



## EARLY CHILDHOOD

### EPISODE 7: GRINDING STONE



*Synopsis: Little J and Big Cuz vow to protect the old grinding stone they find out bush.*

In this episode, Little J learns about what kind of things are okay to collect from Country, and what things need to stay. He and Big Cuz find a grinding stone while looking for things to add to his 'nature collection', and Nanna shows them what grinding stones are used for. Nanna teaches them that they have to keep the grinding stone safe at the riverbed for other people to be able to use. She tells the kids not to go blabbing about it.

There are opportunities to use this episode and activities to educate young children about Indigenous Knowledges, Collaboration and Respect, and Wellbeing in order to meet the Cross Curriculum Priorities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures (*Version 8.4*).

In this Teacher Pack, there is an overview of how this episode can be utilised for key Learning Outcomes, including ***prompting questions***, with an outline of some activities based on the principles and practices outlined in the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF).

Along with best practice pedagogical approaches, and AITSL Standards relating to Indigenous content, we encourage all teachers to find ways to link the content of each episode to the local community in which they teach. Some KLA's will have activities that you can alter, adjust or build upon in order to ***connect to the local context***.

*\*If you're planning on utilising additional resources (such as videos, websites, books etc) touching on themes that are covered in this episode, we recommend you use the 'AIATSI's Guide to selecting and evaluating educational resources' to ensure you're representing Indigenous perspectives accurately.*

#### **Links to the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF):**

##### Learning Outcomes

- Children are connected with and contribute to their world.
- Children are confident and involved learners.
- Children have a strong sense of wellbeing.
- Children are effective communicators.
- Children have a strong sense of identity.
- Children are active and informed members of the community.

## EARLY CHILDHOOD PROMPTING QUESTIONS

These activities incorporate the key elements of the EYLF, such as play-based learning, cultural responsiveness, and holistic approaches to child development, while also fostering an appreciation for the natural and cultural significance of grinding stones. They also leverage the content from this episode to enhance children's screen literacy and engagement.

This episode explores the need to protect a grinding stone that Little J and Big Cuz found out bush. Throughout the episode, Nanna teaches the kids lots of facts about Country, including information about grinding stones, turtle shells, echidnas, murray cod, and yams. Below are some **prompting questions** to encourage children's digital/screen literacies and comprehension. These questions aim to engage children in discussions about the story, characters, and themes such as nature, responsibility, and cultural values.

- *“Why did George lend his footy to Big Cuz?”*
  - (Answer: He noticed Big Cuz's footy was old and wanted to help her practise).
- *“How did Big Cuz and Lil J find the grinding stone?”*
  - (Answer: Big Cuz tried to kick her footy between two gumtrees and it landed on the grinding stone)
- *“What are some things Lil J collected for his nature collection?”*
  - (Answer: Acacia seeds, river rocks, turtle eggshell, Murray cod skeleton, yam flowers)
- *“Why did Nanna say the grinding stone is very special?”*
  - (Answer: It's used for grinding seeds, which is important for making bread and medicine. It has been used for a long time by First Nations people, it is super special and important, and should be kept safe)
- *“Why was Lil J upset after presenting to the class about their weekend?”*
  - (Answer: He accidentally told the class about finding the precious grinding stone, which they were not supposed to share)
- *“Why did Nanna tell the kids to keep the grinding stone secret?”*
  - (Answer: Because it's very special, and some people have been known to steal special artefacts, so its location should only be shared with people who will respect it. And, if it stays by the river, other First Nations people will be able to use it).
- *“How did Big Cuz help Lil J after he accidentally told the class about the grinding stone?”*
  - (Answer: She comforted him and said she would help fix the mistake).
- *“When Little J and Big Cuz went back to the river to check that the grinding stone hadn't been taken, they realised it had moved. What moved the grinding stone?”*
  - (Answer: There was a big rain the night before and the river flooded, carrying the grinding stone further downstream)
- *“What else had been moved by the flooding water?”*
  - (Answer: the river rocks and the acacia seeds)
- *“What do you think Nanna meant when she said, “Country changes”?”*
  - (Answer: She meant that if you pay attention, you can see what changes are happening in the land and environment.)



We encourage you to invite children into intentional conversations to explore the key learning experiences or interests arising from the viewing of this episode. Some of these conversations may be extended to become inquiry projects.

For this episode discussions could also be based around:

- Sustainability and not taking eggs at the wrong time of year
- Responsibilities in not taking important things from Country - knowing the difference between what can and cannot be taken.
- Different native animals, their needs and their environments (such as echidna and murray cod).

You could also choose to guide some hands-on learning, by bringing resources into the classroom to demonstrate the action of grinding. You could use pieces of chalk or another natural substance (even some leaves from the yard), a rock, and some firm ground outside to get children learning how to grind materials to make a paste.

The Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) for Australia, titled "Belonging, Being & Becoming," aims to support early childhood educators in extending and enriching children's learning from birth to five years and through the transition to school.

Based on the principles and practices outlined in the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) for Australia, here are some suggested ways in which you can connect children to their local context, that align with the document and can teach children about the world around them, encouraging collaboration, and building a sense of belonging.

***Connect to the local context:***

Because this episode features a grinding stone, we encourage you to contact local First Nations community members or Rangers at a local National Park to find out if there are any grinding stones in the Country you're working on. You may choose to organise an excursion, or invite a First Nations person in as an incursion, and ask them to model grinding as an activity. Please keep in mind that using grinding stones is not knowledge everybody holds, and is not everybody's cultural responsibility or place. So it's important to find out if any local community members are able to model the use of grinding stones (whether they are grinding seeds like in the episode, or using it to crush and grind something else like ochre). Be sure never to make the assumption that every First Nations person can do this, or to prescribe an activity or expectations on local community without proper consultation.

You might also like to consult with the local First Nations community to have a deeper understanding of local places of cultural significance, and how these have changed, or remained the same in response to colonisation. As well as this, it's important to teach young children about responsibilities to care for these places, so you might find partnerships between local community, National Parks and other environmental protection organisations to model to the children how these places are being protected (in alignment with the Cross Curriculum Priorities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures *Version 8.4.*)

