

Student worksheet

2.5 Connecting through landscape stories

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Indigenous seasonal calendars

Throughout history, Indigenous Australians have developed an intimate understanding of Australia's landscape. Their understanding of seasons, for example, goes beyond the inflexible four-season European calendar to which most Australians adhere. Rather, the start of each season is marked by observable changes, such as the hibernation of desert animals, the flowering of young plants and the flooding of wetlands. Even the Bureau of Meteorology acknowledges that 'this produces a far more intricate and subtle overview of Australia's climate than the four-season European climate description of summer, autumn, winter and spring, applied as it is across most areas of the continent'.

Given its sheer size, there are varied climate zones in Australia ranging from tropical, desert and alpine. Therefore, there is no one generic Indigenous seasonal calendar. However, Source 1 compares the western calendar with three of the many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander seasonal cycles.

	European terms	Indigenous Australian seasons		
Month	Season	Miriwoong calendar	Nyoongar calendar	D'harawal calendar
DEC	Summer	Nyinggiyi-mageny (wet weather time)	Birak (dry and hot)	Parra'dowee (warm and wet)
JAN			Bunuru (hottest)	Burran (hot and dry)
FEB	Autumn	Warnka-mageny (cold weather time)	Bjeran (cool begins)	Marrai'gang (wet becoming cooler)
MAR			Makuru (coldest, wettest)	Burrugin (cold, short days)
APR	Winter		Djilba (wet days and cool nights)	Wiritjiribin (cold and windy)
MAY			Kambarang (long dry periods)	Ngoonungi (cool, getting warmer)
JUN	Spring	Barndenyirriny (hot weather time)		Parra'dowee (warm and wet)
JUL				
AUG				
SEP				
OCT				
NOV				

Source 1 Comparison of four seasonal calendars

Source: http://www.bom.gov.au/iwk/climate_culture/Indig_seasons.shtml



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- 1 Use the Internet to research the location of the Miriwoong, Nyoongar and D'harawal peoples and mark them on the blank map of Australia provided. Remember to include BOLTSS on your map.



- 2 Choose one of the seasons from Source 1. Visit the website for the Bureau of Meteorology's Indigenous Weather Knowledge here <http://www.bom.gov.au/iwk/> and use the information you find to write a short summary of the Dreaming story related to this season.



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- 3 Draw a sketch to portray this story in the space provided