



Terminology

“To encourage students to respect their own cultural heritage and that of others, including the cultural heritage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, is one of the fundamental goals of Australian education. Therefore, the use of appropriate terminology and content that promotes respect and understanding is vital.”

*National Principles and Guidelines for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies K-12
Curriculum Corporation, Victoria, 1995*

As well as being viewed inappropriate to Aboriginal people, there are many words, phrases and terminology that are extremely offensive to Aboriginal people. The following list outlines some of the preferred terminology when referring to Aboriginal people.

Less appropriate terminology	More appropriate terminology
Dreamtime	The Dreaming The Dreamings
Myths/legends	Dreaming stories Teaching from the dreaming Creation stories
Aborigine(s)	Aboriginal person, Aboriginal people
Ritual/ritualistic	Ceremony/ceremonial
Religion	Spirituality
Tribal	Traditional
Blacks	Aboriginal people
Whites	Non-Aboriginal people
Prehistory	Aboriginal history

*Words used to describe the percentage of blood within
Aboriginal people:*

part-Aborigine full blood, half caste, quarter-caste, octoroon	Aboriginal people
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Words used to describe a group of Aboriginal people

Tribe	Aboriginal people
Horde	Language groups
Band	Aboriginal communities
Clan, Moeity	Family groups

Words used to describe the structure of society

Primitive society	Complex and diverse societies
Simple	Aboriginal societies
Native	Indigenous groups/people Language groups

A capital 'A' should always be used when using the word Aboriginal. The accepted form is Ab'l if the word needs to be abbreviated.

Aboriginal Studies K – 10 Curriculum Framework