. What is their own definition and examples of rules? Share these as a class. Some students may say that a rule is something we have to do.

Ask students to discuss if there are ever times we should break rules? An example may be the rule about no running on concrete. But what if a student needed to urgently deliver a message to a teacher in an emergency?

Should the student walk or should they run? What are the risks if they run?

Discuss the following rules as a class. When are times that these rules are useful and are there times when we should break them?

Rules:

- No yelling inside.
- Hold hands with a partner when walking.
- No talking during assembly.
- Wear a hat outside.

YEAR 3 – 6

WHEN RULES ARE UNFAIR

There have been times throughout history, and even still to this day, where rules and laws have been made that are unfair for certain groups of people.

DID YOU KNOW?

- **It was legal for First Nations children to be stolen from their families for no reason other than being Indigenous.**
- **First Nations people were not allowed in swimming pools, cinemas or shops simply because they were Indigenous.**
- **There were policies that prevented First Nations people from speaking in language, leaving where they were forced to live, marry or work.**

Research one or all of the following examples of unfair rules for First Nations people:

- Boundary Street, West End[3] – curfews and boundaries that excluded Aboriginal people from Brisbane's city limits after dark.
- Moree[4] – by-law preventing Indigenous people from entering the Moree Baths and Pool.
- WA Soldier Settlement Scheme[5] – returning Noongar servicemen not eligible for the land settlement grants as they were not considered citizens.

Follow the lesson 'Putting the You in Community'[6] by Australians Together which examines the Australian Constitution and whether it is or isn't fair for all Australians.

HOME

TEMPTATION

In the story, the older brother felt "a ripple of excitement for breaking the Law". He and his brother continued to break the Law three times in total before they were swallowed by Country for punishment.

Discuss with your child/children why they think the brothers felt excitement to break the Law. What was happening in their bodies to feel this rush?

Talk about adrenaline – what it is, when we feel it, how it can make us feel, and when it can be useful.

Discuss dopamine (the "feel good" hormone) too. The boys liked the adrenaline rush from feeling adventurous and it gave them a dopamine boost. But are there other ways we can feel excitement, bravery and autonomy without breaking the law?

How could the brothers have acted and felt these feelings by doing positive things?

Create a list of all the things we can do to feel happy, excited and do good for our community.

DREAMING

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

SHORT DEFINITION

The 'Dreaming' is First Nations people's understanding of the world and its creation. Passed from generation to generation through storytelling, the Dreaming shares knowledge deeply connected to Country and the natural world. Dreaming stories incorporate creation, rules for living, social regulations, ethics and morality, and are strongly interconnected with Law. They often feature characters who demonstrate undesirable behaviours, and face consequences because of it.

LONG DEFINITION

The 'Dreaming' is an English word often used to describe ongoing, familial relationships to Country, which includes plants, animals, land, seas, skies and waterways. These relationships are often depicted in song, art, dance and story, representing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing, and being with Country. Dreaming can also be used by individuals to refer to either their own Dreaming or their community's Dreaming. Please read the following Common Ground article 'The Dreaming'[1] to learn more about how the Dreaming is an integrated way of life for First Nations people.

HOW TO EXPLAIN DREAMING FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

The Dreaming is First Nations people's understanding of the world and how earth was created. This knowledge is passed on from generation to generation in Dreaming stories. Each Nation has their own stories and their own word/translation for 'Dreaming'. Dreaming stories often include rules for living, community and individual responsibilities, and consequences for doing the wrong thing. These stories have existed for thousands and thousands of years, without being written in books. They are very sacred.

HOW IT LINKS TO THE STORY:

The story, 'The Rainbow Serpent'[2] was filmed in 2022 on Wiradjuri Country and told by Wiradjuri man Ricky Ah-See. This Dreaming story is about Baayami sending a creator being, the Rainbow Serpent, to earth to form mountains and rivers allowing life to flourish.

WIRADJURI COUNTRY



WATCH THE STORY

1 www.commonground.org.au/article/the-dreaming
2 www.commonground.org.au/bedtime-stories/the-rainbow-serpent

DREAMING ACTIVITIES

PREPARATION

UNPACK THE VOCABULARY

Model how to say and write the word 'Dreaming'. Read the definition for young people above and share examples from the Common Ground article 'The Dreaming'[1] of how the words can be used from a First Nations perspective. Support students to share their own sentence examples.

LOCATE COUNTRY

Wiradjuri Country on the AIATSIS Map of Indigenous Australia[2]



WATCH THE FILM

The Rainbow Serpent [00:02:50]

UNDERSTAND THE STORY

Ask and discuss the following comprehension questions:

- After the Rainbow Serpent shaped the earth, where did it go to rest? *Some say its spirit went to the night sky. Others say it's still here on earth in a secret place having a long sleep.*
- What does the Rainbow Serpent represent to Wiradjuri people? *The creation of the land.*
- Where do you think the Rainbow Serpent rests and why? *Open answers and discussion.*

1 www.commonground.org.au/article/the-dreaming
2 www.aiatsis.gov.au/explore/map-indigenous-australia
3 www.commonground.org.au/bedtime-stories/barra-the-sun-maidens

EARLY CHILDHOOD

THE RAINBOW SERPENT

The Rainbow Serpent is a significant creation being in Wiradjuri culture. The Rainbow Serpent is also a significant figure throughout many other First Nations communities across the continent.

Discuss with students how the Rainbow Serpent was described in the story by Ricky Ah-See and **create Rainbow Serpent art**.

You might like children to draw their own and use pencils, textas or paint to add rainbow colours.

Another great option is to use glue and rainbow sand. Apply glue to a piece of paper in the shape of a serpent/snake and sprinkle different colours of dyed sand to the glue.

FOUNDATION – YEAR 2

CAUTIONARY TALE

The Rainbow Serpent is a Dreaming story about how the earth was created. Sometimes, First Nations Dreaming stories include a moral or a lesson for younger generations, like the story 'Barra, the Sun Maidens' from First Nations Bedtime Stories 2021.

Watch 'Barra, the Sun Maidens' and ask students to identify what the moral of the story is.

Support students to individually (or in pairs) create a cautionary tale for children that shares an important message or lesson about a school rule.

For example:

A story about a group of wallabies who were too impatient to wait in line for the canteen like they were supposed to. They snuck into the front of the line which made the other animals angry. One day when they needed help to reach their ball that was stuck in a tree, the other animals didn't want to help them...

Allow time for students to read their cautionary tales to each other and draw an illustration for their story.

YEAR 3 – 6

BAAYAMI

Baayami (also spelt Biyaami and Baiame) is a significant creation being in Wiradjuri. Baayami is also a significant figure throughout many south-eastern Aboriginal communities including the Awabakal, Darkinung, Biripi/Birpai, Worimi and Wonnarua:

www.newcastle.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0010/103114/The Wollotuka Cultural-Standards.pdf

Ngemba people also have Dreaming stories about Baayami:

www.mpra.com.au/baiame-s-footprint

Research the following to explore the significant sites where Baayami travelled to:

- Baayami's footprints at Ngunnhu (Brewarinna Fish Traps).
- The rock art of Baayami in a cave on Wonnarua Country.
- Mount Yengo on Darkinung Country – one of the sites where Baayami descended from and ascended back into the sky.

Use the AIATSIS Map of Indigenous Australia to plot the First Nations countries where Baayami travelled to.

HOME

LOCAL DREAMING

This is a great opportunity to **connect with an Elder or appropriate community member** to learn about a non-secret Dreaming or creation story where your home is located.

Start your research with a simple Google search. Type in "First Nations Dreaming stories in [town name]".

You can also **visit your local public library or museum to find more information**, as well as local First Nations cultural centres, services or businesses.

It's important to remember that not all Dreaming stories can be shared with everyone. Some are held by specific families or knowledge custodians.

Please see the Resource Overview on page 16 for a summary of all suggested resources to explore Dreaming.

ANCESTORS

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

SHORT DEFINITION

Our Ancestors are the family members who came before us, such as our great-great-grandparents and those from generations long ago. They hold a significant place in First Nations families and cultures, playing a vital role in connecting us to our histories, traditions and identities.

LONG DEFINITION

First Nations people have an ongoing relationship with Ancestor spirits. To not know your Ancestors is to feel disempowered and disconnected. For First Nations people, connecting to the Ancestors is not confined to one's family lineage, rather, it encompasses First Nations spirituality and the interconnectedness of plants, animals, landforms and celestial bodies. The creation Ancestors sculpted the earth's formations and established the ways in which all things should live and relate to one another to maintain order and sustainability. Please read the following Common Ground article 'Ancestors'[1] to learn more about the importance of Ancestors to First Nations people.

HOW TO EXPLAIN ANCESTORS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Our Ancestors are the family members who came before us, such as our great-great-grandparents and those from generations long ago. Ancestors are important part of First Nations families and cultures. First Nations people believe their Ancestor spirits watch over them, guiding them and protecting them. Some Nations believe their Ancestors are in the land around them or up in the sky.

HOW IT LINKS TO THE STORY:

The story, 'Djinda Midariny'[2] was filmed in 2023 on Noongar Country by Noongar Elder, Kerry-Ann Winmar. It is a story about a young Noongar man who was a very good dancer – one of the best ever. He was so good that other Noongar men got jealous and wanted to hurt him. To protect the dancer, his family sent him into the sky and he became the Djinda Midariny (Eastern Star). You can still see him there today. Aunty Kerry-Ann states, "stars are the campfires of our Ancestors".

NOONGAR COUNTRY



WATCH THE STORY

CULTURAL SENSITIVITY WARNING:
The following activities contain the names of First Nations people who have passed

1 www.commonground.org.au/article/ancestors
2 www.commonground.org.au/bedtime-stories/djinda-midariny



ANCESTORS ACTIVITIES

PREPARATION

UNPACK THE VOCABULARY

Model how to say and write the word 'Ancestors'. Read the Common Ground article 'Ancestors'[1] for your understand. Read the definition for young people above. Support students to share their own sentence examples.

LOCATE COUNTRY



Noongar Country on the AIATSIS Map of Indigenous Australia[2]

WATCH THE FILM

Djinda Midariny [00:05:39]

UNDERSTAND THE STORY

Ask and discuss the following comprehension questions:

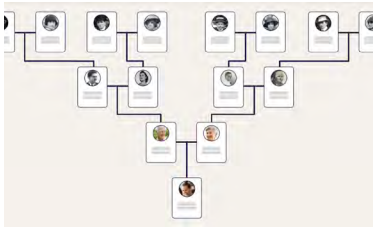
- What does Djinda Midariny mean? *Star dancer.*
- Why were some men jealous of the moorditj (good) dancer? *They wished they were as good a dancer as him.*
- How can you find Djinda Midariny in the night sky? *Look up to the east and look for the bright, twinkling star.*

1 www.commonground.org.au/article/ancestors
2 www.aiatsis.gov.au/explore/map-indigenous-australia
3 www.findmypast.com.au/blog/family-tree/family-tree-template
4 www.nga.gov.au/on-demand/julie-dowling-self-portrait-in-our-country/

EARLY CHILDHOOD

WHO ARE OUR ANCESTORS?

After watching the film and sharing the definition of Ancestors with children, have a **yarn with them about the people in their families**. Explain that families are made up of different generations.



Showing an example of a family tree like this from Find My Past[3] can help children visualise the different layers of their family. Remind them that Ancestors are our family members who lived before us, or a long time ago.

Support children to make a visual representation of the different generations of their family, including their Ancestors. This could look like a family tree, a layered circle, a drawing of living family members in colour and Ancestors in black and white (as presented in the diagram above).

FOUNDATION – YEAR 2

ANCESTORS IN COUNTRY

Aunty Kerry-Ann Winmar sings to the Ancestors and asks permission to share the story with the children. She sings into Country – the land, the sky, where she believes the Old People or Ancestors are watching over her.

Take students outside to observe Country. What do they notice about how the plants move? What sounds can they hear?

Observe the artwork 'Self-portrait: in our country' (2002)[4] by Badimaya woman, Julie Dowling with students.

Ask students:

- What can you see in this artwork?
- How do you think this artwork links to what we are learning about today?
- Where is the artist and where are her Ancestors in this artwork?
- Why do you think the artist and her Ancestors are surrounded by Country?
- Support students to create their own family portrait artwork that depicts themselves, their family and their Ancestors in a place that is special to them.

YEAR 3 – 6

THE STRENGTH OF OUR ANCESTORS

The strength, determination and resilience of our Ancestors – who lived through extreme racism, displacement, the forced removal of children, exclusion, assimilation and trauma from colonisation – continues through us as First Nations people. We have an ongoing relationship with our Ancestors and connecting to them is not confined to family lineage, rather it encompasses First Nations spirituality and the interconnectedness of plants, animals, landforms and celestial bodies.

Research one or all of the following First Nations people who have now passed and discuss the barriers they faced and how they overcame them:

- Uncle Archie Roach
- Uncle Jack Charles
- Fanny Cochrane Smith
- Shirley Colleen Smith

Create a list of powerful words we can use to describe and admire First Nations Ancestors. For example, strong, clever, determined, resilient.

Combine the words to create a class poem (in any structure you deem appropriate).

Write the poem on a large piece of cardboard and decorate it as a class.

Display on a wall in your classroom.

HOME

OLD PHOTOS

Do you have photos of family members who lived a long time ago? Do you know any stories about your Ancestors? What do you know about them?

Show your child/children the photos and **share the knowledge** you have about those family members.

- When and where were they born?
- How old were they when they passed?
- What did they do for work?
- What were their hobbies?
- Is there anything they did in their lifetime that is really important for how your family lives now. For example, sacrifices they made (like going to war), moving to a new town for a better job or living situation, continued certain cultural traditions.
- What do you, or your other family members, remember about them?
- Does your family do anything special to remember them? For example, visiting their grave, naming other family members after them, keeping photos of them in an album.
- Ask your child/children to think of three questions they would ask their Ancestors.

Please see the Resource Overview on page 16 for a summary of all suggested resources to explore Ancestors.

CONNECTION

OVERVIEW

COUNTRY, FAMILY, LAW, DREAMING AND ANCESTORS INTERCONNECT AND OVERLAP. FIRST NATIONS LAWS ARE PLACE-BASED AND LINKED TO COUNTRY. DREAMING STORIES COMMUNICATE THESE LAWS AND WE SHARE THEM WITH FAMILY. OUR ANCESTORS ARE OUR FAMILY MEMBERS WHO HAVE PASSED AWAY. WE OFTEN SAY THEY HAVE "RETURNED TO THE DREAMING" OR THEY HAVE "RETURNED TO COUNTRY" (EITHER THE LAND ITSELF OR THE SKY).

CONNECTIONS COULD BE MADE BETWEEN SEVERAL OF THE STORIES THAT INCLUDED OR REFERENCED THE RAINBOW SERPENT. IN BOTH 'THE ONE-EYED RAINBOW SERPENT' AND 'THE BOYS WHO BROKE THE LAW', FIRST NATIONS PEOPLE SPOKE TO SPIRITS IN COUNTRY ASKING FOR RAIN.

MANY MORE CONNECTIONS CAN BE MADE BETWEEN THE STORIES AND THE WAYS OF BEING, DOING AND THINKING OF EACH NATION WHERE THESE STORIES ORIGINATE FROM. EXPLORE THESE CONNECTIONS BY FOLLOWING THE ACTIVITY.

First Nations Systems Thinking

Please read 'First Nations Systems Thinking' by Rona Glynn-McDonald to learn more about systems thinking and relationality within First Nations cultures.

www.commonground.org.au/article/first-nations-systems-thinking

1 www.padlet.com
2 www.miro.com

ACTIVITY

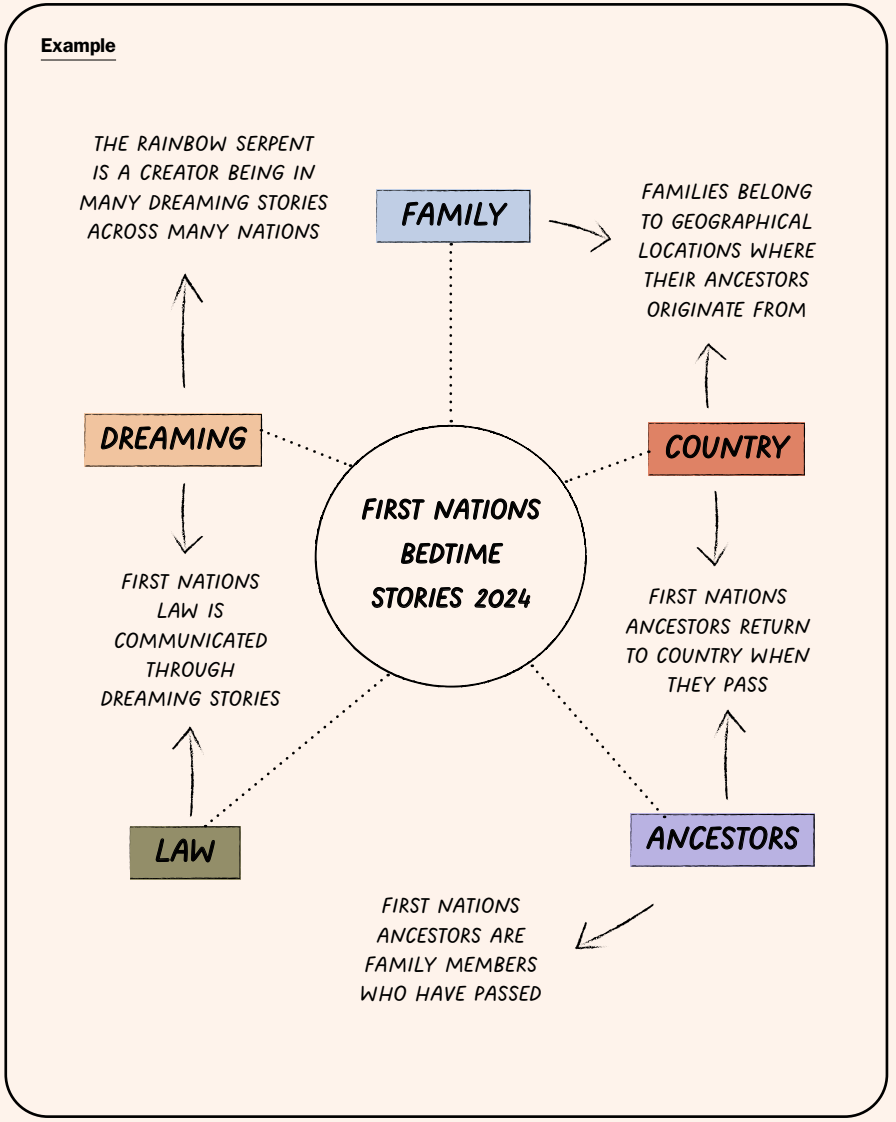
CONNECTION

Use a whiteboard or large piece of butchers paper/cardboard to create a mindmap where students can add examples of the connections they noticed while learning about the themes: Country, Family, Law, Dreaming and Ancestors (or the stories themselves).

Students can write their examples directly onto the whiteboard or paper, or use sticky notes for the ability to move examples around. See example to the right. You are welcome to print this example and add to it.

Tip: Alternatively, you might like to create a digital mind map or brainstorm using Padlet[1] or Miro[2].

Example



RESOURCE OVERVIEW

	COUNTRY	FAMILY	LAW	DREAMING	ANCESTORS
FIRST NATIONS BEDTIME STORIES AND PAST TEACHER RESOURCES	The One-Eyed Rainbow Serpent	The Lost Joey	The Boys Who Broke the Law Alternative story: The Cockatoo Sisters and the Magic Digging Stick	The Rainbow Serpent Barra, the Sun Maidens	Djinda Midariny
COMMON GROUND ARTICLES FOR TEACHER LEARNING	What is Country? by Gemma Pol Acknowledgement of Country by the Common Ground Team	First Nations Family and Kinship Systems by the Common Ground Team	First Nations Legal Systems by Phoebe McIlwraith	The Dreaming by the Common Ground Team	Ancestors by the Common Ground Team
SUGGESTED ACTIVITY RESOURCES		Family and Kinship by Reconciliation Australia 'The Stolen Generations' Resource Kit for Teachers and Students by the Healing Foundation	Defying boundaries of Brisbane's past by Reconciliation Queensland National Heritage Places - Moree Baths and Swimming Pool Complex by Department of Climate, Energy, the Environment and Water War Service by South West Aboriginal Land & Sea Council Putting the YOU in Community by Australians Together	Cultural Standards by the Wollotuka Institute Baiame's Footprint by Murdi Paaki Regional Assembly	Family Tree Template by Find My Past
OPTIONAL	Country by Aunty Fay Muir Heal Country Resource by Roots for Future and Common Ground	Wandihnu and the Old Dugong by Elizabeth Wymarra, Wandihnu Wymarra and Benjamin Hodges Families Come in All Shapes and Sizes - Classroom Display and Class Family Tree Display by Teach Starter First Nations Kinship blog post by Australians Together	Gurrill, Storm Bird by Trevor Fourmile and Jingalu	Our Dreaming by Kirli Saunders and Dub Leffler	Nedingar: Ancestors by Isobel Bevis and Leanne Zilm For Our Elders Teacher Resource by the Yulang Effect and Common Ground

CONNECTION

First Nations Systems Thinking by Rona Glynn-McDonald

OTHER

AIATSIS Map of Indigenous Australia

Fun Ways to Introduce Vocabulary in the Early Years blog post by Teach Starter

- Word of the Week Poster
- Vocabulary Activities Bulletin Board

The Early Years Learning Framework (Version 2.0)

- Information Sheet: Belonging, Being & Becoming: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Perspectives

The Australian Curriculum (Version 9.0)

- The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures cross-curriculum priority

Diverse First Nations Identities by the Common Ground Team

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We acknowledge and thank our Elders and Old People for paving the way and protecting and sharing our Dreaming stories. We honour, celebrate and pay respect to them and their unwavering strength. Those we have lost and those who are still with us and continue to guide us and advocate for justice and our communities.

BEHIND THE RESOURCE

COMMON GROUND

Common Ground is a First Nations not-for-profit changing systems through storytelling. We are led by community, and work with a collective of First Nations people to amplify knowledge, cultures and stories – building on over 80,000 years of strong, community-driven storytelling.

THE TEACHER FOCUS GROUP

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RESOURCE DESIGN

Celine Tan from Harvey



JORDYN GREEN

Jordyn Green is a Wiradyuri, Ngemba and Paakantji primary teacher and founder of The Yulang Effect. The Yulang Effect exists to build connection, truth and deeper understanding in education by supporting teachers to be impactful allies who create a yulang (ripple) effect lasting long into the future.

TEACH STARTER

Thank you for creating vocabulary resources for First Nations Bedtime Stories, that teachers can download for free from your website.

BEHIND THE FILMS ACROSS THE FIVE THEMES

COUNTRY

Story — **The One-Eyed Rainbow Serpent (2019)**
Storyteller — *Garrard Anderson*
Director — *Rona Glynn McDonald*
Producer — *Penelope McDonald*
Cinematographer — *Meg White*
Camera Assistant— *Shane Mulcahy*
Sound — *Pin Rava*
Editor — *Joelle Baudet*

FAMILY

Story — **The Lost Joey (2020)**
Storyteller — *Robin Japanangka Granites*
Director, Producer — *Tanith Glynn-Maloney*
Cinematographer, Editor — *Aidan Tai-Jones*
Sound — *Anna Miers & Pin Rava*
Hosts — *Damien Angale Williams & Stirling Twaname*

LAW

Story 1 — **The Boys Who Broke The Law (2021)**
Storyteller 1 — *Mark Coles Smith*
Story 2 — **The Cockatoo Sisters and the Magic Digging Stick (2021)**
Storyteller 2 — *Dr Anne Poelina*
Director, Producer, Editor — *Marlikka Perdrisat*
Director of Photography — *Harry Jakamarra*
Grip, Gaffer — *Lachie Carracher*
Community Advisor — *Pat Riley*
Cultural Consultant — *Dr Anne Poelina*

DREAMING

Story 1 — **The Rainbow Serpent (2022)**
Storyteller 1 — *Ricky Ah-See*
Director, Producer, Editor — *Jack Steele*
Cinematographers — *Kent Marcus & Ryan Andrew Lee*
Animation — *Studio Gilay*
Post Production Producer — *Jake Duczynski*
Composers and Sound — *Sam Gill & Luke Neher*
Photographer — *Josh Howlett*
Cast — *Taylah Nean, Neil Lucas, Malakia Ah-See, Isaac Smyth, Jayden Steele, Thomas Nixon & Mathew Sharrock*

Story 2 —**Barra, the Sun Maidens (2021)**
See 'Law' for 2021 Credits

ANCESTORS

Story — **Djinda Midariny (2023)**
Storyteller — *Kerry-Ann Winmar*
Director — *Gary Hamaguchi*
Producer — *Brooke Collard*
Director of Photography — *Torstein Dyrting*
Photographer — *Cole Baxter*
Sound — *Gavin Repton & Diego Espinoza*
Editor — *Jason Haji-Ali*
Hosts — *Ivy Cox & Steven Cox*

As we celebrate five years of First Nations Bedtime Stories we want to celebrate and thank all storytellers that have shared their knowledge and stories with us: *Alison Torres, Dr Anne Poelina, Audrey McCormack, Doreen McCormack Mokarenge, Edwin Mulligan, Elaine Stuart, Garrard Anderson, Ian "Dougie" Sutherland, Kerry-Ann Winmar, Koodah Cornwall, Professor Len Collard, Lorna Wilson, Marie Taylor, Mark Coles Smith, Uncle Neil Ingram, Ricky Ah-See, Ricky Orr, Robin Japanagka Granites, Tjunkaya Tapaya, Vennessa Poelina, Vivienne Hansen.*

In loving memory of storytellers *Kathleen Kemarre Wallace* and *Peter "Coco" Wallace.*

CONTACT US

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Facebook	/commongroundfirstnations



FIRST NATIONS BEDTIME STORIES

We are a First Nations not-for-profit that exists to centre First Nations people, Country and truth-telling. We acknowledge all First Peoples of this land and celebrate their enduring connections to Country, knowledge and stories. We pay our respects to Elders and Ancestors who watch over us and guide Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. © 2024 Common Ground First Nations