

Educator Notes

Local seasons – exploring Indigenous weather knowledge

Learning and Engagement Approach

This activity is designed to engage young learners aged from 7 - 13. The activity is intended to:

- encourage observation of daily changes in weather and the environment using the senses
- increase awareness of how First Nations Peoples follow the changing seasons through observing the weather, plants and animals
- use the story to create a local seasons journal
- help develop connections to local First Nations Peoples communities

Safety Considerations

- Check the weather before conducting any outdoors activity. If there is going to be extreme temperatures, storms or high wind, postpone the activity.
- Ensure that everyone is wearing closed shoes, hats, sunscreen and have a water bottle handy.
- Keep any allergy plan information at hand and any associated allergy medication.
- Check the site beforehand for any hazards and risks. Remove hazards, if this is not possible move to a safer location.

Materials and References

Use the [Indigenous Weather Knowledge](#) from the Bureau of Meteorology to explore the Indigenous seasons by selecting the language group on the map closest to where you live.

This [article](#) from ABC helps us to understand the changing weather through learning about Australia through First Nations Peoples knowledge of seasons.

[Season wheels](#) showing ecological knowledge from across Northern Australia developed with Indigenous language groups and CSIRO.

[Caring for Country \(Primary\) resource](#) from Narragunnawali provides resource material for all students to build a personal sense of responsibility for respecting and caring for the Country/place around them, all the while building an awareness and appreciation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander contributions to sustainable Land management.

The [Gambay – First Languages Map](#) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages from First Languages Australia can help locate your local First Nations Peoples as it reflects the names and groupings favoured by community.

WATCH

Learn from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities across Northern and Western Australia who have helped to develop seasonal calendars in this [video](#) from ABC Education (2 minutes).

Watch this Behind the News [story](#), as Elders share stories on Indigenous seasons within a school (3 minutes).

READ

My Home in Kakadu (2005) from Magabala Books, Author: Jane Christophersen, Illustrator: Christine Christophersen. This picture book tells the story of Tarrah who lives with her community in Kakadu and the significance of the changing seasons to those who live there.

Grant, Stan & Grant, Stan, 1940-, (compiler.) & Rudder, John, (compiler.) (2010). A new Wiradjuri dictionary. Restoration House, O'Connor, A.C.T. for Wiradjuri language. In addition to the resources listed in the learning activity.

Bodkin, FB. (2013), Dharawal Climate and Natural resources. Envirobook, Sussex Inlet, NSW.

Cahir, FC, Clarke IDC, Clarke PAC. (2018). Aboriginal bio cultural knowledge in South- Eastern Australia. CSIRO publishing, Clayton South VIC 3169.

Magabala Books is Australia's leading First Nations Peoples publishing house, refer to their [website](#) to source a large range of relevant books.

Site Suggestions

- A natural outdoor or garden setting is ideal for this activity, to encourage the observations of plants, animals and to hear sounds in the environment.
- A local Elder or First Nations Peoples community member can help to suggest a suitable local location.

Educator Tips

We learn about the four seasons – Summer, Autumn, Winter and Spring. However, this does not really fit into what our weather pattern is like in Australia. If we travel to other parts of Australia the weather is different (at the same time of year). Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples observe different seasons through the changes in weather, plants and animals. This shows them the time of year for certain activities, when to move to other places and when to eat certain foods. Some areas of Australia had two seasons while others had up to eight. Seasonal cycles are described depending on location, reflecting the different climates across our vast country.

The Bureau of Meteorology, [Indigenous Weather Knowledge website](#) is a great place to get more information about the different seasons across Australia and how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples observe them.

Below are some discussion questions along with some suggested answers to get you started with tuning in to the seasons with children.

What are some of the things that change in the environment over a year? Animals, plants, temperature, clouds, night sky, rain, what we do, activities, etc.

What changes have you seen in the bushland near you, or even in your backyard? Moss, fungi, flowers, seeds, birds nesting, ducklings, dry grass, cicadas, crickets, ground muddy, etc.

What is weather? How can we describe it?

- Temperature – Hot, warm, cold.
- Rain – rainy, dry, drizzle, storms, showers, hail, snow.
- Wind – still, windy, light breeze.
- Sun – sunny, daylight, night, morning, afternoon, midday.

How do we know that the seasons have changed? What can we see?

- Change in temperature, change in daylight hours, change in rainfall
- Plants growing, flowers, seeds and the life cycle.
- Animals growing, finding places for nests, having babies, babies grow up (life cycles).

Why is it important to know about the seasons? Imagine if you lived in the bush and all of the things you needed came from the bush.

How would you keep warm and dry if you lived in the bush? Build a shelter, wrap yourself up in skins (a possum skin cloak).

How would you keep yourself cool if you lived in the bush? Camp near a river or the beach, build a shelter that gives you shade but lets the wind cool.

Aligning this Activity

This activity can be conducted as a stand-alone activity or linked to:

- [Whose Country are you on? – Exploring the Indigenous languages map](#)
- [Creating an Indigenous plant use garden sequence](#)

Extension activities include:

Extension 1

Connect with your local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and invite them to share their knowledge with you.

Extension 2

Use information from the Bureau of Meteorology's [Indigenous Weather Knowledge](#) site and find the Seasonal calendar from the First Nations Peoples community closest to you. Select a

Language group and open the page showing the seasons for that group. Compare the seasons in the story. Use with other online resources or books to construct a chart or write a story about the seasons in your area. You may like to use pictures to help.

Extension 3

Share your knowledge and tell a story about how a plant or animal changes through the seasons.

Community Engagement

We recommend reaching out to the Local Traditional owners and First Nations Peoples community groups who can assist in knowledge sharing and understanding local land, language, stories and culture. To reach out or find contacts in your local community you could speak to parents of First Nations students, to an Indigenous Learning Officer (ILO) at your school, local Land Council or a local Landcare group.

We have some suggested organisations to approach listed on our [Junior Landcare Community page](#).

Curriculum and Framework Links

SCIENCE

Year 3: [ACSSU044](#), [ACSHE050](#)

Year 4: [ACSSU072](#), [ACSHE061](#) Year 7: [ACSSU115](#), [ACSHE121](#), [AC SIS129](#)

HUMANITIES and SOCIAL SCIENCES

Year 3: [ACHASSK062](#), [ACHASSK066](#), [ACHASSK068](#)

Year 4: [ACHASSI074](#), [ACHASSK083](#)

Year 5: [ACHASSK113](#)

GENERAL CAPABILITIES

[Critical and Creative Thinking](#)

[Personal and Social Capability](#)

[Ethical Understanding](#)

[Intercultural Understanding](#)

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

[Outdoor Learning](#)

[Food and Fibre](#)

CROSS CURRICULUM PRIORITY

[Aboriginal and Torres Straight Islanders Histories and Cultures](#)

[Sustainability](#)

MY TIME, OUR PLACE: FRAMEWORK FOR SCHOOL AGE CARE

[Outcome 2 and 4](#)