

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga

Teachers' Notes



Part 1

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Contents

Title	Author	Text type	Page number
Ruby's Sunflower	Sally Stephenson	story	7
The Four Friends (a story from the Solomon Islands)	Glorious Oxenham	story	10
Todd's Pigeons	Jan Trafford	article	13
The Brilliant Plan (a story from Tibet)	Barbara Beveridge	play	16
Feet	John Parker	poem	18

Teachers are welcome to photocopy these notes if and as necessary.

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Introduction

Why do we read? To satisfy curiosity? To develop deeper understandings? To gain specific information – or simply for enjoyment and entertainment?

These teachers' notes are intended to help you to encourage your students to use the *School Journal* for all of these purposes. They provide a wealth of detailed suggestions for using the Journals in your class reading programme.

The notes should be used in close conjunction with *The Essential School Journal*, *The Learner as a Reader*, and *English in the New Zealand Curriculum*.

The Teaching Approaches

A classroom reading programme uses a variety of approaches, including:

- reading to students
- reading with students
- reading by students.

These notes include ideas for using *School Journal* material for all these approaches, with a particular emphasis on guided reading.

For information on deciding which approach to use with a particular journal item for particular students, see *The Essential School Journal*, pages 12–15 and *The Learner as a Reader*, Chapter 5.

Guided Reading

Guided reading is at the heart of the instructional reading programme. In this approach, teachers work with a small group of students to guide them purposefully through a text.

Guided reading involves:

- selecting a purpose for the reading
- introducing the text
- reading and responding to the text
- extending students' word-level strategies
- discussion and, where appropriate, follow-up activities.

These notes include suggestions for:

- selecting a focus for the reading and setting the scene
- particular features of the text that could be highlighted in discussion, including words and

concepts that may present challenges for some students

- possible discussion points, learning experiences, and follow-up activities, where these are appropriate.

Possible follow-up activities are presented in charts that provide suggestions for:

- relevant achievement objectives
- learning outcomes for students
- learning experiences for students.

Please note that these charts are intended only to provide a range of suggested activities for you to choose from or adapt to your students' particular needs. The objectives and outcomes listed for each activity are also intended only as suggestions. You might choose to use a particular learning experience for any one of a number of different achievement objectives and learning outcomes, according to the needs of your students.

Introducing the Text

The introduction should be brief. It should:

- make links with students' background knowledge and motivate them to read
- highlight selected features of the text
- introduce in conversation any unfamiliar names or potentially difficult concepts
- set a purpose for the reading.

Reading and Responding

Some texts can be read straight through; others may need to be broken up, with breaks for discussion. While students are reading the text silently, you can observe their reading behaviour and help any students who are struggling. Students could be encouraged to identify (for example, with a paper clip or Post-it sticker) any words that cause difficulty.

Discussing the Text

This should be brief (a maximum of 10–15 minutes) and should not be a simple "question and answer" session. Students should be encouraged to think about their own responses to the text and to consider alternative points of view.

New concepts, vocabulary, and text features can be discussed in greater detail. Words that have caused difficulty could be discussed in the group. These notes list some words that have challenged students when the material has been trialled. You should not assume, however, that these same words will challenge your own students. Wait and see what comes out of the first reading. Students should be encouraged to use a variety of strategies to work out unfamiliar words. This is an opportunity to develop students' phonological awareness and skills. For example, in studying the context of the text, you could use a whiteboard to draw students' attention to letter clusters and letter-sound relationships, to break up words into syllables, or to discuss the meanings of words.

This is also a good time to look closely at language features if this is a focus for the lesson. For example, you could discuss features such as alliteration or use of similes or metaphors, and you could take the opportunity to expand students' own written vocabulary by pointing out interesting verbs or adjectives and synonyms for commonly used words.

Where appropriate, follow-up activities may be selected.

Selecting Texts: Readability

When you are thinking about using a *School Journal* item for a particular student or group of students, you can use the *School Journal Catalogue* or *Journal Search* to find its approximate reading level. These levels are calculated using the Elley Noun Frequency Method (Elley and Croft, revised 1989). This method measures the difficulty of vocabulary only and does not take into account other equally important factors affecting readability.

When selecting texts, you should also consider:

- the student's prior knowledge, interests, and experiences
- the complexity of the concepts in the item
- the complexity of the style
- the complexity and length of the sentences
- any specialised vocabulary
- the length of the item
- the density of the text and its layout

- the structure of the text
- the support given by any illustrations and diagrams.

It is important to remember that most of these points could constitute either supports or challenges for particular students, and all of these aspects should be considered when selecting the text and the approach to be used.

These notes give further information about some of the potential supports and challenges in particular *School Journal* items. They include information gathered through trialling the items with groups of students.

Developing Comprehension Strategies

Reading is about constructing meaning from text.

Using a guided or shared reading approach provides an ideal context in which to teach comprehension strategies, for example:

- using prior knowledge
- predicting
- inferring
- asking questions and seeking clarification
- visualising text content
- summarising
- interpreting.

These notes suggest ways to develop these and other strategies.

Curriculum Links

These notes place particular emphasis on the English curriculum's achievement objectives for all three strands and the processes of exploring language, thinking critically, and processing information.

Where appropriate, links are suggested to key strands of other curriculum statements.

Suggestions for Further Reading

In some instances, related items from the *School Journal* or other Ministry of Education publications are listed. This will help you to suggest further reading or to plan theme studies.

Ruby's Sunflower

by Sally Stephenson

Overview

Ruby really wants to win the contest for growing the tallest sunflower, but she ends up faced with a difficult decision when her prize-winning flower gets broken. Does she bend the rules and take first place, or does she tell the truth and let someone else be the winner?

Features to Consider in Context

- The narrative structure of the text, which presents a series of events leading to a problem and a resolution
- The use of direct speech in the second half of the story, with punctuation features such as exclamation marks, question marks, ellipses, and italics
- The use of contractions - "she'd", "I'm", "That'll", "I'll", "wasn't"
- The relationship between the two main characters, Ruby and Saul.

Readability: Supports and Challenges

Noun frequency level: 7.5-8.5 years

Suggested level: 8-9 years

The features to consider in context and the points outlined below could constitute either supports or challenges for individual readers.

- The familiar settings within the family, neighbourhood, and school
- The use of simple and compound sentences throughout much of the story
- The feelings associated with winning and losing
- Concepts that might be challenging for some students: crossing your fingers, a piece of cane, cheating
- Words that some students might find challenging: "badge", "special", "practising", "whopper".

Introducing Students to the Text

- Ask the students about their experiences of being in competitions or receiving awards.
- Discuss winning. "How do you feel when you win something? How do you feel when someone else wins?" Let the students think, pair, and share their experiences.
- Introduce the title. "What sort of contest do you think the story will be about?" Ask the students to predict how the winner will be judged.
- Ask the students to read to "she felt like crying" to check their predictions and have them justify their opinion with evidence from the text.

During the Reading

- Check the students' predictions against what actually happened in the story.
- Discuss how Ruby felt when her sunflower broke. Ask the students, in pairs, to predict what Ruby might do about this, then have them read the next paragraph to check their predictions.
- Discuss Ruby's actions and compare them with the students' predictions. Do they agree with Ruby's actions, or do they think that she is cheating? Ask the students to justify their opinions: "Yes, because ..." or "No, because ...".

After the Reading: Responding to the Text

Possible focuses for discussion

- "Why did Ruby change her mind about winning the contest? In pairs, find and reread the part in the text that tells you."
- Explore how the ending would have been different if Ruby hadn't changed her mind. Focus on the characters' feelings and the consequences for Ruby and Saul.

- “Which character do you feel you know the most about? Why?” The students might reread the text to see what else they can find out about that character.
- Look at the direct speech in the second part of the story. Discuss punctuation features and how we change our voices to reflect these features (question marks, exclamation marks, ellipses, italics).
- Choose three students to act the story from “Dad says I have to practise ...” while the other students read aloud, using punctuation to guide their expression.

Suggested Activities

You may like to select an activity from those listed below. You may need to work with the group for some activities.

Suggested Achievement Objectives	Learning Outcomes <i>Students will be able to:</i>	Learning Experiences <i>Students could:</i>
Interpersonal Speaking Interpersonal Listening • thinking critically	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • generate questions for a character; • answer questions in the role of a character. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in pairs, develop questions for the characters. • take turns in the “hot seat”, where they take on the role of a character from the story and answer the questions that other students have developed.
Interpersonal Speaking Interpersonal Listening • thinking critically	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develop and communicate a point of view that focuses on a playground issue that could involve cheating in a game. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in pairs, develop an argument for or against one interpretation of rules in a game like marbles. They could then share their responses with the group.
Transactional Writing • thinking critically	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide reasons for Ruby’s point of view. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develop speech bubbles for the conversation that would have taken place between Ruby and Mr Buckley when Ruby explained why she thought Saul should be the winner.
Close Reading • processing information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • locate, select, record, and use information. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use the Internet, <i>Journal Search</i>, or the library to find out about how plants grow. They could then use the information to grow their own plants (sunflowers, beans, radishes).
Transactional Writing • processing information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • observe and record accurately. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • record the stages in the growth of their plants.

Links with Other *School Journal* Titles

“A Giraffe’s Been in My Garden” 1.4.98;
“Growing My Name and Eating It” 1.3.90; “Not
Just for Eating” 1.3.98; “Sunflower” 1.2.98

***School Journal Catalogue* Categories**

Plants

Cross-curricular Links

Mathematics: Measurement
Science: Making Sense of the Living World
Health and Physical Education
Technology

Associated Websites

Sunflowers
<http://www.sunflowers.com/>
Growing Giant Sunflowers
<http://www.artknapp.com/giantsflwr.htm>
Gardening with Children – Sunflowers
<http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Acropolis/1465/sunflowers.html>

The Four Friends (a story from the Solomon Islands)

told by Glorious Oxenham
and written by Alice Robertson

Overview

This traditional tale tells how four friends fall out when one doesn't pull his weight. It also explains why cats chase after mice.

Features to Consider in Context

- A generally accepted fact (that cats chase mice), which is explained in the style of a traditional tale
- The dialogue between the characters
- A variety of sentence structures.

Readability: Supports and Challenges

Noun frequency level: 8-9 years

The features to consider in context and the points outlined below could constitute either supports or challenges for individual readers.

- The students' experiences with their own friends
- Their experience with reading other traditional tales
- Concepts that some students may find challenging: dugout canoes, shark country, straining their ears, wailing, as swift as light.
- Words that some students may find challenging: "island", "enjoying", "competition", "screeched", "distance", "swift".

Introducing Students to the Text

- Introduce the title and the characters. Ask the students to predict which of the four friends might be left out of the friendship.
- Distribute the Journals and allow time for the students to briefly look at the illustrations to check their predictions.
- Revise decoding strategies: "What will you do

if you come to a tricky word?"

- Set a purpose for the reading. "What reasons can you think of for mouse being left out of this friendship?" Ask the students to read to " 'My paws are too little,' said the mouse."

During the Reading

- Discuss and chart the students' responses to the purpose for reading.
- Clarify any concepts (such as shark country) or words that are causing difficulty.
- Ask the students to read to "But where was the mouse?".
- After the reading, have the students think, pair, and share other reasons why the mouse might be left out, referring to the text to justify their opinions. Add these ideas to the chart.
- Discuss how the friends might feel about the mouse's disappearance.
- Ask the students to predict what has happened to the mouse and read to the end of the story to check their predictions.

After the Reading: Responding to the Text

Possible focuses for discussion

- Have the students check their predictions with the text.
- Either as a group or using a think, pair, share technique, consider the statement "It was okay to forget about the mouse because he wasn't a good friend." The students can use their charted responses or the text to help them in this discussion.
- Ask the students how they would feel if they were the mouse. "How would you like to be treated by your friends?"
- Have the students mime how they would look if someone were "hurting" their ears or they were "straining" their ears.

- Allocate roles (dog, cat, and crab) and ask the students to read only the lines of dialogue from “Our dear little friend ...” to “Let’s just forget all about him” to compare the changes in the characters’ feelings.
- Ask the students to reread the last two paragraphs. “What does this story explain?” Discuss the concept “as swift as light” with reference to thunder and lightning (noting that you see the lightning before you hear the sound of the thunder).

Suggested Activities

You may like to select an activity from those listed below. You may need to work with the group for some activities.

Suggested Achievement Objectives	Learning Outcomes <i>Students will be able to:</i>	Learning Experiences <i>Students could:</i>
Personal Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • read for pleasure; • practise reading strategies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • read a selection of other traditional tales from the Solomon Islands or tales about cats and mice.
Presenting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • thinking critically • exploring language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • communicate meaning through the use of sound. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • with teacher supervision, create a soundscape from a list that identifies some of the actions and sounds from the story, for example, paddle, sing loudly, screech, sing softly, whisper, nibble, waves slapping against the boat, water gurgling through a hole, wail, moan. The students could also use musical instruments to help them with this soundscape.
Viewing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • processing information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • read a map. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • locate the Solomon Islands on a world map.
Personal Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • read for information; • practise reading strategies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • find out how children live in the Solomon Islands and compare one aspect of their lives with our own. The students could share their findings with the group orally.

Links with Other *School Journal* Titles

“Heron and Turtle” 2.3.93; “The Moon Trap” 1.2.93; “Toys from the Solomon Islands” 3.2.93; “Fishing for Octopus” 2.1.01

***School Journal Catalogue* Categories**

Talking Animals
Traditional Stories
Solomon Islands

Cross-curricular Links

Social Studies: Place and Environment
Culture and Heritage

Health and Physical Education: Relationships with Other People

Associated Websites

Legends

<http://www.planetozkids.com/oban/legends.htm>

Nations of the Commonwealth: Solomon Islands

<http://www.tbc.gov.bc.ca/cwgames/country/Solomon/solomon.html>

Solomon Islands

<http://www.solomons.com/>

See also the websites suggested for “The Brilliant Plan”.

Todd's Pigeons

by Jan Trafford

Overview

An eight-year-old boy is interviewed about his hobby of keeping pigeons. He describes the types of pigeons and explains how he cares for them and why he is interested in these pets.

Features to Consider in Context

- The interview structure with a question-and-answer format
- The use of italics to indicate questions
- The conversational style of the responses
- The use of simple and compound sentences
- The use of subject-specific vocabulary.

Readability: Supports and Challenges

Noun frequency level: 10-12 years

Suggested level: 9-10 years

The features to consider in context and the points outlined below could constitute either supports or challenges for individual readers.

- The use of simple and compound sentence structures
- The question/answer format, which provides manageable chunks of text.
- The large number of nouns specific to the topic may be challenging for some students – words such as “tipplers”, “somersaults”, “homing instinct”, “stoats”, “weasels”, “ferrets”.
- Concepts that some students may find challenging: clipping wings, homing instinct.

Introducing Students to the Text

- Ask the students to share their experiences of looking after pets. “What kinds of animals make good pets?”
- Discuss birds as pets. “What kinds of birds make good pets?”
- Introduce the title and read the introductory paragraph to the students. Discuss the idea of pets as a hobby. Allow time for the students to browse through the photographs before asking them to turn their Journals face down.
- Ask the students what questions they would ask Todd about his pigeons if they had the opportunity to interview him. Chart the students’ responses.
- Set a purpose for the reading. “Read the first five question and answer sections to check whether your question is answered and to locate the different kinds of pigeons Todd has talked about in the photographs.”

During the Reading

- Check whether anyone has had their question answered yet and identify the different types of pigeons from the photographs.
- “What jobs do you think Todd might have to do to look after the pigeons?”
- Ask them to read to “How often do you feed them?” to confirm what these jobs are.
- “What have we found out about keeping pigeons?” Get the students to compare what they found in the text with their predictions.
- Using bullet points, chart the students’ responses to the question “What job do you think Todd might have to do to look after the pigeons?” on a chart with the headings: Jobs To Be Done, Equipment Needed.
- Clarify the meaning of “their homing instinct” and discuss how pigeons get this instinct.
- “Read to the end of the article to find out if Todd has any other jobs to do in caring for the pigeons.”

After the Reading: Responding to the Text

Possible focuses for discussion

- Review the Jobs To Be Done chart and add any other ideas that can be supported by the text.
- Review the chart of the students' questions recorded before the reading. In pairs, ask the students to refer back to the text to find out whether their questions have been answered. Share the responses within the group.
- Discuss how the students could find answers to any questions that are still unanswered (the Internet [see Associated Websites below], local pet shops, local bird breeder clubs).

Suggested Activities

You may like to select an activity from those listed below. You may need to work with the group for some activities.

Suggested Achievement Objectives	Learning Outcomes <i>Students will be able to:</i>	Learning Experiences <i>Students could:</i>
Close Reading Presenting • processing information	• locate, select, and record relevant information using bullet points.	• in pairs, use the Internet, <i>Journal Search</i> , or the library to find out more about pigeons (racing pigeons or messenger pigeons) and share the information with the group.
Interpersonal Speaking Interpersonal Listening	• ask questions and listen to and record information.	• survey their classmates to find out the different kinds of pets they have.
Transactional Writing • processing information • thinking critically	• generate questions that will provide information.	• record questions to ask when interviewing a classmate about their pet.
Interpersonal Speaking Interpersonal Listening	• work co-operatively to adapt spoken language for an audience.	• in pairs, rehearse their interviews.
Interpersonal Speaking Interpersonal Listening • processing information • exploring language	• ask questions and adapt spoken language for an audience.	• in pairs, conduct the interviews, recording them on a tape recorder.

Links with Other *School Journal* Titles

“The Crashing of Kereru” 1.1.87; “Feeding Time”
Junior Journal 16

***School Journal* Catalogue Categories**

Birds
Pets
Pigeons

Cross-curricular Links

Science: Making Sense of the Living World
Mathematics: Statistics

Associated Websites

All about Pigeons and Doves
<http://www.iwrc-online.org/kids/Facts/Birds/pigeons.htm>
Pigeon Facts
<http://www.jamiegleave.freeserve.co.uk/facts.htm>
Pigeons
<http://www.cyborganic.com/People/feathersite/Poultry/Pigeons/BRKPigeons.html>

The Brilliant Plan (a story from Tibet)

retold by Barbara
Beveridge

Overview

An ageing cat's brilliant plan to catch some mice is foiled when the clever mice notice that something is amiss. They come up with their own brilliant plan and outsmart the cat.

Features to Consider in Context

- The conventions of a play: a list of characters in capital letters, stage directions in italics, directions for specific characters in parentheses, and dialogue for each speaking character
- The use of signs to indicate the passage of time
- The concept of a trick
- The use of short sentences, which gives a conversational tone to the dialogue.

Readability: Supports and Challenges

Noun frequency level: 7-8 years

Suggested level: 7.5-8.5 years

The features to consider in context and the points outlined below could constitute either supports or challenges for individual readers.

- The use of simple sentences
- Familiarity with the format of a play
- The manageable length of the text
- Words that some students may find challenging: "stagehand", "brilliant plan"
- Concepts that some students may find challenging: the mice countering the cat's plan by keeping up conversation with the last mouse, the cat not wanting to be found out
- The use of offstage voices.

Introducing Students to the Text

- Before distributing the Journals, introduce the names of the mouse characters. Ask the students to choose one character and quickly draw what they think that character could look like.

- Tell the students that there are two other characters, a cat and a stagehand. Ask them what they think a stagehand might do.
- Introduce the title of the play. Ask the students in pairs to predict which of the characters might have a brilliant plan and ask them to suggest three ideas of what the plan might be. Clarify the meaning of "brilliant" if necessary.
- Distribute the Journals. Allow the students time to check their sketches with the illustrations of the characters in the Journal.
- Set a purpose for reading. "Find out what the plan is and what the job of the stagehand is."

After the Reading: Responding to the Text

Possible focuses for discussion

- Check the students' predictions about the plan. "Did anyone predict what actually happened?"
- Ask the students what the mice did about the cat's plan. "Why didn't the cat grab Big Ears?"
- Ask the students to think, pair, and share why the mice's plan was successful.
- Ask the students to look at the stagehand's part and compare their earlier predictions with what they have found out about that part from their reading. Discuss other jobs a stagehand might do.
 - "If we were going to perform this play, what would we have to think about?"
 - the stage directions (the movement of characters on and off the stage) the use of the voice for dramatic effect (whispering)
 - the voices offstage
 - the use of props (signs)
 - costume ideas (how to distinguish between the mice).
- When the students are clear about the details involved in the plot, allocate the roles and reread the play (without stage directions) to gain fluency and expression.

Suggested Activities

You may like to select an activity from those listed below. You may need to work with the group for some activities.

Suggested Achievement Objectives	Learning Outcomes <i>Students will be able to:</i>	Learning Experiences <i>Students could:</i>
Viewing Presenting • thinking critically	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify the main events in the play, using verbal and visual language. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> make a storyboard to show the main events.
Using Texts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> read aloud, using voice, facial expression, and gesture. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> practise and perform the play for the class or another group.
Viewing • processing information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> locate information. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> locate Tibet on a world map.
Personal Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> read for enjoyment; practise reading strategies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> use <i>Journal Search</i>, the Internet, or the library to locate other stories about cats and mice.

Links with Other *School Journal* Titles

“Neighbours” 2.1.94; “The Mouse and the Elephants” *Junior Journal* 8; “Mousework” *Junior Journal* 12

School Journal Catalogue Categories

Traditional Stories
Cats
Mice

Cross-curricular Links

Social Studies: Culture and Heritage

Associated Websites

Story Library – Mice in Council
<http://www.storyarts.org/library/aesops/stories/mice.html>

Folk Lore about Cats
<http://www.petlink.com.au/Cats/Folklore/>

A Folk Tale from Tibet: From the Elephant Pit
<http://www.storiestogrowby.com/stories/elephpit.html>

The Tale of Two Bad Mice
<http://www.tcom.ohiou.edu/books/kids/beatrix/bm0.htm>

Feet

by John Parker

Overview

This poem describes, in three verses of irregular length, the functions and forms of animals' feet.

- Read the poem to the class a couple of times, asking the students to think about what action could accompany each line.
- Distribute one copy of the Journal to each pair of students and ask them to take turns, with one student reading out the poem while the other mimes the actions.
- Bring the class together and, as a whole group, have them mime the actions while you read out the poem.

Thinking Critically

- "Who is talking in this poem?"
- "Why would they be glad their feet don't look like ours?"
- Look at the photomontage of "Whose Feet are THOSE?" (page 14) and match the foot with the animal.
- You might like to innovate on the first verse of the poem and create a number of co-operative verses. For example,

Hands

We can (hold)

we can (slap)

we can (shake)

and (stroke)

and (clap).

After you have modelled with this example, you could give the students some strips of paper to write their choice of words on. The students could then arrange these strips into the "best words in the best order".

Links with *Connected* Titles

"Feathery Friends" *Connected* 1 2001

Associated Websites

Whose foot is this?

<http://www.nhm.org/birds/guide/classroom/whosws.html>

Whose foot is that?

<http://www.yahooligans.com/content/ka/almanac/measure/mea00006.html>

Whose foot is whose?

http://www.gov.nt.ca/RWED/kids/quiz/matching_feet.htm