



Overview

The narrator and his sister are on a fishing trip with Dad, but the outing is overshadowed by the fact that their mother is at home with an unspecified illness. (Note: Be sensitive to students who may have direct experience of a parent or relative with a serious illness.)

The author handles the emotional content in a sensitive and sophisticated manner. He alludes to the mother's illness and the effect it has on her family, but at the same time, portrays the father's love and kindness, the protectiveness he shows to his children, and his appreciation of what life offers. The author makes good use of figurative language to describe the context and imply the strong family bond. The story has a lot going on beneath the surface and a slow reveal of what is really happening. André Ngāpō shows rather than tells, and combined with the story's clever construction and use of extended metaphor, the text lends itself to a discussion of the writer's craft.

Underpinning this story is a theme about the precarious existence of the Māui dolphin. The text also makes direct reference to Māori tradition and tikanga, including to Tangaroa and Hinemoana, the guardians of the home of the dolphin, and the traditional stories about Māui-tikitiki.

This story:

- includes an extended metaphor
- has te reo Māori inserted strategically
- uses dialogue to advance the storyline.

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

Texts related by theme "After the Storm" SJ 2.1.11 | "A Birthday Cake for Grandma" SJ 3.1.10 | "Drought" SJ 3.2.10 | "Flowers for James" SJ 3.1.09 | "Leave" SJ 3.3.08

Text characteristics from the year 6 reading standard



Te Paea and I hold tight while Dad guides the boat through the push of the current. He's expert at this, always steering us safely through the breaking waves towards home.

illustrations by Rachel Walker

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

for a quick fish on the way home... bumpy ride over the bar. Four snapper, two gurnard, and two kahawai are stashed in the cooler. Mum will be pleased about the kahawai. Smoked, they're her favourite.

The boat's slicing through the water when Te Paea points back the way we came. It's the dolphin. We agree it must be the friendly one, the one with the scar. "He followed us all the way," she says.

The headland is approaching fast, the choppy bar not far away - daring us to pass through. Dad slows the engine, and the dolphin comes right up to the boat before suddenly dashing off to leap high in the air. Then he dives in the water, his tail disappears, and he's gone.

"Do you think the popoto will make it, Dad?" I ask.

"I hope so," he says.

Dad gazes after the dolphin for a moment. Then he looks back to shore.

"Right, let's get that kahawai home to your mum. Are you ready?"

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)

"Dad, why are they called... doing nothing, the three of us just lazing in the sand. "Are they named after Māui-tikitiki?"

"What do you know about Māui-tikitiki?" Dad asks.

"We learnt some stories at school. He's the one who was cast out to sea, the cheeky one - cheeky, like a dolphin."

"You could be onto something there," Dad says.

"Māui-tikitiki is the one who stole stuff," says Te Paea.

Dad looks amused. "Stole stuff?"

"He took fire and his grandmother's jawbone," I say.

"And wasn't he the one who tried to cheat death?" asks Te Paea.

"Oh, yeah, I'd forgotten that bit," I say.

Behind us, somewhere in the mānuka, I hear a fantail. Or at least I think I do. We're quiet for a long time, the dolphin nowhere in sight.

some ideas and information that are conveyed indirectly and require students to infer by drawing on several related pieces of information in the text



The food's different from usual. Mum always packs sausage rolls and banana cake, but Nan made lunch this time. Dad sees me looking and guesses what's on my mind. "Mum will be fine today," he says. He takes the lid off a big container of egg sandwiches. "She's glad we decided to come out. It's such a beautiful day. She said it would be good to charge our batteries."

I imagine Mum sitting in her green chair, trying to charge her own batteries, the sun hot and bright over her.

figurative and/or ambiguous language that the context helps students to understand



Reading standard: by the end of year 6

Possible curriculum contexts

SOCIAL SCIENCES

- Level 3 – Understand how cultural practices vary but reflect similar purposes.
- Understand how people make decisions about access to and use of resources.

HEALTH AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION

- Level 3 – Personal growth and development: Identify factors that affect personal, physical, social, and emotional growth and develop skills to manage changes.

ENGLISH (READING)

- Level 3 – Ideas: Show a developing understanding of ideas within, across, and beyond texts.
- Language features: Show a developing understanding of how language features are used for effect within and across texts.

ENGLISH (WRITING)

- Level 3 – Ideas: Select, form, and communicate ideas on a range of topics.
- Language features: Use language features appropriately, showing a developing understanding of their effects.

Possible first reading purpose

- To understand how people deal with sadness and change and how strong family relationships can be important in difficult times.

Possible subsequent reading purposes

- To explore the use of extended metaphor
- To identify how authors use “show, not tell” to communicate a message and tell a story, and to recognise the effect this has on a reader.

Possible writing purposes

- To write a letter or diary entry about the fishing trip from the perspective of Tiki (the narrator) or one of the other characters in the story
- To use “show, not tell” or an extended metaphor to describe a time in your life when someone in your family helped you through something important or difficult
- To write a persuasive letter about the need to protect Māui dolphins
- To write a report to Department of Conservation (DoC) detailing the information about the dolphins that Dad would have given on the phone.



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 “twitch”, “rod”, “sinkers”, “bait”, “hook”, “rig”, “catapult”, “sleek”, “anchored”, “bar”, “headland”, “ashore”, “current”
- Names and terms in te reo Māori, including “Te Paea”, “Tiki”, “Māui-tikitiki”, “Tangaroa”, “Hinemoana”, “karakia”, “kahawai”, “popoto”, “Ka pai”, “tāmure”
- Unusual descriptive phrases, such as “charge our batteries”, “catapult into the air”
- Words with more than one meaning or used in an unusual way (these may be particularly difficult for students learning English): “lick”, “cutting”, “catch”, “bar”.

Possible supporting strategies

- Point out to the students that there will be some te reo Māori in the text. The students may already be familiar with some words but may have to work out others.
- Go through the Māori alphabet phonetically to help students with the pronunciation of the te reo Māori words.
- Remind students that they will encounter some fishing terms in this text. Ask them to use a sticky note to highlight any terms they don't know so they can discuss them with a partner afterwards.
- *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

- Some knowledge of fishing
- Some familiarity with Māori customs and tikanga
- Knowledge of the Māui dolphin and its status as an endangered species
- Awareness of the work of the Department of Conservation
- An understanding of how people support each other through difficult times and the different ways people deal with sadness.

Possible supporting strategies

- Activate students' prior knowledge of Māui.
- Show a video clip of Māui dolphins to help students visualise the imagery about dolphins.
- Ask someone who knows about fishing to talk about their experiences with the class.
- Provide visual support (such as a poster of different fish species) and actual objects (such as a fishing rod) to help English language learners understand the meaning of the words.
- Share the information on the DoC website about marine mammal sightings.
- Have a discussion with the students about times when they have needed to ask for help or felt sad about something but didn't want to talk about it. How did they deal with it?
- Discuss the ways people support each other through difficult times.

TEXT FEATURES AND STRUCTURE

- A straightforward, sequential narrative structure told from the child narrator's point of view
- The use of a slow reveal to show why Mum isn't with them
- The use of figurative language:
 - extended metaphor of the dolphins
 - Dad guiding them safely over the bar
 - the juxtaposition of the uncertainty of life with the peace and beauty of the natural world
 - metaphorical language, including “the sun climbs higher and higher”, “fishing rod stands straight”
 - personification: “waves lick and tickle the side of the boat”
- The use of “show, not tell” as a writing technique.

Possible supporting strategies

- Explain to students why writers use figurative language. Ask the students to identify some examples and discuss what impact they have.
- Question the students to check they are making valid inferences. *On page 4 it says, “Dad looks sad, too, much sadder than usual”. Why do you think Dad is usually sad?*
- Explain that there is a lot of showing and not telling in this text. Remind students that the writer has deliberately chosen every word and phrase, so they need to think about hidden meanings (for example, why the characters go quiet when the death of Māui is mentioned).
- Ask them to note any questions they have while reading and discuss them afterwards.
- If you have students who are familiar with Māori tikanga around fishing, have them share what they know. Alternatively, share your knowledge about these concepts yourself. If you are unsure, you could ask another staff member or person from your community to explain some of the protocols around kaimoana and kaitiakitanga.

Instructional focus – Reading

Health and Physical Education Level 3 – Personal growth and development: Identify factors that affect personal, physical, social, and emotional growth and develop skills to manage changes.

Social Sciences Level 3 – Understand how cultural practices vary but reflect similar purposes; Understand how people make decisions about access to and use of resources.

English Level 3 – Ideas: Show a developing understanding of ideas within, across, and beyond texts; Language features: Show a developing understanding of how language features are used for effect within and across texts.

First reading

- Set the purpose for reading.
- Explain to students that this is a story about a family going on a fishing trip that has special significance for them. Ask them to think about the developing storyline as they read.
- Remind students that the text is from the boy's perspective and is a record of his experience.
- Scan through the pictures and ask students to make predictions about what the text is about.
- Talk about tikanga Māori and the place of Tangaroa and Hinemoana as guardians of the ocean and its creatures.
- You may wish to chunk the text into sections. You could stop the students at the end of page 4 and have them recap what has happened. Then, ask them to predict what will happen next. *What have you learnt so far? What do you know about the boy? Why have they thrown the fish back in? Where are they? What do you think will happen next?*

If the students struggle with this text

- Remind them of strategies that are particularly useful on a first reading, such as reading on, rereading, and making connections with their prior knowledge.
- Clarify any unfamiliar vocabulary.
- Create a social interaction map to visualise how the characters feel about each other.
- Create a storyboard to clarify the structure and storyline.
- Question students to tease out why they think a particular way.

Subsequent readings

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

The teacher

- *How do you know what is happening in the family? What has shown you that? What information do we learn about Mum from what the characters say (or don't say) and do?*

The teacher

Prompt the students to think about how the family interact and work together.

- *Look at what the characters do and say to each other. What do those things tell you about the family? Do they get on well? Do they help each other?*

Prompt the students to explore how the different characters deal with sadness.

- *How do we know that the family are all dealing with their sadness?*

Consider using a three-level thinking guide to help students to make inferences.

The teacher

- *Have the students create a diagram identifying similarities between Mum and the dolphins. Discuss their diagrams and juxtapose what isn't being said about Mum with what is being said about the dolphins.*

Ask the students questions about the significance of the dolphins and why one features so centrally in the story.

- *Why is the story called "Māui"? Are the dolphins an important part of the story? Why?*

Ask the students questions about the author's intentions.

- *What does the author want us to think about?*
- *Was he successful? Why/why not?*

GIVE FEEDBACK

- *I noticed that you checked what Dad was saying on page 5 with what was shown in the illustration to decide that Dad was concerned about Tiki. Using all the evidence, including the illustrations, is a good strategy for reaching your conclusions.*
- *The diagram you created was a good way of showing the similarities between what was happening to Mum and the dolphins' situation.*
- *I saw you reread the examples of dialogue between Te Paea and Tiki. That was a good strategy to work out how they feel about each other.*

METACOGNITION

- How did the diagram help you to understand the meaning of the metaphor of the dolphin?
- Show your partner a place where you weren't sure what was happening and explain how you worked it out.
- What information helped you to work out what was happening to the family? How did you locate that information?

The students:

- draw on several pieces of information to infer that Mum is seriously unwell. For example, she could not come on the trip, she is "recharging her batteries", and Nan made the lunch
- locate information that Dad is "sadder than usual", that he looks relieved after checking his texts, and that he and the two children stay quiet for a long time after the death of Māui is mentioned, to infer that while no one talks about it, they are all worried about Mum.

The students:

- infer that the family is a strong and caring one, by identifying the friendly competition between Dad and Te Paea, the banter between Tiki and Te Paea, or the way Dad asks Tiki how he's feeling
- find and integrate evidence in the things the characters say and do and from the illustrations to understand that they are all dealing with Mum's illness in their own way.

The students:

- see the parallels between Mum's illness and the dolphins' endangered status and understand that the writer has used the dolphin as a metaphor
- make connections between what is said about the dolphins and their precarious existence and what they know about Mum to draw conclusions about the fate of both
- integrate the various ideas in the story about kaitiakitanga, the need to protect the Māui dolphin, and the way the family cares for each other to conclude that the writer wants the reader to think not only of conservation but also about the ways we can care for each other in difficult times.



Reading standard: by the end of year 6



The Literacy Learning Progressions



Assessment Resource Banks

Instructional focus – Writing

Health and Physical Education Level 3 – Personal growth and development: Identify factors that affect personal, physical, social, and emotional growth and develop skills to manage changes.

Social Sciences Level 3 – Understand how cultural practices vary but reflect similar purposes; Understand how people make decisions about access to and use of resources.

English Level 3 – Ideas: Select, form, and express ideas on a range of topics; Language features: Use language features appropriately, showing a developing understanding of their effects.

Text excerpts from “Māui”

Examples of text characteristics

Teacher (possible deliberate acts of teaching)

The boat’s slicing through the water ...

“I hope so,” he says. Dad gazes after the dolphin for a moment. Then he looks back to shore.

EXTENDED METAPHOR

Writers sometimes use a metaphor to symbolise an idea. Using an extended metaphor can reinforce a theme and provide more depth to a story. It can also help the reader to understand an idea more clearly by drawing parallels with a similar thing or situation.

- Model how to plan and write a story that incorporates symbolism and metaphor.
- I want the reader to know that the boy is sad that his holiday is coming to an end. I was thinking that I could draw a parallel with the sun going down at the end of a glorious day. What do you think? Would that be a good way of creating an extended metaphor to get my message across?
 - Ask students to share their writing with a partner and together, find places in each other’s writing where creating an extended metaphor would be a more effective way of “showing, not telling”. How will you write it? Remember not to overdo it. Less is more!

Note: Using an extended metaphor may be beyond the language level of some English language learners. For ideas on scaffolding descriptive language, see *Supporting English Language Learners in Primary Schools: Years 5 and 6*, pages 11–17.

“Not many left now, eh, Dad?” says Te Paea.
“Āe,” says Dad. “Not many at all.”
“How many?” I ask.
“I’m not sure,” Dad says. “Less than a hundred.” ...
“It’s sad,” says Te Paea.

DIALOGUE

Instead of simply stating facts and describing the action, writers can use dialogue to convey these. This can speed up the story or provide background information in a more interesting way.

- Through shared writing, create a conversation between Tiki and Nan that occurs after they have arrived back from the fishing trip.
- What would Nan ask? How would Tiki respond? Would he be excited, sad, or both? What would Nan say that shows she understands without saying it directly?

Have the students look at their own writing to find a place where dialogue would clarify a character’s thoughts and actions and then create some dialogue. Ask them to work in pairs to give each other feedback on how well they have achieved this.

“We say a karakia of thanks ...”
“Hey, over there! A popoto!”

USING TE REO MĀORI

The writer has incorporated te reo Māori in a natural way. This helps to build a picture of the characters and the family and reinforces the Māori concept of kaitiakitanga that underlies the story.

Support any students who wish to use their own language in their writing. Model how to incorporate te reo Māori into a story naturally. This could be through dialogue. Demonstrate how you check for accuracy when you aren’t sure of using the correct term or the correct spelling.

The sun’s dropping out of the sky ...
The boat’s slicing through the water ...

DESCRIPTIVE WRITING

Writers use descriptive phrases and imagery to build a visual image in the reader’s mind. It helps to create a sense of place.

Prompt students to check that they have used descriptive phrases appropriately to build a visual image in the reader’s mind. It may be helpful to explore some of the examples in the text and unpack how the author has written them. Ask questions and give feedback to help the students justify their choices.

- I can see you have changed these words that have been crossed out and added different phrases. Why did you do that? How did you choose those words?
- How do they improve your writing?

GIVE FEEDBACK

- In your dialogue, you’ve managed to show how much Nan cares for Tiki and his sister by adding just a few lines. That was a perfect way of showing the reader, without telling them, that Nan understood how they felt.
- Adding those phrases in Tongan when the grandfather speaks really makes him come alive and gives a sense of his character.

METACOGNITION

- Tell me why you decided to include the kāhu in your story. What are the characteristics that made you think it would make a good metaphor?
- What did you find easy or difficult about writing dialogue? How did you give each character their own voice?



Writing standard: by the end of year 6

The Literacy Learning Progressions