

7 Stages of Grieving

Pre reading activities: Extending the field with other texts

1. 40,000 years – [Mural](#) in Redfern

Look at the image of the mural in Redfern, which is famous for its “40,000 years” slogan.

- What does the image seek to say about Indigenous culture and their experiences of colonisation?
- Did anything surprise you about the mural?
- What have you learnt from viewing this mural? (It may be helpful for you to read the text of the article, as it will explain the significance of many of the images in the mural.)

2. Welcome to country

Before a ceremony or event, it has become customary to include either a ‘Welcome to country’ (led by an Indigenous person whose ancestors were the traditional owners of the land the event takes place on) or an ‘Acknowledgement of country’ (where a non-Indigenous speaker acknowledges the heritage of the land). Take a look at the [different examples of the acknowledgement](#). Consider how they differ and what their purpose is.

- How does an ‘Acknowledgement of country’ help Australians to understand or be reminded of our country’s Indigenous history?
- Why is it important to acknowledge the past?
- How does an ‘Acknowledgment of country’ relate to reconciliation?

3. A song: Treaty

Perhaps the most well-known song from an Indigenous band, Yothu Yindi, is [‘Treaty’](#). At the time that *The 7 Stages of Grieving* was written, the song was a prominent and passionate text calling for a treaty to recognise the land rights of Aboriginal Australians. It was originally written as a response to the 1988 Barruga Statement, which asked the ruling Australian Government to formally recognise Indigenous land rights in the form of a treaty. (The Prime Minister at the time, Bob Hawke, broke a promise to put this request into action.)

- Why was a ‘treaty’ necessary?
- Why would a ‘treaty’ deal with the issue of land rights in a way which gave the Indigenous people a sense of dignity?
- Read the lyrics of ‘Treaty’, and note the issues to which they refer.

When you read the play, you should consider any links or commonalities to the song lyrics.

4. Film: *Jedda*

Discriminatory attitudes towards Indigenous Australians were reflected in early Australian films – most notably, the first film to ever star an Aboriginal actress in a leading role. Indeed the film was later retitled, [*Jedda the Uncivilized*](#). Look at the posters for [*Jedda*](#) (1955), [here](#) and [here](#).

- How are Aboriginal people portrayed through the text and the images?
- What do they tell you about the likely audience of the film and their understanding of Indigenous culture?
- What do you think would be different about the posters if they had been created to advertise a film in the 21st century?

[\(ACELA1566\)](#), [\(ACELT1774\)](#), [\(ACELY1749\)](#), [\(ACELY1750\)](#), [\(ACELY1752\)](#), [\(ACELY1754\)](#)