The Dreaming (or Dreamtime) is the foundation of Aboriginal Spirituality. Although it has different meanings for different Aboriginal people, like any belief, there are common experiences and story-lines which connect not only neighbours but Aboriginals across the whole of Australia. The different stories recount different experiences (both mythical and real) and lead to different individual and social behaviours.

Stories and information about Dreaming can be obtained from a number of sources including the Australian Museum online site: www.dreamtime.net.au/dreaming/storylist.htm.

1. (a) Explain how a spiritual concept such as ‘Dreaming’ can be the same but different for different people.

(b) Describe how the Dreaming is manifest in one example of Aboriginal culture.

(c) Use a website to find out more about Dreaming stories. List three concepts you found in the site.

(i) ____________________________________________

(ii) ____________________________________________

(iii) ____________________________________________

The Dreaming refers to all that is known and understood by Aboriginal people. It is the central spiritual concept because it determines not only beliefs and values but also relationships with other people and the overall environment. Aborigines are able to understand Creation in a continuing and living sense by virtue of Dreaming.
Dreaming belief

2. Below are two pieces of information about Dreaming. Rewrite these in your own words after the subheadings.

(a) Aboriginal people believe they are related to the natural world and this relationship provides the advantages of survival and life and also imposes the responsibilities of preservation and education. Responsibilities include conservation of natural and social environment by providing a law to be obeyed and cultural mores and taboos to be followed and passed on from initiated elders to the next generation.

Relationships: ____________________________

______________________________

(b) Dreaming permeates every aspect of music (both song and dance), storytelling, artwork (exampled by paintings and craft or artefact manufacture), food gathering and hunting activities within a complex framework of kinship or family totem relationships. The artwork at Yorambulla Caves in South Australia (below) is one simple example of the complex representations of Aboriginal life.

Art and music: ____________________________

______________________________

Spiritual time

The concept of spiritual time is not the same as Western-style time which relates a past (which has gone), present (now) and a future (still to come). Spiritual time is part cyclical (repeats over and over) and part simultaneous (what was, is and will be). When the stories are told, when the songs are sung or when the dances are danced, not only is the Dreaming story being remembered and retold but the act and process occurs all over again.

For example, if the Dreaming legend of the Creation of the tribe is being told in a dance and song cycle then the tribe is being re-created. It is for this reason that the stories have such respect and are held to be so important by Aboriginal people. They are not just stories of the ancient time, they are the cause of the continuation of life itself. For this reason the Dreaming beliefs must be passed from one generation to another to remain alive within the community.

3. What do you understand by the following terms?

(a) cyclical time ____________________________

(b) simultaneous time ____________________________
**Spiritual art**

The Aboriginal artwork that is becoming more popular with Western collectors is both useful (in that it allows hunters to tell others where food can be found) and spiritual (it allows the young to visually learn the stories of the Dreaming Spirits.

4. The table below shows some examples of common Aboriginal shapes and their meanings. Describe these drawings in your own words and explain how they can help the tribe both physically and spiritually.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>How this could be used to help the tribe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="Family" /></td>
<td>Family (man, woman and child)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="Women cooking" /></td>
<td>Women cooking at a camp fire</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="Camp fire" /></td>
<td>Camp fire, meeting place or sacred place</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="Goanna tracks" /></td>
<td>Goanna tracks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="Kangaroo tracks" /></td>
<td>Kangaroo tracks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="Emu tracks" /></td>
<td>Emu tracks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Dreaming retold

Retelling the Dreaming stories is also the main way of teaching ethical behaviour. Honesty and social responsibility are coupled with education of respectful and culturally acceptable behaviour. Any society would experience cultural difficulties if this tradition was destroyed.

The Dreaming stories also teach children about the natural world and understanding the stories and remembering the details allows them to survive in what is a very harsh environment. The characteristics of grasses and trees, fish and reptiles, birds and mammals, along with the seasonal weather and climate changes are learned by the children and then used as adults in their daily survival. The stories also provide the initiated with a detailed map of the country in which they live and the directions to neighbours, water, food and shelter. The Dreaming map also shows the way to get to sacred sites, as well as indicating their relative importance.

5. Why is it important to retell the Dreaming stories?

6. Read some Aboriginal Dreaming stories and use them to explain how stories, songs or paintings can fulfill the following:
   (a) teach correct behaviour
   (b) learn about the natural world
   (c) find neighbours, water and food
   (d) teach an understanding of the sacred places

7. (a) Suggest reasons why Aboriginal relationships can be simply described using the three circles.
   (b) Copy the diagram and show how these headings relate to other aspects of Aboriginal life.
Missionaries and the Aboriginal people

Since white settlement, every Aboriginal group has experienced a recent history with the complication of having been exposed to different religious beliefs, such as Christianity. This has caused variations in the way Dreaming is expressed. In some cases, Aboriginal spiritual beliefs have combined with Christianity in a form of syncretism or attempt to combine traditional beliefs with the more formal introduced religion. This has resulted in Aboriginal customs being incorporated into Christian services and Christian symbols such as the cross and Trinity being included in traditional Aboriginal drawings and stories.

Extension

8. (a) Find examples of Aboriginal art and see how they describe the Dreaming and the land.

(b) Research and describe some examples of syncretism showing both the inclusion of Aboriginal ideas into Christian worship and Christian ideas into Aboriginal art.
D Quiz

1. Complete the passage below by adding the missing words.

The concept of ________________ time is not the same as Western-style time which relates a ________________ (which has gone), a ________________ (now) and a ________________ (still to come). Spiritual time is part ________________ (repeats over and over) and part ________________ (what was, is and will be). When the stories are told, when the songs are sung or when the dances are danced, not only is the Dreamtime story being ________________ and retold but the act and process occurs all over again. They are not just stories of the ancient time, they are the cause of the ________________ of life itself. For this reason the Dreaming beliefs must be passed from one ________________ to another to remain alive within the community.

2. Connect the words on the left with their correct definition on the right.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>7% of population in 2001</th>
<th>Ten Commandments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Olgas</td>
<td>Jewish commandments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>syncretism</td>
<td>Also called Liberal or Modern Jews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anglican Church</td>
<td>Commandments found in this book</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reform</td>
<td>Uniting Church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exodus chapter 20</td>
<td>Largest Protestant denomination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hermannsburg</td>
<td>Combining Aboriginal and Christian expressions of belief</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uluru</td>
<td>Famous Lutheran Mission in Northern Territory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decalogue</td>
<td>Kata Tjuta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mitzvot</td>
<td>Ayers Rock</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Extension

3. On the grid provided, draw a line graph to show the change in total Christians since 1901.

(a) Correctly label the vertical and horizontal axes and describe the shape of the graph you produce.

(b) Describe what has happened to religious belief in Australia since 1901.

(c) Suggest reasons to explain this change.
Across

4. These parchments were found in 1948 in a cave near the Dead Sea and included early manuscripts of the Hebrew Bible and new Gospels of Jesus. (4, 3, 7)
6. A level of rank in some Churches usually below that of full Minister in the Church. (6)
8. Generic term used to describe scattering of peoples around the world. Often specifically related to Jewish people at particular times of their history. (7)
9. Many religions consider the question of: what happens to a person after you do this. (3)
10. The Ten Commandments is a list of instructions from God to the Jewish people telling them what they should _____. (2)
11. One style of ‘The Lord’s Prayer’ starts with the words: ‘Our Father who art ____ Heaven’. (2)
12. St Peter’s Cathedral in Rome, St Paul’s Cathedral in London and the Great Church of Hagia Sophia in Istanbul each contain a large, beautifully decorated curved roof called a _____. (4)
14. Another name for the Ten Commandments. (9)
15. Philosophical term relating to any god. (5)
16. An Old Testament story has Daniel in a lion’s _____. (3)

Down

1. Term given to the different individual church organisations under the general term of Christian. (12)
2. An ethical system which seeks to determine correct morality based on following process or rules rather than referring to consequences or results. (10)
3. Aspect of Aboriginal Spirituality which explains creation myths or gives reason behind social lore or tribal relationships and behaviour. (9, 5)
5. Capital of Syria. Paul lived here after his conversion to Christianity. (8)
6. Term which includes teachings, law, ethical guidance and writings within Buddhist tradition. (6)
7. Evil spirit or part of the Devil that fights for evil against good. (5)
10. Administrative area within the Catholic and Anglican traditions. Under the authority of a bishop. (7)
13. Term used to condemn someone specifically to hell. (4)
14. Specific unit of time related to the terms, ‘____ of Atonement’, ‘Christmas ____’ and every _____. (3)