

LIFE ON THE MURRAY RIVER

Level: 5 & 6

Activity: 4

Overview

Aboriginal Australians are believed to be one of the oldest populations on Earth. Before British colonisation in 1788 there were over 500 different clan groups or 'nations' on the continent of Australia, many with distinctive cultures, beliefs and languages. During this lesson, students will investigate what Australia's history looks like in visual form by creating a timeline to scale. They will find out about some of the most important events/information from across this whole period. They will reflect on the sheer magnitude of time that the Aboriginal people have been on this continent.

Resources

- Masking tape
- Tape measure
- Post-it notes
- Computer access for students
- Appendix A: *Metric Conversion Chart*

Activity

ENGAGE

Measure out 10m on the ground using a tape measure and then mark out this line using masking tape. Using Post-it notes, mark 100,000 at one end and 0 at the other. Explain to students that 0 means zero years ago (i.e. today) and that 100,000 means 100,000 years ago. Ask students:

- How many centimetres in a metre? How many millimetres? (Some time could be taken here to demonstrate measurement conversions using Appendix A: *Metric Conversion Chart* depending on student need.)
- If we were to mark the date of British Colonisation (1788), where do you think it would be on the line?

EXPLORE

Explain to students that Aboriginal Australians are one of the oldest populations on earth and are believed to have been here for tens of thousands of years. Studies have traced back their history in Australia up to 70,000 years. British colonisation occurred in 1788. Challenge students to work out (in small groups) the correct place to mark each of these on the timeline. Depending on student ability, this could be left very open for students to problem solve, otherwise the following process may be used to scaffold the problem:

Step 1: Work out how many years in 1m

Step 2: Work out how many years in 1cm

Step 3: Work out how many years in 1mm

Step 4: Combine these as needed to calculate the total distance

EXPLAIN

Ask a representative from each group to share their answers and explain their strategy. Mark both events on the timeline as follows:

100,000 years = 10m

100 years = 1cm

10 years = 1mm

Therefore:

If Aboriginal Australians arrived 70,000 years ago, that's 7m along the timeline.

If the British arrived in 1788 and it is now 2018, that's 230 years which is 23mm or 2.3 cm along the timeline.

ELABORATE

Explain to students that they will now be doing some research to fill in the timeline with more events and detail. Some students will be assigned to investigate *Pre-Colonisation* and others *Post-Colonisation*. Ask students to decide how many should be assigned to each task given what they can see on the timeline. Give students some time to research their allocated historical period. Each time they find a new fact/event, they need to write it on a Post-it note and place it in the appropriate position along the timeline.

EVALUATE

In pairs, ask students to reflect on what they have learnt and share:

- Something they didn't know before
- Something that surprised them
- Something that they think other people should know

Finally, have students gather around the timeline and discuss:

- How would you describe Australia's history?
- What can you say about the information we have collected? Is it evenly spread? Why do you think this is?
- How important do you think it is to know about our entire history?

Curriculum Links



Level 5		
MATHEMATICS	<u>Measurement and Geometry:</u> Using units of measurement	Choose appropriate units of measurement for length, area, volume, capacity and mass (VCMMG195)
HISTORY	<u>Historical Concepts and Skills:</u> Chronology	Sequence significant events and lifetimes of people in chronological order to create a narrative to explain the developments in Australia's colonial past and the causes and effects of Federation on its people(VCHHC082)
Level 6		
MATHEMATICS	<u>Measurement and Geometry:</u> Using units of measurement	Connect decimal representations to the metric system(VCMMG222)
		Convert between common metric units of length, mass and capacity (VCMMG223)
		Solve problems involving the comparison of lengths and areas using appropriate units (VCMMG224)
HISTORY	<u>Historical Concepts and Skills:</u> Chronology	Sequence significant events and lifetimes of people in chronological order to create a narrative to explain the developments in Australia's colonial past and the causes and effects of Federation on its people(VCHHC082)

Sample Report Comments

{Name} has developed an understanding of the scope of Australia's history, both pre- and post-colonisation, including some significant events and information from these time periods.

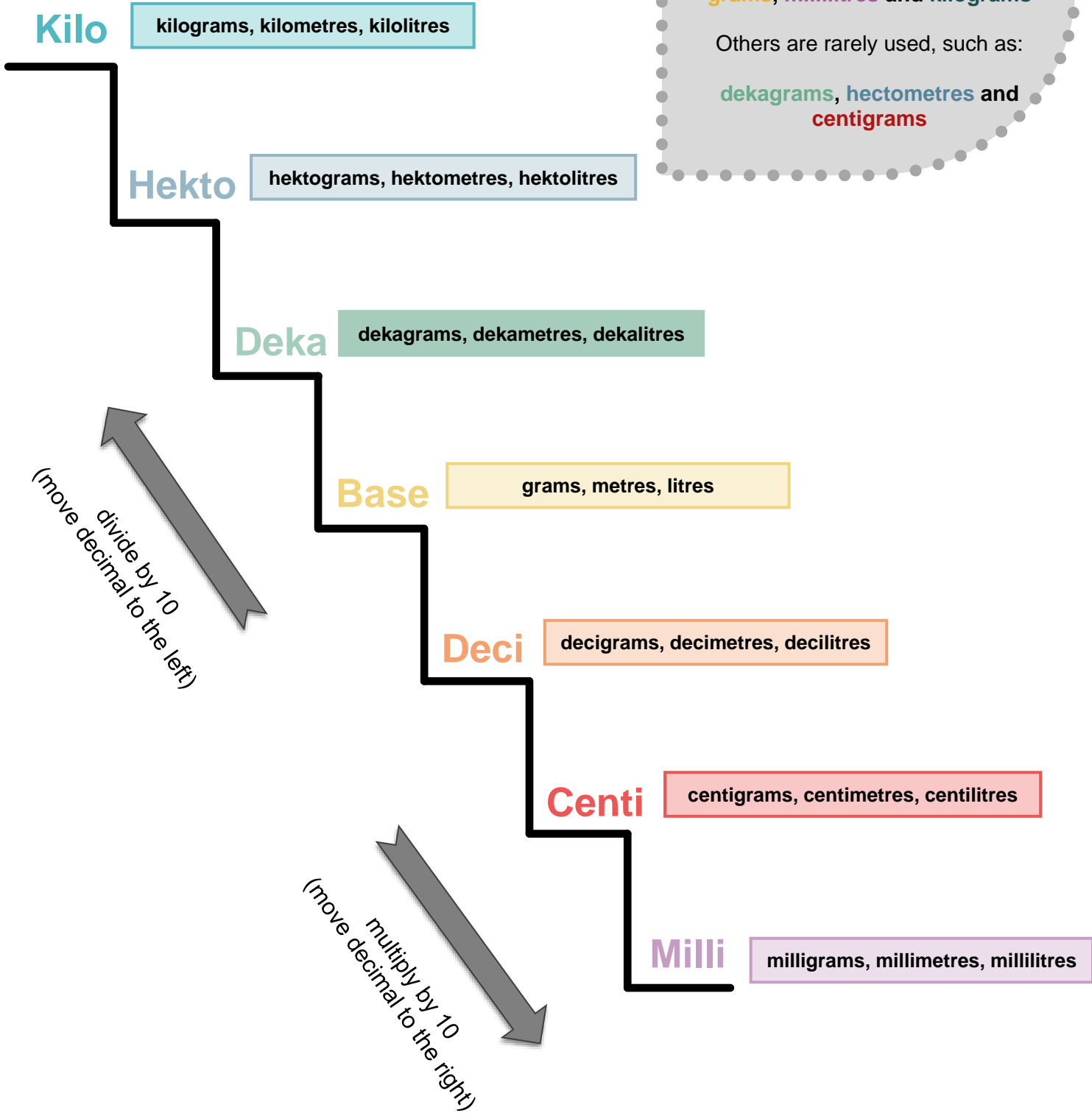
{Name} can confidently convert between common metric units (for example 125mm=12.5cm). {He/She} was able to apply this knowledge to create a scaled timeline of Australian history, where ten metres was equal to 100,000 years.

References

Australian Geographic. *DNA confirms Aboriginal culture one of Earth's oldest*, <http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/data/?ref=ftr> [viewed 15 July 2018]

Appendix A

Metric Conversion Chart



Some of these measurements are more commonly used, such as:

grams, millilitres and kilograms

Others are rarely used, such as:

dekagrams, hectometres and centigrams