Main Topic: Law and Knowledge
Sub Topic: Traditional Law

- Brainstorm: Rules in our Society.
  - What are they?
  - Who makes the rules?
  - What would happen in society if we didn’t have rules?
  - Link to established classroom and school rules

- Dreaming stories are a springboard for learning. Many Creation or Dreaming stories relate to the laws and rules given by the Spiritual or Ancestral Beings to Aboriginal society. Read some Dreaming Stories or watch them online or on DVD. Discuss with students the issues which are raised within the story and what social rules can be gleaned from them.
  - *The Dreaming* DVDs
  - Bobtails video
  - Many Dreaming stories in your school library collection
  - *Dust Echoes*: [http://www.abc.net.au/dustechoes](http://www.abc.net.au/dustechoes)

- Link Creation and Dreaming Stories to the stories within the Bible. Just as the Bible contains God’s law of right and wrong and rules for living a good life, Dreaming stories hold the Law and rules for living in communion with each other and with the land.

- In the book *Traditional Yamaji Law*, there is a list of the rules of Aboriginal Law.
  - Find out if these laws apply to all Aboriginal groups
  - Discuss whether these laws apply only to Aboriginal society

- Discuss the fact that law is important to Aboriginal people as it gives them rules to live by. Research local Aboriginal law. Who is responsible for ensuring that the laws are upheld within the group?

- *Know the Song, Know the Country* is the Ngaardangarli story of culture and history in Ngarluma and Yindjibarndi Country. It explains that the Law is what makes people who they are.

- Ask students to brainstorm as a whole class the words ‘roles’ and ‘responsibilities’. List the ‘roles’ and ‘responsibilities’ that each of them have in the classroom, home and within the community. Do these roles and responsibilities change? Why?

- Discuss the role of the Elders and their responsibility to ensure that the Law is adhered to. Consult with your Aboriginal Teaching Assistant or your Aboriginal School Community Consultant to ascertain the appropriate depth of knowledge for the students.

- In separate groups make two charts - Aboriginal law & Australian law or as a whole class use a Venn diagram. Chart the similarities and the differences between Aboriginal Laws and Australian Laws?

- Find out about the *Koori Court* on Screen Australia’s film clip: [http://](http://)
What is Circle Justice and how and where does it operate in Australia? Research, discover and record your findings on a circle map.

Students create their own Circle of Justice using classroom protocols as their base.
  - Decide who will be jury, judge, clerk of courts, public gallery, community members and lawyers.
  - Work out how to best deal with ‘hypothetical’ law breakers within the classroom.
  - Take a recent public trial and re-enact the events of the trial.
  - Discuss the outcomes and how the students reacted to the different scenarios.
  - What could happen with those law breakers who speak a different language to that spoken in the court?

Students invite an Aboriginal person involved in the legal system in some way, eg. A lawyer, Juvenile Justice team, police person or liaison officer to visit the classroom and discuss similarities and differences in Law.

Resources

- *The Dreaming: a six series collection on DVD (kit)*. Aboriginal Nations Australia, Sydney. 2004
- *Traditional Yamaji Law*. Catholic Education Office WA, Geraldton
- Indigenous Australians and the law: Issues in society vol 248