

The Journey

as told to Kiwa Hammond by Tumanako Taurima

School Journal
Part 3 Number 3 2010
Noun frequency level: 9.5–10.5
Years 5–6



Overview

This retelling of a true story comes from a dark time in Rēkohu's history. That time is described briefly on page 5 of this issue. Moriori children who survived the slaughter of 1835 were sent off in a waka pahī to an uncertain destination. Retold in a tense, third-person narrative, the story is seen through the eyes of a small boy who later became a chief in the Wairoa district of New Zealand. There are opportunities for students to make connections with the two previous articles in this Journal, as well as with their own knowledge of

modern-day refugees. Although there are obvious links to the non-fiction articles, this story can also be appreciated as a well-crafted and moving short story.

You will need to be aware of, and sensitive to, students' experiences of war. Some refugee students may have had recent experiences of war that are traumatic and that need to be addressed outside the classroom.

Journals related by theme

School Journal Part 2 Number 2, 2010

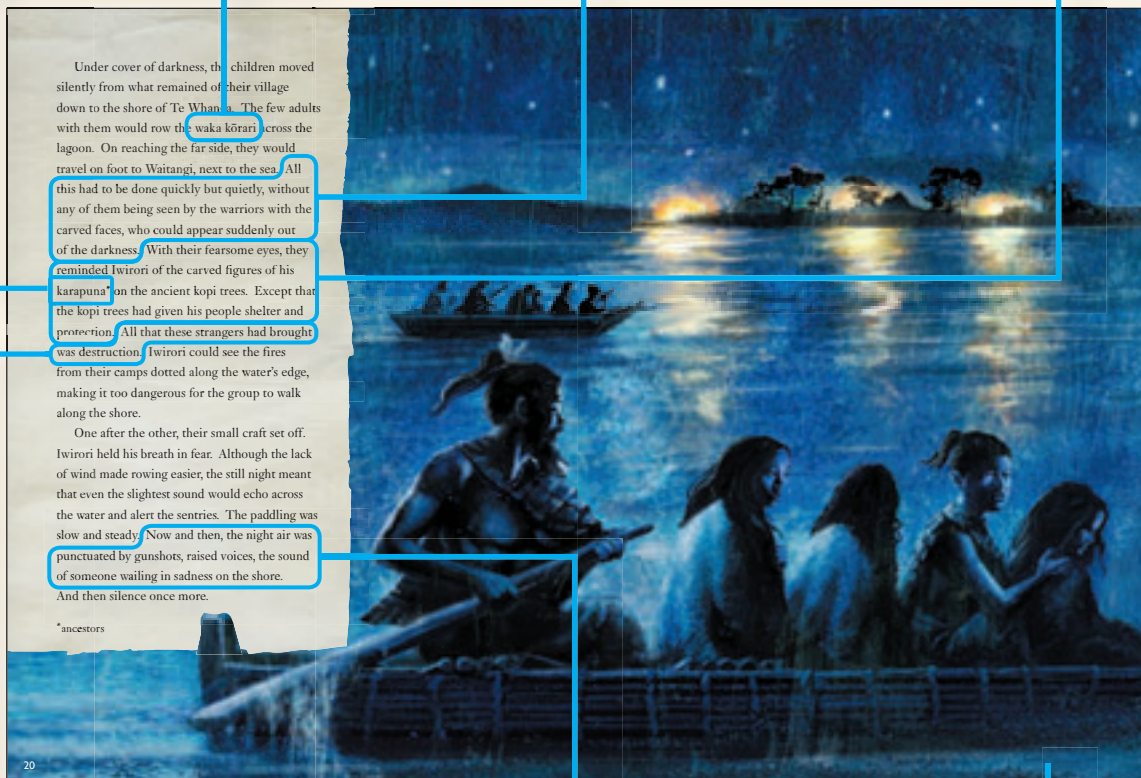
| *School Journal* Part 4 Number 3, 2010

Text characteristics from the year 5 and 6 reading standards

a significant amount of vocabulary that is unfamiliar to the students (including academic and content-specific words and phrases), which is generally explained in the text by words or illustrations

some ideas and information that are conveyed indirectly and require students to infer by drawing on several related pieces of information in the text

sentences that vary in length and in structure (for example, sentences that begin in different ways and different kinds of complex sentences with a number of subordinate clauses)



abstract ideas, in greater numbers than in texts at earlier levels, accompanied by concrete examples in the text that help support the students' understanding

figurative and/or ambiguous language that the context helps students to understand

illustrations, photographs, text boxes, diagrams, maps, charts, and graphs that clarify or extend the text and may require some interpretation

Reading standards: by the end of years 5 and 6

Possible curriculum contexts

ENGLISH (Reading)

LEVEL 3 – Purposes and audiences: Show a developing understanding of how texts are shaped for different purposes and audiences.

ENGLISH (Writing)

LEVEL 3 – Language features: Use language features appropriately, showing a developing understanding of their effects.

SOCIAL SCIENCES

LEVEL 3 – Understand how people remember and record the past in different ways.

Possible reading purposes

- To learn a piece of Rēkohu's history as told through a family story passed down through generations
- To explore a story of escape, fear, and hope
- To explore a story about being a refugee
- To explore the author's writing style and its impact on a reader.

Possible writing purposes

- To write a family or cultural story from the past
- To retell a true story
- To recount a scary experience
- To describe a setting, a journey, or a place (as part of another story).

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 and concepts, including “survivors”, “faint chance of escape”, “sentries”, “punctuated”, “half-light”, “emerging dawn”, “devoured”, “lagoon”, “ventured”, “outlying”, “contend”, “eastern horizon”, “implore”, “lowered their gaze”, “buffeted”, “carved warriors”, “ancient homeland”, “vessel”
- The use of figurative language, including “under cover of darkness”, “camps dotted along”, “night air was punctuated by gunshots”, “dawn would soon break”, “the open ocean”
- The use of te reo Māori and Māori, including “waka kōrari”, “karapuna”, “waka pahi”, “hākoakoa”, “tāiko”, “titi”, “hopo”, “Hhiawaiki”, “Nō hea koutou?”.

Possible supporting strategies

Introduce any unfamiliar words in te reo Māori or Moriori before reading. It may be useful to list these if students have not read the previous articles.

The vocabulary is not difficult for most year 5 and 6 students, but be aware of any students who may need support with specific terms or expressions.

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

SPECIFIC KNOWLEDGE REQUIRED:

- The cultural and historical background to the story
- Knowledge of people fleeing their homes, for example, refugees from wars
- Narrative structure.

Possible supporting strategies

“A Short History of Rēkohu” in this Journal provides the background to the events of this story. “Where No Boat Could Live” provides background to the waka used in the story. If students have not read these articles, some of the ideas may be difficult for them to understand.

Review the history of Rēkohu briefly, with a focus on the arrival of Ngāti Mutunga and Ngāti Tama in the early 1830s (page 5 of this Journal). Help students make connections with modern-day conflicts that have caused people to flee their homelands.

TEXT FEATURES AND STRUCTURE:

- Third-person narrative, “as told to”
- True story with links to other articles in this issue
- Use of short sentences to build tension
- Extensive use of adverbial phrases and clauses
- Passive verb forms, for example, “Not a word was said by anyone”, “All this had to be done quickly”, “without any of them being seen by the warriors”, “was punctuated by gunshots”, “was buffeted by wind and waves”, “was adopted by Wiremu Taitau”, “has been written down and shared”
- A wide variety of past-tense verb forms
- Varied sentence structures that include the use of lists, dashes, and ellipses
- The need to infer meaning through the slow unfolding of the story
- Background information at the end of the story.

Possible supporting strategies

Some students may need support to read complicated sentences, for example, those that start with adverbial clauses or phrases and sentences that use lists, dashes, or ellipses. If necessary, support students with identifying when different events occur. Note that a lot of the first page refers to events before this story, which is indicated by the use of the past perfect (“had seen”, “had lost”). Choose parts of the text and support them to identify what happens and when it happens. Model using context clues, time signals, and verb forms.

Some students may find the passive verb forms difficult. Focus on meaning, identifying the emphasis of the sentence and who or what does the action. Establish that the doer of the action comes after the verb (and after “by”) because the doer is either unimportant or needs special emphasis. The doer may be left out if it is unimportant, obvious, or unknown (“all this had to be done quickly”, “Iwirori's story has been written down and shared”). With the class, discuss examples in the text and why the passive is used in each case. You could experiment with changing passive into active verbs to show how the emphasis of a clause changes.

Instructional focus – Reading

English (Level 3 – Purposes and audiences: Show a developing understanding of how texts are shaped for different purposes and audiences.)

Text excerpts from “The Journey”

Students (what they might do)

Teacher (possible deliberate acts of teaching)

It was time to go. Not a word was said by anyone, not even the little ones. They understood why it was so important to be quiet. Their young eyes had seen many terrible things. They had lost parents, brothers, sisters, cousins, aunts, and uncles – but did not understand why.

Students ask and answer questions (such as: Who are these people? Where are they? What do they mean by “lost”?) as they search for clues to work out what is happening. They infer the sense of danger from the short, dramatic sentences, using what they know of dangerous situations where total quiet is essential. They consider the collocation “Their young eyes” and infer that the writer is emphasising their youth and innocence.

One after the other, their small craft set off. Iwirori held his breath in fear. Although the lack of wind made rowing easier, the still night meant that even the slightest sound would echo across the water and alert the sentries. The paddling was slow and steady. Now and then, the night air was punctuated by gunshots, raised voices, the sound of someone wailing in sadness on the shore. And then silence once more.

Students visualise the silence and sense of fear. They make connections with what they know about rowing or being on water at night. They evaluate and integrate information about the waka journey (for example, the sense of fear, the alertness of the sentries, the use of the word “punctuated”, and the slow, silent paddling) to understand the danger the people were in. Students make connections with what they have already learned to understand the sounds that are described (for example, connecting “wailing in sadness” with the losses that survivors have experienced).

One day, a new land appeared, long and strange on the horizon. Was this the ancient homeland of Hhiawaiki? Or was this the place that some called Te Ika-a-Māui? Iwirori heard one of the paddlers call it Te Māhia.

Students integrate what they know about Māori migration and New Zealand to infer that this is the Māhia area of the North Island.

Kiwa was first told this story by Tumanako Taurima (one of his kuia), and in turn, he passed it on to his own children. However, this is the first time the story of Iwirori has been written down and shared outside the family.

Students make connections between the text and their own experience of stories passed on within a family or culture. They make inferences about why Kiwa is sharing the story now.

MODEL your thinking to support students to identify aspects of the writer’s style.

- When I read this text, I get a real sense of danger. If I look closely, I can see that it is the short sentences that create these feelings. I also begin to ask myself questions, such as: What effect is the writer trying to achieve by starting the story like this?
- The writer also says, “Their young eyes had seen many terrible things.” From these words, I suspect the children have witnessed people being killed.

Students may need more support with distinguishing the action from the emotion of the story. You could ask them to scan some pages looking for words that describe movement, for example, “moved silently”, “row the waka kōrari”, “travel on foot”, “quickly but quietly”, “appear suddenly”. Discuss the meaning of these terms and what they tell the reader.

EXPLAIN that writers often compress information for effect. Point out the way the writer lists the sounds.

- The writer uses “punctuated”. What does this usually mean? What does it mean here?
- What does the writer convey in the list of sounds?
- What is the effect of the last sentence?
- What connections can you make to things you know or have heard about, for example, fishing in a boat at night or stories of people escaping from danger?

PROMPT students to integrate what they know about Māori migration and New Zealand geography to work out where the waka has arrived.

- What clues does the writer give you?
- What do you already know that helps you to use the clues?
- Why do you think the writer uses questions? Whose voice are we hearing?

ASK QUESTIONS

- What kinds of stories are handed down in your family or culture?
- Who decides which stories are passed down?
- Why do you think Kiwa Hammond is sharing this story now?

For students who share another culture and language, give them time to talk about their stories in their language and then share (in English) with the rest of the class. If some students have traumatic experiences of conflict, think about the kinds of emotional support they may need or ways they may want to share their stories (for example, by writing them down and having someone else read them).

GIVE FEEDBACK

- I noticed the way you made connections between the survivors in the story and the boat people you’ve read about in the news. That’s helped you to understand the story better.
- I noticed how you were able to integrate several pieces of information to understand what was happening in the story. That is a good strategy for helping you to understand more complex texts.

METACOGNITION

ASK QUESTIONS to make the students’ strategies explicit for them.

- What did you do to infer what the writer meant by ...?
- How did knowing the background help you? Tell your neighbour why.
- If you had to evaluate the decision to send the children across the sea, what facts would influence your ideas?

Reading standards: by the end of years 5 and 6

The Literacy Learning Progressions

Assessment Resource Banks

Instructional focus – Writing

English (Level 3 – Language features: Use language features appropriately, showing a developing understanding of their effects.)

Text excerpts from “The Journey”

Kiwa Hammond is a direct descendant of Karauria Te Iwirori. The story of Iwirori has long been a part of the oral storytelling tradition of his whānau.

On reaching the far side, they would travel on foot to Waitangi, next to the sea.

One day, a new land appeared, long and strange on the horizon. Was this the ancient homeland of Hhiawaiki? Or was this the place that some called Te Ika-a-Māui?

“Nō hea koutou?” he called out.

“Rēkohu,” came the reply.

The man showed a sign of recognition. He opened his arms wide.

“Haere mai,” he called.

Examples of text characteristics

RETELLING A TRUE STORY

Many cultures have a tradition of passing on stories through generations.

The original audiences would usually be close family, whānau, or clan members. Stories may vary over time and between different tellers. Oral stories can be written down in many different ways, for example, as historical fiction.

ADVERBIAL PHRASES

These are phrases that act like adverbs, telling us when, how, why, or where. Writers often put an adverbial phrase or clause at the start of a sentence for impact.

VERB FORMS

Present participle – “reaching”

Modal verb – “would”

Modal verbs act as auxiliaries, in a similar way to the verbs “have” and “be”.

In this context, “would” indicates intention or probability. It modifies the verb “travel”.

ASKING QUESTIONS

Questions can be used to show what a character is thinking. They can convey a character’s uncertainty and give the reader clues about events, people, or places.

DIALOGUE

Used in a true story, the dialogue may be exactly what people said or what they might have said.

Dialogue helps move a story along and gives insights into a person’s character.

METACOGNITION

ASK QUESTIONS to encourage the students to think more deeply about their writing.

- How did having an audience in mind affect how you wrote?
- What other options did you consider before you chose to retell the story in this way? Why did you make this choice?
- How did your writing change after you received feedback?
- What have you learned about how to revise your writing for greater impact?

Teacher

(possible deliberate acts of teaching)

ASK STUDENTS questions to help them plan for writing.

- Why do people retell true stories from the past?
- How might you put a true story into writing? What are the advantages or disadvantages of each option?
- How do your purpose and audience affect the way you write a true story?

PROMPT students to consider the language features they will use in their writing. Some students will need more support than others, and by year 6, most students should be able to independently choose and use effective language features for their writing. Focus on the finer points of language and encourage students to provide each other with constructive feedback during the writing process.

For students who need more support with their writing in English, choose one specific focus, for example, using adverbial phrases and putting them first for effect, or using passive forms. Give the students many examples and opportunities to practise before they start writing.

MODEL rewriting this sentence using simpler adverbial and verb forms.

- If I rewrite the sentence as, “When they got to the far side, they walked to Waitangi”, it changes the impact.
- I wonder what effect the writer achieves by writing it the way he did?

PROMPT students to reread their writing and consider where it could be expressed more effectively.

- Remember your audience and your purpose: what do you want the audience to think or feel?
- What change could you make to help your audience think or feel this?
- Are there places where asking a question will clarify a character’s thinking or engage the audience more effectively?

ASK QUESTIONS

- Will you be writing the exact words people said?
- How are you using dialogue?
- What impact do you want it to have?
- What do you want the audience to know, to think, or to feel?

GIVE FEEDBACK

- How will the changes you’ve made to this sentence change the impact on your audience?
- Your story is very dramatic and powerful – until the last part. Would putting some into dialogue make it stronger?

Writing standards: by the end of years 5 and 6

The Literacy Learning Progressions