

Six Photos

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Overview

“Six Photos” is an article that gives readers a “peek into history”. It is a collection of six old photographs with accompanying text. The introduction prepares readers to look closely at each photo with the inclusive “we”, implying that all of us will enjoy a wander through New Zealand history. The article makes a link between what we know about taking photos and what we can find out from photos that show different times and places. The writer prompts the reader to ask questions, reminding us that old photos “contain clues about the past”. Our natural curiosity about the people and the setting causes us to respond to what we see.

This article:

- refers to the technical process of taking photos in the nineteenth century
- offers some comment on the purpose of the photos, as well as the subject matter
- provides many opportunities to ask questions, discuss possibilities, and form opinions
- requires students to keep track of many different pieces of information, across the six photos.

A PDF of the text is available at www.schooljournal.tki.org.nz


Texts related by theme “Bright Fine Gold” SJ L3 May 2015 | The First World War theme of SJ L3 June 2014

Text characteristics from the year 6 reading standard


TE RAUKURA

These people are from Parihaka in Taranaki. From their hob-nailed boots to their hats, they all wear European clothes. During the nineteenth century, Māori had to adapt to Pākehā ways. Many were also under pressure to sell or give up their land for European settlers. Some Māori resisted, like those at Parihaka. As punishment, their whare were destroyed, their men were jailed, and their land was taken.

Perhaps that's why this group looks so serious – and so sad. We don't know if this photograph was taken before or after the government raid on Parihaka in 1881, but we do know these people had begun to fight back in their own unique way. Look closely at the women in the back row.



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




on page nine. It's much more involved... It was also taken when new technology made it easier to photograph what went on in the world outside the studio.

Some of the family are milking the house cows. Two children are perched on carts. One boy holds the family cat. The other stands with the farm dogs. Behind them, you can see a new shed and house.

This photograph shows a much bigger picture than just one family's farm. It was taken during a time of great change, when huge areas of our native bush were being destroyed. Look at the hill. There's native bush – but below that, see the burnt trees? Back then, you first had to clear the land if you wanted a farm. You could chop the bush down – but fire was quicker.

So this picture tells two stories: the hard work that went into making and running... that hard

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)



costumes of Scotland... of the British Empire). Others have come as Britannia, a mythical woman who represents Britain. The boys' costumes tell a different story. They are soldiers, princes, pirates, and kings – from British history and storybook adventures.

But some of the costumes are downright weird. What about the boy dressed as a fob watch? And would you turn up at a party with your face blackened with soot pretending to be an African-American singer? Or spot the two “Fijians” dressed in tapa-cloth skirts with afro hairstyles and pig tusks. Today, these costumes would be very bad ideas.

I'd give first prize to the two boys near the middle on the right, dressed as Robinson Crusoe and Friday – two famous characters stranded on an island for twenty-eight years. The kids have also brought along a goat and... Classic.

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

Wellington... and not a family home. It was a nineteenth-century... The photographer (now well known) lived here. Sometimes the flatmates dressed up for fun. Other photos show them posing with the weapons. These guns and knives tell us a different story about our past. They may have been used for hunting – or perhaps they were even used during the New Zealand Wars.

THE FULL PICTURE

Old photos contain clues about the past. Next time you look at one, think about the following questions to get the full picture:

- What is the first thing you notice in the photo?
- Why do you think the photo was taken?
- What clues tell you how old the photo might be?
- If there are people, what are they doing?
- What can you see in the background?
- What do you think is going on just outside the frame?
- What do you think happened before and after the photo was taken?

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

Reading standard: by the end of year 6

Possible curriculum contexts

ENGLISH (Reading)

Level 3 – Ideas: Show a developing understanding of ideas within, across, and beyond texts.

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 first reading purposes

- To learn more about our past through photos.

Possible subsequent reading purposes

- To understand the significance of migrations to New Zealand
- To make connections to contemporary ways of recording people's lives
- To think critically about what photographers choose to show us and why.

Possible writing purposes

- To write a comment for a family photo
- To create a dramatic monologue for one of the people in the photo.



The New Zealand Curriculum

Text and language challenges

(Some of the suggestions for possible supporting strategies may be more useful before reading, but they can be used at any time in response to students' needs.)

VOCABULARY

- Possibly unfamiliar words and phrases, including “lug”, “tripod”, “chemicals”, “develop” (in relation to photography), “portrait”, “studio”, “waist or head clamps”, “passive resistance”, “blackened”, “soot”, “afro”, “man cave”
- Te reo Māori: “whare”, “moko kauae”, “korowai”
- The names of people and places.

Possible supporting strategies

- Explain that the text contains names of people and places, some words that describe photography techniques, and some words in te reo Māori.
- Familiarise yourself with the te reo Māori vocabulary and provide translations if necessary.
- Prompt students to use context clues to make meaning, for example, for “waist or head clamps”.
- 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

- Understanding that photographic equipment from the nineteenth century was very different from today's equipment
- Some knowledge of New Zealand's history
- Awareness that things change over time.

Possible supporting strategies

- Prompt prior knowledge of current photography equipment and practices.
- Take a group photo with a tablet. Display it alongside the Keep Still photo, and support students to identify the differences, for example, facial expressions, clothing, and use of colour.
- Help students from other countries make connections to this text by having them share information about past clothing styles from their parts of the world.
- Prompt students to discuss what they know about New Zealand in the nineteenth century. Discuss any significant differences, such as clothing, houses, environment, and so on.

TEXT FEATURES AND STRUCTURE

- An introduction
- Discrete photos, each with its own commentary
- A personalised guide to each of the photos
- Sentences with modal verbs, to show that something is probable: “*Their best clothes would have been ...*”; “*Then the family would have walked ...*”
- Imperatives directed at the reader: “*Look at the baby. And look at the way the parents each have a hand on a daughter's head.*”; “*Look closely at the women in the back row.*”; “*Look at the hill.*”
- One word sentences, as a comment: “*True.*” “*Classic.*”

Possible supporting strategies

- Skim the article with the students to see how it is structured.
- Prompt discussion about their response to the photos. *Why do they all look so serious?*
- Direct students to the author's use of “we”.
- Discuss the questions that the writer suggests we may want to ask of the photos. Extend these with the students. Model curiosity by thinking aloud, for example, *I'm wondering about the length of time they had to sit still. I think it would be hard to smile for that long.*

Sounds and Words

Instructional focus – Reading

English Level 3 – Ideas: Show a developing understanding of ideas within, across, and beyond texts.

Social Sciences Level 3 – Understand how people remember and record the past in different ways.

First reading

- Set the purpose for reading.
- Prompt prior knowledge of, or tell students about, the Alexander Turnbull Library in Wellington.
- Direct the students to read the introduction on page 7.
- Explain that the writer is our “tour guide” and is going to take us through a selection of photos.
- Prepare students for asking questions by directing them to the text box at the end, The Full Picture.
- Ask the students to read the text for the first photo and then talk to a partner. *Have a chat about what the writer is telling us. Did it make you want to look at the photo more closely? Why? How?*

If the students struggle with this text

- Use questioning to support students’ predictions. *We are going to look at some photos that were taken a long time ago. What can we expect?*
- Provide copies of the text box The Full Picture for students to use alongside each photo.
- Encourage students to record further questions.
- Use student-generated questions to prompt discussion.
- Encourage students to record their responses to the questions.

Subsequent readings How you approach subsequent readings will depend on your reading purpose.

The teacher

Particular photos will appeal to some students more than others. Invite students to choose a favourite and prepare a personal response to it.

- *Reread the text and look closely at the photo. What do you notice? What is your own feeling about the picture? What clues do you get? How would you guide others to notice what you have noticed?*
- *What would you like to ask the people in the photo?*
- *What do you think about the sentence: “Sometimes it’s the smallest thing in a photograph that tells the biggest story.” Is this statement true for the photo you selected?*

The teacher

Lead a discussion on what we can learn about people living in New Zealand in the late 1800s from the photos.

- *What can you infer about the lives of the people in Te Raukara and the Ferry family in Keep Still? How are their lives different? What information in the photos supports your inferences?*
- *In What’s In A Name, the writer tells us that the book on Irini’s lap is deliberately placed there. Do you agree? What do you think the inclusion of the book tells you about her? Who might she have been? What does she want people to know? Give reasons for your answers.*

The teacher

Remind students that one of the purposes of libraries, museums, and galleries is to keep a record of our past.

- *Is it important to keep old things? Old photos? What can we learn from them?*
- *How could we show future people what our lives are like in the twenty-first century? What would we want them to see?*
- *With modern devices, we can take hundreds of photos every day. How do we decide which ones are worth keeping?*
- *What is the point of “Snapchat”?*
- *Why don’t we have video footage of the families in the photos? Would it be useful to future generations to leave video images?*

METACOGNITION

- Were the writer’s questions and comments helpful for looking more closely at the photos? Why? Why not?
- How does looking at old photos and reading about them help you understand how people lived in different times?

The students:

- reread the text (accompanying one photo) to recall the writer’s opinion
- ask questions and think critically about what the writer is saying, stating their own views
- compare and share their responses
- integrate information across several photos to make comparisons and inferences
- present an oral response to one photo.

The students:

- compare the two photos and search for clues to make inferences that each group of people had very different lives, and that life was not easy for the people in Te Raukara. In particular, they integrate information from the text and photo to make inferences about what was important to each group of people.
- use the prompts in the text to think critically about who Irini might have been and what she wanted people to know about her from this photo. They find evidence such as her clothing, the way she is sitting, the book on her knee, and the expression on her face to support their inferences.

The students:

- evaluate the importance of keeping old things for future generations
- form opinions about keeping contemporary images
- share ideas about the value of static images and moving images.

GIVE FEEDBACK

- *You have used the suggested questions effectively and added some of your own. That’s helped you to identify what you think are the important points about that photo.*
- *You have evaluated what you read and recorded some honest responses. That helps me to see why you especially like that photo.*



Reading standard: by the end of year 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 “Six Photos”

Examples of text characteristics

Teacher (possible deliberate acts of teaching)

Page 17

So this picture tells two stories: the hard work that went into making and running a farm – but also the impact of that hard work on our forests. Gone forever. Did the photographer include that hill on purpose? Or was this sight so common in the 1890s that he didn't even notice it?

USING QUESTIONS

Writers use questions for a variety of reasons, depending on the purpose of the text. Questions can prompt the reader to think, suggest alternative perspectives, or offer a pointer to the content that will follow.

Prompt students to respond to the questions in the text box on page 19. Lead discussion around deliberate photographic decisions. Then direct students to a photo of their own.

- *What do you have to say about your own photo? What will you need to explain? Your readers will probably want to know who the people are and where and when the photo was taken.*
- *What questions would a reader have if they were looking at your photo and reading the commentary?*
- *What questions could you include in your writing to make your readers think more about the photo?*

Page 7

The people who took these very old photos had to lug around heavy cameras and tripods. They also used dangerous chemicals to develop the photos. But at the time, this was the very latest technology – and it was exciting. Photographers used it to capture what they saw, and this means we will never forget the clothes, the buildings, how people played, what they cared about, their celebrations and tragedies. So think of these six photos as a time machine, taking you back...

ENGAGING THE AUDIENCE

Writers must consider their audience as they choose the best words to use and as they think about the details that will keep the reader interested and allow them to make personal connections.

Clarify what students have learned about historic photographic equipment.

- *We have learned that the equipment used by photographers in the 1800s would be difficult to carry. How does that compare with a cellphone camera?*
- *Do we have to “lug around” a camera today? How does the writer’s choice of “lug” help us to understand how heavy it was?*
- *How can you provide your readers with the details they need to understand what is going on in your photo? Why is it important to choose specific nouns and expressive verbs?*
- *Check through your commentary to see if you have given the reader the details they will need.*

Page 14

Irini wears both Māori and Pākehā clothing. Her blouse and headscarf are European. Her double-braided hair style was popular with all New Zealand women. Irini also wears a traditional korowai around her waist. The korowai may have been hers, or perhaps the photographer has given it to her for the photo. On it she rests her hands and a book. Like the tattoos, the book is very deliberate. I wonder what it is – and why she wants us to see it?

DESCRIPTION OF CHARACTER

When writers describe a character, they usually mention the character’s physical appearance. They also provide clues to the sort of person the character is by describing the way he or she behaves and the things he or she says.

Invite responses to the question about the book.

- *The writer suggests that Irini has chosen to display the book on her lap. I wonder if that was her decision. What do you think?*

Have students work with a partner to describe one of the characters in Keep Still. Discuss the details that readers would want to know.

- *If our description accompanies an actual photo, we have to be accurate. Our readers will check the detail in the picture with the detail in the words.*

Based on what we can see from the photo on page 9 and what we have learned about photography in the 1870s, model how you might put yourself in the shoes of the son. Write down what he might be thinking and what his parents might have said.

- *What would he be thinking? Consider how his morning has gone, having to be dressed in his best clothes and having to be scrubbed and polished.*

GIVE FEEDBACK

- *You have managed to stand in that character’s shoes when you wrote your dramatic monologue. The old-fashioned expressions you’ve chosen to include help to make it believable. It sounds historically accurate.*

METACOGNITION

- *What changes did you make as you reviewed your writing? How did the changes you made improve your writing?*

Writing standard: by the end of year 6

The Literacy Learning Progressions