

Gnamma holes

About the lesson

Students examine an informative text about gnamma holes (rock water holes) and their importance to Aboriginal people. They consider the differences between verbal and written information, conduct research about WA's water or other natural features and present the information orally to the class.

Year level

Year 5-6

Learning objectives

Students will:

- Identify features of informative texts.
- Practise scan reading, note taking, summarising and referencing.
- Understand the importance of gnamma holes to the survival of traditional Aboriginal people (and the role of gnamma holes in an ecosystem).
- Consider the reliability and credibility of information sources.
- Research and orally share knowledge about WA's natural features and their importance to Aboriginal people.
- (Optionally) Learn Noongar words associated with gnamma holes.
- (Optionally) Create an informative text about water invertebrates.

Curriculum links

English	
<i>Language</i>	ACELA1500
	ACELA1797
	ACELA1515
	ACELA1524
<i>Literacy</i>	ACELY1699
	ACELY1700
	ACELY1701
	ACELY1704
	ACELY1702
	ACELY1708
	ACELY1709
	ACELY1710
	ACELY1711
	ACELY1712
ACELY1714	
HASS	
<i>Geography</i>	ACHASSK112
	ACHASSK113
<i>Science (Optional)</i>	ACSSU043
<i>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures</i>	OI.2
	OI.3
	OI.9

> Lesson Plan

Engage and set the scene

1. Show students an image of a camper van or similar in an outback setting and outline the following scenario:
"Imagine you were out with your family on a camping trip around WA. One morning you are planning to go on a guided walk around some granite hills, where you will learn about the plants and animals living in the area. You arrive a bit early and decide to go and explore yourself while waiting for the guide. Before you know it, you've wandered too far away from your campsite. You are lost!! You've heard that people were sometimes lost in the outback for many days. What are you going to do? How will you find food, shelter and, most importantly, water?"

Equipment and Links

[Camper van in an outback setting](#)

Explore

1. Show students one or all of the following:
 - a historic photograph of a person using a gnamma hole
 - a sketch which includes a diagram of a gnamma hole
 - the front cover of the *Derdibin Gnamma Storybook* publication
2. Ask: Who and what is shown in the image? What are the people doing?
3. Explain what a gnamma is (water rock hole), and introduce students to the *Derdibin Gnamma Storybook*. Discuss the quote on the front cover, and what this suggests about the importance of gnammas to traditional Aboriginal people.
4. Examine the images on page 2 of the text, and discuss the location of Derdibin Rock in relation to your school. Discuss other features of the text: e.g. contents, illustrations, headings, acknowledgments. How is this text different to other 'storybooks' you might have read?
5. Give students a few minutes to scan the text and do a think-pair-share: what questions about gnammas will this text answer?

Equipment and Links

[20th century photo of explorers using a gnamma hole](#)

[19th century sketch of Aboriginal people close to a gnamma hole](#)

[The Derdibin Gnamma Story Book](#)

Explain

1. Model how to take notes and how to correctly reference the source.
2. Get students to summarise information from page 4-7 of the text.
3. Ask students to share some of the key points they identified.
4. Discuss: Do you think this text is credible and reliable? How can you tell?
5. Briefly provide additional information about gnamma holes, which students would not have been able to ascertain from their reading - e.g. how they are formed and their importance in the ecosystem, and how many of the holes stagnated after European settlement.

You may like to show students a video of the Derdibin Gnamma being cleaned.

6. Explain that today, we can find out information about gnammas, their location, importance and how to care for them by going online and reading information texts like the *Derdibin Gnamma Storybook*. Knowing about gnammas was critical to the survival of people living in the outback. In the past, Aboriginal people communicated this sort of information through their actions, stories and songs.

Oral sharing of knowledge remains important today, and not just to the Aboriginal people: for example, parents and teachers often share knowledge verbally. It is usually the main way that tour guides share information about special places they take visitors to.

If possible, invite an Aboriginal person from your local community to talk to your class about significant water places in your area, how people obtained water in the past and how Aboriginal people today contribute to looking after these water places.

Equipment and Links

[Video of Derdibin gnamma clean-up](#)

> Lesson Plan

Extend and elaborate

1. Direct students to search online to find and watch a YouTube video about gnammas and complete a Venn diagram comparing the clip to the *Derdibin Gnamma Storybook*. Criteria for comparison can include content, text organisation, interest, reliability and credibility, etc.
2. Discuss how someone presenting information orally might ensure that what they are talking about is clear, interesting and memorable. Get students to research and take notes about a WA water feature (e.g. a river, lake, wetland), or another feature of the natural landscape, then present their findings orally to the class, e.g. as if they were a tour guide. In their research, students should try to find information about the significance of the water/natural feature to Aboriginal people.

Optional: Noongar words

3. Students can make a list of Noongar words included in the *Derdibin Gnamma Storybook* and use them to create a Noongar-English illustrated dictionary. Alternatively, get students to come up with mnemonics to learn the Noongar words, and challenge the class to see who remembers the most. Students then can write a creative story or poem incorporating some of the Noongar words into their writing.

Optional: Aquatic mini beasts

4. Students can use the information in the *Derdibin Gnamma Storybook* plus additional research to complete a fact sheet about aquatic invertebrates.

Evaluate and reflect

1. Get students to reflect on the questions they thought might be answered by reading the *Derdibin Gnamma Storybook*. Which questions were answered?
2. Discuss the positives and negatives of learning information through reading versus viewing and listening. Do some people prefer to learn in one way over the other?

Useful resources

- Water Corporation. (n.d.). Western Australian Aboriginal language centres contact list <https://www.watercorporation.com.au/-/media/files/education/lessons-and-teaching-resources/lesson-plans/activity-sheets-and-fact-sheets/western-australian-aboriginal-language-centres-contact-list.pdf>
- WA Museum. (2017). Gnamma Holes <http://museum.wa.gov.au/explore/wa-goldfields/water-arid-land/gnamma-holes>