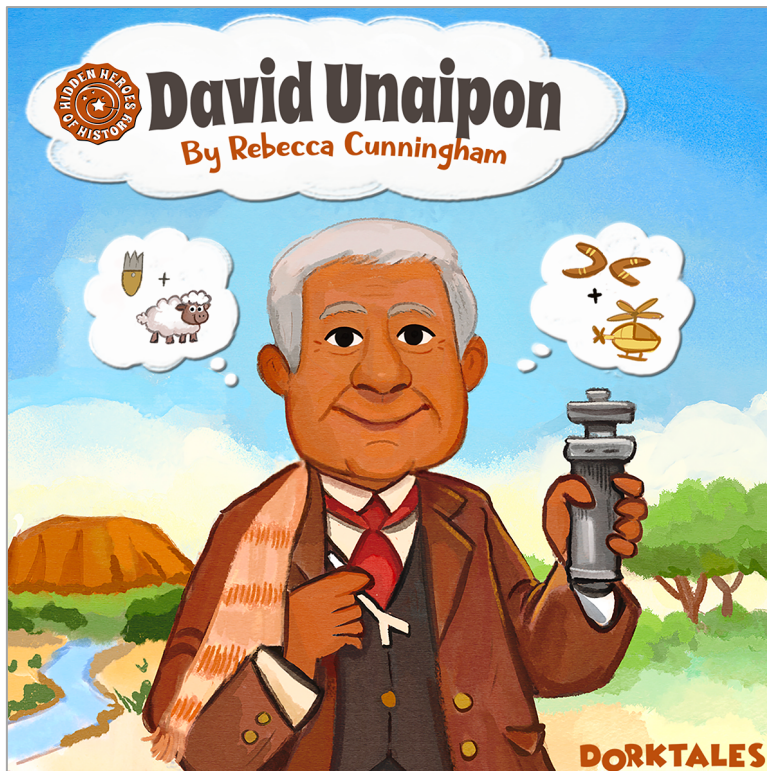


**DORKTALES**  
STORYTIME PODCAST



**DAVID UNAIPON**

**HIDDEN HERO OF HISTORY**

– ACTIVITY GUIDE & COLOR PAGES –

Listen to the episode: <https://jonincharacter.com/david-unaipon/>

David Unaipon was an author, poet, preacher and most famously, an inventor. He is known as Australia's Leonardo Da Vinci.

David Unaipon was born September 28, 1872 in Australia at a place called Point McLeay Mission. David and his family were Aboriginal Australians, the very first group of people to live in Australia. His ancestors had lived there for tens of thousands of years.

About 100 years before David was born, European settlers came to Australia and took over much of the land. Aboriginal Australians were often treated unfairly and were pressured to change their ways of life. David grew up during this challenging time.

David's father James changed his last name to Unaipon to make it easier for European settlers to pronounce. He also changed his religion to Christianity. He loved his new religion so much that he became a preacher, and he still loved his Aboriginal culture. He would tell bible stories and Aboriginal stories to children. He passed down a love of learning, storytelling, and Aboriginal culture to his nine children.

David, his fourth child, was curious, exceptionally smart, and loved to learn. He was obsessed with reading, especially books about science. He went to school on the Mission from ages 7 to 13.

When he turned 13, David was sent away to be a servant in another part of Australia called Adelaide. This unfairly took him away from school and family, but he was determined to never stop learning. He studied subjects like philosophy, literature, music, and science, and learned to speak four languages: Yaraldi, Latin, Greek, and English.

When David turned 18, he returned home. While there, he learned how to make boots and played the organ at the church. At the time, Aboriginal people were segregated, or separated, from white people so there weren't many job opportunities for David. Because of this, he moved back to Adelaide where he found a job at a boot maker's shop and continued to learn and explore new ideas.

He became very interested in how things work. He studied mechanics and experimented with ideas about motion and energy. One idea he explored was called perpetual motion, or the concept that a machine could run forever without stopping. Although every attempt at perpetual motion has never worked, David never stopped studying or trying to discover a solution his entire life.

David was a problem-solver and inventor. One of his most important inventions was an improved design for sheep shears. Before this, farmers used tools like large scissors that made the job slow and difficult. It took an entire day to shear 30 sheep. His design helped them shear sheep much faster, up to 300 sheep in a day, helping to create a very important industry for Australia.

His curiosity was endless. He imagined a flying machine like helicopters before they were even invented! He got this idea by combining science with his knowledge of a boomerang, a tool created by Aboriginal Australians that spins through the air and can return to the person who throws it. David used both his love of science and his deep understanding of Aboriginal culture in his inventions.

David was also a talented writer. He became the first Aboriginal writer to be published in newspapers. Inspired by the stories his father told him as a child, he traveled across Australia collecting traditional Aboriginal stories and turned them into a book called *Legendary Tales of the Australian Aborigines*. A man named William Ramsay Smith bought the rights to the book and published it under his own name. David did not get the credit he deserved at the time.

Even so, David continued to share his knowledge. He gave talks about science, literature, and Aboriginal culture. When he was 80 years old, he received a special award called the Coronation Medal from Queen Elizabeth II.

Today, David Unaipon is remembered as an important inventor, writer, and thinker. He is even featured on Australia's 50-dollar bill. His life reminds us that curiosity, a love of learning and perseverance can help change the world.

## - GLOSSARY -

### Leonardo da Vinci

A brilliant Italian artist and inventor from a time called the Renaissance. He is most famous for painting the *Mona Lisa*, but he also spent his time drawing secret plans for futuristic inventions like flying machines and helicopters.

### Aboriginal Australians

The first people to live in Australia, with cultures and traditions going back thousands of years.

### Settlers

People who move to a new place to live, often taking land that indigenous people already lived on.

### Indigenous

The very first or original people, animals or plants to live in a certain place.

### Preacher

A person who teaches others about religion and shares beliefs and stories.

### Culture

The traditions, stories, language, and ways of life of a group of people.

### Adelaide

A city in Australia where David lived and worked.

### Yaraldi (Ya-ral-dee)

The name of a group of Aboriginal Australian people and the special language they speak. They are from the lower Murray River and the Lakes region in South Australia, a beautiful area where the river meets the sea.

### Segregated

When groups of people are separated from white people and not treated equally.

### Discrimination

When someone is treated unfairly because of who they are.

### Mechanics

The study of how machines work and how things move.

### Perpetual Motion

The idea of a machine that could run forever without stopping.

### Inventor

A person who creates something new to solve a problem.

### Sheep Shears

A tool used to quickly and efficiently cut wool off sheep invented by David Unaipon.

### Boomerang

A curved tool created by Aboriginal Australians that spins through the air and can come back to you when thrown.

### Myths and Legends

Traditional stories passed down over time, often teaching lessons or explaining the world.

### Coronation Medal

A special silver medal given by the King or Queen of the United Kingdom. It is given to honor people who have done amazing things for their community. David Unaipon was awarded one in 1953 by Queen Elizabeth II to honor his many achievements.

## – GIVE IT SOME THOUGHT –

- What do you think makes David Unaipon a “Hidden Hero”?
- What is one thing you learned from his story that you want to remember?
- Why do you think David loved learning so much?
- Why do you think he kept studying even when he couldn’t go to school anymore?
- How did David use both science and his culture to come up with ideas?
- Why was it important that David stayed connected to his Aboriginal culture?
- How can learning about your own culture help you in life?

## – USE YOUR IMAGINATION –

Inspired by the episode on David Unaipon, use your imagination to think like an inventor. Use the worksheets to:

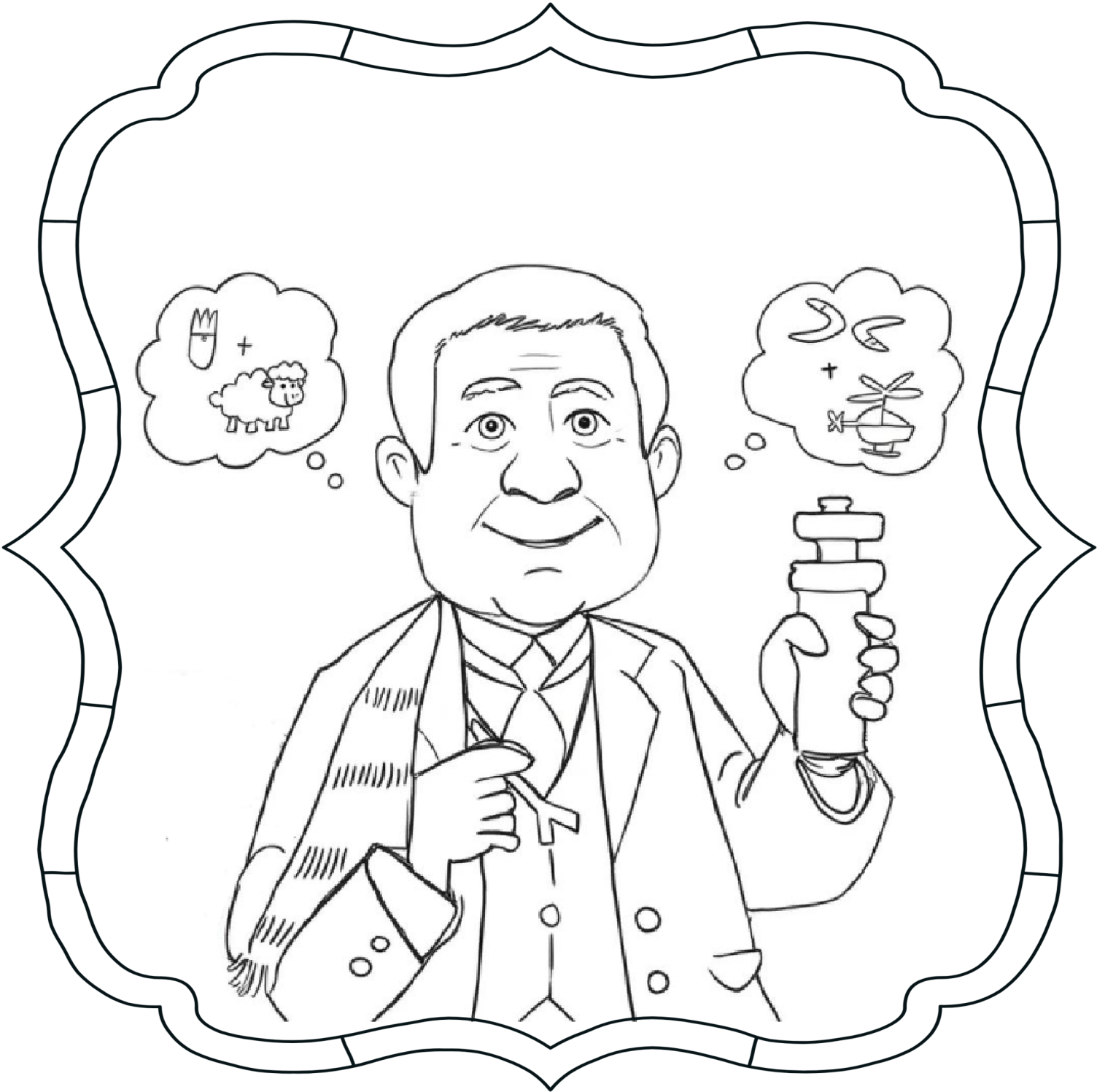
- Color the picture of David and his inventions.
- Draw yourself and in the thought bubble over your head, draw your invention idea.

In your journal or on a separate piece of paper, answer these questions:

- What is your invention called?
- If your invention could do one amazing thing, what would that be?
- How does it help people in your community?
- What inspired your idea?

# David Unaipon

David used his curiosity and imagination to invent new things that helped his community and changed the world. Color this page while you listen to his story.



# My Big Invention Idea!

Now it's your turn! Inspired by David Unaipon, imagine your own big idea. What problem does it solve? How does it help others?

