**Year 7/8 Visual Arts**

**Collage project — Our flags**

**Suggested Duration:** One lesson

## Summary

In this activity, students will explore the designs of the Australian Aboriginal flag and the Torres Strait Islander flag using *The Little Red Yellow Black Book* and online resources from the AIATSIS website.

*The Aboriginal flag was designed by Harold Thomas, a Luritja man from central Australia, and was first flown on National Aboriginal Day in July 1971 in Adelaide. It has bands of black and red with a central yellow sun. The red at the bottom represents the earth and our relationship to it. The black above represents all Aboriginal people past, present and future. The yellow sun is, of course, the source of life. In 1997, the Federal Court of Australia officially recognised Harold Thomas as the creator of the flag. This decision meant the flag is protected under the* Copyright Act 1968 *and can only be reproduced in accordance with this legislation or with the permission of Mr Thomas* (The Little Red Yellow Black Book*,* p. 11).

*The Torres Strait Islander flag was designed by Bernard Namok from Thursday Island. It has horizontal bands, two of green for the land and one of blue for the sea* (The Little Red Yellow Black Book, p. 12).

**Learning outcomes**

1. Students will be able to Identify and connect specific features and purposesof the Aboriginal and Torres strait Islanders flags
2. Students will be able to design an original flag that represents the multicultural heritage of Australia as a nation.

## General capabilities Cross-curriculum priorities

Literacy Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures

Critical and creative thinking Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures organising ideas: 3, 9

Ethical understanding

**Australian Curriculum content descriptions**

**Years 7 and 8 Visual Arts**

Experiment with visual arts conventions and techniques, including exploration of techniques used by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists, to represent a theme, concept or idea in their artwork (ACAVAM118).

Practise techniques and processes to enhance representation of ideas in their art-making (ACAVAM121).

Identify and connect specific features and purposes of visual artworks from contemporary and past times to explore viewpoints and enrich their art-making, starting with Australian artworks including those of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples (ACAVAR124).

## Provisions for differentiation

## Learning support

Students with special learning needs may elect to work in partnerships with peers or a learning support teacher. They could draw and colour the flags instead of working with scissors and glue if they find the task too challenging.

## Resources

* One colour copy of **Student resource sheet**
* Colour or mono copies of the **Assignment sheet** (one per student)
* Coloured construction paper (or copy paper)
* Scissors
* Glue sticks
* A3 copy paper
* *The Little Red Yellow Black Book — an introduction to Indigenous Australia* (4th edition), ‘Who we are’, Aboriginal Studies Press, AIATSIS, Canberra, 2018.

## Suggested online resources

Bernard Namok artist description — *Explore* article, <https://aiatsis.gov.au/explore/articles/bernard-namok>

Bernard Namok monument — <http://monumentaustralia.org.au/themes/people/indigenous/display/103870-bernard-namok-senior>

Torres Strait Island Regional Council — <http://www.tsirc.qld.gov.au/our-work/torres-strait-islander-flag>

The Torres Strait Islander flag — *Explore* article, <https://aiatsis.gov.au/explore/articles/torres-strait-islander-flag>

Cathy Freeman: *Explore* article, <https://aiatsis.gov.au/explore/articles/cathy-freeman> and 'The Olympic Branding of Aborigines' <https://books.google.com.au/books?id=nMzYdZpk8qMC&pg=PA244&dq=National+Indigenous+Advisory+Committee+2000+olympics&hl=en&sa=X&ei=iDDQVMT1Hqe4mwWmrYDYCA&ved=0CB4Q6AEwAA#v=onepage&q=National%20Indigenous%20Advisory%20Committee%202000%20olympics&f=true>

## For teachers

Ensure that the guidance notes included in *The Little Red Yellow Black Book* teacher resource have been considered.

**Vocabulary**

Copyright Act

Preparation: Make one copy of the **Assignment sheet** for each student. Colour printing would be ideal. Set up a Resource Box containing the following:

* construction or copy paper in these six colours — red, yellow, black, mid green, royal blue, white (30+ of each)
* scissors
* glue sticks

Make a copy or a projection of the **Student resource sheet**, providing full-colour images of the two flags

**Step 1** Distribute one A3 sheet of copy paper to each student and one copy per student of the **Assignment sheet**.

**Step 2** Display the coloured pictures of the two flags.Read the extract below from *The Little Red Yellow Black Book* about the flags. Discuss the key points and understandings. Ask students to discuss the symbolism of the various elements within the flags and how the flags as a whole represent the culture and identity of the people.

**Step 3** Present the **Student resource sheet** to students and ensure that you show them the full-colour images of the two flags.

**Step 4** Read through the Instructions to Students on the **Assignment sheet** to ensure they understand the task:

* In the Resource Box, you’ll find sheets of coloured paper. Pick up one sheet of each colour — six in all.
* Use scissors and glue to create a collage that reproduces the design of each flag. Stick your collage pieces onto the A3 sheet of paper you were given. You will need to create the two flags slightly smaller than A4 size — with both to be completed on one side of your A3 sheet. You will need to use the reverse side of the sheet later. *Tip: fold the A3 sheet into half to mark out the space for each flag. Do not cut the sheet in half.*
* Think about the colours and shapes you will need to complete each flag and use the pictures of the flags you were shown for reference.
* Now, using any coloured paper you have left over, design an original flag that represents the multicultural heritage of Australia as a nation. Create this collage on the reverse side of your A3 sheet. Make the collage in the centre of the page, about A4 size, leaving white space around all the edges.
* In the space around your finished multicultural flag design, write some point form notes that explain the key elements of your design and what they symbolise.

**Step 5** Before the end of the lesson, spend ten minutes discussing the choices of colour and design that students used in creating their multicultural flag design. Discuss whether or not any patterns appeared among the choices they made.

**Assessment ideas**

Q and A on key understandings about key elements of the flags

Completed flag collages marked against instructions