Main Topic: Arts
Sub Topic: Aboriginal Writers

- Look for the CD-ROM *Moorditj: Australian Indigenous Cultural Expressions* in your school’s teacher resource collection. It is an interactive resource which includes 300 artworks from 110 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists with teaching activities for each. Writing is one of the arts areas it explores.

- Child authors: Read your students a book by an Aboriginal child author without telling them anything about the author. After reading, ask them to describe who they think would write a book like that. Discuss their surprise and reasons for it when they are given the information.
  - *The Cowboy Frog*
  - *Joshua and the Two Crabs*
  - *Lilli and her Shadow*

- Biographies and autobiographies

- Read books written in an Aboriginal language
  - Check your school library collection
  - Big Books and Story books in NNBNN
  - Regional schools contact your local Language Centre

- Invite Aboriginal storytellers and authors to interact with students and tell stories that reflect Aboriginal customs and life-styles. Record and later illustrate the stories told by guests. Display them in the school for all to see.

- Investigate the writings of Aboriginal authors, poets, playwrights and songwriters, for example Sally Morgan, Jack Davis, Oodgeroo Noonuccal, Boori Monty Pryor, Graeme Dixon, Alice Nannup, Dora Dann, Jimmy Little, Jimmy Chi, Archie Roach, Kev Carmody, Pigram Brothers, Christine Anu, Tiddas, Alf Taylor.

- Using a map of WA, students identify the places from which Western Australian Aboriginal authors come. Select an author and write a report on their life and history or read and review a book written by the author.
  - The State Library of Western Australian has a list of WA Aboriginal authors.
  - Wikipedia has a list of Australian Aboriginal authors

- Play songs by Aboriginal musicians and use the words as literacy texts.
  - What are they trying to say with their lyrics?
  - What style of music is it?
  - How does it make you feel?

- Create a dramatisation or role play to illustrate the text.

- If the text is a song, create a dance, mime or body sculpture to highlight what the musician is singing about.
• The Road Open DVD was made in the Kimberley Catholic Schools. At each school students wrote about what characterised their community and what was important to them and the themes were used to write a song and create a dance. Watch the DVD and see what can be learnt from the songs & dances.

• Listen to some songs of non-Aboriginal artists who write/sing about Aboriginal themes e.g. Paul Kelly, Shane Howard, Bernard Carney, John Butler Trio, Neil Murray, Goanna, Midnight Oil

• Create a CD remix of various songs with Aboriginal themes. Use one of the songs for an assembly item. Develop an art piece for the CD cover.

Resources


• Road Open (DVD). Catholic Education Office WA. Leederville. 200

• Thompson, L. Aboriginal voices: contemporary Aboriginal artists, writers and performers. JB Books, Marleston, SA, 1999.