



# What is Country?

Primary & Secondary Activity

## A resource for Teachers

### Mapping Country:

- Show students the AIATSIS Map of Indigenous Australia. An interactive map can be found [here](#). As a class discuss the following questions:
  1. Have you seen this map before?
  2. What do you think this map represents?
  3. Have you seen a map of Australia that looks like this?

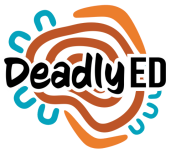
**Note:** The AIATSIS Map attempts to show language, social and nation groups of First Nations peoples across Australia, however, there are other ways in which First Nations peoples identify that aren't included on the map. This is, that there are many different cultural groups that have their own languages and dialects, lore and Dreaming or Creation stories; First Nations peoples can belong to one or several nation and kinship groups.

- Show students a political map of Australia. Compare the two maps. Identify what makes them similar and what makes them different.

### Defining Country:

- Define the term country from a non-First Nations perspective. For example, country means an area of land that has its own government.
- Explain what Country means to First Nations people. Note: Country is a proper noun and this is why it is capitalised.

*Country is everything in the natural environment – living and non-living. It is the land, the waterways and the sky. It is all of the rocks, the dirt, the sand, the hills, the plains, the rainforests and deserts, the plants and the animals. Country is not just a place or the things we see on the land, in the waters or in the sky, but it also all First Nations people. In Country there is culture, law, knowledge and stories that come from the land, water and sky. First Nations people believe that everything on and within Country is linked to each other by relationships. First Nations have been connected to Country for at least 60,000 years. Their connection is deep and timeless.*



- Refer back to the AIATSIS Map of Indigenous Australia and explain that Country also gives First Nations people identity. They might say they are from a particular Country or which places they are connected to through their ancestors. For example, *“I am a Wiradjuri person with connections to Dubbo and Tumut.”*
- Find the Country your school sits upon.

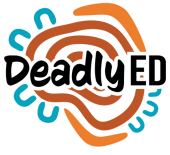
### Watching Country:

- View [The beautiful connection between people and Country | Back To Nature](#).
  1. On the AIATSIS Map of Indigenous Australia find the First Nations countries shown in the video: Wadawurrung, Wurundjeri, Darkinjung, Kurna, Yugambeh, Tebrakunna, Ngarigo and Larapuna.
  2. Yarn about the process of what happened when people wanted to visit another’s Country, and why people had to go through ceremony.
  3. When Kurna Country is shown the First Nations person offers a leaf to the person being welcomes. What is the significance of this?
- Get creative and write a short story, poem, or reflection about the importance of Country to First Nations people.

### Exploring Country:

Take your students outside to a quiet area near a garden or to your learning circle if you have one. Connect with Country by completing the following activities:

- Encourage students to say hello to Country as shown in the videoclip viewed earlier.
- Sit your students in a circle and take some time to observe the environment. During your observation time, yarn about the different types of animals, insects and plants you can see. Identify the different types of sounds you can hear in the environment. Then yarn about the textures of Country by describing what some of the plants feel like.



- Ask students to write down 10 things they can see on Country. Then invite your students to share all the different things they wrote down.
- Explain that all of the natural features of the environment are a part of Country, and First Nations people play an important role in looking after each thing and the land. First Nations peoples also believe that if you look after Country and all of her beauty – living and non-living – Country will look after you. Ask how they felt whilst making a connection with Country.

**Pause and reflect:**

Students are to distinguish why a connection to Country is so important by finishing the writing prompt: '*Country is important to First Nations peoples because...*' For younger learners, you might ask them to answer this question orally, or get them to create a collage of images or draw a picture that reflects the importance of Country to First Nations peoples.

**Australian Curriculum links:**

This lesson resource is linked to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures cross-curriculum priority Country/Place. By following the hyperlink you will be able to see which Key Learning Area this lesson can fit into, including the curriculum dot point or relevant elaboration.

- First Nations communities of Australia maintain a deep connection to, and responsibility for, Country/Place and have holistic values and belief systems that are connected to the land, sea, sky and waterways. [A\\_TSICPI](#)