

ILLUSTRATING THE READING STANDARD

“Haere Mai!” *School Journal*, Part 2 Number 1, 2010

Noun frequency level: 8.5–9.5

By the end of year 4, students are required to locate and evaluate the information and ideas within a variety of fiction and non-fiction texts, drawing on the knowledge and skills described in the Literacy Learning Progressions, to meet the reading demands of the curriculum. The curriculum tasks will often involve the students in generating their own questions as well as answering questions from the teacher.

The students in a year 4 class, and their teacher, are planning a visit to the local marae as part of their social studies inquiry into social and cultural rights and responsibilities. The teacher wants the students to understand the roles of the people with different rights and responsibilities on the marae and the significance of the marae to the tangata whenua. This planned visit has connections to the key competency of participating and contributing.

“Haere Mai!” recounts the experience of a young girl who plays a key role in her class’s visit to her marae. It describes marae protocol

for key cultural activities. This factual recount includes a significant amount of te reo that could be unfamiliar to some students but is supported by the context, by the photographs, or by definitions in the glossary.

The teacher chose this text because it includes relevant abstract ideas (such as Paige’s sense of belonging as tangata whenua), which are accompanied by concrete examples of her role as host. To evaluate the ideas that are implicit in the text, students need to locate information and make inferences based on further information that is easy to find because it is nearby in the text and there is little competing information.

The following example illustrates aspects of the task and text and demonstrates how a student engages with both task and text to meet the reading demands of the curriculum. A number of such examples would be used to inform the overall teacher judgment for this student.

Paige feels excited, but she’s nervous, too ... Usually, Paige would be in the whareniui, helping to welcome the guests. Today she’s one of the manuhiri, bringing the kids from her school onto the marae.

The student identifies the idea that the role Paige is about to play, that of accompanying the manuhiri onto her marae, may be an unfamiliar role for her. He does this by making connections between Paige’s feelings and the use of the words “Usually” and “Today”. He recognises that with this role comes new responsibility.

Paige’s whānau have welcomed manuhiri to Whitiara Marae ... At sad times, like a tangi ... Paige’s whānau always gather at the marae.

The student uses context and prior knowledge to get an initial idea of the meaning of “whānau”, “marae”, and “tangi”. He uses the glossary for the meaning of “manuhiri”.

The student notices that the marae is used for different purposes (for example, tangi and weddings). He makes connections to his prior knowledge of places in his community where similar activities occur. He asks questions about what a marae is like, what it is for, and who uses it.



Before they step through the gate, the manuhiri all take off their hats. They walk close together, the girls at the front with Paige, the boys behind. Everyone is quiet. When they reach the whareniui, they take off their shoes.

With prompting, the student asks questions about what happens at a marae, such as “What do visitors do when they get to a marae?” and “How will we know what to do when we are marae visitors?” By making connections to his prior knowledge and by using information close by in the text (such as the visitors taking off hats and shoes and being quiet), he infers that it is the role of visitors to show respect to their hosts and to the special place in specific ways. By connecting the dialogue to how Paige is feeling, he also infers that it is the custom not to step on pillows or over people.

“Please don’t stand on the pillows, and be careful not to step over people.”
Paige is glad that her friends are showing respect inside the whareniui.

“In the old days, poi were used by men as well as women,” says Leah’s mum. “Warriors used poi to get ready for battle.”

The student identifies and summarises the range of activities undertaken during the visit and uses this information to evaluate ideas about the different roles and responsibilities of the visitors and hosts at the marae. With support, the student asks questions about what his own and others’ roles and responsibilities will be when the class visits the local marae.

“Fishing has always been important at Whitiara,” says Paige. “People used to go fishing here even before there was a marae!”

After locating information (such as information about the importance of carvings), the student makes connections within the text (to related information about the protocols, the roles, and the historic and current activities) which, taken together, indicate the significance of the marae to Paige (as tangata whenua) and how it connects the tangata whenua to their ancestors. With prompting, he asks more informed and specific questions about what his class might see when they visit the local marae, for example, “What stories might the carvings tell us about the history of our district?”

“These carvings tell the story of our people,” says Paige. “They remind us of our whakapapa.”