

# From Corned Beef to Captain Cook: The Art of Michel Tuffery

by Iona McNaughton

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## **Overview**

This article highlights the life and art of well-known New Zealand artist Michel Tuffery. This is a powerful text that focuses on three main ideas: the overcoming of adversity (Michel succeeding despite his dyslexia), the passion he has for his art (following his dream), and how we can communicate through art (the telling of stories).

## **Suggested reading purpose and teaching purpose**

*Based on the information I have about my students' learning needs, what would be appropriate reading and teaching purposes for this lesson?*

- To find out about the experiences and ideas of a New Zealand artist.
- To support the students in developing the comprehension strategy of **identifying the main idea(s)**.

## **Suggested learning goal**

We are learning to combine the clues and evidence in a text to determine the main idea(s).

## **Success criteria**

To support our comprehension of the text, we will:

- ask questions and make connections to find the key ideas
- identify clues and evidence within the text to support our thinking
- make links between the clues and evidence
- propose main ideas for the text.

## **Readability**

Noun frequency level: 9–10 years for guided reading

*What features of this text support a range of reading and teaching purposes?*

- The three interlinked main ideas in the story: the overcoming of adversity (succeeding despite dyslexia), the passion (following his dream), and communication through art (telling his stories)
- The formatting of the introduction in a different font and colour
- The pull-out quote on pages 6 and 7
- The engaging photographs and reproductions of artwork
- The strength of Michel Tuffery's character

- The use of direct quotes
- The explanation of dyslexia
- The non-linear structure of the article
- The quotes about communicating through art (for example, on page 4).

*What prior knowledge or experience might help my students to read this text?*

- Experience of creating their own art
- Experience of learning to read
- Previous visits to museums and art galleries
- Knowledge of Sāmoa or other Pacific nations
- Awareness of being passionate about something
- Knowledge of Captain Cook
- Familiarity with tinned corned beef
- Experience of reading stories and articles about people's lives and achievements.

*What text features might challenge my students and require a prompt or a brief explanation?*

- The concept of faga'ofe
- The concept of dyslexia
- The structure of the article (the use of the third person and the inclusion of first-person direct quotes)
- Particular words and concepts, including "corned beef", "paddocks", "faga'ofe", "journalist", "research", "sculpture", "Moa", "inspire", "dyslexia", "galleries", "obsessed", "exhibition", "Tahitian", "translator", "navigator".

### ***A framework for the lesson***

*How will I help my students to achieve the reading purpose and learning goal?*

### **Preparation for reading**

Students could browse a selection of New Zealand or Pasifika art books, for example, *Welcome to the South Seas: Contemporary New Zealand Art for Young People* by Gregory O'Brien (Auckland University Press, 2004).

## **Before reading**

- Preview the illustrations in the article and discuss the title with the students. “I wonder what the connection might be between corned beef and Captain Cook?” You may need to help English-language learners with background knowledge and vocabulary in order for them to access this text. (Making connections; forming and testing hypotheses)
- Share the reading purpose and briefly introduce the text.
- Inform the students that this is a biography and discuss what they might expect to find, for example, the subject’s life history, family relationships, and likes and dislikes. (Making connections)
- Make links to students’ previous reading and writing in reference to the “main idea”. Discuss the use of key words and phrases. Discuss how sometimes we are given ideas explicitly (evidence) and sometimes we have to infer ideas from the text (clues). (Making connections; analysing and synthesising)
- Share the learning goal and success criteria with the students.

## **Reading and discussing the text**

*Refer to Effective Literacy Practice in Years 5 to 8 for information about deliberate acts of teaching.*

As your students read through the text, support them with any unfamiliar vocabulary, grammar, and concepts as necessary.

### **Pages 2 and 3**

- Discuss the creatures Michel makes and why someone might want to make a life-sized bull. “I wonder why Michel made the bulls and turtles?” (Making connections; forming and testing hypotheses)
- On their own pieces of paper or in their books, have students write Michel’s name in the middle of a page. As they read the text, have them use this as an organiser to record key information that they think may lead to an understanding of the main ideas. Remind them to ask questions and use what they already know about finding key information to check these decisions. Encourage them to think about what their key information shows (as opposed to tells), for example, the fact that Michel had dyslexia but managed to become an artist shows that he overcame adversity. (Analysing and synthesising; identifying the main idea)

### **Page 4**

- Strongly model your thinking as you discuss this page with the students. “It seems to me that there are a few key ideas on this page. Let’s see if we can identify them.” (Refer to the success criteria) Identify the three ideas with the students. “I can find three ideas here but one of them seems stronger because it has some supporting

information. Let's write these ideas down on our organisers."  
(Analysing and synthesising; identifying the main idea)

### **Page 5**

- Discuss dyslexia and what this might have meant for Michel when he was younger. Support the students to find any key ideas on this page and add them to their organisers. "Are there any patterns emerging in the information you have recorded?" (Analysing and synthesising; identifying the main idea)

### **Pages 6 and 7**

- Discuss the word "obsessed" and how it could be both a positive (in this case) and a negative. Again have the students find the key information and add to their organisers. (Analysing and synthesising; identifying the main idea; vocabulary building)

### **After reading**

- Have the students discuss their brainstorms with a buddy. Encourage them to look for links between the ideas they have on the page or for common themes. (Identifying the main idea; summarising)
- Tell the students that there might be more than one main idea, but ask them to decide on the one that they think comes through most strongly in the text. Have them share their "main ideas" with the group and back up their choice with evidence from the text. (Analysing and synthesising; identifying the main idea)
- Review the learning goal and success criteria and reflect with the students on how well the learning goal has been achieved. For example, "What helped you to find 'clues' as opposed to 'evidence' in the text?" "How will your learning about finding the main idea help you next time you are reading a text like this by yourself?" Note any teaching points for future sessions.

### **Links to further learning**

*What follow-up tasks will help my students to consolidate and/or extend their new learning?*

- Have the students read the artists' profiles from the three books (sculpture, design, and painting) in *Exploring the Visual Arts in Years 1–6* or other artists' profiles from the *School Journal* such as "Wired!" (SJ 3.3.08), "Bringing Stories to Life" (SJ 2.3.02), or "Wild and Wacky: The Art of Fraser Williamson" (SJ 1.1.03). They can determine the main ideas and compare these with the main ideas in the article about Michel Tuffery by using a Venn diagram or other organiser.
- Have the students tell the class or write about an artist that they know about. (You may need to scaffold English-language learners with this.) (Making connections)
- Have the students undertake follow-up research on Michel Tuffery's art and the stories that he tells (especially if this is the main idea that the student chose).

- Ask the students to share with a partner how they find the key information and main idea(s) in a text when they are reading independently.