

The Rainbow Serpent

Lesson Plan

K - Year 6

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The Rainbow Serpent

K-6

- Learning:**
- how do Aboriginal people understand the creation of the world, the animals and features such as mountains and lagoons?
 - people tell different stories about how the world and the things in it came to be the way they are;

Before reading:

- what do you think this book will be about? What do you see that makes you think that?
- what do you see, think and wonder when you look at the cover?
- what is a serpent? (discuss title);
- what do you know about Australia's Aboriginal people/First Peoples/Indigenous people?
- have you ever heard of Dreaming stories or the Dreamtime? What do you know about them? (write ideas and responses on the class whiteboard);
- tell children Aboriginal people call this a Dreaming Story;
- write words or phrases from the text which might be new to the children on the whiteboard (eg different tongue, journeyed north, granite, head-dress, pandanus armbands, humpies). Discuss their meaning and have them visible as you read the book;

After reading: K - Year 4

- ask the children if there were any unknown words in the story. Write them on the class whiteboard and discuss their meaning;
- is this a true story? How do you know?
- when did the story happen? How do you know?
- where does the story take place?
- who are the main characters? (write responses on the class whiteboard)
- what happened in the story? (write responses on the class whiteboard)
- what do Dreaming stories teach us?
- what are you wondering about after hearing the story? What does the story make you want to find out more about?
- tell children paintings of the Rainbow Serpent first appeared in Arnhem Land rock art more than 6,000 years ago;
- tell children ATSI people all over Australia have their own versions of the Rainbow Serpent story in their own languages;

After reading: Years 5 - 6

- ask the children if there were any unknown words in the story. Write them on the class whiteboard and discuss their meaning;
- is this a true story? How do you know?
- when did the story happen? How do you know?
- where does the story take place?
- who are the main characters? (write responses on the class whiteboard)
- what happened in the story? (write responses on the class whiteboard)
- how are Dreaming stories structured?
- what do Dreaming stories teach us?
- how do the Dreaming stories connect the land to its people and animals?
- other cultures also tell stories about how things came to be. Do you know of any?
- what are you wondering about after hearing the story? What does the story make you want to find out more about?
- tell children paintings of the Rainbow Serpent first appeared in Arnhem Land rock art more than 6,000 years ago;
- tell children ATSI people all over Australia have their own versions of the Rainbow Serpent story in their own languages;

Activities:

K - Year 1

- children write a sentence or two about the story and illustrate it;
- **art:** show the children an illustration of the Rainbow Serpent from the book. Discuss the colours and design they see on the snake. The children draw their own Rainbow Serpent;
- **craft:** children make a Rainbow Serpent using coloured paper or a collage Rainbow Serpent;

Years 2 - 3

- children write a response to the text: why do they think the story is important to Aboriginal people?
- children re-tell the story in their own words;
- in small groups or in pairs, children create story cards for each of the main characters and use the cards to re-tell the story;
- **art:** children make an individual or collaborative art work depicting the Rainbow Serpent;

Activities: Years 4 - 6

Enhancing children's understanding of the Rainbow Serpent story

Watch this short clip (6 mins) about the story of the Rainbow Serpent:

- note that the narrator calls the story a myth. It's important to tell children that the story is not a myth but a very real story for ATSI people;
- after watching the clip, lead a discussion about how the video added to the children's understanding of the story of the Rainbow Serpent;
- how does the clip help us to understand ATSI people's thinking about how the world was made?

<https://www.nationalgeographic.org/media/rainbow-serpent/>

Watch this short clip (2:45mins) which shows an Indigenous man from Tamworth talking about Gariya, the name his people give to the Rainbow Serpent:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vZRFL-aEmz4>

After watching both clips, children write about the Rainbow Serpent story:

- how do they think the story came into being?
- what does the story tell us about the way ATSI peoples thought about and understood the world?

Exploring Character (requires card, cut into quarters)

In pairs or small groups:

- children discuss and record facts and their thoughts about characters in the text (Goorialla, Rainbow Lorikeet brothers, Tree Goanna brothers);
- children use post-it notes to move and group their ideas as they work;
- they use the information to create story cards (trading cards) for the characters, with information on one side and an illustration on the other;
- invite groups to retell the story of the Rainbow Serpent to the class using their story cards;

Activities:

Researching Rainbow Serpent Art (requires computers and internet access)

In pairs or individually: children choose a topic to research and write a paragraph about it in their own words:

- historical and sacred sites in the Northern Territory;
- Arnhem Land;
- rock art in Arnhem Land;

Websites for research:

<https://www.aapant.org.au/sacred-sites>

<https://northernterritory.com/arnhem-land/region-guide>

Notes: