



Overview

This humorous story has a serious message. When Grandad takes Vika and Kele out on his boat, he insists that the children wear life jackets and tells them a story from his childhood in Tonga that explains why. Sure enough, later in the story, Kele falls overboard, but his life jacket saves him. This journal includes two related texts: a report, "Life Jackets", about the history of life jackets, and a humorous poem, "In the Manawatū".

"Staying Afloat" requires students to "confidently use a range of processing and comprehension strategies to make meaning from and think critically about" text (from *The Literacy Learning Progressions*, page 14). It also provides many opportunities for building vocabulary.

There is a PDF of the text and an audio version as an MP3 file at www.juniorjournal.tki.org.nz

Related texts

Texts with the same characters: "Kele's Car" (JJ 49); "Helpful" (JJ 50)

Texts about fishing, boating, and/or keeping safe by water: *Whitebait Season* (Ready to Read, Purple); "Pirate Crew" (JJ 41); "Kūtai Fritters" SJ Level 2 Aug 2012

Texts that refer to life in the Pacific (all Ready to Read): *White Sunday in Sāmoa* (Turquoise); *A Quilt for Kiri* (Purple); *A Gift for Auntie Ngā*, "A Quiet Evening" in *Night Is a Blanket* (Gold)

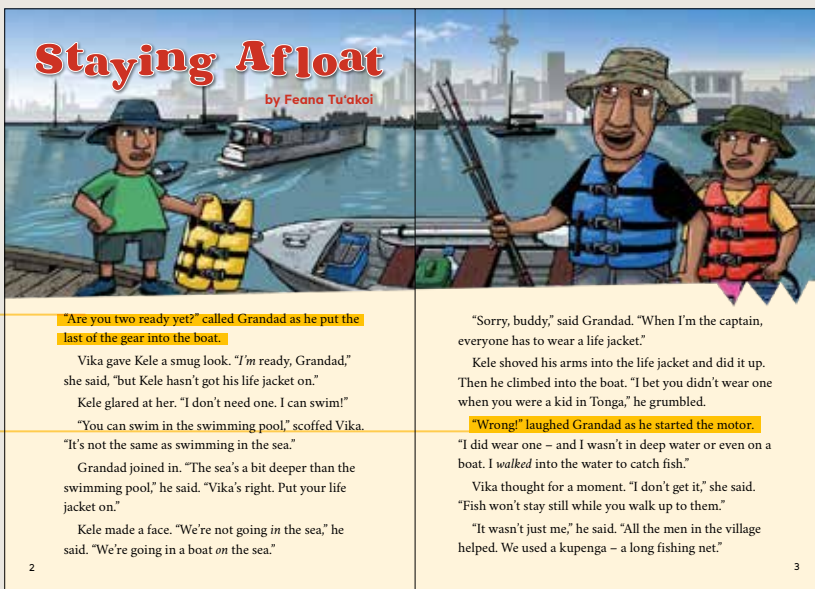
Text characteristics

Key text characteristics relating to the reading standard for after three years at school, as they relate to this text, are shown in the boxes below.

A mix of explicit and implicit content that requires students to make connections between ideas in the text and their prior knowledge in order to form and test hypotheses (for example, that the life jacket will save one of the characters), and make inferences (for example, why the characters behave as they do)

Several characters and events and more than one storyline, including shifts in time between the present and the past, requiring students to notice key words and phrases in order to keep track of events

Frequent use of dialogue, some of which is not explicitly attributed, and more than one character speaking on a page



Some unfamiliar contexts and settings

The use of italics for emphasis within dialogue

Ideas and information organised in paragraphs

A variety of sentence structures, including complex sentences, requiring students to notice linking words (for example, "as", "but", "When", "so", "until") and punctuation, including dashes

Some unfamiliar words and phrases, including descriptive vocabulary and colloquial language, the meaning of which is supported by the context, the sentence structure, and/or the illustrations

English (Reading)

Level 2 – Ideas: Show some understanding of ideas within, across, and beyond texts.

Health and physical education

Level 2 – Safety management: Identify risk and use safe practices in a range of contexts.

Select from and adapt the suggestions below according to your students' strengths, needs, and experiences – their culture, language, and identity (*Reading and Writing Standards for Years 1–8*, Knowledge of the Learner, page 6).

Possible reading purpose

(What can the students expect to find out or think about as a result of reading this text?)

- To find out what happens when Vika and Kele go out in the boat with Grandad
- To think about why the author wrote this story

Possible learning goals

(What opportunities does this text provide for students to learn more about how to “read, respond to, and think critically” about texts?)

- The students **make connections** to their own knowledge and experiences to **form and test hypotheses** about what will happen.
- They search for key words and ideas to help them **visualise** and keep track of events in the story.
- They **make inferences** about the feelings of the characters and why they behave as they do.
- They identify and discuss the author's purpose.
- They **monitor** their reading, and when something is unclear, they take action to solve the problem, for example, by rereading a sentence or looking for clues close by.



Text and language features

Vocabulary

- Possibly unfamiliar words and phrases: “gear”, “smug”, “glared”, “scoffed”, “shoved”, “Tonga”, “mumbled”, “started the motor”, “village”, “kupenga”, “GPS”, “anchor”, “shallow”, “bait”, “cast”, “furiously”, “scarlet”, “whoop”, “fisher”, “scowled”, “toppled”, “current's”
- Figures of speech: “washed off his feet”, “a close call”, “struck a pose”
- Colloquial language within dialogue: “I bet”, “I still don't get it”, “for sure”, “Woah!”, “so flash”

Possible supporting strategies

(These suggestions may be used before, during, or after reading in response to students' needs.)

Prompt the students to remember the strategies they can use, often in combination, for example:

- when **decoding**:
 - recognising word chunks or syllables within a word (“shall-ow”, “fur-i-ous-ly”, “scar-let”)
 - noticing similarities to known words (“gear” – “ear”, “bear”, “smug” – “mug”, “hug”, “bug”; “started” – “star”, “start”, “part”, “bait” – “wait”, “whoop” – “hoop”, “loop”)
 - drawing on their awareness that letters and letter combinations can have more than one sound (“anchor”, “glared”, “shoved”, “village”, “scowled”, “coughing”)
- when **working out word meanings**:
 - using the context of the sentence and the paragraph
 - making connections to their prior knowledge
 - reading on to look for further information.

Have a dictionary available for students to confirm or clarify word meanings, but remind them that they can make a best attempt at a word and come back to it later.

Readers are able to use strategies for working out unfamiliar words only when they know most of the vocabulary in the text. For English language learners who need support with vocabulary, introduce and practise selected items before reading. See [ESOL Online: Vocabulary](#) for suggestions.

Text features

- The use of italics for emphasis in dialogue
- Complex sentences
- Have the students practise reading the dialogue on pages 2, 3, or 9 and discuss how the emphasis supports the meaning. (You could also read the dialogue without emphasis to highlight the difference.)
- See “After reading”.



Metacognition

HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT YOUR STUDENTS TO BE METACOGNITIVE

Here are some ways you can build students' awareness of the processes and strategies they are using as they make meaning and think critically.

- What helped you work out the meaning of “cast” in this story?
- What helped you to understand why Grandad told the story from his childhood?

Introducing the text

- Use your knowledge of your students to ensure that your introduction to the text is effective in activating their prior knowledge and providing appropriate support for a successful first reading. (The audio version provides support for the pronunciation of the characters' names.)
- Have the students use the illustration on pages 2 and 3 to help them infer the meaning of the title (and begin to establish who, what, and where). Some students may be familiar with Vika and Kele from *Junior Journal 49* or *50*. Expect them to notice the life jackets and to predict that they will be important. (Some may also notice the “wavy” writing in the title.) Encourage them to share any knowledge of life jackets, including any from reading the article “Life Jackets” in this journal. If possible, have a life jacket for them to try on.
- Together, set a purpose for reading. Share the learning goals.
- You could provide sticky notes for the students to record ideas or questions as they are reading.

Reading and discussing the text

Suggestions for ways that you can support the students to achieve the learning goals are in the right-hand column of the table below. **Select from and adapt** the suggestions according to your students' needs. These suggestions may apply to the first or a subsequent reading of the text.

Encourage the students to read the text by themselves, intervening only if it's clear a student needs help. There will be many opportunities to provide support with word-solving and deeper comprehension on subsequent readings.

Student behaviours

Examples of what to look for and support as the students work towards achieving their learning goal(s). Note that much of the processing that students do at this level is “inside their heads” and may not be obvious until after they have read the text and you are discussing it as a group.

Deliberate acts of teaching

Examples of how you can support students as they work towards achieving their learning goal(s). Often this will involve individual students rather than the whole group.

The first reading

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• As they read page 2, the students make connections between the title, Kele's reluctance to wear a life jacket, Grandad's insistence, and/or their knowledge of story structure to predict that Kele's life jacket will play an important role in the story. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prompt the students to review their predictions from the introductory discussion. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The students use context (the arguing between Kele and Vika) to infer the meanings of the words “smug”, “glared”, and “scoffed” (if unknown). They draw on these words and the statement “I'm ready” (and any prior knowledge of Vika and Kele) to make inferences about the relationships between characters. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Encourage them to think about the characters. <i>What are you noticing about the way Vika and Kele are behaving? Why is “I'm” in italics?</i> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• On page 3, they make connections between clues such as Kele's comment, “when you were a kid in Tonga”, and Grandad's use of the first-person plural (“we”) and words such as “village” and “kupenga” to infer that Grandad is referring to his childhood. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• If necessary, prompt the students to notice the change in focus from Kele not wanting to wear his life jacket to Grandad remembering a time in his childhood. <i>When Grandad says “We used a kupenga”, who is he talking about?</i> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• As they read, the students jot down any questions they have. (Some of their questions may be answered as they read on.)• The students may notice that Grandad hasn't responded to Vika's comment. They may infer from the gap between Grandad starting his story (on page 3) and continuing it halfway down page 4 that he has been busy getting the boat to the right fishing spot. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Remind students that making notes or marking sections will help focus their thinking. Prompt them to look for clues in the text and illustrations.• If students seem confused by the interruption to Grandad's story, you could support their thinking by asking: <i>Why has Grandad stopped telling his story? What is he doing?</i> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• They use the thought bubble on page 5 to clarify that Grandad's story is a memory from his childhood. They make connections between his page 4 description of using a kupenga and the page 5 illustration to visualise the process and what happened to Saia. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• If necessary remind the students of the purpose of a thought bubble. Prompt them to use the illustration to help them visualise the events in Grandad's story. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The students infer from the dramatic language Grandad is using that he wants the children to realise how dangerous the sea can be. They also notice the impact the story is having on the children (“eyes grew wide”, “gasped Vika”). | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prompt the students to think about why Grandad is telling Kele and Vika this story. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• On page 6, the students track the shift back to the present-day fishing trip. They review (and possibly, confirm) their earlier prediction that something involving Kele's life jacket is going to happen. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prompt the students to review their predictions and think about where the story is heading. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• After enjoying Kele's triumph over Vika, the students reflect on the author's purpose. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enjoy the students reactions to the ending, but also prompt them to think about why the author wrote this story. |

Discussing the text after the first or subsequent readings

- The students share their responses to the events on the last two pages.
- They summarise the main events in each story, perhaps sharing any personal experience of “close calls”.
- The students consider Grandad’s purpose in telling the story about Saia. They infer that by including a story about the past and one about the present, the author has created two powerful examples of why life jackets are important.
- The students share their opinions about the relationship between Vika and Kele using evidence from the text (and, possibly, the audio version) and their prior knowledge of the characters.
- The students share any queries they have and how they solved (or attempted to solve) them.
- *Is this what you thought was going to happen?*
- Remind the students of the purpose for reading and have them summarise what happened in each story (the story of the present-day fishing trip and Grandad’s story from the past).
- *Why do you think Grandad told the story of Saia?* Ask the students to think critically about the author’s purpose and how she has tried to achieve it.
- *What does this story suggest about the relationship between Vika and Kele? What makes you think that?* Read some of the dialogue together, emphasising the words in italics. (The interplay between Vika and Kele is conveyed well in the audio version of the story.) The students could role-play what it means to look “smug” and to “scoff” and “glare”.
- Ask the students to share any questions they still have about the story or about words or phrases. They could add examples to their personal word jars or to a classroom word wall.

Supporting metacognition

With support, the students reflect on their learning.

- The students describe strategies such as rereading, looking for key words like “kupenga” and the names of the characters, noticing Grandad’s use of “we”, and the thought bubble on page 5.
- The students explain how they worked out (or tried to work out) meanings, for example, using the context of the sentence and the previous sentences and visualising Grandad’s description.
- Remind the students of the reading purpose and learning goal(s).
- *What helped you keep track of the story that Grandad was telling?*
- *What helped you understand what the phrase “washed off his feet” means?*

After reading: Practice and reinforcement

- Provide further opportunities for students to reread this text as well as some “Related texts”. They could reread the story as they listen to the audio version. Audio versions also provide English language learners with good models of pronunciation, intonation, and expression.
- Have the students work individually or in pairs to identify six key events and then to create a summary in comic-strip form that includes a sentence, speech bubble, or thought bubble (containing the key idea) and a quick drawing for each event.
- To reinforce the main idea of the story, have the students write thought bubbles for the characters in the illustrations on pages 2–3 and 8–9.
- They could write a diary entry for Kele or Vika about their fishing trip with Grandad.
- Have students share their experiences of different fishing methods, just as Grandad explained about the kupenga. This is an opportunity for students from other countries to share their knowledge.
- Encourage the students to think of other adults, like Grandad, who tell them stories about keeping safe. They could write and illustrate a story they were told (for example, what happened when someone didn’t wear a helmet or ran on the road without looking). Alternatively they could draw and write about a time they had a “close call” like Kele.
- Support students to build their vocabulary knowledge by having them explore the descriptive language in the story:
 - They could select some new words and/or phrases from the story and explain what helped them to work out their meanings, for example:

| New word | What helped me work it out | Meaning |
|----------|---|---------------------------------|
| flash | “puffed out his chest” | really cool |
| cast | “He cast his line out into the sea.” They are getting ready to go fishing. They have rods, and bait, and hooks so they will have fishing lines too. Grandad needs to throw the fishing line into the water so he can catch some fish. | threw the fishing line |
| bobbing | Kele is in the water and floating. The water is bouncing him around. | moving up and down in the water |

- They could choose a character and write words and phrases that describe them, including words not in the story (for example, “stubborn”, “argumentative”, “bossy”, “wise”). Have the students compare their lists. Help them create a Venn diagram to highlight the contrasts and overlaps.
- Start (or add to) a class collection of interesting words and phrases, including figures of speech (for example, “made a face”, “washed off his feet”, “swept away”, “a close call”, “struck a pose”) and colloquial language (for example, “for sure”, “Woah!”, “so flash”) for students to use in their own writing.
- Build the students’ confidence in reading and writing complex sentences. Choose an example from the story to use as a model. Substitute words and phrases to create new sentences together, for example: “‘Wrong!’ laughed Grandad as he started the motor.” (“No!” laughed Jack as he jumped on the trampoline.) Follow up by giving the students some starter phrases and having them complete the sentences. The students could work in pairs. Encourage creativity and humour.