

Makuru Activities (Early Years)

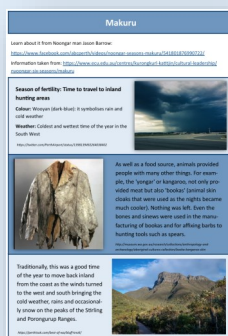
These activities are presented as a whole lesson but could easily be taught on their own. I taught this lesson in June 2026 (makuru is June—July ish). The focus was on learning the elements of makuru and how the Noongar people used their knowledge of the land during this season. As this was for a Kindy class I included practical and tactile activities. I also included a little bit of language through the Noongar names of birds and the wanil (peppermint tree). These activities help develop respect for Noongar culture through sharing knowledge of Noongar boodjar (Country).

Activity 1: Introduction to Makuru and bird game (5 - 7 minutes)

Focus: Children learn some elements of the Noongar season makuru and learn some Noongar bird names.

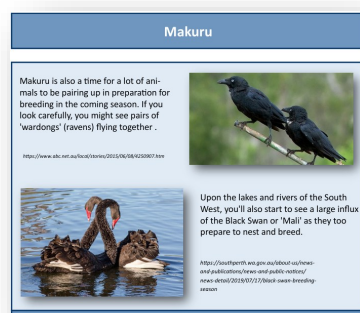
Resources:

- Makuru season posters
- Bird cards
- Noongar words



Part 1: Introduction

Ask the children how are they feeling, 'hot', 'cold' etc. Ask them what the weather has been like and what it is like today. Show makuru posters and ask the students to tell me what they see. Teach some of the bird names in Noongar throughout.



- ⇒ **Teacher:** How many birds do you see in this picture?
- ⇒ **Students:** Two
- ⇒ **Teacher:** In makuru many of the birds are pairing up, make sure you keep a look out for them.

Part 2: Bird activity

Ensure you have enough pairs of birds.

- ⇒ **Teacher:** I'm going to give you a card and I want you to fly around the room and see if you can find someone with the same card. When you find your bird partner come and sit down on the mat.
- ⇒ **Students:** Children pretend to fly around and find their partner

Once all children are seated, collect the birds saying the names in Noongar as you do.

Activity 2: Country takes care of you, Wanil (peppermint tree) (5 - 7 minutes)

Focus: Students learn some bush medicine and that Country provides

Resources:

- gather some fresh peppermint leaves
- Booka—kangaroo skin (or a picture of one)



Part 1 Wanil medicine

- ⇒ *Teacher:* Does anyone have a cold or a cough?
- ⇒ *Students:* *cough* yes
- ⇒ *Teacher:* What do you take to get better?
- ⇒ *Students:* Medicine
- ⇒ *Teacher:* Noongar Country must really care about you because there are lots of medicine trees around. Does anyone know what tree this belongs to? (Hold up wanil leaves)

Teacher gives the students one leaf of the peppermint tree.

1. **Crush the leaf in your hands**
2. **Use the warmth of your hands to release the oil**
3. **Cup your hands over you nose and breathe in deeply (smells fresh)**

How do you feel? Next time you have a cold or cough you can ask a wanil tree for a leaf. If the leaf comes easily you know the tree wants you to have it. If it is really difficult to get the leaf then the tree doesn't want you to have it.

Note: Asking trees for permission before taking anything reinforces respecting all living things on Country.

Part 2 Stay warm in your booka

Ask students how they stay warm. Take out the booka and ask students if they know what it is. Tell them that it's a real yonga (kangaroo) skin. The skin is very clever because if the fur is on the outside it keeps you dry and keeps the rain off. If the fur is on the inside it keeps you warm and cosy.

Students can come up and try on the booka. (I only put it on three students but say they could all have a go throughout the morning.)

Note: You can order yonga (kangaroo) fur online.



Activity 3: Impressions of Country (15—20 minutes)

Focus: Students learn about items that Country leaves for us in the season of makuru

Resources:

- Ask students to gather some natural items on their way to school or from the beach (e.g. nuts, leaves, sticks, shells) try to find items that will make interesting imprints
- Airdrying clay
- Baking paper
- Rolling pin (or something that can roll the clay flat ish)



Country leaves us gifts which we can use for all sorts of things, like food, medicine but also jewellery and art. In this activity we are appreciating the textures of Country by collecting items that leave interesting impressions in clay. In different seasons Country will leave us different items so it is important to pay close attention to what each season provides.

Tell students they will be pressing the items into the clay to make a Makuru dish or wall hanging. They need to press the most interesting part into the clay to make it beautiful. Encourage students to select a variety of items, some big some small, some with lines like on shells or seed cases.

1. **Students roll their lump of clay on their piece of baking paper** (5—7mil thick)
2. **Students select items from a collection on their table**
3. **Students push their items into the clay**
4. **Allow clay to dry** (use a dish to help shape the clay)
5. **Paint clay with makuru colours** (blues and purples, or whatever colour the students want)

You could also make this into a mobile and put a hole in the clay before it dries.

References

Batchelor Press. (2014). *Djerup: Noongar birds*. Batchelor Press.

Edith Cowan University. (2026, February 26). *Noongar six seasons*. Kurongkurl Katitjin.

Hansen, V., & Horsfall, J. (2016). *Noongar bush medicine: Medicinal plants of the south-west of Western Australia*. UWA Publishing.

Wadjela Learning. (2026). *Resources for Noongar Boodjar*. <https://wadjelalearning.com/>

