OVERVIEW

This lesson plan has been designed to teach students about rivers and the importance of **NEVER SWIMMING ALONE**. It looks at how rivers may be important to different communities and how they can also be sacred meeting places for Indigenous people. Students will discover the existence and location of *The Nargun’s Den* and consider the dangers of rivers. It reminds students to **CHECK THE CONDITIONS** before swimming.

WHAT YOU WILL NEED

- Computer / Tablet
- Library books and/or pictures that relate to myths and legends
- Collect images of rivers showing features; banks, water flowing, snags etc.
- Art materials
- Recommended reading:
  - *The Ice is Coming*  
    Patricia Wrightson  
    Publisher- Macmillan Pub Co  
    ISBN- 9780689500817
  - *The Nargun and the Stars*  
    Patricia Wrightson  
    Publisher- Catnip Publishing Ltd  
    ISBN- 9781846470769

LESSON TOPICS

1. Myth or Fact
2. Time and Place
3. Ngrung a Narguna

CURRICULUM CONNECTION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Health and Physical Education*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Physical, Social and Community Health</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Being healthy, safe and active</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✔️ Describe and apply strategies that can be used in situations that make them feel uncomfortable or unsafe (VCHPEP090)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✔️ Identify and practise strategies to promote health, safety and wellbeing (VCHPEP091)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mathematics*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Measurement and Geometry</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Location and transformation</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✔️ Level 3 – Create and interpret simple grid maps to show position and pathways (VCMMG143)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✔️ Level 4 – Use simple scales, legends and directions to interpret information contained in basic maps (VCMMG172)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
History*

**Historical Knowledge**

*Community, remembrance and celebration*

- The significance of Country and Place to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who belong to a local area (VCHHK072)


**MYTH OR FACT**

15 MINUTES

**Activity**

1. What can you find out about myths? Give students 10 minutes to research myths and their purpose. Ask students to find an example of a myth and a fact.

2. Share time: Have students bring what they learnt about myths along with their example of a myth and fact and ask them to share with a friend. The friend is to try and guess which example is a myth, and which is a fact.

**Differentiation**

Students could work with a partner or small group and come up with their own facts and myths.

**TIME AND PLACE**

15 MINUTES

**Content Information**

Nearly 140 years ago, explorer Alfred William Howitt, travelled the Mitchell River by canoe accompanied by two men from the Ganai tribe who inhabited that land - Turnmile and Bunjil Bottle. Up one creek, they came to an ancient cave, fringed by stalactites. Bunjil Bottle was convinced that this was the den of the mysterious creature, the Nargun, the ‘Ngrung a Narguna’. The Nargun is a mysterious creature, a cave dweller that haunts various parts of the bush, especially the Mitchell Valley (Mitchell River National Park) in Gippsland, Victoria.

**Activity**

1. Finding the location: Give students a map of Mitchell River National Park and identify the location of the Nargun Myth.

2. Places of interest: Looking at the map, have students create their own path to get from the National Park to the Den of Nargun and include other places of interest to visit along the way.

**Differentiation**

In groups, have students create directions from their school to where the Nargun Myth is located.
**NGRUNG A NARGUNA**  
**30 MINUTES**

**Content Information**

The Nargun is a large female mythical creature who lives in a cave behind a waterfall. The cave, called the Den of Nargun, can be found on Woolshed Creek, a small tributary of Gippsland’s Mitchell River. The cave is about one kilometre upstream from where the creek joins the river.

The Gunaikumai people who lived there would gather around their campfires and tell stories about how the Nargun would steal children who wandered off on their own to visit the creek or river. It was said the Nargun could not be harmed with boomerangs or spears; she could send them back to the person who threw them. The adults told this story to keep the children close to the campsite, and away from the sacred cave.

Howitt’s companions could not describe a Nargun, beyond that it was like a rock (wallung), and is said to be all stone except the breast, arms and hands. It inhabits caverns, into which it drags unsuspecting passers-by.

**Activity**

1. Describing the features of a river: Read the content information to the students and ask the following questions:
   - Do you think there is a safety message in the Nargun myth? What would that safety message be?
   - Why is it dangerous to wander off to visit the creek or river on your own, without an adult?

   What would you do if one of your friends asked you to go to a river without an adult? Does the river in our township change or is it always the same? Same colour? Same temperature? Same amount of water? Always still? Always flowing? Different at different times of the year?

2. What do you think the Nargun looks like? Create a poster with your Nargun somewhere in it. The poster needs to warn people to *Never Swim Alone* and include other dangers to look out for.

**Differentiation**

Students form five small groups. The teacher asks a question and gives all of the groups one minute to brainstorm in their small group. The teacher will select a group to present its answer to the rest of the class.

The class will then vote, with a show of hands as to whether they think it was a correct answer. Other groups can then be asked if they would add anything to the answer or change the answer in any way. Each of the five groups will get to present two answers to the class.

This can also be run as a trivia quiz, with students at tables.

Dramatise the Nargun myth through puppetry, shadow play, clay animation, or dressing up as characters from the Nargun myth and acting out the story through role-play.

Using *The Nargun and The Stars*, complete a book or movie review.
REPORTING COMMENTS

Students identify the location of the Mitchell River National Park on a simple map using an alphanumeric grid.

The student has engaged in class/group discussion.

The student has confirmed particular water safety knowledge by listing some of the possible dangers associated with rivers and lakes and by answering questions.

The student has listened attentively to the Nargun myth, and has demonstrated that he/she can identify the topic, retell information accurately, ask clarifying questions, volunteer information and justify opinions.

The student has shown and described their art work, expressing their ideas, feelings, and purpose.