

Geography

# Willandra Lakes

## Mungo National Park



# Geography

**Lesson Focus:** Willandra Lakes - Mungo National Park

## Learning Intentions:

**WALT** - Understand what makes places around the world special.

**WALT** - Understand how places have changed over time.

**WALT** - Develop our research skills to answer specific questions.

## Instructions

1. Watch the video about the Willandra Lakes
2. Watch the animation about how Lake Mungo has changed over time.
3. Visit the website to learn more about Mungo National Park
4. Answer the questions in the assignment

## Expanding Vocabulary:

- **Semi arid** - A type of environment that receives a small amount of rain, enough for some plants and animals to survive.
- **World Heritage Site** - a natural or man-made site, area, or structure recognised as being of outstanding international importance and therefore as deserving special protection.
- **Artefact** - A tool or item that has been made by a human. These can give us a hint about what life was like in the past.

# Willandra Lakes

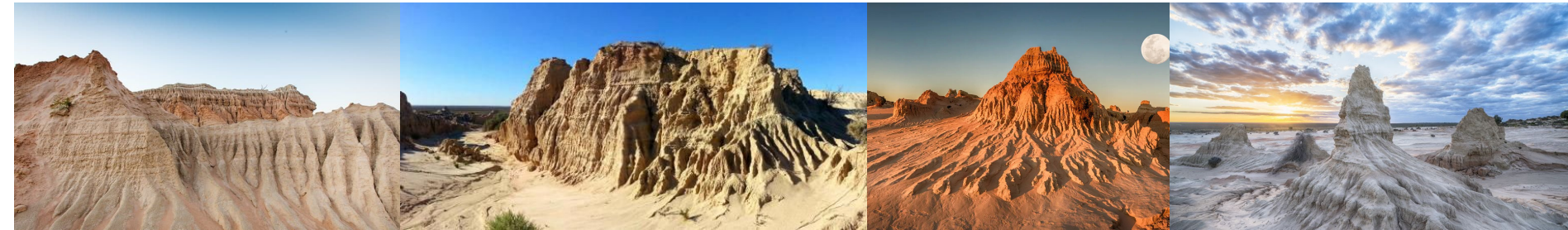
In the semi arid plains of south-west New South Wales lies one of the world's most important archaeological sites, and one of Australia's most interesting landscapes. The World Heritage listed Willandra Lakes Region is a string of dry lake beds. The most famous of these lakes is Lake Mungo, one of the four largest lakes.

The area has undergone immense change over thousands of years. When Aboriginal people first arrived over 45 000 years ago, their practice of farming by controlled burning of small parcels of land changed the types of plants and animals that lived there. Plants that easily survived regular burning, and the animals that ate those plant, thrived.



25 000 years ago, the lakes were part of a wetland area. Then the climate changed, and the area became semi-arid. Gradually the lakes dried up. Today all that can be seen is a string of dry lake beds covered in Mallee scrub. The lakes have been dry for around 19 000 years.

Over time, wind and water have carved the clay and compacted the sand of the old lake beds into fantastic shapes such as the Walls of China that can be found on the eastern shore of Lake Mungo. This band of compacted sand dunes is about 30 kilometres long.



## Aboriginal Occupation

The Willandra Lakes region supported a large population of Aboriginal people who lived on fish and shellfish from the lake and plants and animals from the surrounding scrub.

Many artefacts have been found at Mungo. The artefacts include hearth (earth ovens that used heated stones), stone tools, grindstones for making flour from grass seeds, and middens (piles of discarded shells). Some of the stone tools are made from stone that is only found 400 kilometres away. This is evidence of trade being carried out with Aboriginal people in other regions.

There is also the world's oldest evidence of burial by cremation (burning the body). Human remains found at the lake have been dated at 40 000 years old.

