



Overview

This poignant story, told with subtle humour, is about Mana coming to terms with the fact that his best mate is leaving town. At the same time, he has to deal with the news of the imminent arrival of a baby brother or sister.

“Best Mates” is a sequel to “Iron Tamariki” (SJ L2 June 2014). Students who have read the earlier story will enjoy meeting Mana and members of his whānau again.

This narrative:

- includes the theme of coping with change and separation
- illustrates the traditional Māori value of tuakana-teina
- provides the opportunity to discuss real situations where students have to deal with friends moving away or the arrival of a new brother or sister
- includes large sections of the story told through the dialogue.

Texts related by theme “Iron Tamariki” SJ L2 June 2014 | “Jump” SJ L2 May 2015

Text characteristics from the year 4 reading standard

When Jackson’s mum turns up, she gives me a hug – you’ll have to come over for kai before we leave, eh?”

I guess so.

Dad picks me up not long after.

“How was your day, cuzzie?”

“Stink. Jackson’s leaving.”

“Eh? That’s no good. But you’ll be all right. You’ll find another mate.”

He doesn’t get it.

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

it to Mana!” I turn round, but too late – BOOM! ... the stomach, and I fall down winded.

The rest of my day is like that. It’s as if I’ve been knocked over. I’m still in a daze. It just drags on.

Finally, the bell rings for the end of school. Jackson asks me if I want to come over to his house, but I can’t. I’m staying with Dad and Sharon this week – not with Mum, who lives round the corner from Jackson.

When Jackson’s mum turns up, she gives me a hug. “Hey, Mana you’ll have to come over for kai before we leave, eh?”

I guess so.

some places where information and ideas are implicit and where students need to make inferences based on information that is easy to find because it is nearby in the text and there is little or no competing information

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When Jackson’s mum turns up, she gives me a hug. “Hey, Mana, you’ll have to come over for kai before we leave, eh?”

I guess so.

Dad picks me up not long after.

“How was your day, cuzzie?”

“Stink. Jackson’s leaving.”

“Eh? That’s no good. But you’ll be

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

BEST MATES

by Paora Tibble

“Brrrrriinnngg!”

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

Possible curriculum contexts

HEALTH AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION (Relationships with Other People)

Level 2 – Interpersonal skills: Express their ideas, needs, wants, and feelings appropriately and listen sensitively to other people and affirm them.

ENGLISH (Reading)

Level 2 – Ideas: Show some understanding of ideas within, across, and beyond texts.

ENGLISH (Writing)

Level 2 – Ideas: Select, form, and express ideas on a range of topics.

Possible reading purposes

- To find out what happens to Mana when things change in his life
- To identify and analyse how the adults try to help Mana deal with the changing situation at home and at school
- To identify how the author shows what Mana is feeling.

Possible writing purposes

- To describe a time when a good friend moved away; how you felt and how you dealt with the situation
- To describe what makes you good mates with someone (Include the things you both like to play and a description of a favourite time together.)
- To write a list of pros and cons for moving away from your school/town
- To describe how you felt when you found out that you were going to have a new baby brother or sister.



The New Zealand Curriculum

Text and language challenges

VOCABULARY

- Words in te reo Māori without translation but well supported by the text
- Possibly unfamiliar words and phrases, including “pretty much”, “buzzes”, “rugby”, “cricket”, “pipes up”, “blushes”, “hang out”, “scrag”, “scrapping”, “already sorted”, “hard-case”, “touch footy”, “tied”, “dummies”, “try”
- Colloquialisms such as “Whoa”, “Yeah”, “stink”, “stink one”, “eh”, “cuzzie”, “PJs”, “Yep”, “Cause”, “dunno”, “bros”, “gonna”, “Nah”, “Bah”, “mean-as”
- Common words used in unusual ways such as “pretty”, “stink”, “bug”
- Descriptive language including metaphor and onomatopoeia, such as “Brrrrriinnnggg” and “BOOF!”.

Possible supporting strategies

Some of these suggestions may be more useful before reading, but they can be used at any time in response to students’ needs.

- Familiarise yourself with te reo Māori terms used. Depending on your students’ knowledge, provide support for their meaning and pronunciation.
- Before reading, preview selected words that may be unfamiliar to your students.
- Colloquialisms may need support. If necessary, list those that may be less familiar and provide example sentences. Have the students work in pairs and enjoy creating some sentences of their own to share with the group.
- *The English Language Learning Progressions: Introduction*, pages 39–46, has useful information about learning vocabulary.
- See also [ESOL Online, Vocabulary](#), for examples of other strategies to support students with vocabulary.

SPECIFIC KNOWLEDGE REQUIRED

- Experience of friends leaving
- Knowledge of the concept of tuakana-teina.

Possible supporting strategies

- Ask students to share their experiences of moving or of their good friend moving. *How did you feel? What did you do? Do you still keep in touch somehow?*
- Discuss the concept of tuakana-teina by getting students to share their experiences of how big brothers and sisters look after their younger siblings.

TEXT FEATURES AND STRUCTURE

- First-person narration
- Told in chronological order
- Told in a series of short episodes, separated by a row of asterisks to signal a change in time
- Dialogue used to tell large sections of the story
- Use of unattributed dialogue
- Use of pronouns
- The tone of the language reflects the changing emotions
- Some compound/complex sentences containing more than two clauses
- The use of ellipses and dashes to pause for emphasise and to show thinking
- Sentence fragments included in the dialogue.

Possible supporting strategies

- Remind students of similar first-person narratives, particularly “[Iron Tamariki](#)”, the prequel to this story. Have them use their prior knowledge of these texts to think, pair, share the features they expect to see. If necessary, prompt them to remember such features as plot structure, order of events, time markers, the use of dialogue, and character voice.
- For those students having difficulty identifying speakers in the dialogue, draw their attention to:
 - the close-by illustrations to notice the number of characters, who they are, and what they appear to be doing
 - the narrative prior to the dialogue for what has just happened
 - the use of character names and of the pronoun “I” and who that refers to in the text (the narrator, Mana).
- Model how to identify pronominal reference chains in a paragraph by drawing a circle around the characters’ names in the text. Use a different colour for each. Then, underline the pronouns in the paragraph, using the appropriate colour for each subject.
- Help students to understand the connection between ideas in longer sentences by identifying the clauses, phrases, linking words, and punctuation.
- During a subsequent reading, discuss how the writer draws the reader’s attention to Mana’s changing feelings with the selection and tone of the vocabulary.



Sounds and Words

Instructional focus – Reading

Health and Physical Education (Level 2 – Relationships with Other People: Interpersonal skills: Express their ideas, needs, wants, and feelings appropriately and listen sensitively to other people and affirm them.)

English (Level 2 – Ideas: Show some understanding of ideas within, across, and beyond texts.)

First reading

- Share the purpose for reading with the students.
- Support the students to make connections to the theme of coping with change by reminding them to keep the title in mind as they read.
- On page 26, support meaning by encouraging them to notice the connection between the use of “I” in the narrative and the dialogue as they identify the two mates. *How do you know who is telling this story?*
- Prompt the students to make connections with their prior knowledge to infer the meaning of the figurative language on page 27, when Mana finds out his best friend is moving away.
- Ask questions to help the students infer and reflect on what is changing for Mana and how he is dealing with it. For example: *How was Mana feeling as he ate his lunch with Jackson? What does Dad’s news about a new brother or sister mean to Mana? Why do you think Mana asked Jackson what it was like to have brothers and sisters?*

If the students struggle with this text

- Activate their prior knowledge by asking them to share their own experiences of having a best friend move away. Record some of the words used to describe how they felt. Organise these on a cline or a word cloud.
- The large number of colloquialisms and words in te reo Māori could be particularly challenging for some students, including English language learners. Before reading, consider telling a simplified version of the story, using the illustrations as support. This will allow English language learners to follow the story more easily when they read it themselves.
- Support their understanding of the family relationships and the style of the dialogue by making connections with “Iron Tamariki”.
- Prompt the students to make connections between the illustrations and the text to support the unattributed dialogue, particularly between Nan and Mana on pages 30 and 31.
- Identify pronominal reference chains (see “Possible supporting strategies” under Text Features and Structure above).
- Prompt students to link the ideas across a longer sentence by pausing for slightly longer at commas, dashes, and ellipses to clarify each connecting part.
- Remind students to use strategies such as rereading the sentence or looking for clues nearby to solve word meanings, particularly with less familiar Māori vocabulary and colloquialisms.

Subsequent readings

The teacher

Prompt students to make connections with their own experiences as they think about why Mana is so upset about his friend leaving and why he’s not interested in the baby that’s coming.

The teacher

Ask questions to help the students think critically about the meaning of the last episode of the story.

- *What has Mana’s dream got him thinking about?*
- *Why does the author write about him looking for his old boots?*
- *What do you think the author is telling the reader about Mana in the last episode?*

The teacher

Support the students to identify and analyse the ways the adults try to help Mana deal with the changing situation. You could provide a framework and record their ideas as they read.

- Ask questions to draw their attention to significant information as they reread the text. For example:
 - *How is Jackson’s mum trying to help Mana?*
 - *Why does Mana like it when Nan comes? Why does she tell him stories about her brother?*
- Following their analysis of the text, ask the students to form an opinion about what most helped Mana to deal with the changes.

The students:

- discuss the description of the friendship on the first page
- infer from the description of Mana’s feelings on page 27 that he is shocked, lonely, and lost at the news.
- infer from his response to Dad’s baby news on page 28 that he feels nobody, especially a baby, can replace his best friend.

The students:

- make connections between the fun Nan had with her brother and Mana’s dream about playing with Haki to infer that Mana is wondering what it would be like to have a brother
- discuss the evidence in the story that shows Mana likes playing rugby, thinks it could be fun with a little brother, and might have a use for his old boots
- draw conclusions about why Mana is feeling happier about getting a younger sibling.

The students:

- identify the response of each adult and discuss Mana’s reactions to decide how much the adults were able to help him cope with Jackson leaving
- connect with their experiences and Mana’s response (“I guess so”) to think about what Jackson’s mum’s actions mean to Mana on page 27
- use the information about Mana’s opinion of Nan to track the conversation on page 30 closely, noting what Nan says that helps Mana
- using the chart below, work with a partner to discuss the evidence and form an opinion about what helped Mana the most.

Adults	How they tried to help	Did it help Mana?
Jackson’s mum	She gave him a hug. She asked him to come for kai before the family go.	Not much – he didn’t sound happy when Dad picked him up.
Dad	He said Mana would find a new best friend.	
Sharon		
Mum		
Nan		

GIVE FEEDBACK

- *I saw you rereading the dialogue between Nan and Mana several times. That helped you explain that her asking Mana about his best friend showed how she was listening. Rereading helps to clarify information.*
- *I heard you explain the words “sidestep” and “dummies” to your partner. Your explanation helped her build a picture of how the boys won the game.*

METACOGNITION

- How did being the oldest in your family help you to understand what Jackson said about his brothers?
- As you read the dialogue between Nan and Mana, what helped you work out who was speaking?



Reading standard: by the end of year 4



The Literacy Learning Progressions



Assessment Resource Banks

Instructional focus – Writing

Health and Physical Education (Level 2 – Relationships with Other People: Interpersonal skills: Express their ideas, needs, wants, and feelings appropriately and listen sensitively to other people and affirm them.)

English (Level 2 – Ideas: Select, form, and express ideas on a range of topics.)

Text excerpts from “Best Mates”	Examples of text characteristics	Teacher (possible deliberate acts of teaching)
<p>“Brrrrriinnngg!”</p> <p>Lunchtime. I sit next to Jackson. We sit in pretty much the same spot every day. He’s my best mate – we’re in the same class, the same swimming group, the same rugby team, and the same cricket team. We like the same stuff. Mum says he’s my brother from another mother.</p>	<p>INTRODUCTION TO PERSONAL WRITING</p> <p><i>The opening language engages the reader by using interesting or unusual word choices to create curiosity and entice the reader to read on. This may include devices such as one-word statements, exclamations, and onomatopoeia.</i></p> <p><i>The introduction will set the scene by including the “who, where, what, and why” of the writing.</i></p>	<p>Ask questions to support the students to clarify the purpose of the introduction.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Why has the writer chosen to begin like this?What do the words tell us?What words might suit the opening if the setting was the beach?How else does the opening tell the reader about the rest of the writing? <p>Direct the students to review their opening paragraph with a partner to check that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">the opening engages the readerthe reader can work out what the writing is going to be about.
<p>Jackson buzzes when he sees my lunchbox. “Whoa, Mana, what’s that?” he says.</p> <p>“Hāngi,” I reply. “What have you got?”</p> <p>“Jam sandwiches.”</p> <p>“Want some of mine?” I ask.</p> <p>“Yeah!”</p> <p>“Bad luck!” I laugh. “You know the rules about swapping food.”</p> <p>“That’s OK,” he says. “Jam is sweeter than hāngi anyway.”</p>	<p>CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT</p> <p><i>A text develops characters by showing what they do, say, and think.</i></p> <p><i>Dialogue provides the opportunity to show rather than tell the reader about the kind of characters they are and how they relate to other characters.</i></p> <p>PACE OF DIALOGUE</p> <p><i>The use of dialogue speeds up the pace of what is happening. Using short phrases and targeting key words also helps.</i></p>	<p>Explain to students that by using a section of dialogue we can quickly add information for the reader to infer how characters get on with each other.</p> <p>Prompt them to identify what the excerpt implies about the friendship between Mana and Jackson.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">What does the dialogue tell us about Mana and Jackson?What do you notice about the way they talk to each other?How do you know Mana is joking?What does that show us about their friendship? <p>English language learners may benefit from a dramatisation or oral reading of the dialogue between the two characters.</p> <p>Tell the students to review their writing to develop or rewrite dialogue that shows the way they get on with another person.</p> <p>Support their review by having them share their ideas with a partner or have some students share with the group.</p>
<p>It’s good when Nan comes to stay. She listens to me – not like Dad.</p> <p>“Moko.”</p> <p>“Yeah, Nan.”</p> <p>“I hear you’re going to be a big brother.”</p> <p>When I wake up, I’m still thinking about my dream ... and my little brother, Haki. I’m still thinking about him later when I’m eating my toast.</p>	<p>PUNCTUATION</p> <p><i>Apostrophe: indicates a contraction</i></p> <p><i>Comma: a pause between ideas in a sentence, or separate clauses, phrases, modifiers, and lists of words</i></p> <p><i>Dash: a longer pause than a comma, adding emphasis to an idea</i></p> <p><i>Ellipsis: longer pause to show thinking</i></p> <p><i>Speech marks: show where the talking starts and ends.</i></p>	<p>Draw their attention to the pace of the dialogue by reviewing the question-answer structure of the excerpt and the brevity of many of the responses. They may like to use a similar pattern to develop their dialogue.</p> <p>Remind students to proofread their writing for the correct use of punctuation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Look at each sentence or line of dialogue to check punctuation is used correctly to clarify the meaning.Check if it’s best to use a comma, a dash, or an ellipsis in the sentence. <p>GIVE FEEDBACK</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">The use of “he snorted” made me laugh as I read the dialogue about the movie. That’s a great word to show humour in the conversation.I noticed that when you revised your dialogue, you shortened some responses. That made it sound like real conversation – we can use fewer words to say what we mean and still make sense.

METACOGNITION

- How did sharing your introduction with a partner help you to make your writing more engaging?
- I noticed you changed some of your punctuation when you were proofreading. How did that improve your message?

Writing standard: by the end of year 4

The Literacy Learning Progressions