



Overview

Ariana Tikao tells the true story of her Uncle Tony's exploits in the Māori Battalion during the Second World War. This story of his war experiences gives a fascinating insight into the kind of person her uncle was, the qualities that led to him being awarded the Military Cross, and the life of a soldier in the Second World War. The story is told as a recount, using excerpts from his diary and historical photographs. It also includes a brief description of the players and events in the Second World War. Rich illustrations depict life in the desert and some dramatic moments on the battlefield.

Students whose whānau or tīpuna (ancestors) were part of the Māori Battalion will be able to make personal connections with the story. The text also provides opportunities for students to connect with their cultural knowledge of whakapapa and the values of service for others. The dramatic aspects of the story will appeal particularly to Māori boys and may encourage them to seek out other stories of the Māori Battalion and its contribution during the Second World War.

Be sensitive to the different nationalities in your class and to students who have recent experience of war.

Texts related by theme

The White Mouse SJSL 2012 | "Boy Soldiers" SJ 4.3.08 | "Spitfires from Tonga" SJ 3.1.09

Text characteristics from the year 7 reading standard

adverbial clauses or connectives that require students to make links across the whole text

non-continuous text structures and mixed text types

words and phrases with multiple meanings that require students to know and use effective word-solving strategies to retain their focus on meaning

JOINING THE BATTALION

Like most of the men who **volunteered** to join the Māori Battalion, Tony had never been in the army before. After signing up, he completed his basic soldier training. The battalion then travelled to England by boat. It was a very long and boring trip. Once there, he and his company completed specialised training before moving on to Egypt in North Africa.

THE SECOND WORLD WAR

The Second World War began in 1939 when Germany, led by **Adolf Hitler** and his Nazi Party, **invaded and occupied** Poland. When this happened, France and Britain **declared war** against Germany. Many other countries fought alongside Britain and France during the war. They included New Zealand, Australia, Canada, and the United States. These countries were called the **Allies**. Italy supported Germany in the war, and they were called the Axis. The war was fought in many countries, including Egypt, Libya, and Tunisia in North Africa.

The Second World War ended in May 1945. It lasted for six years, and more than 60 million people died.

THE 28TH MĀORI BATTALION

The 28th Māori Battalion was part of the group of soldiers that New Zealand sent overseas to fight in the Second World War. The battalion was made up of five companies, which fought in Greece and Crete, in North Africa, and in Italy. Six hundred and forty-nine men were killed in action or died on active service. The 28th Māori Battalion was one of the most celebrated and decorated units in the history of the New Zealand armed forces.

EUROPE AND NORTH AFRICA, 1942

- Allied countries and countries occupied by the Allies
- Neutral countries
- Countries occupied by Nazi Germany

sentences that vary in length, including long, complex sentences that contain a lot of information

academic and content-specific vocabulary

illustrations, photographs, text boxes, diagrams, maps, charts, and graphs, containing main ideas that relate to the text's content

Possible curriculum contexts

SOCIAL SCIENCES (Social studies)

Level 4: Understand how people participate individually and collectively in response to community challenges.

ENGLISH (Reading)

Level 4: Purposes and audiences – Show an increasing understanding of how texts are shaped for different purposes and audiences.

Possible reading purposes

- To learn how the author found out about her uncle's wartime experiences
- To read about the life of a soldier in the Māori Battalion during the Second World War
- To examine how people responded to challenges during the Second World War
- To consider what is meant by bravery and heroism in wartime.

Page 4 has suggestions for writing instruction.

For more support and suggestions for accelerating students' writing, see Teaching Writing in Years 7–8 on the Writing Hub.



The Writing Hub

Text and language challenges

VOCABULARY:

- Possibly unfamiliar words and phrases, including “diary”, “choir”, “descent”, “ancestor”, “tribal”, “on behalf of”, “signing up”, “specialised”, “companies”, “killed in action”, “active service”, “invaded”, “declared war”, “Allies”, “Axis”, “blend in”, “access”, “transferred”, “officers”, “nickname”, “fit in”, “overheard”, “strode”, “missions”, “locate”, “gloom”, “stench”, “wafted”, “Amazingly”, “first light”, “searchlight”, “enemy lines”, “deafening”, “shelling”, “advance”, “turning point”, “major health risk”, “diseases”, “true heroes”, “child’s play”, “conflict”, “commander”, “machine-gun burst”, “worked up”, “fury”, “grenades”, “captain”, “Expeditionary Force”, “Citation”, “inflicted”, “heavy casualties”, “high qualities of leadership”, “sector”, “initiative”, “participation”, “heal”, “pride”, “arch”, “graced”, “presence”, “district welfare officer”, “forestry trainees”, “account”, “deeds”, “fellow soldiers”
- The Māori names and terms
- Words associated with war, including the different kinds of guns such as “artillery”, “machine-gun”, “Bren-gun”
- The words (in bold) that are explained in the glossary.

Possible supporting strategies

Identify vocabulary, including military terms, that may be challenging for students. Use strategies to support them, such as:

- providing opportunities for students to meet the vocabulary through oral language before reading
- reviewing how to use a glossary
- discussing, explaining, and listing words associated with the life of a soldier
- supplying or eliciting words that are in the story.

If you think a lot of the vocabulary will be unfamiliar to the students, allocate time to explore the context and words over more than one session before reading. Identify new vocabulary that students should prioritise, selecting words that they are likely to encounter again. Have the students record this vocabulary and plan for them to use the words in a range of contexts. *The English Language Learning Progressions: Introduction*, pages 39–46, has some useful information about learning vocabulary.

Use the cover and the title page as prompts. Give some pairs of students copies of the cover and other pairs copies of the title page. Have them discuss, label, and make notes on what they see and any predictions about the broader context.

SPECIFIC KNOWLEDGE REQUIRED:

- Knowledge of the Second World War: who it was between, where it was fought, and New Zealand's involvement in it
- Knowledge of the Māori Battalion and their role in the Second World War
- Knowledge of the concepts of whānau and whakapapa
- Knowledge of the way stories can be told using several sources of information
- Knowledge of a diary: what it is and why a person might keep one.

Possible supporting strategies

Ask students if there is any knowledge in their family of the Second World War or the Māori Battalion. The Māori Battalion website (www.28maoribattalion.org.nz) has lots of videos, activities, fact sheets, and audio recordings. During reading, check that students have sufficient understanding of the context to gain meaning from the text. If in doubt, review what they know and fill essential gaps, using information from the story and other resources.

Students who have knowledge of the cultural concepts and phrases may be prepared to share this knowledge with the group. For example, the concepts of whānau, whakapapa, holding on to tribal lands, and serving the people.

Explain what a diary is. If possible, show some examples. Students need to understand that in earlier times, and especially during wartimes, people did not have email, Facebook, or blogs as means of staying in contact or recording their thoughts.

TEXT FEATURES AND STRUCTURE:

- The first-person recount
- The explanations of the Second World War, the 28th Māori Battalion, the North African campaign, and the battle of El Alamein
- A map of the war areas in Europe and Africa in 1942
- The descriptions of specific battles
- The Military Cross citation
- The quotes in green italic font
- The historical photos.

Possible supporting strategies

Adjust the scaffolding according to students' needs. Many may need support to identify the various sections and to notice that some parts are recounted by the author in her own “voice” and other parts provide additional information in a neutral voice.

Review with students the different ways a factual story can be told. Remind them of the difference between first and third person writing. During this discussion, feed-in, practise, and recycle key vocabulary. As you support vocabulary, structures, and concepts before reading, find out what students know, make links to their prior knowledge, and build a shared knowledge of the topic and language that will support them with reading the text.



Sounds and Words

Instructional focus – Reading

Social Sciences (Social studies, level 4: Understand how people participate individually and collectively in response to community challenges.)

English (Level 4 – Purposes and audiences: Show an increasing understanding of how texts are shaped for different purposes and audiences.)

Text excerpts from *The Desert Kaupoi*

Tony's full name was John Piuraki Tikao-Barrett. He was my dad's cousin and of Ngāi Tahu descent. Tony was named after our ancestor Piuraki. According to our whānau, Piuraki was so strong he could hold the weight of three men on each of his arms. Piuraki fought hard to keep hold of our tribal lands. He signed the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840 on behalf of our people. In 1940, his descendant Tony joined D Company of the Māori Battalion to fight on behalf of all New Zealanders.

DEMANDS OF THE TEXT

Students need to:

- identify the narrator
- understand the vocabulary and use the glossary
- draw on their knowledge of the naming of a person after an ancestor
- draw on their knowledge of legends to understand the reputation of Piuraki
- draw on their knowledge of New Zealand history to understand Piuraki's actions and his role in the Treaty of Waitangi
- link this extract with the opening section of the text to identify Tony as the writer's uncle
- understand the abstract concept of acting "on behalf of" others and make connections between Piuraki's actions and Tony's actions
- keep track of the different times, people, and places in this section.

Students

(what to prompt, support, and look for as the students are reading)

The students make connections between the text and their knowledge of whakapapa and Māori stories to infer that strength and the will to fight for their rights are noticeable characteristics in this whānau.

The students make connections between the words "ancestor" and "descendant" to understand the connections between members of the whānau. They cross-check to identify the place of the writer in the same whānau. They integrate this knowledge with other information to understand that "our lands" and "our people" refer to the land and people of Ngāi Tahu.

The students make connections within the extract to identify the similarities between Tony and Piuraki. They ask questions and make connections with their knowledge of behaviour to interpret the two uses of the expression "on behalf of".

Teacher

(possible deliberate acts of teaching)

The students need to have some prior knowledge of families and whānau and the handing down of names and characteristics to make connections between the characters and their actions. Chart the genealogy as described so far to show the relationship between the writer, Uncle Tony, and Piuraki.

PROMPT the students to use specific strategies to work out vocabulary, implications, and overall meaning.

- Whose voice is telling this story? What are the relationships between the writer, Piuraki, and Tony?
- Why does the writer tell us about the family story? Is it important?
- What's the difference between an "ancestor" and a "descendant"? Can a person be both? Give an example from the story and one from your own whānau or family.
- Notice the use of "our". What do "our lands" and "our people" mean? Who does "our" refer to? How did you work that out?
- What does "on behalf of" mean? Why do you think Piuraki signed the Treaty "on behalf of our people" and Tony went to war "on behalf of all New Zealanders"? What point is the writer making here?

GIVE FEEDBACK

- I noticed you checked back to identify the relationships. That helped you work out where Piuraki fitted in. Understanding who's who in any story is important for keeping track of actions, relationships, and events.
- Thinking about the changes in New Zealand between 1840 and 1940 helped you understand why Tony went to war for "all New Zealanders". When you're reading about long-ago events, it's important to think about the changes that have taken place since those times.

MONITORING THE IMPACT OF TEACHING

- Ask the students to talk in pairs to clarify who's who, including the narrator. They could share their understanding of "on behalf of", comparing their ideas about the actions of Piuraki and Tony.
- If the students' lack of prior knowledge limits the connections they can make, provide resources for them to build this before reading. If relevant, ask them to share experiences from their own cultures that could have parallels with the story.
- Check students' accuracy and fluency by asking them to read the paragraph aloud. Be aware of using appropriate teaching strategies during reading. It may be helpful to read parts of the text aloud as students listen and follow along. Pause for discussion and questions at the end of each section. The students can then attempt each section independently.

Text excerpts from *The Desert Kaupoi*

Students
(what to prompt, support, and look for as the students are reading)

Teacher
(possible deliberate acts of teaching)

The 28th Māori Battalion

The 28th Māori Battalion was part of the group of soldiers that New Zealand sent overseas to fight in the Second World War. The battalion was made up of five companies, which fought in Greece and Crete, in North Africa, and in Italy. Six hundred and forty-nine men were killed in action or died on active service. The 28th Māori Battalion was one of the most celebrated and decorated units in the history of the New Zealand armed forces.

DEMANDS OF THE TEXT

Students need to:

- apply knowledge of different structures in a text
- evaluate and integrate information in the text
- use vocabulary knowledge to work out “companies” in this context
- apply some knowledge of geography to place the countries mentioned
- cross-check information in the text
- understand the ways of describing the death toll.

The students use their knowledge of text structure and layout to recognise that this is a fact box, not part of the main narrative. They also notice the changed, neutral voice that contrasts with the less-formal tone of the narration.

The students ask questions and make inferences based on their knowledge of history as they try to understand why the army had a separate battalion for Māori. They cross-check and integrate information across the text to confirm that the men volunteered to join the battalion. The students use their knowledge of the word “companies” in a modern sense to infer that, in this context, it means a group within the battalion.

They ask questions about the countries listed and search for answers using the map on page 5. They make inferences about Crete and North Africa (not named on the map).

The students draw on their knowledge of vocabulary, sentence structure, and military terminology to understand the difference between “killed in action” and “died on active service”.

Ensure that the students have read page 5 and studied the map. Note that Crete and North Africa are not named: you may need to supply information to supplement this.

PROMPT the students to use their knowledge of the structure and layout of texts.

- How is this extract different from the main part of the text? What does this tell you?

ASK QUESTIONS to support the students to use strategies as they read.

- What questions do you have as you read this section? For example, did you wonder why there was a separate battalion for Māori? What other questions do you have about the battalion?
- What is a company? How can you use what you know about modern companies to work this out?
- What other parts of the text will help you work out where the Māori Battalion fought? If you can't find all the information, what can you do?
- Many men in the Māori Battalion died. What can you infer from this?
- Why do you think the deaths are described in two ways? What's the difference? Does it matter? Why?

GIVE FEEDBACK

- You made connections between your family's pride in those in the Māori Battalion and the text to understand it was an honour to fight as Māori. This helped you understand why so many Māori volunteered.
- You knew that Algeria is in Africa, so you inferred that the African countries involved in the war were all part of North Africa. Looking up Crete online showed you it is very close to Greece. This information helped you understand the places where the Māori Battalion fought.

MONITORING THE IMPACT OF TEACHING

- If the different sections and layout styles confuse some students, skim the whole story with them, identifying the parts that are recounted by the writer (noticing her use of “Tony” and the headings that refer to his life). Next, identify the green text boxes and the two pages (5 and 14) that are not part of the main recount. Talk about the reasons these sections are different and about the “neutral” and “personal” voices the author has used.
- If students have trouble relating the text to the map, spend time going over the information on page 5, physically pointing to each country and its role (Allied, Axis, or neutral). You may need to use a larger-scale map and point out that some countries' borders and names have changed since the Second World War.
- Breaking the text into sections can make it more manageable. Using a jigsaw approach with selected sections means students encounter the text and concepts several times – orally as well as in writing. You could assign individuals or pairs to one of the four sections on pages 4–6 (The 28th Māori Battalion, The Second World War, In the Desert, The North African Campaign). Support them to read their section and summarise the main points. Have each pair or individual share their information with the others. Then have all of the students read these sections. For more information about jigsaw reading, see ESOL Online at: <http://esolonline.tki.org.nz/ESOL-Online/Teacher-needs/Pedagogy/ESOL-teaching-strategies/Reading/Jigsaw-reading>

Text excerpts from *The Desert Kaupoi*

Last Days

By September 1942, Tony was back with D Company as a platoon commander. One morning, two of Tony's men were hit by the enemy's first machine-gun fire of the day. In response, another soldier, McDonald, charged the German machine-gun post. Tony shouted at him to come back. McDonald returned and was standing with the others when a sudden machine-gun burst knocked him over.

I will always remember when McDonald fell. I was standing about a yard from him when a heavy machine-gun burst blew off his left arm. He was so worked up that he picked up his arm, and in his fury, threw it at the machine gun post.

DEMANDS OF THE TEXT

Students need to:

- draw on their knowledge of text structure and format
- use knowledge of sentence structure, including the use of adverbial phrases
- apply some knowledge of warfare
- understand colloquial language
- follow a sequence of events.

METACOGNITION

- What questions were going through your head as you were reading? Were any of them answered by reading on? Is this a strategy you use a lot? Why or why not?

Students (what to prompt, support, and look for as the students are reading)

The students use their knowledge of text structures to identify the recount and the italicised section as a quote from Tony's diary. They use the adverbial phrases to follow the sequence of events and to infer how quickly things happened. They make connections between the text and what they know of war to infer the reasons for each person's actions. They ask questions about Tony's reaction, wondering why Tony told McDonald to return.

As the students read the quote from the diary, they make connections between the text and what they know about war to visualise the events. They use the words "worked up" and the description of McDonald's actions to infer that McDonald was so fiercely engaged and angry, he was not able to feel pain. They ask questions about whether his fury was at the Germans for shooting off his arm or with Tony for preventing his charge.

The students integrate information about the kinds of courage shown.

Teacher (possible deliberate acts of teaching)

PROMPT the students to use their text knowledge.

- What does the heading tell you?
- What are we likely to learn in this section?
- Why is part of the text in italics? Who is "I"? How did you work that out?

ASK QUESTIONS to help students integrate and evaluate ideas.

- We already know that Tony is a leader and is brave in battle. What more do we learn about Tony in this extract?
- How do his actions here show his leadership?

MODEL unpacking the last sentence.

- I wasn't sure why McDonald did this, so I went back and reread the last sentence. I know what "worked up" means – it's how you feel when you're really, really angry or upset. The words "in his fury" helped me to understand how he felt. I wonder if his fury was with the Germans for shooting off his arm or with Tony for stopping him from charging? What do you think? Why?

GIVE FEEDBACK

- You used the words in both parts of the extract, the illustrations, and your knowledge of how sentences work to follow the sequence of events. It really helps when the writer gives you those phrases that tell when things happened, doesn't it?
- I noticed you slowed down your reading here to understand what was happening. Remember you can also reread a part of the text if it doesn't make sense.

MONITORING THE IMPACT OF TEACHING

- If the students need more support to follow what happened, write the phrases that give the order of events on a chart ("One morning", "In response"). Outline the action, step by step, using the first paragraph. Then read the quote aloud and point out the links to the main paragraph, for example, the position of the men, the action, and McDonald's reaction.
- If students need support with understanding the causal relationship signalled by the construction – be so + adjective + that + clause – identify the construction, give several simple examples (He was so tall that he always bumped his head on the door frame; He was so upset that he cried), and identify the cause and effect in each.

Suggestions for writing instruction

The students could respond to this story by:

- planning and creating a graphic text or play script based on *The Desert Kaupoi*, for example, telling the story of one or more of the battles
- exploring the idea of "bravery", "courage", or "leadership" based on the true stories of one or more heroes they have read about
- comparing Tony with another New Zealand hero, for example, Charles Upham, Willie Apiata, or others who have been decorated for acts of heroism in peacetime. They could compare the actions and achievements of the heroes they have chosen and draw conclusions about their shared characteristics.

Students often need support to communicate their ideas in writing, even when the topic has been set. You may need to help them clarify their thinking orally to start with. Ask them to focus on key ideas they must include and to expand on these. Prompt students to think about what they already know, reminding them to draw on their personal experiences as well as what they have learnt from TV, movies, videos, websites, books, magazines, and other people's stories.

Help the students to identify ideas that are not relevant to the topic. When they have clarified what they can write about, provide a graphic organiser to help them organise the ideas and to identify information they need.

Explore a topic, including relevant language as well as concepts. Read a text on the topic that can function as a model for the students' writing. Analyse the structure and the language of the text. Identify, explore, and practise vocabulary and structures (for example, past verb forms and sentences signalling cause-and-effect relationships) that will be useful for students to use in their writing. Co-construct a writing frame from the model. Co-write a text using the writing frame. Support students to use the writing frame to write independently. You can provide differentiated levels of support with a writing frame, giving some students simple prompts or headings to identify the content for each section as well as some sentence starters. For more information about writing frames, go to: <http://esolonline.tki.org.nz/ESOL-Online/Teacher-needs/Pedagogy/ESOL-teaching-strategies/Writing/Writing-frames-or-text-frames>

 Writing standard: by the end of year 7

 The Literacy Learning Progressions

 Assessment Resource Banks