

Evaluating Resources Guide

As part of curriculum planning, it is important to carefully evaluate resources that include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content and perspectives. Using inappropriate resources can risk perpetuating negative stereotypes and misinformation about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, histories and cultures. The below criteria are a guide only and, as a result, you may not always get your selection right every time. Speak to local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people or organisations if you are unsure if a resource is contextually appropriate. Make sure you state where you got information from by referencing sources.

Production

<p>When was the resource produced?</p> <p>Is the content up-to-date?</p> <p>What is the value and relevance of the resource beyond the context of its original production, and (how) have you actively honoured this?</p>	<p><i>As a general rule, many non-Indigenous authored publications produced before the late 20th Century present an outdated view of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, histories and cultures. While there are always exceptions, it is important to engage with earlier publications with a critical eye, and often best to use more recent resources. Remember, too, that even recent resources can problematically perpetuate longstanding stereotypes.</i></p> <p><i>When selecting less recently produced resources authored by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, it is important not to relegate these resources—and the people and perspectives behind them—to the past, and to instead think carefully about their continued, contemporary relevance.</i></p>
<p>Was the resource produced by, or developed in consultation with, Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people?</p>	<p><i>Use resources that are either produced by or developed in collaboration with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.</i></p> <p><i>Should you select resources that were not produced by your local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, invite community members to evaluate the resources' appropriateness and relevance to your specific education context, and to provide guidance around the most meaningful way to incorporate these resources into local learning activities.</i></p>
<p>Does the resource use appropriate terminology?</p>	<p><i>The use of inappropriate terms in a resource can act as a warning to you that the attitudes being expressed are likely to be problematic, or that your students may take a negative meaning from the material, regardless of what the author and you intended. Staff and students should be encouraged to critically analyse terminology used (visit narragunnawali.org.au/about/terminology-guide as a reference).</i></p>

Representation	
Do the resources give a range of perspectives of Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people?	<i>Given the great diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and identities across Australia, it is important to appreciate that there is often no single “Aboriginal” viewpoint/voice, and to acknowledge and celebrate the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content and perspectives in education.</i>
Does the resource illustrate the diversity, complexity and distinctiveness of Aboriginal cultures and Torres Strait Islander cultures?	<i>Do not use resources that that contain stereotypical depictions or present generalised information that presents Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures as homogenous or lacking diversity.</i>
Are illustrations and photographs positive and accurate portrayals of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people?	<i>Illustrations and photographs should present dynamic and contemporary representations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, unless selected portrayals are to be used as examples of racist and stereotyped representations (which should be done with caution and sensitivity).</i> <i>In selecting photographic images as resources, staff and students will also need to ensure that they are aware of cultural protocols around image sharing and publication (for example, in accordance with cultural respect protocols, many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities will not publicise images of deceased community members for a period of time following that community member’s passing).</i>
Are photographs accompanied by captions which name the Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person, or group, and indicate where they come from?	<i>Many photographs, particularly those taken in the 19th and early 20th centuries, did not dignify the person or group with a name and location. Make students aware of the courtesy of identifying people and groups portrayed and avoid using photographs where people are unnamed.</i> <i>If photographs are of local people or groups, local community members may be able to assist with identification. Note that in some areas it is not appropriate to use the name or photograph of a deceased person. Consult with the local community.</i>
Do the materials give a sense of the longstanding and continuing presence and contributions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and cultures?	<i>Statements that relegate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to “an Ancient past” or as part of “a vast and empty landscape” were common in twentieth century education texts. They problematically present static representations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, cultures and contributions, and risk perpetuating myths such as the legal fiction of ‘terra nullius’ (land belonging to nobody).</i>

Adapted from [QCAA – Selecting and Evaluating Resources](#) and [Queensland Museum – Evaluating Resources](#)