

# Up the Guts!

by Paora Tibble

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## Overview

This TSM contains a wide range of information and suggestions for teachers to pick and choose from, depending on the needs of their students and their purpose for using the text. The materials provide multiple opportunities for revisiting the text several times.

This fast-paced story follows Para (the narrator) and her older brother, Shane, as they practise their rugby league skills in their backyard, then play a game of league with the rest of their team. The teasing sibling rivalry at home is replaced by whānau solidarity on the field. As well as good use of humour, the story contains a surprise or two, and readers must pay attention to follow the sequence of events in both settings. There are plenty of opportunities for readers to make connections with the story and for teaching critical-thinking strategies such as visualising, inferring, and hypothesising. The story will appeal to boys, but the use of a strong girl character makes the story more gender-inclusive than it otherwise would be. This reinforces the message of the preceding article, “Score!”

This story:

- features the game of rugby league, popular in many Māori and Pasifika communities
- has a theme of strong whānau/family involvement that will be familiar to many Māori and Pasifika students
- includes a character giving a mock interview with himself
- includes the thoughts of the narrator as well as her descriptions of the action and dialogue
- includes some te reo Māori in the dialogue
- requires readers to make connections between events at the start and the end of the story to infer the outcome.

A PDF of the text and an audio version as an MP3 file are available at [www.schooljournal.tki.org.nz](http://www.schooljournal.tki.org.nz)

### Texts related by theme

“Mossie” SJ L2 Nov 2016 | “Queen of the Board” SJ L2 August 2016 |  
“Awarua: The Taniwha of Porirua” SJ L2 May 2016 | “Tui in a Tree” SJ L2 April 2013

## Text characteristics from the year 4 reading standard

Then he starts talking like a commentator in a cheesy Australian accent. “Shane Waha for the Warriors has just made a tackle on the Eel’s prop forward. He’s also picked up the ball. Amazing!”  
Dad comes over and pretends to tackle Shane.  
“The last line of defence for the Eels is their koroheke fullback, Henare Waha,” Shane continues. “But no, Shane’s fend is just tumeke! He scores!”  
After scoring the winning

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

“Yep. I haven’t got all day. Kick the ball.”  
“OK, but don’t try to run round me. That doesn’t work in a real game. You need to take it straight up the guts!”  
“OK, then,” I think. “If that’s how he wants to play it.”  
I catch the ball, and I run straight at him. Next minute ... boof! I’m on my back, and the ball is on the ground. So much for running it up the guts! Shane’s just flattened me with a great tackle. He scoops up the ball and runs towards the goal line in slow motion.

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

a tackle on the Eel’s prop forward. He’s also picked up the ball. Amazing!”  
Dad comes over and pretends to tackle Shane.  
“The last line of defence for the Eels is their koroheke fullback, Henare Waha,” Shane continues. “But no, Shane’s fend is just tumeke! He scores!”  
After scoring the winning try, Shane puts two fingers in his mouth to blow the final whistle of the game. Then, just

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

so he’s playing.  
Latu is causing havoc on the field. When he gets the ball, he just keeps running at our smallest players. It takes three of us to stop him.  
With five minutes to go, Latu gets the ball. He runs straight at me. I go for the tackle, but it’s like trying to stop a bulldozer – he runs straight over me and carries on to score a try. I’m left face down in the grass.

figurative language, such as metaphors, similes, or personification



Reading standard: by the end of year 4

## VOCABULARY

### Possible supporting strategies

- Possibly unfamiliar words and phrases, including “one on one”, “sidestepping”, “bonus”, “willow”, “cross-eyed”, “ute”, “league crazy”, “boof”, “commentator”, “cheesy”, “versus”, “havoc”, “ref”
  - Terms related to rugby league, including “up the guts”, “convert my try”, “league”, “kicking conversions”, “the ball sails between the posts”, “tackling”, “kick off”, “Warriors”, “goal line”, “Eels”, “prop forward”, “fullback”, “fend”, “final whistle”, “Man of the Match”, “under-9 competition”, “score a try”, “time up”, “drives his shoulder”, “the Leopards’ 20”, “dummy-pass”, “pop the ball”
  - Colloquial expressions: “Are you for real?”, “up the guts”, “Sweet as”, “Yep”, “Chur”, “No points for guessing”, “Nice work, bro”, “Go, Shaney boy!”, “straight up the guts, even”, “no pressure”
  - Figurative language: “to rub salt into the wound”, “At the end of the day”
  - Te reo Māori words and terms that are not translated: “koroheke”, “tumeke”, “āpōpō”
- Spend time familiarising yourself with any unfamiliar Māori words or expressions. Depending on the knowledge of your students, provide support for pronunciation and meanings. Look up or ask others for help with any words that are unfamiliar to you. You could ask other people in your school community or iwi for support or you could listen to the [audio version](#) of the story.
  - Review the text carefully before using it, keeping in mind the possible prior knowledge or challenges for the students. Decide on the strategies you will use to support all students, for example, brainstorming words and phrases associated with rugby league (and/or rugby). If necessary, have the students work in pairs to discuss what they think the colloquial expressions mean.
  - Have students work in pairs to identify rugby league terms in the story: one partner writes down the words, the other finds and writes their meaning. Pairs can then combine with others to compare and clarify any confusions they had.
  - *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

### Possible supporting strategies

- Some familiarity with rugby league (and the Warriors) or rugby
  - Experience of playing a team sport
  - Experience of roles within a whānau or family, such as having older and/or younger siblings
  - Some knowledge of the role of sports commentators (including Te Arahī Maipi) to describe progress in a game
  - Familiarity with humorous stories in oral or written forms, in which inference, exaggeration, irony, and colloquial language are often used
- Invite students who play or watch rugby league to share their knowledge and experiences with the class or group. Use the preceding article, “Score!”, for background information, particularly about the increase in girls and women playing the sport.
  -  You could select a range of online video clips to illustrate the various terms referred to in the story (such as tackle, conversion, and kick off).
  - Prompt students to consider the role of whānau and family in supporting and encouraging involvement in sports.
  - Students who are unfamiliar with the game and/or with Māori culture will need support to build prior knowledge and make connections with their own experiences, team sports they play, or other cultures they know of.
  -  Play a brief section of a sound recording or video clip of a rugby league game to illustrate the role of the commentator.
  -  For more information about Te Arahī Maipi, go to: <http://www.maoritelevision.com/tv/shows/ata-marie-waitangi-2015/te-arahi-maipi>
  - If your students are unfamiliar with rugby league, consider introducing them to the game in physical education.

## TEXT FEATURES AND STRUCTURE

### Possible supporting strategies

- Humorous fiction, set in present day Aotearoa New Zealand
  - First-person narration in two time settings: in the backyard (Friday) and āpōpō (tomorrow) at the game (Saturday)
  - The use of the continuous present tense
  - Markers of the passage of time, in particular, in the second part of the text (“With five minutes to go”, “Now it’s almost time up”, “Two more minutes”)
  - The need to make connections between the two settings
  - The use of dialogue (often unattributed) to reveal characters and relationships
- Review features such as the order of events and the time markers, the use of dialogue, and the structure of a story from the start to the end.
  - Read and act out selected dialogue to support students with understanding it and how it works in the narrative. Support students to identify the characters and their relationships. Prompt them to name the characters in the illustrations as they learn who they are.
  - Some students may need support to fully understand the events and to make the necessary inferences. Support students to use a graphic organiser (see below) to record the events, Para’s feelings, and how they have inferred those feelings. Model making inferences and filling in the graphic organiser. At selected points, give students opportunities to discuss and revise their ideas in pairs and as a whole group.

Event	Para’s feelings	How I know

- Create reference chains to show who each pronoun refers to. See “First reading” for more detail.



## Possible curriculum contexts

### 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 first reading purpose

- To enjoy a humorous story about playing rugby league.

### Possible subsequent reading purposes

- To explore the tungāne–tuahine (brother–sister) relationship between the siblings
- To discuss what the actions tell us about the characters.

### Possible writing purposes

- To describe a game or sport you have taken part in
- To write a story based on something you know well
- To describe a time when you looked out for your brother or sister, or they looked out for you.



# Instructional focus – Reading

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

## First reading

- Share the purpose for reading, and provide a brief overview of the story. You may wish to spread the first reading over two sessions, breaking at the end of page 29.
- Read the title and examine the illustration together, explaining that the girl's name is Para. *Para and her brother Shane are the two main characters in the story.*
- Invite the students to form hypotheses about the meaning of the title, the relationship between the brother and sister, and the events in the story. *Keep your hypotheses in mind as you read, making changes as you learn more about the events and the characters.*
- Direct the students to read the first section (to the end of page 29) and discuss their thoughts with a partner. *What do you know about Para and Shane? Have your hypotheses been correct so far? What is going to happen at the game?*
- Have the students read to the end of the story.
- When students have read the whole story, allow time for them to discuss it with a partner or with the group, checking that they understand the events and that they can support their inferences about the outcome of the game.

## If the students struggle with this text

- Chunk the text by pages. Read the first page aloud, then pause to support the students to identify the characters and their relationship, the setting, and the events so far. *Who is telling this story? How do you know? Who is the better player? What tells you that?*
- Reference chains: Para's name is not given until page 28, and a lot of the dialogue is unattributed. This may make it difficult for English language learners to follow who is speaking because pronouns can be confusing for them. One strategy to help students is to have them identify reference chains. First, they draw a box around each of the characters in the selected text. Next, they draw a circle around all the pronouns or referring words such as "you", "me", "I", "my", "brother", "him", "We've", "our", "I've". Then they draw arrows to link each pronoun backwards or forwards to the character it refers to. You could use a different colour for each character and their related pronouns. (See *ELIP*, Stage 2 Reading, section 11 (c) for an example of a reference chain.)
- As the students finish reading to the end of page 29, ask questions about parts of the text that may be challenging. If necessary, direct the students to reread the story to clarify any possible confusion. *What does "up the guts" mean? What part of the text tells you that?*
- Continue reading and discussing the text, allowing time to check that students are following the events. Make a note of places to return to in subsequent readings, such as where deeper meanings (about relationships and feelings) have to be inferred.
- If necessary, make a chart to show the sequence of events and work with the students to fill it in as they read. Make the distinction clear between the events in the first part of the story (at home) and those the next day (at the game).

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

### The teacher

Ask the students to work in pairs or as a group to discuss the relationships in the story. Remind them to draw on evidence in the text to support their thinking.

- *Which character is older? How does age make a difference in their relationship?*
- *When Para says, "Shane has to be the Warriors and I'm some other team – any team", what is she implying?*
- *Does their relationship change during the story? What evidence can you find to support your thinking?*
- *What experiences of your own helped you to understand the relationship between Para and Shane?*

You could use a [Say It](#) activity to help students understand the relationship between the two main characters. Have the students work in groups of four to six. Draw up a grid like the one on the right and allocate a pair of grid coordinates to one student in each group. That student reads the text in the grid cell aloud and then responds to it in a role play. They then allocate a new set of coordinates to another student in the group. The students continue to play until all the cells have been role-played. Use the statements in the example, or write your own statements to support your teaching purpose.

### The students:

- locate examples in the text that illustrate the relationships within the whānau
- make connections between these examples in the text and their own experiences of whānau or family relationships
- think critically about the examples in the text and their own connections as they evaluate the relationships.

	1	2	3
A	You are Shane – what do you admire about your sister Para?	You are Para – what made you decide to run straight up the guts at Latu?	You are Para – how do you feel when you are lining up the ball to kick a conversion?
B	You are Shane – why do you pull faces and play tricks on Para?	You are Para – how do you feel when Shane flattens you in a tackle and shows off?	You are Shane pretending to be an Aussie commentator – give the commentary when Para kicks a conversion to win the game for the Tigers.
C	You are Para – describe what happens and how you feel about Shane when he helps you tackle Latu.	You are Shane – why do you decide to support your sister to tackle Latu?	You are Mum – how do you feel watching them play, and what do you say to them after the game?

## Subsequent readings (cont.)


### The teacher

Model making an inference by reading the lines on page 28 that imply Shane believes he is a better player than Para. *I already know the Warriors are our best team. Shane always pretends he's in the Warriors when he plays with Para. Putting these ideas together, I infer that he thinks he's the best. When Para says she is "any team", I infer that he doesn't care what team she's in because he will always be the best.*

Direct the students to identify places in the text where they had to reread or use a strategy to understand the meaning. Ask volunteers to share their ideas and work through them together, identifying the strategy and how it was used. *What did you do? How useful was it?*

Places in the text could include:

- the mock-commentator section
- "What a sad guy!"
- Latu's birth certificate
- "He wasn't running over my sister twice."
- "Shame, Mum!"

 You could copy and paste the text from the PDF into a blank Google Doc. (For easier viewing, change the font to 14. You can also add images using screen shots). Give each student a copy of the Google Doc, which they can use to highlight their examples and add comments about the strategies they used. They can then share it with you to view and give feedback.

### METACOGNITION

- *How did you form your hypothesis about the end result of the match? What evidence in the text helped you?*

### The students:

- locate places in the text where they reread or applied strategies
- explain what strategies they used and how those strategies helped them to understand the text better
- reflect on the strategies they used and share their learning with the group.

### GIVE FEEDBACK

- *You compared the difference in the way Shane treats Para in the first section and the second section with the way you and your brother play-fight at home but stick up for each other in the playground. Relating what happens in a story to your own experience is a good way of deepening your understanding of a text.*



Reading standard: by the end of year 4



The Literacy Learning Progressions



Assessment Resource Banks

# Instructional focus – Writing

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

## Text excerpts from “Up the Guts!”

## Examples of text characteristics

## Teacher (possible deliberate acts of teaching)

Page 28

Our whānau is league crazy. Mum and Dad have been Warriors supporters since day one. That was before Shane and I were even born!

### IDEAS: USING WHAT YOU KNOW

*Writers often get ideas from their own interests and experiences. Basing a story on something you already know makes it easier to come up with ideas and to make your writing believable.*

Prompt the students to reflect on Paora Tibble’s topic.

- Do you think he already knew a lot about rugby league? Do you think this story is true? Why do you think that?

Discuss how writers use what they know as a starting place for ideas.

- What are some things you know a lot about?
- How can you build on what you know to come up with ideas for a story?

Page 28

Just before Shane kicks off, he pulls out the same old trick he uses every time I’m ahead. “Hey, Para, last try wins. OK?”

“Yep. I haven’t got all day. Kick the ball.”

“OK, but don’t try to run round me. That doesn’t work in a real game. You need to take it straight up the guts!”

### DIALOGUE

*Dialogue serves many purposes in a story. It can move the plot along, show characters and their reactions, and convey understanding about the relationship between characters.*

Model the way the dialogue works in this extract.

- The writer doesn’t always tell us who is speaking, so I have to use what I know about conversations to keep track. There are only two characters in this scene, so using the names as they speak also helps me know who is talking. Writers expect their readers to understand this. (See the note on creating a reference chain, above.) Ask questions to support the students as they review their own writing.
- When you read the dialogue to yourself, is it clear who’s talking? If not, how can you help your readers?
- Do the lines you’ve given the characters sound like the way people really talk? How could you make it sound more natural?
- Does the dialogue help your readers know more about the action, the characters, or their relationships?

It may help to have them read the dialogue aloud or try it out on a partner.

Page 28

“OK, then,” I think. “If that’s how he wants to play it.”

Page 29

What a sad guy!

Page 31

Mum yells, “Go, Shaney boy!” Shame, Mum!

### FIRST-PERSON VOICE

*Using a first-person narrator lets the writer show what the narrator is thinking and feeling. Their thoughts can be written like dialogue or can be part of the narration.*

Explain the concept of voice.

- Just like speakers, writers have a voice. When a story has a narrator, the writer can use the voice of the person telling the story. This means the writer can express feelings and thoughts as well as recording the words and the events. If you’re telling your own story using “I” and “me”, the voice is your own.
- If Shane had been the narrator, how would the story be different?
- If you choose to have a narrator (including yourself), what will the voice “sound” like?
- Try writing about an event from the perspectives of two characters using two different voices. What’s the same? What’s different? (This might work best by first using a well-known story that students are already familiar with.)

Invite the students to share their thoughts about the way the story ends. If necessary, direct the students to compare the last lines with those at the end of page 27.

- What clues did the writer give us? What did he want us to think? Was this a good way to finish the story?
- Have you ever tried using an open ending in your own writing?
- Try changing the ending of a story you’ve written. Would an open ending make the story more interesting? What clues could you use to help your readers?

Page 32

I’m focused. I imagine the willow tree in our front yard. I take a deep breath, the ball drops to the ground, and my right foot swings back ...

### OPEN ENDING

*Writers use an open ending to make readers work out what happened for themselves. It’s a way of creating suspense until the readers have drawn their own conclusions. Usually, the writer has given clues that help the readers do this.*

### INFERRING MEANING

*Sometimes writers imply information or ideas. They give clues but don’t state the obvious. Their readers have to infer meaning from the clues.*

### GIVE FEEDBACK

- You have managed to get under the skin of that elephant – he sounds so lonely! Your careful choice of words helps us know how he is feeling.

### METACOGNITION

- Do you think it’s easier or harder to show a character through dialogue? Can you use too much dialogue? How did our success criteria help you?