

Rahi and the Patupaiarehe

retold by Sue Gibbison

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Noun frequency level: 9–10
Year 4



Overview

Rahi-tutaka-hina lost his beautiful wife Ti Ara to the patupaiarehe (fairy people) long, long ago. In this retelling of the legend, we learn about Rahi's arduous journey to find Ti Ara and the challenges he faced on the way. Eventually, Ti Ara and Rahi are reunited and a peace is brokered with the patupaiarehe. The plot, characters, and motivations in the legend are complex, and students may need support to map out the events. After the dramatic events, a game is invented in which the

elements of Rahi's and Ti Ara's story are represented.

The legend gives opportunities to explore some key cultural customs, traditions, and values. It also serves the purpose of explaining the origins of the game Kī-o-Rahi, which is described in a following article in this *School Journal*.

Texts related
by theme

“How Fire Came to Sāmoa” SJ 2.2.02 | “The Wing of Māui's Moa” SJ 2.3.09 | “A Wife for Te Rā?” SJ 2.4.04

Text characteristics from the year 4 reading standard

a straightforward text structure, such as a structure that follows a recognisable and clear text form

some abstract ideas that are clearly supported by concrete examples in the text or easily linked to the students' prior knowledge

some compound and complex sentences, which may consist of two or three clauses

RAHI AND THE PATUPAIAREHE
retold by Sue Gibbison
based on a version by George Mori Barrett
(Waikato, Ngāiti Maniapoto, Ahiwa)

Once upon a time, there was a man called Rahi-tutaka-hina. He had a beautiful wife named Ti Ara-kura-pake-wai. One day, when Ti Ara was gathering plants in the forest, the patupaiarehe carried her off. They put a spell on the forest so that the trees sprouted thick vines. None of Ti Ara's tribe could find a way through the vines to follow her.

Rahi was determined to find Ti Ara. He built a huge manu tangata and loaded it with moa eggs packed in ki as food for his journey. Then he set off to find his wife.

Tāwhirimātea, god of the wind, sent a breeze that lifted Rahi high into the air. As it rose higher, the manu tangata tipped sideways, dropping some of the moa eggs into the nest of Namu, the giant hokioi. Namu's hungry chicks eagerly ate the eggs. Then the manu tangata set Rahi gently down in a clearing in the forest.

When Ti Ara was being dragged through the forest, she had bent back the leaves of the silver ferns. The leaves made a silver trail for Rahi to follow, and he set off after her.

some words and phrases that are ambiguous or unfamiliar to the students, the meaning of which is supported by the context or clarified by photographs, illustrations, diagrams, and/or written explanations

Reading standard: by the end of year 4

Possible curriculum contexts

SOCIAL SCIENCES

LEVEL 2 – Understand how cultural practices reflect and express people's customs, traditions, and values.

ENGLISH (Reading)

LEVEL 2 – Purposes and audiences: Show some understanding of how texts are shaped for different purposes and audiences.

ENGLISH (Writing)

LEVEL 2 – Language features: Use language features appropriately, showing some understanding of their effects.

Possible reading purposes

- To explore how people use stories or legends to pass on their values and customs
- To explore the legend behind the game kī-o-rahi
- To find out how Rahi found his wife.

Possible writing purposes

- To describe the origins of an existing practice, event, or physical feature
- To create a story to describe a particular cultural or family tradition
- To retell a known legend.

See [Instructional focus – Reading](#) for illustrations of some of these reading purposes.

See [Instructional focus – Writing](#) for illustrations of some of these writing purposes.

Text and language challenges

VOCABULARY:

- Possible unfamiliar words, including “spell”, “sprouted”, “vines”, “determined”, “journey”, “breeze”, “eagerly”, “clearing”, “trail”, “kidnappers”, “channel”, “plunged”, “heaved”, “managed”, “vents”, “erupted”, “represents”, “sheltered”
- The use of te reo Māori names and terms that are not in the glossary (“Rahi-tutaka-hina”, “Ti Ara-kura-pake-wai”, “Tāwhirimātea”, “Namu”, “tohunga”, “taniwha”, “Kī-o-Rahi”)
- Word family: kidnap, kidnapper, kidnapped.

Possible supporting strategies

Identify the vocabulary your students will need support with, charting some (for example, te reo Māori) if necessary.

Provide opportunities for students to encounter and practise key words, such as “spell”, “determined”, “kidnappers”, “tohunga”, “taniwha”, or the Māori names before, during, and after reading.

Some students may need support to use the short glossary: review this briefly before reading.

The English Language Learning Progressions: Introduction, pages 39–46, has some useful information about learning vocabulary.

SPECIFIC KNOWLEDGE REQUIRED:

- Knowledge of legends from New Zealand and other cultures, in particular those in which the hero has to overcome many trials to achieve his or her goal
- The concept of supernatural forces (spells, gods) and humans interacting, and the fight of good against evil
- The origins of some traditions and values
- Playing, watching, hearing, or reading about the game of Kī-o-Rahi.

Possible supporting strategies

Read together or listen to recorded Māori legends to familiarise students with the key ideas, characters, and concepts they contain.

Before or after reading, read the story on pages 28–32 together and discuss the origins of this and other games.

TEXT FEATURES AND STRUCTURE:

- Features of traditional legends and stories, for example, starting with “Once upon a time”
- Wide range of descriptive verbs, adverbs, and adjectives used for dramatic effect
- Language signalling the sequence of events, for example, “One day”, “Then”, “As it rose higher”, “When”
- Use of short sentences to build tension
- Personification of natural forces, inanimate objects, and non-human living things
- Large number of characters and events
- Glossary of five Māori terms.

Possible supporting strategies

Share experiences and knowledge about legends from Māori and other cultures. Prompt students to talk about the common features of many legends. Chart these features on a graphic organiser. They can also relate these to superhero stories they've read or seen in movies. Focus on the “larger than life” aspect of the characters and the language used to express this. In your discussion, include a range of past verb forms and sequence language. Ensure students who need support with this language have repeated opportunities to encounter and practise it within meaningful contexts.

The number of characters and events in this story may be confusing for some students. If necessary, draw up a “cast list” and a flow chart of events beforehand, and refer to this as you support students during reading.

You could also use a flow chart with spaces to fill in to provide scaffolding for students who need it – creating lots of gaps for those who can manage and fewer for those who may struggle.

Instructional focus – Reading

English (Level 2, purposes and audiences – Show some understanding of how texts are shaped for different purposes and audiences.)

Text excerpts from “Rahi and the Patupaiarehe”

Students (what they might do)

Teacher (possible deliberate acts of teaching)

Rahi and the Patupaiarehe retold by Sue Gibbison based on a version by George Horii Barrett (Waikato, Ngāti Maniapoto, Atiawa)

Students ask and answer questions to understand that this is an old story that has been handed down. Using what they know about oral storytelling, and the word “version”, they infer that there may be differences in the way the story can be told.

PROMPT students to read the title and author lines carefully and to think about what we learn before we read the story.

- What do these words imply: “retold”, “based on”, “version”?
- What does the list of tribes or iwi mean? How might they be relevant to the story?
- Why do you think Sue Gibbison wanted to retell the legend?

The patupaiarehe knew that Rahi was chasing them. Their tohunga cast more spells.

The students make connections between Rahi and what they know about legends and heroes. They use the context and the language to infer that Rahi will have to face many difficult challenges.

MODEL

- I’ve read and heard a lot of legends and hero stories. I wonder why the heroes of these stories always have a really hard time. What might be the purpose of this? Let’s read on and see if we can work it out.

Rahi’s tribe and the patupaiarehe gathered on the shores of the lake that had formed around the rock where Rahi had been trapped. They agreed to make peace.

The students draw on what they know about legends, on the text, and on their own understanding of story themes to infer that Rahi’s heroic efforts provide a lesson about the value of peace over war. Students evaluate the actions in the text and make connections with other stories they have read to conclude that legends are a way of passing on the values of a culture.

ASK QUESTIONS to help students identify the purpose and possible audiences for this story.

- Why do you think the patupaiarehe who kidnapped Ti Ara wanted to make peace? How did Rahi’s actions influence them?
- Who might have told this legend over the years? Who would have been the audience?
- What do you think the teller (or writer) of this story wants to tell the audience? What is the theme or message of the legend?

Some students may need support to understand the multi-clause sentence and the range of verb forms in the example. Break the sentence into clauses and ask questions to establish who did what, where, and when.

The game was carried in the fog and swept on the wind. In time, it reached all of Aotearoa.

The students interpret the figurative language (metaphor) and use what they know about how ideas can spread to infer that the game has been spread far and wide all around Aotearoa New Zealand. The metaphor fits well with the supernatural nature of the legend.

ASK QUESTIONS to help students work out the meaning of the metaphor.

- How do ideas spread? For example, how do you know when marbles are out and skipping is in?
- Is the fog metaphor a good way to describe the spread of an idea? Why do you think that? Do you know any other metaphors in English or in other languages that express this idea?

GIVE FEEDBACK

- This story has lots of characters and events. I noticed that some of you made notes to help you keep track. Good thinking!
- You made connections between modern superheroes and Rahi. Making connections to something we know is an excellent way to understand a text.

METACOGNITION

ASK QUESTIONS and prompt to develop students’ awareness of the strategies they have used as they read and responded to the text.

- Which elements of legends did you recognise in this story? How could you use what you knew about legends to understand the theme or message in this story?
- Why do you think Namu the hokioi helped Rahi? What strategies did you use to work that out?
- Rahi’s second (successful) journey to find Ti Ara seemed to be a lot easier. Why do you think the first journey is the one that became a legend? How would that fit with the original storyteller’s purpose?

Reading standard: by the end of year 4

The Literacy Learning Progressions

Assessment Resource Banks

Instructional focus – Writing

English (Level 2, language features – Use language features appropriately, showing some understanding of their effects.)

Text excerpts from “Rahi and the Patupaiarehe”

As it rose higher, the manu tangata tipped sideways, dropping some of the moa eggs into the nest of Namu, the giant hokioi. Namu’s hungry chicks eagerly ate the eggs. Then the manu tangata set Rahi gently down in a clearing in the forest.

Their tohunga cast more spells. First a fiery sun burned the forest trees. Then a strong wind blew. The land became a desert of sand.

Examples of text characteristics

DESCRIPTIVE LANGUAGE

Verbs – “gathering”, “carried”, “sprouted”, “determined”, “loaded”, “tipped”, “dragged”, “burned”, “circled”, “plunged”, “froze”, “heaved”, “attacked”, “destroyed”, “gathered”, “forced”, “erupted”, “thrown”

Adverbs – “sideways”, “eagerly”, “gently”, “Gradually”

Adjectives – “fiery”, “bare”, “cool”, “enormous”

SENTENCES

Short sentences can help build tension in a story. They keep the reader hooked in, wanting to find out what happens next. The use of connecting words (“First”, “Then”) gives a sense of pace.

Teacher (possible deliberate acts of teaching)

EXPLAIN the use of descriptive language.

- Readers get a much stronger sense of characters, places, and actions if the author uses descriptive language. The language helps the reader visualise what’s happening.

MODEL

Remove the adjectives and adverbs in some sentences from the story, for example, “Namu’s chicks ate the eggs”, and discuss the impact they have on the reader’s ability to visualise how the chicks ate the eggs.

If students need support to come up with descriptive language, list a few descriptive words that relate to their topic. Discuss what difference they would make to the writing. Allow time for exploring options orally before settling on choices.

PROMPT the students to reread parts of their writing and focus on the kinds of sentences they’ve used.

- Do some sentences wander for too long? Will they have the impact you want on the reader?
- Would the writing have a better sense of pace if you split some sentences? Remember to check the sentences still make sense.

Students using word processing can use the track changes tool as they try out different ways to shape their sentences. They can save each version as a record and ask others to make comments or suggestions using the same tool.

GIVE FEEDBACK

- You’re using more descriptive language in your writing now, and it’s become more interesting.
- Let’s read the before and after versions and discuss the changes you made.
- I can tell you’ve learned a lot about adding tension from the stories we’ve read: it shows in your writing. Your stories are more exciting.

METACOGNITION

ASK QUESTIONS to help the students think more deeply about the strategies they use to convey ideas in their writing.

- Why did you choose these words to describe the action? How will they help the reader get a sense of the drama?
- What strategies and tools do you use when you’re revising? Can you explain what you’re thinking when you make changes?
- Can you describe how your character shows he is ...?
- Think about what you want to say in your language. How would you say that in English?