

Aboriginal Art Styles Across Australia

Teacher Notes (Years 3–6)

Lesson Overview

This lesson introduces students to four Aboriginal art traditions: X-Ray Art, Western Desert Art, Wandjina Art and Tiwi Art. Students learn that Aboriginal art is not one style and that different Aboriginal communities developed different artistic traditions connected to their own Country.

Slide 1 – Aboriginal Art Styles Across Australia

Key Message: Aboriginal art is not one style.

Ask: What do you think Aboriginal art looks like? Do all Aboriginal artworks look the same?

Slide 2 – Aboriginal Art Is Not One Style

Key Message: Different Aboriginal communities developed different art styles.

Ask: Which artwork looks most different? Which would you most like to learn about?

Slide 3 – Country

Key Message: Country means much more than land.

Ask: What places are important to your family? Why are places important to people?

Slide 4 – X-Ray Art

Key Message: X-Ray Art shows the outside and inside of animals.

Ask: Why might an artist show what is inside an animal?

Slide 5 – X-Ray Art Activity

Key Message: Artists carefully observed animals.

Ask students to find the spine, stomach and intestines.

Slide 6 – Western Desert Art

Key Message: Western Desert paintings often show Country from above.

Ask: Have you ever looked at a map from above?

Slide 7 – Can You Read the Symbols?

Key Message: Symbols help tell stories about Country.

Ask students to find waterholes, travel lines, running water and bush tucker.

Slide 8 – Wandjina Art

Key Message: Wandjina are important ancestral beings from the Kimberley.

Ask: Why do you think the Wandjina doesn't have a mouth?

Slide 9 – Age of Wandjina Art

Key Message: The Wandjina tradition is very old.

Compare the age of the tradition with Stonehenge.

Slide 10 – Tiwi Art

Key Message: Tiwi artists are famous for painted carvings and Jilamara designs.

Ask: Which patterns catch your eye first?

Slide 11 – Aboriginal Australia

Key Message: Aboriginal Australia contains many nations and language groups.

Ask: How many different groups can you see on the map?

Slide 12 – Conclusion

Key Message: Aboriginal art is many traditions, not one style.

Ask: Which style did you find most interesting and why?

Learning Outcomes

- Recognise X-Ray Art
- Recognise Western Desert Art
- Recognise Wandjina Art
- Recognise Tiwi Art
- Understand that Aboriginal art is not one style
- Understand that different Aboriginal communities developed different artistic traditions