

How do the Aborigines represent and pass on their myths?

DOC
A — Why the stories are told



My name is Beryl Carmichael and my traditional name is Yungha-dhu.

I belong to the Ngiyaampaa people, come from the Ngiyaampaa nation and the area we're in now belongs to Eaglehawk and Crow.

I'm a storyteller as well and all the stories have been handed down to me by my people.

I am now custodian¹ of about twenty-eight stories.

The stories are a wonderful and a valuable tool, an education tool in teaching our children.

The "Dreamtime" stories as they are referred to today, we didn't know that there was such names for them. Because when the old

people would tell the stories, they'd just refer to them as "marrathal warkan" which means long, long time ago, when time first began for our people, as people on this land after creation.

We have various sites around in our country, we call them the birthing places of all our stories. And of course, the stories are embedded with the lore² that governs this whole land. The air, the land, the environment, the universe, the stars.

The stories that we are passing and talking on today, we are hoping that, some way, it will help our people – and our children, our young people in particular – to get a better understanding about the lore that governs our lives today.

No matter what we do, there is always guidance there for us and the guidance comes through in the stories.

Beryl CARMICHAEL, rmwebed.com.au

1. guardian 2. traditional knowledge



Help yourself

Nouns

- customs: *traditions*
- knowledge /'nɒlɪdʒ/
- storyteller
- wisdom: *sagesse*

Adjectives

- educational
- traditional

Verbs & expressions

- enlighten sb about sth = explain
- interested in sth/V-ing
- learn about
- passionate /'pæʃənɪt/
- tell sb about sth
- transmit = pass on

- a. Pick out information about where and when dreamtime stories typically take place.
b. Why do dreamtime stories play a key role in Aboriginal culture?
c. Present the narrator, Aunty Beryl, in a few words. Why is she an important person?
d. **ROLEPLAY:** Write a letter inviting Beryl to come and tell your class one of her stories. Explain why you would like her to come.

Prepare your task

DOC
B — The Rainbow Serpent



In the Dreamtime all earth lay sleeping. Nothing moved. Nothing grew. One day the Rainbow Serpent awoke from her slumber and came out from under the ground.

She travelled far and wide and eventually grew tired and curled up and slept. She left marks of her sleeping body and her winding¹ tracks. Then she returned to the place where she had first appeared, and called the frogs, "Come out!"

The frogs came out slow because their bellies were heavy with water, which they had stored in their sleep. The Rainbow Serpent tickled their stomachs and when the frogs laughed, water ran all over the earth to fill the tracks of the Rainbow Serpent's wanderings. This is how lakes and rivers were formed.

With water, grass and trees sprang up. Also all animals awoke and followed the Rainbow Serpent across the land. They were happy on earth and each lived and gathered food with his own tribe. Some animals live in rocks, others on the plains and others in trees and in the air.

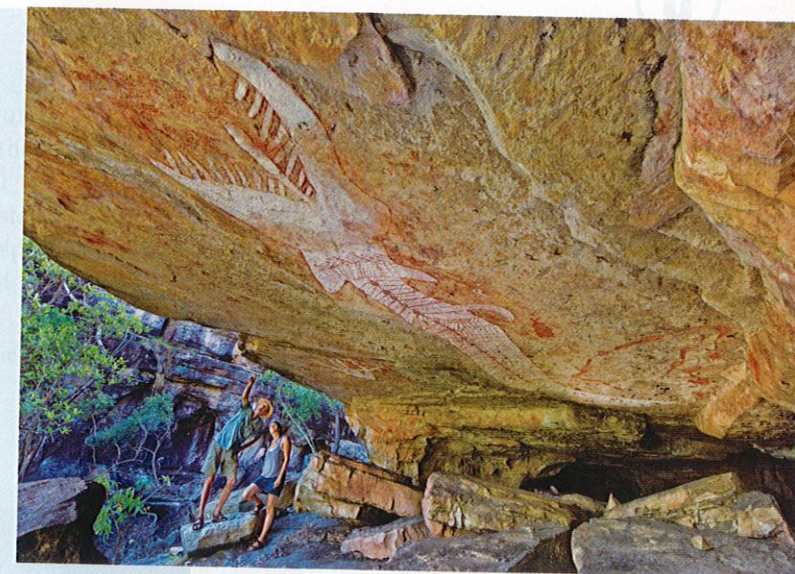
The Rainbow Serpent made laws that they all were to obey, but some became quarrelsome² and made trouble. The Rainbow Serpent said, "Those who keep my laws will be rewarded³; I shall give them human form. Those who break my laws will be punished and turned to stone, never to walk the earth again."

The lawbreakers became stone and turned to mountains and hills, but those who kept the laws were turned into human form. The Rainbow Serpent gave each of them their own totem of the animal, bird or reptile from whence they came. The tribes knew themselves by their totems. Kangaroo, emu, carpet snake, and many, many more. So no one would starve, the Rainbow Serpent ruled that no man should eat of his totem, but only of other totems. This way there was food for everyone.

The tribes lived together on the land given to them by the Rainbow Serpent or Mother of Life and knew the land would always be theirs, and no one should ever take it from them.

expedition360.com, 2001

1. sinuous 2. rebellious 3. récompensés



- a. Read the story, list the different characters and explain:
1. how they are connected to each other,
2. how they are related to their surroundings.
b. What does the Rainbow Serpent symbolise?
c. Why is it so important that her story be told?

Prepare your task
d. **ROLEPLAY:** Tell small children your own version of this dreamtime story. Make sure to be captivating!

Help yourself

Nouns

- concord ≠ discord
- harmony /'hɑ:məni/
- path = road
- punishment /'pʌnɪʃmənt/

Adjectives

- disobedient /dɪsə'bi:diənt/
- fair = just
- peaceful
- quarrelsome /'kwɒrəlsəm/

Verbs & expressions

- abide by the law = respect the rules
- live in harmony /'hɑ:məni/
- meander /mɪ'ændə/ = wind /'waɪnd/ serpent
- rise up in rebellion /rɪ'beljən/