

Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Studies marking guide and response

External assessment 2025

Short response (28 marks)

Assessment objectives

This assessment instrument is used to determine student achievement in the following objectives:

1. define and use terminology relating to maintaining, retaining and recognising the culture and identity of Aboriginal peoples and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples within the context of reconciliation and recognition
2. demonstrate an understanding of the connection between land, language, culture, time, place and relationships within Aboriginal societies and/or Torres Strait Islander societies within the context of reconciliation and recognition
3. analyse worldviews of Aboriginal peoples and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples through identifying, examining and considering these within the context of reconciliation and recognition
5. evaluate the significance of cultural interaction by assessing the impact of responses related to reconciliation and recognition
6. create responses that communicate ideas related to reconciliation and recognition within sentences and short paragraphs.

Note: Unit objective 4 is not assessed in this assessment instrument.

Purpose

This document consists of a marking guide and a sample response.

The marking guide:

- provides a tool for calibrating external assessment markers to ensure reliability of results
- indicates the correlation, for each question, between mark allocation and qualities at each level of the mark range
- informs schools and students about how marks are matched to qualities in student responses.

The sample response:

- demonstrates the qualities of a high-level response
- has been annotated using the marking guide.

Mark allocation

Where a response does not meet any of the descriptors for a question or a criterion, a mark of '0' will be recorded.

Short response

Q	Sample response	The response:
1	<p>In conversation with Hamacher, Passi shares that the ability to read the sky and sea remains an important skill (Source 2). Although an ancient practice, this skill continues to inform the farming, fishing and travel practices of people in this region and remains an important part of culture. As Passi explains to Hamacher, this knowledge has been developed over years of careful observation. These deep understandings are reflected in his artwork, providing a visual representation of complex knowledge systems.</p> <p>These works are held by a major art gallery, meaning that this knowledge is now accessible to Torres Strait Islander peoples, many of whom may live on the mainland. Passi's work ensures the continuation of important cultural practice by ensuring this knowledge is permanently documented and able to be easily shared.</p>	<p>Defining, using and demonstrating understanding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identifies a way cultural knowledges of Torres Strait Islander peoples continue to be shared, using Source 1 and/or Source 2 [1 mark] • identifies a second way that cultural knowledges of Torres Strait Islander peoples continue to be shared, using Source 1 and/or Source 2 [1 mark] • provides a relevant explanation of the importance of continuing to share cultural knowledges [1 mark]

Q	Sample response	The response:
2	<p>The sources demonstrate a growing acceptance of the First Nations knowledges, specifically when considering seasons. Kim Scott (Source 5) identifies that place (Country) is the organising principle for Aboriginal societies. This is different from the western view that values time. Scott's point is clearly demonstrated in both the Yirrganydji calendar (Source 3) and the Noongar calendar (Source 4) where the year is not divided by four distinct seasons, but by considering what could be happening in nature at particular times. For example, on Noongar Boodja, in Makuru it is cold, wet and windy (Source 4) but at that same time, it is cool, dry and windy on Yirrganydji Country during Jinjim. This further demonstrates Scott's view that there are 'different rhythms' in a place, meaning that the European model of seasons does not accurately reflect the natural world in Australia. The wider use of seasonal calendars demonstrates a growing interest in incorporating the complex knowledges that First Nations people have about Country that have been developed over millennia of careful observations. It not only shows a growing appreciation of the way that First Nations people view the world but also a greater understanding of the scientific knowledges about Country held by First Nations peoples across this country.</p>	<p>Defining, using and demonstrating understanding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> identifies how the seasonal calendars convey cultural knowledges [1 mark] <p>Analysing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> provides an analysis of Sources 3–5 [1 mark] identifies how these sources demonstrate changing perspectives about the cultural knowledges of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples [1 mark] supports this with an explanation [1 mark] <p>Creating</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> conveys ideas related to the question [1 mark]

Q	Sample response	The response:
3a)	<p>Article 25 in Source 6 is connected to the worldview held by First Nations Australians of the centrality of Country. It emphasises that there is a deep connection between First Nations Australians and Country, referring to this as a 'distinctive spiritual relationship'. Unlike the Western view of Country, this relationship extends beyond seeing Country as simply a human habitat. It outlines that First Nations people have a responsibility, and the right, to care for Country, not just for their benefit but for the benefit of future generations. This reflects a cyclical view of time where the past, present and future are intimately connected.</p>	<p>Analysing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provides an analysis of one article in Source 6 [1 mark] • provides a plausible explanation of how this article could link to the worldviews of Aboriginal peoples and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples [1 mark] • uses relevant evidence from the source to support the explanation [1 mark]

Q	Sample response	The response:
3b)	<p>First Nations Australians need to be able to access culturally significant sites. This requires governments to guarantee the right of access and to work with communities to ensure that it is done in a culturally appropriate way. While this will assist in strengthening and maintaining relationships with Country, it also provides an opportunity for non-Indigenous Australians to become aware of the significant sites around them, and why they are significant. It would prompt non-Indigenous Australians to consider the unique relationship that First Nations Australians have to Country, situating it in a contemporary context rather than a historical one.</p>	<p>Evaluating</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provides a plausible suggestion of how this article could be put into practice in Australia [1 mark] • provides a relevant explanation of how the action could contribute to greater acknowledgment and recognition of worldviews [1 mark] <p>Creating</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • conveys ideas related to the question [1 mark]

Q	Sample response	The response:
4a)	<p>Truth-telling encourages the acknowledgment of past injustices and for the perspectives of First Nations peoples to be shared and understood in order to have a better understanding of the past. The move towards reclaiming traditional place names can be considered as a form of truth-telling. It acknowledges historical practices that resulted in traditional place names, that would have existed for millennia, being replaced with colonial names. The reclamation of traditional place names, whether it is the replacing of the colonial name (Source 7) or the use of dual-naming conventions (Sources 8 and 9), also allows for the perspectives and knowledges of First Nations peoples in Australia to be centred as it allows for the recognition of language (Sources 7, 8 and 9) and space for the correct oral histories of places to be shared more freely.</p>	<p>Analysing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identifies how attitudes towards place names have changed over time [1 mark] • explains how these changing attitudes could lead to a form of truth-telling [1 mark] • uses evidence from Sources 7–9 to support their explanation [1 mark]

Q	Sample response	The response:
4b)	<p>These actions represent an important step in the reconciliation process as a way that all Australians may be able to incorporate traditional knowledges into their everyday life. The simple act of referring to K'gari rather than Fraser Island not only refers to the physical place, but also cultural knowledges such as the creation story and Butchulla language. Dual-naming and reclamation of traditional place names publicly recognises the unbroken connection as these names were not forgotten, even when publicly replaced by colonial names. The reclaiming of traditional place names is a step towards building a more positive future where First Nations knowledges, histories and cultures are valued, trusted and respected.</p>	<p>Evaluating</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • makes a judgment about the extent to which reclaiming traditional place may contribute to reconciliation processes [1 mark] • provides a valid explanation that supports the judgment [1 mark] <p>Creating</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • conveys ideas related to the question [1 mark]

Q	Sample response	The response:
5	<p>In this article, Karen Mundine acknowledges that Australia is still on its reconciliation journey. She implies that there is a focus on symbolic gestures, as awareness raising, rather than substantive changes addressing issues of inequality and racism. In order for Australia to become a more reconciled nation, she believes that progress needs to be made on these issues — that Australia needs to be ‘brave’. The excerpt highlights the need for greater truth-telling, using the debate surrounding January 26 as an opportunity to share a more truthful, shared history of this place and also to celebrate the resilience and contribution that First Nations peoples have made, and continue to make, to Australian society.</p> <p>Substantive change needs to be practical. UNDRIP (Source 6) notes Indigenous peoples’ right to Country, including the retention of traditional names. Although the dual-naming conventions used by organisations (Sources 8 and 9) may be considered a step towards this, it still privileges place names that were imposed as part of colonisation. The transition to using only the traditional place name, like what has occurred at K’gari (Source 7), represents a substantive change as it is both achievable and a step towards rectifying historical wrongs where traditional place names were removed. Using only the traditional place names will act as a permanent reminder of the custodianship of Country that First Nations peoples have exercised over millennia and continue to do so in modern Australia.</p>	<p>Analysing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provides an analysis of Source 10 [1 mark] • describes the state of reconciliation in Australia [1 mark] • uses relevant evidence from Source 10 [1 mark] <p>Evaluating</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • suggests a change that may progress the reconciliation process in Australia [1 mark] • provides an explanation that outlines why it may be considered a substantive change [1 mark] • uses relevant evidence from one source from Sources 1–9 to support this position [1 mark] • uses relevant evidence from a second source from Sources 1–9 to support this position [1 mark] <p>Creating</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • conveys ideas related to the question [1 mark]

References

Source 2

Hamacher, D. (2021), 'Sky fireballs and a shark in the stars: Indigenous art and astronomy', Pursuit. <https://pursuit.unimelb.edu.au/articles/sky-fireballs-and-a-shark-in-the-stars-indigenous-art-and-astronomy>.

Source 5

Crow, T. (2021, February 7). 'No such place as wilderness' *Particle*. <https://particle.scitech.org.au/earth/no-such-place-as-wilderness/>.

Source 10

Mundine, K. (2021). 'Moving from safe to brave: 2021 State of Reconciliation in Australia'. Committee for Economic Development in Australia <https://www.ceda.com.au/news-and-resources/opinion/indigenous-affairs/moving-from-safe-to-brave-2021-state-of-reconciliation> Licensed Creative Commons Attribution-NoDerivatives 4.0 (CC BY-ND 4.0)



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