



Australian Government
Australian Sports Commission

boomerang

'boom-er-rang'



SCHOOL
YEARS
7-9

SCHOOL
YEARS
10-12

Post-school age

Background

Boomerang throwing was a popular activity with Aboriginal groups in many parts of Australia. While the fighting boomerang was often used as a toy, the returning boomerang implement was often constructed solely and especially for purposes of sport and amusement.

The toy, or returning boomerang, was usually thrown only by men and boys. Various types of boomerang games were played in different parts of Australia.

Language

The word *boomerang* had its origins from the word for a 'fighting stick' that was thrown. In the language of the people in the Sydney area it was *bumarang*, *wumarang* or *bumarit*.

Suggestions

Boomerang throwing can be an enjoyable activity with a place in school physical education and/or outdoor education programs. It is a truly Australian activity and it is a reminder of and a basis for understanding the cultural heritage of Australian Aboriginal people.

- Have a number of right and left-handed boomerangs.
- If it can be organised select a number of boomerangs with similar flight characteristics, with a flight of 20–30 metres. Some commercially produced boomerangs can be manipulated to give similar flight characteristics. Boomerangs with four or more 'arms' are often easier to throw with more accuracy.
- Explain the use of boomerangs. Refer to the manufacturer's instructions and follow appropriate teaching methods.
- Set up an aiming mark at a height to help achieve a consistent return.

- Watch others and learn from them. Practise.
- Much frustration comes from the inability to make a boomerang return. Skill and success is the result of practice. Most people can become quite successful.

Safety

Safety is essential. Do not take your eyes off the boomerang. Another person acting as a 'watcher' is useful. Select an appropriate area and set up safety regulation procedures. Check wind direction and set aiming points.

Discuss regulations about where to sit when not throwing and where to throw. Use a large open area for this activity.

Comment

There are different types of boomerangs (including cross boomerangs) with various shapes, sizes and flight characteristics available.

Some fairly cheap, plastic versions of materials that give a boomerang 'shape memory' are perhaps the best value. Set up aiming points for players, based on wind conditions.

Teaching points

- Check the angle (of release).
- Flick the wrist, point the fingers.
- Hand on top, hand underneath (to catch boomerang).
- Slap down to catch.