**Australian Aboriginal Art - Secret Maps**

1st - I give them the text below written in cursive and they need to convert it into printing. (This information came from the National Gallery of Australia website last year.)

2nd - They take notes on the paragraph and I check them and give them feedback on whether they are using good headings, finding all the pertinent information and writing it down in succinct notes.

3rd - We use this information to create our own secret map art. I tell them about what several Australian animals symbolize and give them a chance to see pictures and videos of them on the ipads. I put pictures of the animals up as well. I make them do a draft of their picture first and then they paint it in bright colours on 11x14 paper. Putting the paintings on a coloured construction paper background can really make them pop too. I found it worked best to have the students colour in the background first and let it dry, before adding the animal and map symbols. Last year, these were part of their Father’s Day gifts and they included information about the symbolism on the back, letting their dads know of some of the admirable qualities they possess.

Australian Aboriginal Art is loaded with symbolism. It is used to share information between people and to record what has been learned for use by future generations. The symbols can tell the location of a sacred site, watering hole or a place animals live. They may even give directions for getting to these places.

Concentric circles (circles within circles) can represent a meeting place, campsite or a watering hole. A series of parallel lines (lines running beside one another) can symbolize a journey, path or riverbed. If the lines are wavy, they may stand for running water, creek beds or sand hills. Dots in artwork can be used to represent berries or stars. However, the dots are sometimes included just added to try to confuse outsiders so they will not guess the meaning behind a piece of art.

Aboriginal Art in Australia was typically painted on the body at ceremonies or done in sand paintings traditionally. Sand paintings involve pictures made by pouring coloured sand, crystals or minerals on a surface. The sand may be fixed (stuck to the surface) or unfixed. Paintings were also done on cave walls and on rocks. Today, it is popular to decorate pottery and canvases with Australian Aboriginal Art. [[1]](#footnote-1)

1. Presented by Natasha Morley, Walking a Mile in their Moccasins, Oct. 21/16 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)