Aboriginals have lived in Australia for at least 50,000 years, and are thought to have come originally from Africa over 70,000 years ago. They are likely the oldest continuous culture in the world. Their art is an important part of their culture.

A large proportion of contemporary Aboriginal art is based on important ancient stories and symbols centred on 'the Dreamtime' – the period in which Indigenous people believe the world was created

Australian Aboriginal people have no written language of their own, and so the important stories central to the people's culture are based on the traditional icons (symbols) and information in the artwork

Artists had to ask permission to paint a particular story and cannot paint a story that does not belong to them through family lineage.

Aboriginal art on canvas and board only began 40 years ago due to Western influence. Traditionally symbols were scratched or drawn on rock walls, used in body paint or drawn in sand or dirt to help the telling of a story. When they started painting, aboriginals were worried white man would be able to see and understand their sacred and private knowledge. The dots were used to hide the secret symbols underneath.