

Kutju Australia



**An Australian
translation of Advance
Australia Fair**


Teacher Notes





Contents

About <i>Kutju Australia</i>	3
About these teacher notes	3
The Australian Curriculum	4
Our shared Australian history	4
Australian languages	5
Indigenous languages today	6
Introducing <i>Kutju Australia</i>	7
Linking with First Australian communities	7
Protocols and practices	7
Sharing <i>Kutju Australia</i>	8
Translating texts	9
Translating Advance Australia Fair	9
Other ideas for school and community	10
Resources	11
References	12



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Aboriginal Australia map

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Kutju Australia



Teacher Notes

About *Kutju Australia*

Kutju is a Luritja word, meaning ‘Advance, go forward’.

Kutju Australia is the Luritja translation of Advance Australia Fair by Nararula (Alison Anderson) and Ted Egan. Luritja, from central Australia, is one of hundreds of Australian languages, and one of the few still spoken today. Ted worked with the local Elders at Ntaria school, a remote school in Hermannsburg 130km west of Alice Springs, to teach students the song. Then Ted found a group of children from the city – students at Killara Primary School, NSW – whom he taught the song in order to share it with them.

Kutju Australia is a project to bring Australians together to celebrate the many Australian languages, among the oldest surviving languages in the world, and to share the rich and intricate knowledge and understanding of this land, its people and their cultures.

It provides an opportunity to learn from First Australians* and to be united in our pride and respect for this country, its traditions and our shared histories in order to further understand our complex, unique heritage as we move towards the future together.

The hope is that other school communities will be inspired by *Kutju Australia* to translate Advance Australia Fair into other Indigenous languages, and find appropriate opportunities to sing and perform the national anthem in those languages.

* First Australians is the preferred term used throughout this document to refer to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples of Australia. We acknowledge that the term Indigenous can sometimes be used particularly with regard to the original languages of Australia.

About these teacher notes

These teacher notes are designed as a guide to using the *Kutju Australia* book and DVD in the most valuable and appropriate ways in your school. You will find:

- how *Kutju Australia* fits with the Australian Curriculum
- some background information and facts about Australia’s first languages
- suggestions for how to use the book in the classroom and ideas for adapting it within your own school contexts
- ideas for forming and strengthening community partnerships with First Australians in your local area
- a range of questions, ideas, activities and suggestions for teachers and students to discuss and reflect on to effectively use this resource
- ideas for making First Australian languages relevant and meaningful in schools
- suggestions to encourage open communication between schools and communities to ensure understanding, respect and inclusive practice
- links to local, state and national bodies to guide this process
- references and resources for further information and research.

The Australian Curriculum

The Australian Curriculum includes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures as a cross-curriculum priority. The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) has developed conceptual framework key terms that reflect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge, skills and understandings. Where appropriate they are also included in the content descriptions and elaborations within each of the learning areas or subjects. The key terms are:

- Identity
- People
- Culture
- Country/Place
- Living Communities

The conceptual framework includes the following:

- connections to Country and Place
- significant relationships with the land, seas, sky and waterways
- diversity of cultural and language groups
- sophistication of family and kinship groups
- the substantial contributions made by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples at local and national levels.

The *Draft Shape of the Australian Curriculum: Languages* also acknowledges the importance of learning Australian languages for a range of reasons:

- it is a basic right for young people to learn their own language and it is fundamental to their sense of self and will impact on their achievements in all areas across the curriculum
- these languages are integral to all Australian students in understanding and valuing the rich and unique diversity of our first languages and developing a deeper appreciation for the country, the environment and the people
- it is an important step toward reconciliation in this country and towards our maturity as a nation.

Our shared Australian history

A shared Australian history recognises First Australians as the original inhabitants of this country. Many Australians, however, have been presented with a particular version of our history that has often disregarded or denied events involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. While we still hear of different explorers who ‘discovered’ Australia, what do we know about the custodians of this land who have thrived here for many thousands of years? What do we know about the relationships between the early explorers and the First Australians? How much do we know about the different experiences and contact histories in the local areas in which we live? What relationships do we have with First Australians and what stories, experiences and understandings do we share?

An excellent starting point for connecting with our shared history is through language. Raising awareness of the diversity of Australian languages, and the words and place names from those languages that are still in use today, highlights the way cultures have blended and can continue to enrich each other.

Australian languages

A brief history

Language is a key aspect of any person's culture and identity. Language connects us to people and places in very unique ways. It is through language that we understand what is important to us and define our way of seeing the world. It is through language that we develop pride and self-esteem.

Standard Australian English is the official language used to communicate in Australia and the language of instruction in schools. However, prior to 1788 there were up to 300 distinct language groups spoken across Australia each with their own dialects and language varieties. Each language group has its own deep connection to particular areas of land and their local environments. Different language speakers have distinct cultures, lifestyles, values and belief systems, organising structures, and ways of seeing and understanding the world. These languages reflect a very holistic way of being and are extremely different to Standard Australian English. Maintaining and reviving these languages is an important step in keeping cultural and spiritual practices alive.

Australian Aboriginal Languages Map

(click on map to view online)



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The Australian Aboriginal Languages map is just one representation of many other map sources that are available for Aboriginal Australia. Using published resources available between 1988–1994, this map attempts to represent all the language or tribal or nation groups of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples of Australia. It indicates only the general location of larger groupings of people which may include smaller groups such as clans, dialects or individual languages in a group. Boundaries are not intended to be exact.

First Australians have passed on their languages through oral traditions from one generation to the next over many thousands of years, through story, song, the arts and cultural practices. Since colonisation began over the past 200 plus years, there have been dramatic changes to the land, the languages and the cultures across the country and these have had a devastating impact on First Australians, affecting every aspect of their lives. Many Australian languages have suffered as a result of this contact history and many languages are now extinct or close to extinction. It has been estimated that of the possible 300 languages only about 90 survive today, to varying degrees, and of these most are thought to be threatened or endangered, leaving approximately ten that are still spoken as a first language by communities of people.

Use the map as a starting point to talk about Australian languages with students, teachers and staff, parents, carers and community. Consider purchasing your own language map for your library or resource centre, available from the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) website. www.aiatsis.gov.au

Conversation starters

- Find your town or area on the map of Australian languages.
- Look at the traditional or heritage language/s in the geographical area. Find out how to pronounce them; other ways of spelling them; differences that may exist between local knowledge and what is shown on the map.
- Talk about whether these are the recognised languages of local people and whether spellings and pronunciations are the same.
- Consider why the map may not always be an accurate representation of first Australian languages. Discuss who would have developed it (and maps like it) and how they gathered the information, etc.
- Find out about the language groups that First Australians in your local area identify with, know of or connect with through family, places they have lived, and so on.
- Listen carefully and investigate any words from these languages still used in the local community. For example, words for family relationships, plants, animals, place names. Makes lists as you find them.
- Find out if there are any speakers of Australian languages in your local and wider community and, if possible, invite them to the classroom.

Indigenous languages today

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians continue to have a diverse range of language backgrounds that are complex and unique.

There are some places where traditional or heritage languages such as Luritja are still spoken on an everyday basis often, but not only, in more remote locations around the country: for example, Luritja and Walpiri in central Australia; Walmajarri in Western Australia; Kalaw Kawan Ya and Meriam Mir in the Torres Strait Islands; Wik Mungkan in Cape York; and Pitjantjatjara in South Australia.

Some First Australians speak a number of different languages from surrounding areas as well as creoles, Aboriginal English and Standard Australian English.

Creoles are distinct languages that are a direct result of contact situations. There are two officially recognised creoles in Australia: Torres Strait Creole (sometimes called Yupla Tok or Broken) and Kriol spoken across the Northern Territory and the Kimberley region of Western Australia.

Australian languages continue to be sustained through oral traditions, via speech, song and art, as well as sign language. Some early explorers, anthropologists and linguists recorded some languages using the English alphabet. Many of these records and archives are available and can be useful to varying degrees. Some languages have developed standardised spellings with dictionaries and grammars. It is important to have conversations and to negotiate with the people and communities connected to those languages before the languages are written in any formal way or presented in public documents.

Today there are many individuals, groups and organisations committed to maintaining and reviving Indigenous languages. Schools can play an important role in supporting this work through identifying the importance of the range of literacies the languages present, particularly in terms of visual literacy and performance arts, and by developing Australian languages into written forms using Western literacy styles and technologies. There are many opportunities in each of the learning areas to incorporate local Australian languages and an awareness of the language situation.

Talk to students about language and have conversations with them about different languages. Celebrate the diversity you have in your classroom.

Conversation starters

- What is language?
- What makes languages different? (words, sounds, the way the words go together, etc)
- What language/s do you speak at home? In the classroom? What languages do you hear at the market? At the park?
- What are some of the different ways you speak your language (including English) to people: at home, at school, to different members of your family, at sports events, and so on?
- How is English different to other languages you know about? How is it the same?
- What do we know about our First Australians and their languages? How can we find out more?

Don't dwell on differences in language and culture – make note of them, celebrate them and find ways to have fun with them! For example, use different languages as part of your daily classroom routines and display lists of words in other languages and encourage students and their families to add to them.

Introducing *Kutju Australia*

Share the book and the DVD with your students and discuss the people and the children involved with this project.

Conversation starters

- Listen to Nararula's greeting at the beginning of the DVD. What language is she speaking? Point out that she is speaking Australian!
- Talk about where the schools are and locate them on the Australian language map. Find the languages spoken in those areas.
- What part of Australia is shown in the video? Why aren't there any pictures of Sydney?
- Read about all the students involved in the project. Can you find all the languages the Ntaria students speak on the map?

Listen to the children singing the anthem in Luritja. Encourage students to read the words and sing along. Listen to the children singing the national anthem in English and encourage students to sing along.

Conversation starters

- What do we know about our national anthem? (It was written by Peter Dodds McCormick; first performed in public in 1878; and officially adopted as the national anthem in 1984.)
- Why do people write and sing anthems? Ask students to talk about what Australia and being Australian means to them. Write their words and comments and display them in the classroom.
- Go through the anthem's lyrics carefully, phrase by phrase, and talk about what they mean. Ask students to rephrase the lyrics in their own words.

Ask students to think about their own school community and the local Australian language and how they could use *Kutju Australia* as a model and inspiration. Talk about doing a project like this and how it is an opportunity to get to know local people, stories, histories, cultures and languages. Discuss a special event when they might perform the anthem and how they would like to present it.

Linking with First Australian communities

Protocols and practices

One of the key objectives of the *Kutju Australia* resource is to encourage connections with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families, groups and communities in your school and community.

Working with Australian languages provides an ideal opportunity for developing genuine and trusting relationships and sharing knowledge. Find out about the protocols and practices to guide Australian language programs and projects in your area or state. These will include:

- acknowledging the diversity of Australian languages, both old and new
- recognising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples as the custodians of their languages – be sure to seek consent from suitable people and groups and consider appropriate ways of using language in your school context
- allowing local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander communities to determine the Australian language to be used in the school
- developing programs and projects in partnerships with local First Australians.

Have conversations with:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and education workers in your school, district, region, state and/or jurisdiction
- organisations and groups in your area including museums and cultural centres
- Indigenous Coordination Centres
- local reconciliation groups
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural and language centres
- Indigenous education consultative committees in each state.

Sharing *Kutju Australia*

Share the *Kutju Australia* book and DVD with your local First Australian communities. Give the opportunity to as many people as possible to voice their ideas and opinions as you devise ways of working together.

Things to talk about

- Ask what people think about the project and the ideas in the book.
- Ask what is known about the local Australian languages and ‘country’ to which people are connected.
- Ask whether there are still speakers of these language/s in the community.
- Find out about other First Australian languages from the area and language groups from other geographic locations now living in the area.
- Find out if there are local speakers who could be available to help with a similar translation process and/or other people who may be able to help, for example linguists working in the area.
- Find out whether it is appropriate to share the Luritja language version in your local area.
- Find out if there are local musicians who might be interested in being involved.

Things to consider

- Avoid assuming the language backgrounds of First Australians in your school community. Get to know people first and communicate openly and genuinely.
- Language can be a sensitive issue for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, particularly those who have been dispossessed of their country, their language and their families. Tread lightly and discuss ways of communicating in respectful ways.
- Different locations around the country will have different levels of awareness about the languages spoken (both past and present).
- There will be different ways of talking about language/s in different places across the country. For example, people may talk about traditional Indigenous language in terms of ‘lingo’, ‘tribal way’ and, most commonly, in terms of how language belongs to country.

New language varieties may be discussed in terms of ‘home language’, ‘Koori/Murri way’, or connected to particular towns and centres.

Conversation starters

- Country and language are intimately connected. Talk to people about their connections to country. For example, ‘Where are you/your family from? What country are you connected with?’
- Give people time to think, reflect and discuss the ideas about language in terms of our complex shared histories. It may take many discussions before you come to a shared understanding about the language situation in your local area.
- Listen for words and ways of talking that are different to the Standard Australian English used in the classroom. For example, pronouncing sounds like d/t, b/p; new words used such as *bina*, or different grammatical features like *bin* and *langa*.
- Discuss differences in non-judgemental ways. For example, make clear and accurate observations about differences in terms of your own limitations in communicating or understanding students and others in the community. Describe what you notice, for example different words or ways of saying things, and participate in conversations about what other people know and notice.

Translating texts

Translating from one language to another is a challenging process that requires particular skills. It is vital when considering translating the national anthem into local Australian languages that you have the full consent of the First Australians in your community and that appropriate consultation has taken place.

Translating is often not as simple as substituting words in one language for words in the other. Sometimes there are no equivalent words to express particular terms or expressions, particularly for Australian languages that are so different to English. It is important to have a good cultural understanding of both languages so that this is reflected through the language

used in the text. It is an advantage if First Australians involved have used written language in both their own language and in English. If this is not possible, it may be appropriate to invite a linguist with experience in the particular language or other Australian languages to be part of the process.

Translating Advance Australia Fair

As Ted Egan and Nararula (Alison Anderson) worked together to translate the national anthem from English into Luritja, they found the most appropriate words to fit the melody, striving to make it as true to the meaning of the song as possible. For example:

Our home is girt by sea

Was best translated as

Kapi puntu tja - rra

Water surrounds our land

Once you have community consent and involvement, consider the points below to guide the translation process.

- The national anthem represents a particular perspective of Australian history. Discuss the meaning of the song and the purpose of a national anthem. Develop a shared understanding about why you are doing the exercise.
- Go through the song carefully together and discuss the meaning of individual words (rejoice, girt, toil, free).
- Translate the first verse to fit the melody of the song, ensuring the translation is as close as possible to the shared meaning you would like to convey. If necessary, adapt words to reflect how they could be said in the traditional language of the area (or the language the community decides to use).

- When you have a first draft, check it carefully for clarity; meaning; spelling and punctuation; appropriateness for the year level and age of students.
- Ask a number of different people who speak or know the language to check the translation. Read the translation aloud as well as asking others who are readers of the language to read it aloud (if possible). Gather feedback and discuss.
- Ask people who have not been involved in the translation process to translate it back into English and make sure it still makes sense.
- When there is consensus from as many people as possible in the community, publish the final draft and circulate for use and/or give a performance of the song. Encourage further feedback from the wider community and be prepared to make amendments where and when appropriate.
- Encourage students to use their first language in the classroom.
- Discuss ways that the school can support the community to record and document languages in the community.
- Include an 'Acknowledgement of Country' to recognise local First Australian presence and history at formal school events such as assemblies and presentations. There are a range of examples available online such as: *We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the country on which we meet today and we offer our respect and understanding to Elders both past and present.* Work with your local community and students to develop your own.
- Erect a sign at the front of the school to honour the custodians of the country where the school is located.
- Invite local First Australians to talk about their connections to country and the diversity of languages they speak.
- Research oral histories and stories associated with the local area that would be appropriate to record.
- Make posters/pamphlets raising awareness about different languages and cultural groups in your school and local area.
- Put up signs in Australian languages, showing particular trees, places, names, etc.
- Consider naming sports teams, groups, rooms or areas in the school with Australian language names.
- Collect and display local Indigenous languages and words that are reflected in place names, street names, and so on in your local area.
- Make lists/charts/picture dictionaries/alphabets using local Indigenous language words and display them.
- Find out about national and local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander celebrations and events and ways to be involved, or hold your own school events. For example: National Day of Healing, Reconciliation Week, NAIDOC week, Coming of the Light Festival, Mabo Day.

Other ideas for school and community

- Discuss what it means to be Australian with students, staff and members of the community.
- Encourage students to reflect on their culture, language, history and way of doing things and seeing the world.
- Share resources from many different perspectives and explicitly discuss the perspectives they are presenting.
- Discuss what ideas/sentiments/people/perspectives are *not* represented in 'Advance Australia Fair'. Have groups of students write verses that reflect the values of their school community and/or that acknowledge the diversity of First Australian languages and cultures today.
- Write your own class song (like an anthem) to establish your identity as a class and to make you feel proud.
- Have students write profiles about themselves, and their experiences with the *Kutju Australia* project, to share with others.

Resources

Collecting languages

There are many resources available to assist schools and communities to collect, record and document Australian languages and to create materials to support language programs. Digital recording devices such as cameras, digital camcorders, smart phones and similar technologies are very useful.

There are also software programs, some of which are free and others that will need to be purchased. Most can be found online and many have training provided through local language centres, or libraries.

- **Miromaa:** a licensed software developed by Arwarbukarl Cultural Resource Association Inc. This program is a user-friendly database for collecting and collating languages including visual and audio support.
- **Lexique Pro:** a free dictionary software program for making word lists easy to use. It can be used in a range of formats.
- **Audacity:** free software for recording language that includes audio editing.

Other organisations and initiatives of interest for further research and support include:

- Federation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages and Culture Corporation (FATSILC) www.fatsilc.org.au
- Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) www.aiatsis.gov.au
- AUSTLANG database of Australian Indigenous languages <http://austlang.aiatsis.gov.au/disclaimer.php>
- Kimberley Interpreting Service (KIS) www.kimberleyinterpreting.org.au
- Diploma of Interpreting, Bachelor Institute, Northern Territory www.batchelor.edu.au
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages: P-10 Queensland Syllabus 2010 Queensland Studies Authority www.qsa.qld.edu.au/12798.html

Indigenous Education Consultative Committees in each state:

- Queensland Indigenous Education Consultative Committee www.qiecc.eq.edu.au
- NSW Aboriginal Education Consultative Group www.aecg.nsw.edu.au
- SA Aboriginal Education and Training Consultative Body www.aboriginaleducation.sa.edu.au
- ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Consultative Group www.actatsiecg.org
- NT Indigenous Education Council <http://www.det.nt.gov.au/parents-community/students-learning/indigenous-education/ntiec>
- Tasmanian Aboriginal Education Association www.taecinc.com.au
- Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Inc. www.vaeai.org.au
- Western Australian Aboriginal Education and Training Council www.aetcwa.org.au

Consider local community knowledge and frameworks to use in your teaching and learning practice. For example:

- The Holistic Learning and Teaching Framework, Education Queensland <http://www.learningplace.com.au/deliver/content.asp?pid=44292>
- 8 Aboriginal Ways of Learning, New South Wales <http://8ways.wikispaces.com/>

National projects

There are a range of national programs and projects that can assist you building meaningful relationships with local First Australian communities.

- What Works www.whatworks.edu.au
- Dare to Lead www.daretolead.edu.au
- Stronger Smarter Institute www.strongersmarter.qut.edu.au
- Parental and Community Engagement (PaCE) program www.deewr.gov.au/pace
- Reconciliation Action Plans, Reconciliation Australia www.reconciliation.org.au/home/reconciliation-action-plans

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Aboriginal Languages of Western Australia, Curriculum Council
www.curriculum.wa.edu.au/internet/Senior_Secondary/Courses/WACE_Courses/Aboriginal_Languages

Aboriginal Languages K–10, Board of Studies New South Wales (2003)
www.k6.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/go/languages

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages Statement, Department of Education and Training (DET) Queensland
deta.qld.gov.au/indigenous/pdfs/abtsi-language-statement.pdf

Aboriginal Resources and Development Services (ARDS) Northern Territory
www.ns.uca.org.au/agencies/aboriginal-resource-and-development-services-ards

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Australian Human Rights Commission

R-10 Languages (Australian Indigenous) Teacher Resource, Department of Education and Children Services South Australia (2003)

Share Our Pride: An Introduction to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and their culture, and to building respectful relationships
www.shareourpride.org.au

It's an Honour: Australia Celebrating Australians www.itsanhonour.gov.au

Indigenous Languages of Victoria: Revival and Reclamation, Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority
www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/vce/studies/lote/ausindigenous/ausindigindex.html

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages State Library of Queensland
www.slq.qld.gov.au/info/ind/languages

Racism. No way.
Anti-racism education for Australian schools
www.racismnoway.com.au

Websites and other initiatives

- Us Mob, ABC: interactive website where participants can interact with Australian Aboriginal teenagers in Central Australia and play games, chat, share stories and learn about life in the Centre. www.abc.net.au/usmob
- Go Lingo, ABC 3 television: game show for 11/12-year-olds focusing on Australian Indigenous languages and cultures. www.abc.net.au/abc3/shows/11056.htm
- Holding our Tongues. ABC Radio National, Hindsight project: map of Australia showing some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages that you can interact with to listen to language, watch videos and find out more information. www.abc.net.au/rn/hindsight/features/holdingourtongues
- Map of New South Wales Aboriginal Languages, Department of Aboriginal Affairs, New South Wales Government: interactive map to find the Indigenous languages of New South Wales. www.alrrc.nsw.gov.au/default.aspx?nav_id=32
- Our Languages website: sharing information and activities around Australia's Indigenous languages. www.ourlanguages.net.au
- Ngapartji Ngapartji project: community development through the arts brings Pitjantjatjara and non-Pitjantjatjara people together in a variety of ways to experience cultural exchange with a focus on the maintenance of Pitjantjatjara language spoken in South Australia. www.ngapartji.org