Translating Dreaming Stories with Stones

Lesson Plan

Create and use story stones in a similar way to Indigenous Australians, who used them to recall oral histories, with your class. This activity lends itself to small group discussions as each group translates a Dreaming story into a series of stones and orally recalls key points of the story.

You Will Need:

- A collection of fairly flat and similar sized stones. Depending on your local environment you could gather them as a class or buy some from a hardware store.

- Aboriginal Symbols Key (attached) for each group of students.

- Pencils, oil pastels or paint to put markings on the stones.

- Dreaming story for each group of students.

Instructions:

Indigenous people passed down stories and important information from generation to generation. They did this by using symbols painted on stones. They believed that the stones promoted thinking and memory skills.
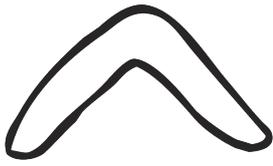
Display and discuss with students the different symbols some Indigenous Australians used. Talk about how these symbols might be used to recall parts of a Dreaming story.

Next, divide your class into groups. Give each group a Dreaming story, stones and materials to mark stones.

Their goal is to translate their story into a series of stones. That way, students wont need the book by the end of the lesson and can tell the rest of their class their story.

You could also try translating other stories onto story stones or use them as writing prompts for students to create their own stories.
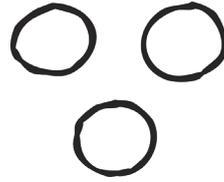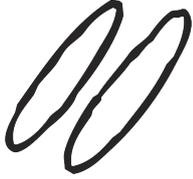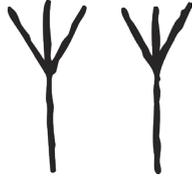
Aboriginal Symbols Key
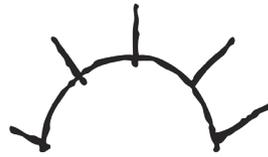
boomerang

bush berry

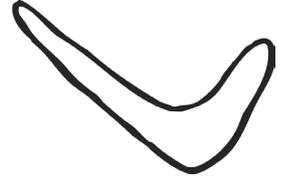ants, fruits, flowers or eggs

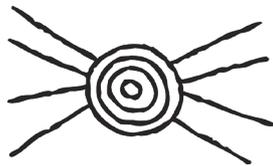campfire

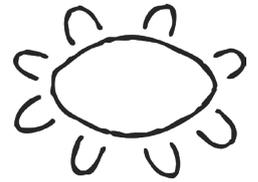digging or clapping sticks

emu

human tracks

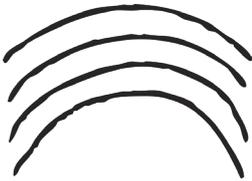hunting boomerang

kangaroo tracks

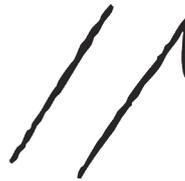meeting place

moving kangaroo tracks
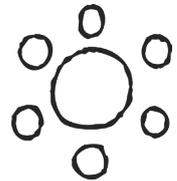
people sitting

sandhill or cloud

snake

spear

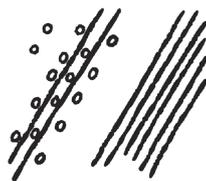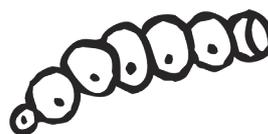star

resting place

emu tracks

goanna tracks

animal tracks

person

rain

witchetty grub

waterholes connected by running water