



Overview

Are wild deer in New Zealand for good? Are they a pest or a resource? In this report, four different groups of people express their opinions and give their reasons for wanting (or not wanting) deer to be left to roam free in New Zealand. The opinions form a continuum, from those that want complete freedom for deer to those who would like to see deer eradicated.

As well as the science curriculum connections, the text offers opportunities for students to compare the reasons for different opinions, analyse arguments, then synthesise information to form their own opinions. The text offers opportunities for students to build on the key competency of thinking.

There is an audio version of this text on the *School Journal Story Library Years 7-8 2011 CD*.

Texts related by theme

“Deer, Oh Deer” SJ 4.1.10 | “To Spray or Not to Spray” SJ 4.3.05 | “Unwanted Visitors” SJ 2.3.08

Text characteristics from the year 8 reading standard

complex layers of meaning, and/or information that is irrelevant to the identified purpose for reading (that is, competing information), requiring students to infer meanings or make judgments

academic and content-specific vocabulary

non-continuous text structures and mixed text types

“Hunting provides jobs and income.”
Warren Plum is another keen hunter. He is a member of the New Zealand Deerstalkers' Association, which promotes hunting in New Zealand. For Warren, hunting is a reason to put on his boots and head into the hills with family and friends.

Hunting isn't just about killing deer, it's the whole experience. One of my friends hunts with his adult granddaughter. You don't find many sports with that age range!
I love having deer running free in New Zealand. They are a wonderful resource that many New Zealanders enjoy. They provide recreation and tasty, natural meat. People stock up their food supply and save money by eating the meat. And many people just love seeing them in the wild.

Deer hunting provides jobs and income for people in hunting stores, food processing plants, and even taxidermists (people who stuff dead animals).
I think that deer should be culled in places where they are hurting rare plants. I have seen tree damage in areas where there are too many deer, but any kind of animal can damage a place when there are too many of them.
I'm totally against the use of poisons such as 1080. This poison is used to control possums, but it can kill deer and other animals, too.
I really hope that my grandchildren will be able to see and hunt wild deer in the future.

A gentleman's sport
In the 1860s, there were laws to stop people hunting deer in New Zealand. Deer were a protected species. But by 1870, people could buy a licence to hunt them. Hunting deer was seen as “a gentleman's sport”. Rich hunters from overseas came here to get deer's heads, which were said to be the biggest in the world. A large deer's head was like a trophy.

words and phrases with multiple meanings that require students to know and use effective word-solving strategies to retain their focus on meaning

metaphor, analogy, and connotative language that is open to interpretation

illustrations, photographs, text boxes, diagrams, maps, charts, and graphs, containing main ideas that relate to the text's content

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.

ENGLISH (Reading)

Level 4 – Purposes and audiences: Show an increasing understanding of how texts are shaped for different purposes and audiences.

Possible reading purposes

- To learn about the history of deer in New Zealand
- To learn about the issues in relation to deer in New Zealand
- To learn about a specific environmental issue in New Zealand
- To think critically about the different opinions people have about deer
- To help form a personal opinion about deer.

Page 4 has suggestions for writing instruction.

For more support and suggestions for accelerating students' writing, see *Accelerated Writing Progress in Years 7–8 on the Writing Hub*.



The Writing Hub

Text and language challenges

VOCABULARY:

- Possible unfamiliar words and phrases, including “debate”, “predators”, “wolves”, “population”, “rapidly”, “opinions”, “threaten”, “source”, “low-income”, “whānau”, “stags”, “antlers”, “chock-a-block”, “lean”, “Deerstalkers”, “experience”, “age range”, “resource”, “natural”, “in the wild”, “provides”, “income”, “food processing plants”, “taxidermists”, “1080”, “protected species”, “gentleman’s sport”, “overseas”, “trophy”, “expert”, “control”, “introducing”, “eradicate”, “landscape”, “definitely”, “broadleaf”, “measured”, “fenced off”, “expensive”, “erosion”, “protect”, “extent”, “aerial hunting”, “professional”, “commercial”, “recreational”, “extinction”, “conservationists”, “essential”, “mammals”, “unique”, “controlled”, “eradicating”, “national parks”, “lowland forests”, “organisations”, “conservation”, “introduced”
- The metaphors: “war of words”, “right at home”, “their population ... exploded”, “possums on stilts”, “green wall of bush”, “a bad army”, “turn back the clock”
- The words (in bold) that are explained in the glossary.

Possible supporting strategies

Review the text and make a note of all words the students may need to encounter (orally or in writing) before reading. Words connected with deer, hunting, and conservation may need to be listed and discussed in the context of working on background knowledge and text features (see below).

During or after reading, highlight the vocabulary and constructions associated with debate, such as “opinion”, “Some say/think ...”, “Others say/think ...”, “should”, “totally against”, “need to”, “I think ...”, “agree”, “believe”, “we feel that ...”. Explain that these words can introduce an opinion.

If students are not familiar with using a glossary, remind them of the conventions (use of boldface in the text, list of glossed words in an alphabetical list at the end of the article). Support students to find the meaning of a glossed word, replacing the meaning for the word, and rereading the sentence to understand it in context.

Identify new vocabulary that students should prioritise for learning. Have them record this vocabulary. Plan for ways to ensure they have opportunities to encounter this vocabulary often and in many contexts. *The English Language Learning Progressions: Introduction*, pages 39–46, has some useful information about learning vocabulary.

SPECIFIC KNOWLEDGE REQUIRED:

- Knowledge of the New Zealand bush, including national parks
- Experience of hunting
- Knowledge of deer as a source of meat
- Understanding of the kinds of environmental issues that can cause controversy and debate.

Possible supporting strategies

Skim the photographs in the text with the students, supporting them to make connections between them and anything they know about deer, the New Zealand bush, hunting, and conservation.

Assign a category to pairs of students. Give them the photographs and ask them to use them as a starting point to brainstorm their topic. (Students who don't have much background knowledge could just produce words for what they see in the photos.) Tell the pairs to chart their ideas as a word map (with their word in the middle and related words around it) and present their chart to the rest of the group.

Be aware that students may have different cultural approaches to disagreement. Make it clear that you would like to explore a range of opinions and for them to express their opinions. Explain that the class is looking at debate and this includes ways of disagreeing as well as agreeing.

TEXT FEATURES AND STRUCTURE:

- A report that presents four different opinions about deer in New Zealand
- The introductions (the bold paragraph and pages 2–3) that have the typical inverted triangle (general to specific) structure – broad topic, defined topic, viewpoints
- The fact boxes
- The introductory and concluding sections that frame the opinion sections
- The descriptions and explanations of hunting and conservation work
- The use of simple, compound, and complex sentences
- The use of words (including conjunctions) that signal different points of view (“Many New Zealanders ...”, “Some people say ...”, “But many others want”)
- The supporting photographs.

Possible supporting strategies

Adjust the scaffolding according to students' needs: some may need strong support to identify the various sections and to notice that each of the four ‘arguments’ is in a different voice.

Help students to make connections between the text and any others they have read that include opinions for and against an idea. Work with them to identify the common text and language features. Co-construct or refer to a list of the typical features of arguments. You may want to compare these examples of informal arguments in a spoken style to more formal argument texts.

As you explore vocabulary, structures, and concepts before reading:

- find out what students know
- make links to their prior knowledge
- build a shared knowledge of the topic and language that will support them with reading the text.



Sounds and words

Instructional focus – Reading

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.)

English (Level 4 – Purposes and audiences: Show an increasing understanding of how texts are shaped for different purposes and audiences.)

Text excerpts from *The Wild Deer Debate*

Students
(what to prompt, support,
and look for as the students
are reading)

Teacher
(possible deliberate acts of teaching)

A War of Words

There's a war of words going on in New Zealand. It's about deer. Some people love them – and some don't.

DEMANDS OF THE TEXT

Students need to:

- identify the extract as an introduction
- understand the metaphor, *war of words*
- form hypotheses about the text structure and content
- identify the inverted triangle structure common in non-fiction texts – in which the topic is given, the topic is defined (more specifically) and then the precise topic (in this case the two viewpoints) is given.

Students identify the bold, large font, and italics. They make connections with other reports they have read to infer that this extract is an introduction. Students use their vocabulary and world knowledge to understand the meaning of the metaphor.

Students ask questions and use the illustrations to infer that deer are the reason people are fighting with words. They form hypotheses about what they are going to read, how the text might be structured, and whose opinions they might read about.

We hunt mostly on farms and in pine forests. Sometimes we see damage caused by deer, including marks on trees where stags have rubbed at the bark with their antlers, but we don't think it's a big problem.

Deer should be allowed to breed naturally so we can keep hunting. We don't need to get rid of them. They aren't that much of a pest!

DEMANDS OF THE TEXT

Students need to:

- unpack the complex sentence
- distinguish facts from opinions
- confirm and/or revise hypotheses.

The students make connections within the text to identify that the speakers ("we") are the boys on page 4.

Students make connections with what they know about tree bark and antlers to visualise the damage and how it was caused.

Students make connections with what they know about the ways people express opinions rather than facts to infer that these are opinions. They draw on their own knowledge of environmental damage to evaluate the speakers' opinions.

DIRECT the students to look at the extract without actually reading the words.

- When the text is written like this, what part do you think it plays in the article as a whole?

ASK QUESTIONS to check that students understand the metaphor, and that they are asking themselves questions.

- We know from the title of the article that this is about a debate. How is a debate similar to a war? What weapons are used in a debate?
- What questions are you thinking about already, based on this extract? Keep those questions in your head and look for answers as you read.

MODEL forming hypotheses.

- When I started this article, the title told me it was going to be about a debate about wild deer, so I expect to read about people's opinions – and about deer in the wild. This extract confirms my hypothesis, and the word "war" tells me it's going to be a pretty heated debate. I'll check my hypotheses as I read, and confirm or change them as necessary.

Have the students identify the two sides of the debate. Tell the students four opinions are given. Have them work in pairs to predict the opinions. Ask them to write notes on at least two opinions with at least two supporting points each. Have them share their predictions. Record and discuss them, highlighting or introducing key concepts and language.

GIVE FEEDBACK

- I noticed you were writing down questions as you read. Remember that you may not find answers to all your questions in this text. Afterwards we will talk about where to search for the information.

MONITORING THE IMPACT OF TEACHING

- If students are not able to ask questions or form hypotheses based on the title, photos, and text so far, engage them in a discussion to determine what they know about the topic. Provide multiple opportunities for students to build knowledge of the topic.

ASK QUESTIONS to help students make connections within the text.

- Who is the "We" in this extract? How do you know that?

MODEL making connections.

- I reread the introduction to this section (page 4) and saw that it tells us who the boys in the photos are. The heading uses speech marks so I know it's a quote. The main part of the text starts with "We". There aren't any speech marks there, but I use what I know about texts to infer that the rest of the text on pages 4 and 5 are the words of Buck and Luke.

MODEL the way you distinguish fact from opinion.

- Buck and Luke say "we don't think it's a big problem" and "They aren't that much of a pest". Their use of the word "think" tells me they are stating an opinion, not a fact.

- I bring my own knowledge about tree damage and my hypothesis about the article to this extract and I evaluate their opinion. I'm guessing that environmentalists might disagree with Buck and Luke.

GIVE FEEDBACK

- Jimmy, you located and charted all the points people agreed on and disagreed on. That's a great way to help you compare the different opinions.

MONITORING THE IMPACT OF TEACHING

- If students are not always able to distinguish between facts and opinions, provide multiple examples from the text and support them to identify key words that give clues. Encourage them ask questions as they read, such as "Who is saying that?", "Is it the author or are they quoting someone?". If students need more support to identify opinions, support them with a graphic organiser (that has the people's names, their opinions, support for their opinions).

Oh deer, what a mess.

We can't turn back the clock. Wild deer are in our country now – and maybe they're here for good.

Now that you've heard both sides of the debate, what do you think? Which side of the wild deer debate are you on?

DEMANDS OF THE TEXT

Students need to:

- Identify and interpret the pun
- Identify the speaker and the audience
- Synthesise information and ideas across the text to form their own opinion.

METACOGNITION

- Did you change your opinion of wild deer as you read the article? What ideas or information helped? Describe the thinking you did as you changed your mind.
- When you are reading conflicting points of view, how do you keep track of the important ideas and information? What strategies help you?

The students notice the use of "deer" in the heading as a pun that relies on the homophone deer/dear. They make connections with telling the time to understand the metaphor and interpret it to mean that it is too late to stop the introduction of wild deer. Students identify the dash as a way of separating two potentially opposing or contradictory ideas. They synthesise ideas from the article (such as "it's impossible to completely eradicate wild deer", "it's hard to get some people to understand the message") to conclude that it's probably not now possible to get rid of wild deer.

The students make connections across the text to identify the speaker as the author, Ian Trafford. Students use their knowledge of text structure to infer that the author is referring to all New Zealanders as "we", and that he is speaking directly to the audience (the readers) when he refers to "you".

PROMPT students to look for words that sound the same but that are spelt differently.

EXPLAIN that a pun is a word joke.

- "Deer" and "dear" sound the same. They're homophones. We usually say "Oh dear" when there's a problem. By using "deer" here, the author is making a pun. Deer are the reason for the debate. By spelling it this way the author makes us think about both meanings at the same time.

EXPLAIN locating, evaluating, and synthesising.

- There are some important strategies we use when we bring together a lot of information and form our own opinions.
- When we read a text for a specific purpose, we pinpoint the different ideas and information that go together. This is called *locating* information. We then think about how the ideas and information connect with other things we know or have read about. We think about how relevant or important the different ideas are for our reading purpose. This is called *evaluating*. Finally, we take apart what we've read, think about it from our own point of view, and create our own interpretation of the ideas. This includes coming up with new ideas or a conclusion that helps us meet our reading purpose or learning goal. This is called *synthesising*.

PROMPT students to put this into practice in relation to the statement by the author on page 15.

- Reread pages 8 and 14 to locate each speaker's point of view about whether it is too late to get rid of deer.
- How do these relate to the author's point of view from page 15?
- What do you think about it? Is it too late to get rid of deer? Why/why not?

ASK QUESTIONS to clarify the speaker's purpose and audience.

- Who is "we" in this extract? How did you work that out?
- Who is "you"? How do you know?
- Why does the author address his readers directly? What is he telling you to do? How will you respond? Do you have enough information to form your own opinion? If not, what more do you need to know?

GIVE FEEDBACK

- You worked out the humour by making connections to other homophones that you know. Remember that strategy when you are reading other texts.

MONITORING THE IMPACT OF TEACHING

- Support those students who are having trouble synthesising and developing their own ideas or opinions from the text. Use a graphic organiser to record the opinions of the people from throughout the text. Model for students how you bring together your thinking about people's opinions and what you can conclude from this.
- For further information on synthesising, refer to *Effective Literacy Practice in Years 5 to 8*, page 150, and *Teaching Reading Comprehension* by Alison Davis, pages 175–179.

Suggestions for writing instruction

Students could:

- Make a continuum that shows the extremes of opinion about deer and those that come in between. For each entry, they can write a paragraph that gives the main reasons for that opinion.
- Take part in a formal debate on the deer issue and then write up one side as an argument.
- Prepare for an oral or written debate on another environmental (or other) issue.
- Use one or more questions raised by the text to carry out further research and report back.
- Write a letter to the author or other people mentioned in the article to ask further questions or find out more about the work they are doing.

Reading standard: by the end of year 8

The Literacy Learning Progressions

Assessment Resource Banks