Teacher's notes and answer key

The Rainbow Serpent – How One Body Shaped a Continent

Subjects: English · Geography · Religious Studies | recommended from age 10 (A2/B1) | Video: 8:49 min

Answers B

1. At least 60,000 years – the oldest continuous living culture. The British anthropologist Alfred Radcliffe-Brown coined the umbrella name in 1926; nations have their own names such as Ngalyod, Wagyl or Yurlunggur.

2. Where it wound through the rock it left grooves in which its water collected (rivers); where it rested, waterholes; where it pushed earth ahead of it, mountains.

3. Not just territory but a living web of land, law, language and kinship.

4. The sky darkened, the serpent rose from the water, swallowed the careless people and sent days of rain; new river channels formed.

5. Many communities still live by it; Australian water management programmes officially include this traditional knowledge.

Answer C

Correct numbers from top to bottom: 4 – 7 – 1 – 6 – 2 – 8 – 3 – 5

Notes on D and E

E: rivers – the serpent's track / erosion by running water; waterholes – resting places / hollows, groundwater; mountains and gorges – pushed-up earth, the serpent's path (Kimberley, Kakadu) / tectonics and erosion; rainy season – its breath / the monsoon in northern Australia.

Content note and age

Recommended from age 10. Careless people are swallowed; no graphic images.

Important: many Dreaming stories are sacred and some are restricted to certain people. The video tells a general, combined version; “Rainbow Serpent” is an umbrella term. Please stress that the individual nations have many separate traditions.

The narrator's voice and the illustrations in the video are AI-generated; the script follows the established tradition. You are welcome to copy and share this worksheet for classroom use.

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