No more boomerang
No more spear;
Now all civilized—
Colour bar and beer.

No more corroboree,
Gay dance and din.
Now we got movies,
And pay to go in.

No more sharing
What the hunter brings.
Now we work for money,
Then pay it back for things.

Now we track bosses
To catch a few bob,
Now we go walkabout
On bus to the job.

One time naked,
Who never knew shame;
Now we put clothes on
To hide whatsaname.
No more gunya,
Now bungalow,
Paid by higher purchase
In twenty year or so.
Lay down the stone axe,
Take up the steel,
And work like a nigger
For a white man meal.

No more firesticks
That made the whites scoff.
Now all electric,
And no better off.
Bunyip he finish,
Now got instead
White fella Bunyip,
Call him Red.

Abstract picture now—
What they coming at?
Cripes in our caves we
Did better than that.

Black hunted wallaby,
White hunt dollar;
White fella witch-doctor
Wear dog collar.

No more message-stick;
Lubras and lads
Got television now,
Mostly ads.
Lay down the woomera,
Lay down the waddy,
Now we got atom-bomb,
End everybody.

by Oodgeroo Noonuccal (Kath Walker)
from Australian Voices: A Collection of Poetry and Pictures (Penguin)
Teaching notes for
No More Boomerang

Text form: Satire
Medium: Book
Field: Destruction of Aboriginal culture
Tenor: Written to unknown reader
Mode: Written

OTHER RESOURCES
Access to resources with information about traditional Aboriginal lifestyles.
Draft writing paper.
Access to collections of poems by Aboriginal writers.

INTRODUCING THE UNIT
This poem by Oodgeroo was one of her early ones written after she became involved in the Aboriginal rights movement. Her poetry is a criticism of the injustices she saw her people suffering as their culture was being destroyed at the hands of the white people.

LET’S TALK ABOUT IT!
Encourage students to research traditional Aboriginal lifestyles with the understanding that there were variations throughout the country in the ways that different language groups lived. You may wish to invite an Aboriginal from the local community to talk with students.

Discuss lifestyle changes in contemporary society in the past few years, particularly those associated with money markets and communication. Ask students to think about how this affects such things as family life, housing, the arts and human interaction. Encourage students to work systematically through the poem examining each stanza for information about the contrasting ways of life that Oodgeroo is describing.

INTERPRETING THE POEM
Encourage students to write about the injustices they see in the poem and to write about these discussions without bias or prejudice.

POLARISED DEBATE
After discussion of the issues in the poem, encourage students to brainstorm all the possible advantages and disadvantages of the technological age before they begin their debate.

STANZAS
Help students to trace the patterns within each stanza. You may wish to talk about how some stanzas set up contrasting patterns about then and now. Help students to hear the effects of the rhyming words in linking the ideas in the stanza.

POETIC IMAGES
Discuss the literal and metaphorical meanings of the images. You may need to provide some background information about aspects such as the abstract art and the ‘dog collar’ allusion to the clergy. Encourage students to explain the effects of these images in creating the meaning.

BE A POET
Encourage students to focus on the process of writing. Point out that they should use Oodgeroo’s poem as a model. Encourage students to think about aspects of contemporary society which are the antithesis of the values of traditional Aboriginal culture. Encourage students to explore how these ideas could be incorporated within a quatrain structure.

WRITE A NARRATIVE
Encourage students to write a narrative using the information gained from the discussion of the poem. Remind them of the various ways they can structure their narrative and encourage the use of character profiles to introduce interesting characters.

FOLLOW-UP/EXTENSION
• Have students research other Aboriginal writers.
• Create an anthology of Aboriginal poems about the invasion of Aboriginal lands.
• Have students write a poem, using quatrains, on a topic related to the issues in this poem.
Let’s talk about it!

‘No more boomerang’ is a poem written by Oodgeroo Noonuccal. Talk about the poem with a group of friends. What is the poem is about? Write your group’s ideas below.

Oodgeroo is presenting a view of traditional Aboriginal lifestyles. Research to find out as much as you can about how Aboriginal people lived before the white colonisation of Australia. Try to find out about social groupings, lifestyle and beliefs. Compare the features of the traditional Aboriginal way of life with that of the technologically based civilised way. How are family life, housing, the arts and human interaction affected?

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<th>Traditional Aboriginal</th>
<th>Contemporary ‘civilised’ white</th>
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Interpreting the poem

In contrasting the two lifestyles Oodgeroo makes it very clear to the reader which lifestyle she believes is preferable. Find words or lines in the poem that show this.

Polarised debate

Hold a polarised debate on the topic ‘The change to a technological age has brought about improvements in our daily lives.’ Before the debate, brainstorm:

Advantages of technology

Disadvantages of technology
Stanzas
Oodgeroo has used a simple stanza form to write her poem. Examine the patterns in each stanza. Which words rhyme? Why do you think the poet has rhymed words in this way? Discuss how the past establishes the contrasting aspects in each stanza.

Poetic images
There are some very powerful images in this poem. Some of these are listed below. Next to each one write an explanation of what you think Oodgeroo means by this image.

To hide whatsaname

Higher purchase

Work like a nigger

White man meal

Abstract picture

White hunt dollar

White fella witch-doctor/wear dog-collar

End everybody

NA 4.1 NSW 3.1 Communicates and interacts confidently for a range of purposes and a variety of audiences to express well developed, well organised ideas dealing with more challenging topics.

NA 4.6 NSW 3.7 Analyses and explains techniques to position the reader and to interpret experiences differently in texts.

NA 4.7 NSW 3.8 Identifies the structures of different texts and with assistance discusses the grammatical structures and features that shape readers’ and listeners’ understanding of texts.

NA 4.9 NSW 3.9 Writes well structured literary and factual texts using challenging topics, ideas and issues for a variety of purposes and audiences.
Be a poet

Oodgeroo Noonuccal achieved a great deal for her people before her death. Use the pattern established in the poem and write further stanzas that identify, from her point of view, other aspects of contemporary society and culture that are a strong contrast to the traditional Aboriginal way of life.

Work on scrap paper and publish your final version in the space below.
Write a narrative

Based on the issues that have become evident in ‘No More Boomerang’, write a narrative thinking about how you can vary the structure of the storyline, for example beginning with a complication or the resolution. Draft on scrap paper and publish below.