**Year 9/10 Music**

**Lyrical Analysis — Activism**

# Suggested duration: Two lessons

**Summary**

In this task, students will perform a close analysis of two songs that present issues relevant to the activism of Indigenous Australians. Through these activities, they will learn how to compare styles and themes in music and the power of music to break down barriers between people of different cultures and traditions.

*Traditional Aboriginal music is a vocal art and songs may often be ‘given’ to singers by a Dreaming being, most commonly during dreams. A series of these songs, which may have many verses, tells a story of a Dreaming ancestor who sang as they travelled through the land. These songs are passed down from generation to generation and can help people live well on their land by describing water sources or places where plants or game are plentiful. People who are given the songs are the Traditional Owners of the land. These songs are proof of our continuous association with the land, an important requirement for land claims* (The Little Red Yellow Black Book, p. 81).

*Young Aboriginal men and women have taken hip hop music and made it their own, building on our oral culture heritage. Yorta Yorta hip hop artist, Briggs, is an Australian favourite with regular rotation on radio* (The Little Red Yellow Black Book, p. 88).

**Learning outcomes**

1. Students will be able to compare music styles and themes through written responses.
2. Students will be able to identify and discuss how music can be used to break down barriers between people of different cultures and traditions.

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## General capabilities Cross-curriculum priority

Critical and creative thinking Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures

Intercultural understanding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures organising ideas: 6, 9

**Australian Curriculum content descriptions**

**Years 9 and 10 Music**

Evaluate a range of music and compositions to inform and refine their own compositions and performances (ACAMUR104).

## Analyse a range of music from contemporary and past times to explore differing viewpoints and enrich their music making, starting with Australian music, including music of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, and consider music in international contexts (ACAMUR105).

## Provisions for differentiation

## Learning support

To support students with learning difficulties, teachers may elect to have them complete annotations while the information they have researched remains in front of them on the screen.

## Extension

Students could try their hand at writing their own song in response to the two songs they examined in this lesson.

## Resources

* Audio recordings (mp3 or CD) of the Midnight Oil song, *Beds are Burning* and the Warumpi Band’s *Blackfella, Whitefella* These can be found online at:

Midnight Oil — <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OKxms88DRQQ>

Warumpi Band — <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M_DHwp5vYBI&feature=kp>

* Printed copies of the lyrics to the Midnight Oil song, ‘Beds are Burning’ on one side of an A4 sheet and the lyrics to the Warumpi Band’s ‘Blackfella, Whitefella’ on the reverse side. Both sets of lyrics should be centred for annotating. The song lyrics for ‘Beds are Burning’ can be sourced from <https://www.lyrics.com/lyric/18293392/Midnight+Oil/Beds+Are+Burning>; the song lyrics for ‘Blackfella, Whitefella can be sourced from <http://lyrics.wikia.com/wiki/Warumpi_Band:Blackfella_Whitefella> (permissions will be needed for the printing of these lyrics).
* Copies of the **Activity worksheet** — one per student
* *The Little Red Yellow Black Book — an introduction to Indigenous Australia* (4th edition), ‘Our leadership and activism’,

Aboriginal Studies Press, AIATSIS, Canberra, 2018, pp 84-91.

## For teachers

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

**Vocabulary**

Activism

Annotations

Preparation: Ensure that students have access to computers and the internet to complete this task. Make one copy per student of the **Activity worksheet**. Make one double-sided copy per student of the lyrics sheets as described in the Resources list above. Ensure students have access to copies of *The Little Red Yellow Black Book*.

**Step 1** Set students up with computer and internet access.

**Step 2** Play audio recordings of both songs for all students to hear. Conduct a whole class discussion about the meaning of the lyrics.

**Step 3** Distribute the **Activity worksheet** and the prepared sheet containing the song lyrics. Clearly outline the task and the expectations of this lesson.

**Step 4** Direct students to work through the tasks on the **Activity worksheet**.

**Assessment ideas**

Completed worksheets

Q and A regarding lyrics, musical themes and styles which have been used to break down barriers