

Home Tutor Scheme

Lesson Plan



everyone's family

Topic: THE NATIONAL APOLOGY TO INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIA

INTRODUCTION	Reading Comprehension
ACTIVITY	Warm up activities Discussion questions Grammar: using phrases Activities for advanced students

The national apology to Indigenous Australia

On 13th February 2008 The Australian government took the long overdue step of apologising to the 'stolen generation' of Aborigines. The 'stolen generation' refers to the thousands of Aboriginal children who were forcibly removed from their parents and adopted by white families. Babies, toddlers and youngsters were forcibly removed from their mothers and fathers and sent to missions or adopted by white families. The idea was to breed out the Aboriginal colour. This policy of integrating mixed-race children into white society started in 1910 and only ended in 1969. Nearly forty years after it ended, newly-elected Prime Minister Kevin Rudd made the formal apology in a parliament address on February 13, 2008 (excerpt only - For the full text of the Prime Minister's apology see http://www.aph.gov.au/house/Rudd_Speech.pdf).

"Today we honour the Indigenous peoples of this land, the oldest continuing cultures in human history.

We reflect on their past mistreatment.

We reflect in particular on the mistreatment of those who were stolen generations - this blemished chapter in our nation's history.

The time has now come for the nation to turn a new page in Australia's history by righting the wrongs of the past and so moving forward with confidence to the future.

We apologise for the laws and policies of successive Parliaments and governments that have inflicted profound grief, suffering and loss on these our fellow Australians.

We apologise especially for the removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families, their communities and their country.

For the pain, suffering and hurt of these stolen generations, their descendants and for their families left behind, we say sorry.

To the mothers and the fathers, the brothers and the sisters, for the breaking up of families and communities, we say sorry.

And for the indignity and degradation thus inflicted on a proud people and a proud culture, we say sorry....."

Christine King from the Stolen Generations Alliance said February 13 was an extremely significant and emotional day. She said "Older people thought they would never live to see it, so it's very important."

[Reference: <http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com>] Note: This article is not a representation of the views of The Smith Family.

Warm up Activity:

1. Construct sentences including the following words:

Government: _____

Apologising: _____

Generations: _____

Toddlers: _____

Sorry: _____

Emotional: _____

Indigenous: _____

2. Make sure you understand the meaning of all the words listed below (if not, look them up in the dictionary). Then fill in the blanks using the following words:

emotional, toddlers, wrongs, long, forty, adopted, white, apology, removed, stolen, suffering, land, society, forcibly, sisters, colour, mistreatment, sorry, proud

On 13th February 2008 The Australian government took the _____ overdue step of apologising to the 'stolen generation' of Aborigines. The '_____ generation' refers to the thousands of Aboriginal children who were _____ removed from their parents and _____ by white families. Babies, _____ and youngsters were forcibly _____ from their mothers and fathers and sent to missions or adopted by _____ families. The idea was to breed out the Aboriginal _____. This policy of integrating mixed-race children into white _____ started in 1910 and only ended in 1969. Nearly _____ years after it ended, newly-elected Prime Minister Kevin Rudd made the formal _____ in a parliament address on February 13, 2008.

"Today we honour the Indigenous peoples of this _____, the oldest continuing cultures in human history.

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To the mothers and the fathers, the brothers and the _____, for the breaking up of families and communities, we say sorry.

And for the indignity and degradation thus inflicted on a _____ people and a proud culture, we say sorry....."

Christine King from the Stolen Generations Alliance said February 13 was an extremely significant and _____ day. She said "Older people thought they would never live to see it, so it's very important."

3. Talk about the differences in apologising to different groups of people. Rank the following groups in order of the most difficult person to apologise to:

Rank		Rank	
	Your best friend		Your wife or husband
	Your sibling		Your mother
	Your neighbour		Your father
	Your child		Your work colleague
	Your home tutor		Your manager

4. Make two lists – one for of all the things you would like to apologise for, and one for all the things the government in your country of origin should apologise for.

<i>Things you would like to apologise for</i>	<i>Things your government should apologise for</i>

5. Have you ever apologised to anyone? What was it for and how did you apologise?

6. Write down all the words or phrases that you think of when you hear the word 'Aboriginal'.

7. True/ False:

- Australia's government has apologised to its indigenous population.....
- Australia forcibly removed thousands of Aboriginal children
- The policy of integrating mixed-race children into white society ended in 1979
- February 13 was an emotional day
- Older Aborigines knew they would live to hear the apology.....

Discussion Questions:

1. What do you think of when you hear the word 'apology'?
2. Did you listen to the Prime Minister's apology on February 13th 2008?
3. Did you know anything about the Stolen Generation before today?
4. What are your feelings about the Stolen Generation?
5. What do you think the world thought of Australia's policy of taking Aboriginal children and giving them to white families?
6. Why do you think it took so long to make an apology to Aborigines?
7. Are the indigenous people in your country of origin treated fairly or are they disadvantaged?
8. Do you think the Aborigines should also receive financial compensation?

Advanced Activities

Further discussions: Some people believe that all indigenous populations should receive apologies from colonisers; others believe that today's governments should not have to apologise for the wrongs of previous generations. What is your opinion?

Phrases:

In grammar, a **phrase** is a group of words that functions as a single unit in the syntax of a sentence. For example *the house at the end of the street* is a phrase. It acts like a noun. It contains the phrase *at the end of the street*, a prepositional phrase which acts like an adjective. Most phrases have a central word which defines the type of phrase. This word is called the head of the phrase. It is often the first word of the phrase. Phrases may be classified by the type of head they take, for example:

- Prepositional phrase with a preposition as head (e.g. *in love, over the rainbow*)
- Noun phrase with a noun as head (e.g. *the black cat, a cat on the mat*)
- Verb phrase with a verb as head (e.g. *eat cheese, jump up and down*)
- Adjectival phrase with an adjective as head (e.g. *full of toys*)
- Adverbial phrase with adverb as head (e.g. *very carefully*)

[Reference: <http://www.phrases.org.uk> and <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Phrase>]

Activities:

1. What are some phrases you can think of that you use often?

2. Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- | | |
|---|------------------------------|
| 1. take the long overdue step | a. their mothers and fathers |
| 2. removed from their parents and adopted | b. and emotional day |
| 3. youngsters were forcibly removed from | c. of apologizing |
| 4. The idea was to breed out | d. to the future |
| 5. it would be a bridge | e. by white families |
| 6. an extremely significant | f. the Aboriginal colour |