



## Overview

In three connected pieces of text, this article explores two concepts: the passing on of traditional ways of life and the ways in which living things respond to their environment. The main part of the text describes a school camp on Rēkohu, during which students attempt to find and cook food the way their ancestors might have done. It is supported by historical information about Rēkohu's first settlers and a scientific report on pāua. The text provides opportunities to explore both concepts and to find connections between them. It also allows readers to draw on the information in other parts of this Journal to find background

information, to consider important themes of adaptation and survival, and to understand why it is important for people to nurture their culture.

Teachers are advised to consider the difficulty level of this article, taking into account the increase in reading independence that occurs (and the level of support required) as students move from year 7 to year 8. See the footnote that accompanies the reading standard (from page 32) for each of these years.

Journals related by theme

*School Journal* Part 2 Number 2, 2010

| *School Journal* Part 3 Number 3, 2010

## Text characteristics from the year 7 and 8 reading standards

sentences that vary in length, including long, complex sentences that contain a lot of information

elements that require interpretation, such as complex plots, sophisticated themes, and abstract ideas

academic and content-specific vocabulary

### The First Hunter-gatherers

The first people of Rēkohu, the Moriori, faced a tough existence. Alone in a harsh and isolated environment, they quickly learnt to adapt, becoming skilled hunter-gatherers who could live off the land no matter what the season. Summer and autumn were especially busy times, when food was gathered and stored for the long winter months.

By far the most important source of food was the sea. Seals were especially prized for their fatty blubber – as were pilot whales, which sometimes stranded on the beaches. From spring till late summer, when the sea was calm, the women and children collected shellfish. Crayfish, crabs, and seaweed were also abundant and easy to gather. Fish in the lagoon and close to shore were caught in nets by the men. The cod-fishing grounds were further out, and these were reached in specially built boats called waka kōrari and waka pahū.

Unlike Māori, the Moriori didn't keep gardens. Instead, they ate the plants that grew around them, including bracken, kopi kernels, the hearts of nikau palms, and fern roots. Although they didn't cultivate vegetables, the Moriori knew how to keep these species strong and healthy to ensure a steady supply. Food also came from the streams, lakes, and Te Whanga lagoon (especially eels) and to a lesser extent from the bush (parea, tūi, and korimako). The kiore that arrived with the Moriori were another valuable source of protein.

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Slade Storm Natalia Keanu

Keanu and his classmates Slade, Storm, and Natalia decide to try their luck with pāua. It's definitely a traditional food – they've all seen the ancient middens on the lee side of the island, some of them measuring almost 10 metres across, which are filled with pāua and gipi shells. Natalia suggests heading for the reef at nearby Owenga. "If the tide's out, you can reach the pāua without getting your feet wet."

Access to the reef is down a craggy rock face. Slade goes first, carefully lowering himself with the help of a rope. The others follow, and within a few minutes, they're searching the shallow rock pools at the edge of the reef. They don't look for long.

"Too easy," calls Keanu, spotting his first pāua.

What isn't easy is prising pāua off the rocks. The survival instincts of pāua are finely tuned. Noise, light, vibration, or any kind of jangling triggers an instant reaction: clamping down. And there's nothing more stubborn than a pāua that senses trouble.

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non-continuous text structures and mixed text types

Reading standards: by the end of years 7 and 8

# Possible curriculum contexts

## SOCIAL SCIENCES

LEVEL 4 – Understand how people pass on and sustain culture and heritage for different reasons and that this has consequences for people.

## SCIENCE

LEVEL 4 – Living World (ecology): Explain how living things are suited to their particular habitat and how they respond to environmental changes, both natural and human-induced.

## ENGLISH (Reading)

LEVEL 4 – Ideas: Show an increasing understanding of ideas within, across, and beyond texts.

## ENGLISH (Writing)

LEVEL 4 – Purposes and audiences: Show an increasing understanding of how to shape texts for different purposes and audiences.

## Possible reading purposes

- To find out about traditional foods and food-gathering practices on Rēkohu
- To identify factors that support or threaten the survival of living things (human and non-human)
- To compare a school camp on Rēkohu with our school camp.

## Possible writing purposes

- To describe food-gathering and preparation practices from another culture
- To recount our school camp
- To explain how a local flora or fauna is impacted upon, both naturally and by humans.

See [Instructional focus – Reading](#) for illustrations of some of these reading purposes.

See [Instructional focus – Writing](#) for illustrations of some of these writing purposes.

# Text and language challenges

## VOCABULARY:

- Words and phrases that may be unfamiliar to some students, including “bivvy”, “bush medicine”, “four-wheelers”, “hunter-gatherers”, “a tough existence”, “blubber”, “abundant/abundance”, “lagoon”, “cultivate”, “species”
- Scientific words and terms, including “evolved”, “respiratory systems”, “organisms”, “circulation system”, “contracting”, “undersized”, “measuring gauge”, “leverage”, “habitat”, “subtidal”, “accumulation limit”
- Colloquial expressions, including “to try their luck”, “out of the question”, “not exactly high tech”, “an all-round success”
- Figurative language, including “live off the land”, “there’s nothing more stubborn than a pāua that senses trouble”.

## Possible supporting strategies

Most of the vocabulary should be accessible to year 7 and 8 students. Some may need support to work out the meanings of less-familiar words. Provide students with different strategies they can use to work out meanings. For example, you could help students explore the different parts of words and use them as clues to meaning. If the scientific words are unfamiliar, support students to make connections with vocabulary they have learnt in related studies of animal function. Pre-teach and chart words if necessary.

Make a class list of the names of plants and animals mentioned in the text, using columns to record common English, Māori, Moriori, and scientific (Latin) names.

The colloquial expressions may be familiar to most students, but remember that for students who are new to New Zealand, they’ll present a significant challenge.

*The English Language Learning Progressions: Introduction*, pages 39–46, has useful information about learning vocabulary.

## SPECIFIC KNOWLEDGE REQUIRED:

- Experiences of school or family camping trips
- Experience of hunting, gathering, and cooking food outdoors
- Knowledge of seafood
- Experience of the division of labour between men, women, and children.

## Possible supporting strategies

If students are not familiar with camping or with the kinds of activities mentioned, allow time for them to learn from other students or from videos or photos of school trips. Support students to make whatever connections they can, for example, comparing hunting and gathering with shopping for food, in order to explore differences.

## TEXT FEATURES AND STRUCTURE:

- Recount of a specific event linked to the other articles about Rēkohu in this Journal
- Use of present tense for the recount
- Historical information in an illustrated text box
- Scientific information in a separate spread
- Many complex sentences
- A lot of language expressing reasons and consequences in the information report, for example, “Because pāua were once found in large numbers, people think ...”, “If a pāua does become injured, it tries to stop the bleeding ...”.

## Possible supporting strategies

The recount is told in the present tense but, at the same time, includes a lot of description and explanation of things that are always true. This could be potentially confusing for students.

Some students may require support to connect the parts to the whole and to follow the instructions and chart in the scientific text.

*Supporting English Language Learning in Primary Schools: A Guide for Teachers of Years 7 and 8*, Explaining, pages 50–59, offers guidance about exploring the language function of explaining. It provides descriptions of learning outcomes, learning activities, and cross-curricular links, at the stages of the *English Language Learning Progressions*.

# Instructional focus – Reading

**Social Sciences** (Level 4 – Understand how people pass on and sustain culture and heritage for different reasons and that this has consequences for people.)

**Science** (Living World, level 4, ecology – Explain how living things are suited to their particular habitat and how they respond to environmental changes, both natural and human-induced.)

## Text excerpts from “Surviving Rēkohu”

## Students (what they might do)

## Teacher (possible deliberate acts of teaching)

On Rēkohu, nearly any spot is a perfect place to pitch a tent, which is one of the reasons the kids say the Chathams is a great place to live.

*Students draw on strategies to understand this complex sentence. They use what they know about sentence structure to identify the main clause and the subordinate clause (which ...). They evaluate how the subordinate clause adds meaning to the main clause.*

**MODEL** for students how to unpack a complex sentence.

- When I look at this text, I can see that the author has used complex sentences. I know that a complex sentence has a least one subordinate clause that adds meaning to the main clause.

**TELL** students to:

- identify the main clause
- identify the subordinate clause
- decide how the clause adds meaning.

This year, as well as learning all the usual survival skills – building a bivvy, bush medicine, and outdoor cooking – the students face a special challenge: finding food in the same way as the Moriori karapuna, which many of them share.

*Students draw on strategies and use of punctuation to understand this complicated sentence. They evaluate the phrase “many of them share” to infer that not all the classmates share Moriori ancestry.*

**PROMPT** students to work out the meaning of the final phrase by asking themselves “who or what do many of them share?”

**ASK QUESTIONS** if necessary to support students to make connections within, across, and beyond the text.

- What features tell you that this is not part of the main story about the camping trip?
- How is it connected to the main story?
- In what ways can you make connections between this extract and what you’ve read elsewhere about the early settlements in the south Pacific?
- What can you infer about the environment Moriori had come from?
- What words imply that the Moriori were able to adapt to the changed environment?
- How does this compare with other examples of people, animals, or plants adapting to a changed environment?

The first people of Rēkohu, the Moriori, faced a tough existence. Alone in a harsh and isolated environment, they quickly learnt to adapt, becoming skilled hunter-gatherers who could live off the land no matter what the season.

*Students recognise that this section of text is different from the surrounding text but is related to it. They make connections with the previous page to predict that this will explain how Moriori karapuna found food. They synthesise information from the text, their own knowledge, and other articles in this Journal (or those in SJ 3.3.10) to infer that the environment on Rēkohu was very different from that of the original homeland of Hawaiki.*

**PROMPT** students to extend the connections they can make with this text.

- As you read, what connections did you make about the ways in which other living things adapt to their environments? Discuss these and share them with a partner or group.
- How does the information in this text relate to the information that you found in the camping recount?
- Can you make any big generalisations about survival?
- How does each generation pass on their survival skills? Is it the same for all kinds of living things? What advantages or disadvantages might humans have compared with other organisms?

If threatened, their only form of defence is to clamp down, and it can take them several days to recover. During this time, movement is restricted, which makes feeding difficult and increases their vulnerability to predators.

*Students make connections between this section of text and the recount of collecting pāua during the camping trip. Students evaluate and synthesise the information in the texts and what they know about human and animal responses to danger to infer that a pāua is at much greater risk of harm than most organisms.*

**GIVE FEEDBACK**

- You used the photo and the context to work out what a bivvy was. Do you know another word for bivvy?
- I noticed that you looked for the main clause when you got lost in that long sentence. That’s a very useful strategy.
- I noticed the way you were able to link this to the ideas in other articles you’ve read about Rēkohu. That strategy helps you to build knowledge about a topic.

*Students make connections between the methods used by the school students in this article and this information to infer why pāua should be collected very carefully.*

### METACOGNITION

- Tell a partner how you worked out what “living off the land” meant.
- Explain to your partner what strategies you used when you integrated ideas from the different texts.
- What questions did you ask yourself as you read this article? How did your questions help you?

 **Reading standards: by the end of years 7 and 8**

 **The Literacy Learning Progressions**

 **Assessment Resource Banks**

# Instructional focus – Writing

English (Level 4, purposes and audiences – Show an increasing understanding of how to shape texts for different purposes and audiences.)

## Text excerpts from “Surviving Rēkohu”

That means no fishing lines or spears, no knives, torches, or dogs, and definitely no four-wheelers.

“Fish, kina, crayfish ... we eat the same things as our Moriori ancestors. We just cook them up a different way.”

There’s an abundance of edibles: fern roots, pipi, cockles, seaweed, kina, and kaēo (also known as sea tulip).

By far the most important source of food was the sea. Seals were especially prized for their fatty blubber – as were pilot whales, which sometimes stranded on the beaches.

Pāua are ancient sea snails that haven’t evolved since the time of the dinosaurs. Their blood and respiratory systems are very basic, and they breathe and reproduce through the row of small holes that runs along their shell.

With an accumulation limit of two days’ worth of catches. This means a person can’t have more than twenty pāua in their possession (including on their boat or in a fridge or freezer).

## Examples of text characteristics

### USE OF DETAIL

*By adding details, such as a list of examples, an author builds up a picture in the reader’s mind. Details also help the reader make connections and comparisons.*

### SIDEBAR

*By adding a sidebar (in this case historical background information) using a different text type (report), the author supports the information in the main body of the text (the recount). The information in the sidebar adds to the readers’ understanding of the key ideas in the text.*

### SPECIALISED VOCABULARY

*evolved, respiratory systems, reproduce, accumulation limit*

## Teacher

(possible deliberate acts of teaching)

**MODEL** how a list is a useful way to add details.

- I know that when I am reading, if I recognise something in a list, it gives me a better understanding of the idea or concept the author is describing and helps me make connections with the topic.

### EXPLAIN

- If you want readers to understand a variety or range of details, try using a list to mention a lot of things in a very compact way. Generally, we put a comma after each item and “and” before the last item. Examine other lists in this article to find variations on this pattern.

**ASK QUESTIONS** to help students identify key ideas in their writing that they may want to present in a different mode.

- What understandings do you want your reader to have after reading your article?
- What background or other information would help their understanding?
- What format might you use to give this information to the reader?

**PROMPT** students to consider their audience as they make word choices.

- Think about your audience as you choose your vocabulary. How much do you expect your readers to know about your topic already?
- What supports can you provide for any technical words and concepts you want to use? For example, can you add a labelled diagram, a glossary entry, or explain the term within the text?

**EXPLAIN** that using vocabulary that is accurate and specific to the topic gives the writing precision and shows that you know what you’re writing about. It also shows respect for the reader by assuming they will understand the terms.

### GIVE FEEDBACK

- I noticed the way you’ve explained how your family has maintained the food practices of your homeland. It helps me to know you better.
- Your audience should be able to follow the explanation well because you’ve used words and details they will be familiar with.
- How can you give a reader who doesn’t know about this topic more support? Have you considered adding a diagram or photograph?

## METACOGNITION

**ASK QUESTIONS** to encourage students to think more deeply about their writing.

- What was your main purpose when you planned your writing? How well do you think you’ve achieved your purpose?
- How will this description help your readers to understand ...?
- What would you change if you were explaining this to an older or younger audience? Why?